Cyberpunk

Characters

Characters can choose one of two packages when first generated:

Natural. You have a deep-seated mistrust of cyberware—you start out with 2 more Talents. If you ever gain cyberware, you have to "pay off" the cyberware with earned experience at a rate of 1 xp per new cyberware point before you can continue advancing. In addition, at every 5 levels (e.g. 5, 10, 15, 20), you can either pick one bonus Talent or gain a +1 to an ability score of your choice.

Wired. You have $10,000 to spend on cybernetic enhancements (or more, depending on how the GM sets up cyberware prices for his campaign setting). You can install new cyberware with no experience penalty. Optionally, you can take $5000 (or half whatever the GM sets) and take another Talent. The character can bank any left-over money.

Cyberware

Cyberware packages are built with points. These points work in a similar fashion to Gear Points in SpyLite, but are tracked separately. Usually, the point total is used to calculate a dollar cost.

1 point lets you do one thing you couldn't before.

It could give you a +2 to a range of appropriate skill checks or a +5 if it's something very specific/appropriate. It could give you +1 to an attribute (up to +8), or +1 to AC or initiative, or it could mimick the effect of one Talent (if you use these) or some other similar bonus.

Attribute bonuses generally only apply as far as the extent of the modification: a cybernetic arm with a +4 to Str might only give bonuses to grip strength, punching and other such applications, but not apply to jumping or running.

Strength bonuses do NOT apply to hit point totals. If you want your cyberware to make you tougher, then buy an AC upgrade.

No ability score can be boosted by more than +8 total, even with multiple pieces of cyberware.

The final total can be modified with the following:

+1 pt   Inconspicuous technology
+2 pt   Lessened impact on Humanity Meter
-1 pt   Inelegant or very obvious (hydraulic rams, for example)
-1 pt   Comes with a side effect of some sort (e.g. causes headaches when in use)

The two -1's can represent outdated or improvised tech.

The final dollar (eurodollar, credit, yen or whatever) cost is equal to the total pts of the cyberware package multiplied by the type of enhancement.

How much of a multiplier is up to the specifics of the setting, but a good guideline might be $1000 for prosthetic limbs, $500 for sensory upgrades, and $250 for a data jack or other similar low-impact enhancements.

Very difficult/high impact modifications such as wired reflexes or physical skillwire enhancements might go as high as $2500 per point, or even higher.

It's recommended that the GM build a list of available cyberware rather than allowing PC's direct access to this system.

Examples:

Cyber-arm. +4 Str, +1 AC. Comes with a pistol built into the palm, but is rather large and bulky, since it was built with sturdy Soviet-bloc hydraulics. 5 pts. $5000.

Datajack. Allows direct neural interface with a machine or computer. 1 point. $250. Better models are inconspicuous (with a concealed port), but cost more.

Dermal Armor. +3 AC. Includes a medical port connecting to a belt pack that allows emergency injections of various performance-enhancing drugs. Drugs are effective for an hour or so, but are potentially addictive. 4 pts. $4000 (using the cyberlimb cost).

Optical Upgrade. Includes infra-red enhancements, a built-in HD camera and connects to a nearby computer (probably a cellphone) as a display. Inconspicuous—looks like a normal eye. 4 pts. $2000.

Retractable Spurs. Adds +1d6 to all unarmed melee damage. 1 point. $1000.

Rigger Processor, Basic Package. Allows a character with a datajack to connect directly to a vehicle's processor. +2 Dex, +1 initiative, but only while driving or flying. 2 points for the Dexterity, 1 point for the initiative bonus, 1 point for the ability to connect with a vehicle, -1 for the vehicle only limitation on the stat bonuses. 3 points. $4500.

For balance reasons, I put the base cost for this at $1500 per point—it's not quite as overpowering as wired reflexes, but it's a more extensive modification than prosthetic limbs, humanity-wise.

Skillwire System. The character can slot in various software chips that mimic knowledge of any skill, ranging from martial arts to obscure academic disciplines. Only 2 chips can be inserted at any given time.

The character is considered to be Trained when making skill checks in that area, or, if they already have that skill Trained, they gain a +2 to appropriate rolls. In other words, if your character is not Trained in Knowledge but is now chipped to speak Chinese, then a skill roll to do so would be at level+3 instead of ½ level+1. Any other application of Knowledge would still be at the lower, untrained level, unless you had another chip to cover that situation.

