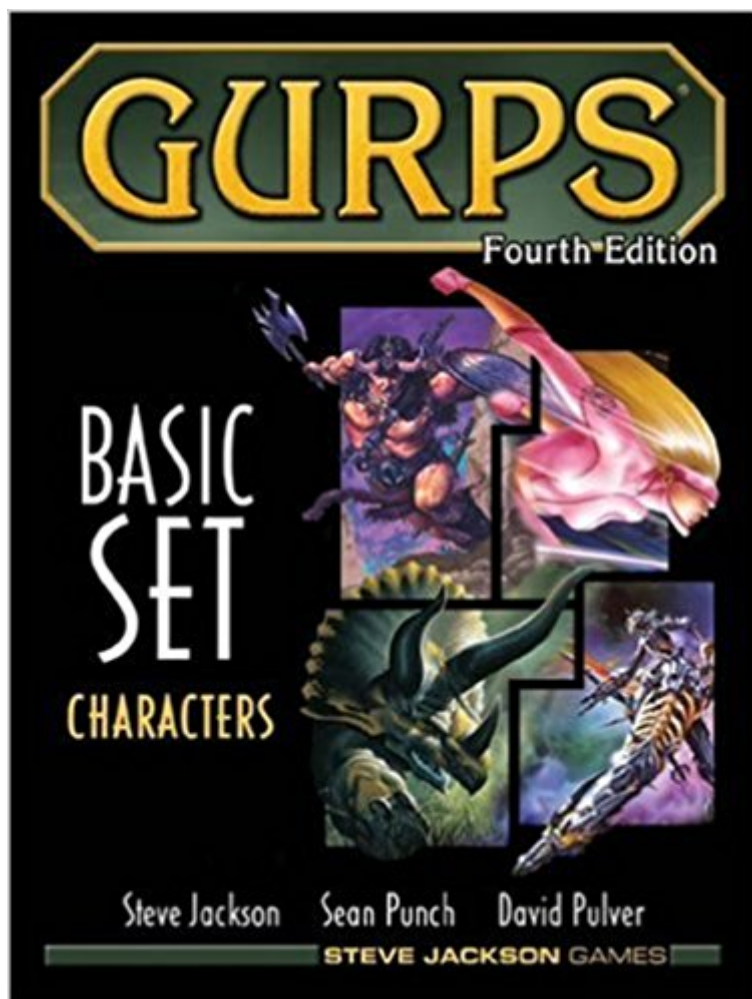


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# GURPS Basic Set: Characters, Fourth Edition



## Synopsis

With GURPS, you can be anyone you want – an elf hero fighting for the forces of good, a shadowy femme fatale on a deep-cover mission, a futuristic swashbuckler carving up foes with a force sword in his hand and a beautiful woman by his side . . . or literally anything else! GURPS has been the premiere universal roleplaying game for almost two decades. The new Fourth Edition makes it even better! GURPS Basic Set: Characters combines information from the Third Edition GURPS Basic Set and GURPS Compendium I, plus hundreds of new and updated rules! This 336-page, full-color hardcover contains everything you need to create and play a GURPS Fourth Edition character.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A dense tome, to be sure. If at all possible, I recommend learning the basics of the game from someone who already knows it before cracking open this book. It is certainly more useful as reference material than a teaching aid. If you don't have a resident GURPS expert, try playing GURPS Lite once or twice first, it is much more new-player friendly. GURPS has slightly steeper barriers to entry than other popular RPGs, but if you muddle through it you'll find a versatile system that fills a void other popular RPGs have skirted for decades.

GURPS can appear very intimidating for newcomers to pen&paper games, but is actually fairly simple to pick up. This review will talk about the system and help you get rolling comfortably.--WHAT TO BUY--Pen&Paper games, especially Dungeons & Dragons 4th ed have a large number of books with no clear indication as to what is necessary to get going. In order to get

started with GURPS, ideally you will have both books of the basic set (This one and [GURPS BASIC SET Campaigns \(GURPS: Generic Universal Role Playing System\)](#)) however a lot of the useful information from Campaigns can be obtained from the resources section of this review. All of the books outside of the Basic Set serve only to give your Game Master (GM) a premade list of equipment and monsters as well as more rules to include for the setting. For example, [GURPS Horror 4th Edition \(GURPS: Generic Universal Role Playing System\)](#) adds more rules regarding insanity and other lovecraftian-influenced horror rules.

**--BASIC MECHANICS--**GURPS is a points-buy system, which abolishes classes in favor of a host of individual skills + traits that you will define your character with. So, instead of, say, choosing to be a Wizard and putting your experience into the Wizard class to unlock fireball, you allocate points into Fireball or however magic works in your setting. The downside of a points-buy system is that the aforementioned people who just want to play a Wizard can be overwhelmed by the options. GURPS uses a 3d6 system where you roll 3 six-sided dice at or under your skill level to succeed at something. Example: Your skill with guns has a level of 12, so you have to roll a 12 or under to succeed. My main complaint about GURPS would be that the book doesn't emphasize enough that a lot of the rules it has available are intended for certain types of campaigns. This is a common confusion among newcomers to GURPS thinking that they need to include every little crunchy rule in the system. A few times throughout the books the authors explicitly say that these rules are only intended for certain settings/campaigns.

**--COMBAT--**GURPS combat isn't terribly complex, although there are books that can make it more complex if you wish. GURPS combat goes as follows: Player A wants to shoot Target B. Player A rolls 3d6 for their guns skill. Success is affected by bonuses + penalties you'd expect like range, visibility, etc. If Player A succeeds, Target B rolls 3d6 to dodge. If Target B succeeds, Player A misses. Exception: Critical hits are not dodgeable. If Target B fails to dodge, Player A rolls for the damage their weapon does. Let's say the gun does 5d6, so Player A rolls 5 dice. (Optional) Player A rolls to see what location Player A hits. Damage is dealt to Target B, reduced by Damage Resistance from whatever armor they have. GURPS' Combat on average is as simple as above, but you can get really number-crunchy if you want to. I prefer combat that isn't an hour long though, so until I run a tactical campaign I can't comment on the crunchy version.

**--AWESOME RESOURCES--**1. GURPS Character Sheet Generator. doesn't allow links in their reviews so just google for GURPS character sheet generator and you'll find it on sourceforge. It's a free java program that allows you to make and print out character sheets, also does whatever little math you need for stat increases, and is great for online campaigns. 2. Roll20 dot net This is a free online service that allows people to play pen+paper games online. It has a beautiful interface

and is being updated all of the time. No matter what system you run, I strongly recommend it.<sup>3</sup>  
GURPS combat cheat sheet (google GURPS combat cheat sheet) This is basically the digital version of a GM screen. It includes the modifiers for range, a hit location table, and other such information.--OVERALL--GURPS is a great system to pick up if only to let people play in whatever setting they wish, instead of modifying a setting-specific system for another. Highly recommended for all pen&paper gamers new and old.

I use to just follow this rule I knew for that game, another for this one etc, to make my own mash-up of things I liked, because I tend to like simple statistics, but that can become complex. I also do this because I tend to make my worlds more "realistic" or to a player who likes to do crazy things...maybe more "cruel". However, with this book, I have no need for that. It covers everything I need to know, and has that simplicity, but still with detail. It is a great book, and it covers just what the title says, Characters. This is the skills, advantages, disadvantages. Some basic magic, armor, and weapons. It says how to do the stats (str, dex, IQ, HT, etc) and some basic scales to go by (that are judged by human, and tell you how to modify). This book doesn't really cover much combat and/or damage. The reason however is because this book is meant to be bought along with the GURPS: Campaign, which continues it. This book (GURPS: Characters) even references quite a few things that are in the other book. However, if you REALLY just need character creation, and can use your imagination a little, they do give a combat LITE edition, that gives you the basics. If you like to roleplay however, I definitely would recommend getting this book, and I intend to get the second half to this book, Campaigns. If it is even half the worth of GURPS Basic Set: Characters, it will well be worth it. some extra information: I didn't really like a few of the D&D books, and compared on understanding and readability, these are much better in my opinion. I also do not like exactly how skills are acquired, but as well as it covers everything else, this was just a minor setback, and still well worth it.

I gave five stars to the Basic Set Characters because I always preferred GURPS over other RPGs on the market and this book is an improvement from the 3rd edition. GURPS is better in my opinion because the rules feel real as if the situation were really happening. A single sword strike may kill an opponent if you are lucky, something impossible in D&D because you accumulate a massive amount of HP in latter levels and will never die of a single sword strike. In GUPRS you may be very powerfull and still die. It is realinstic. There are also lesser reasons: the rules allow you to place jedi wielding lightsabbers in a medieval setting easily and with a good statistical representation of

such encounters. I also recommend this book because it is all you need to buy if you don't want to spend much. The companion book Basic Set: Campaign is optional. Also with GURPS you can buy adventures from other systems and adapt to GURPS rules in a simple way.

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