While the chips are inserted, the character gains either +2 Dex or +2 Int, depending on whether the chips are physical or knowledge in nature (player choice), to reflect the added knowledge base or physical assurance that the skillwire programming lends.

Damaging Cyberware

If the character is reduced in hit points to the point that they start taking Str damage, roll for a random piece of cyberware every time they take damage—if a specific system comes up, there's a 50% chance that it is damaged.

Humanity Meter

The more cyberware your character is packing, the more they distance themselves from humanity. The humanity meter is a quick and dirty way of measuring this distance.

It's rated on a scale of 1 through 5, with 1 being the least enhanced to 5 being almost completely detached from humanity.

HL	Broad Description Of How Enhanced The Character Is
1	Very slightly enhanced—a datajack, for example.
3	An artificial limb or two, or an assortment of minor enhancements.
5	Full conversion, vast laundry list of minor-to-major enhancements. More metal than meat.

However, there's a side effect—for the first hour a new skill chip is inserted, the character suffers blinding headaches (-2 to all checks until the knowledge is fully integrated). 2 pts for the two separate skill bonuses, 2 pts for the stat bonus, +1 for inconspicuous, -1 for the side effects. 4 points. $10,000.

Smartlink. Provides a direct interface to the gun's targeting system, which will give varying information depending on the sophistication of the gun's optics and computer.

Gives a +2 with gunfire rolls, might have other benefits depending on how good your gun is. Requires a datajack. Better models are inconspicuous—the basic model assumes there's a communications pad embedded into one or both palms. 1 point. $250.

Wired Reflexes, Basic Package. +2 Dex, +1 Initiative. 3 points. $7,500.

Wired Reflexes, Cutting Edge. +4 Dex, +1 AC, +3 Initiative. 8 points. $20,000.

Wired Reflexes, Outdated. +2 Dex, +1 Initiative. Side effects: character is constantly jittery and on edge. 2 points $5,000.

Each genre has a different meter—different settings value humanity loss differently and enforce it in different ways.

In a **traditional cyberpunk** setting, as you go up you take a social modifier hit and have a progressively higher chance to rage or weird out in high stress situations.

HL	Social Rolls	Cyber-psychosis
1	No effects	
2	-1 to social rolls	
3	-2 to social rolls	In high stress situations, roll vs DC 10 to avoid snapping
4	-3 to social rolls	In high stress situations, roll vs DC 15 to avoid snapping
5	-4 to social rolls	In high stress situations, roll vs DC 20 to avoid snapping

In a **Shadowrun-style** setting, as you go up you take a social hit (but not as bad as in a cyberpunk setting), and magic becomes harder to use. The magic penalty also applies to the cost of healing spells used on you, so be careful.

HL	Social Rolls	Casting Cost	Maximum Spell Level
1	No effects		Max Spell Level 8
2	No effects	Spellcasting costs: +1 hp	Max Spell Level 7
3	No effects	Spellcasting costs: +25% cost	Max Spell Level 5
4	-1 to social rolls	Spellcasting costs: +50% cost	Max Spell Level 3
5	-2 to social rolls	Spellcasting costs: +100% cost	Max Spell Level 1

And, since it would be really easy to hack in at this point...

`ShadowLite`

In addition to humans, ShadowLite offers several other possible player races:

All of the following races start out with 2 Talents and 2 Action Points (base SpyLite assumes that humans gain +1 Talent and +1 Action Point as a species bonus):

Dwarf. +2 Str, -2 Dex. Automatically gains the Durable Talent. Can see in the infrared spectrum.

Elf. +2 Dex, +2 Int, -2 Str. Automatically has low-light vision.

Orc. +4 Str, -2 Cha. Automatically has low-light vision.

Troll. +8 Str, -4 Int, -4 Cha. Can see in the infrared spectrum. Their thick skin gives them 1 point of DR.

Finally, when choosing whether to make a character Natural or Wired, players have one more choice:

Arcane. Your character can use one type of magic: Cleric, Wizard, Druid or the like.   Spell use works as per Microlite20. If you ever gain cyberware, you have to "pay off" the cyberware with earned experience at a rate of 1 xp per new cyberware point before you can continue advancing.

In all other ways, the game runs like SpyLite, with the cyberware rules in effect.