

MECHA TYPES

While constantly defying hard and fast classification, mecha can be grouped into a few categories based more on the flavor of their setting than their actual physical capabilities, which change from series to series.

POWER ARMOR

The smallest kind of mecha is actually more of a superpowered suit of armor. The main function of power armor is to make its wearer into a one-man (or -woman) army, elevating a simple human being into the ranks of supernatural or superhuman enemies. The weapons of power armor are mainly heavy weaponry available to unarmored soldiers, except that the power armor can use them as if they were much lighter weapons. Because of their relatively cheap and easy construction, power armors can easily be customized for the preferences of their individual users, such as a comms-armor equipped with advanced sensors and communications and melee-tuned suits that pack concussion gloves or monofilament cutting whips.

Magic fantasy armor can be considered power armor, as long as it comes with all sorts of powers that the user would not normally have except when wearing it and it encloses the character completely.

Power armor always stays in the range of Medium size, and users need not learn to do anything to operate them except move well.

- **Example:** *The hardsuits of Bubblegum Crisis.*

MOBILE SUIT

A step up from power armor, the mobile suit enters the category of vehicle. The pilot still controls the suit's limbs with his own body movements but

mostly through a harness of pulleys and cogs or memory metal and servos. A mobile suit can have heavy weaponry mounted on its frame, as well as life support systems, which the pilot can control from more complex internal instruments.

Despite the increased bulk (the higher reaches of Medium and the lower of Large), a mobile suit can still handle tasks like an unarmored individual, and the suit can have hands capable of human-scale fine manipulation or oversized hands to hold oversized weapons and wrestle with tanks.

- **Example:** *The landmates of Appleseed.*

CRAFT

A craft mecha has as much value as a vehicle as it has as a humanoid machine. Hovering around the size of similar vehicles like jet fighters, space frigates, and tanks, craft mecha have advanced modes of travel as well as weaponry that takes advantage of their long range and versatility. Many craft mecha can transform or adopt different modes to optimize each of their various functions and purposes.

The crew of craft mecha consists of a single pilot and perhaps a copilot. Very few models exceed this number before becoming either special vehicles or other types of mecha.

The arsenal of craft mecha is very diverse, combining mounted options like shoulder missile launchers with weapons wielded with one or both of the mecha's hands. The melee weapons wielded by craft mecha can slice vehicles in half, although given their mobility, most of these equip ranged attack options if their base technology allows it.

- **Example:** *The mobile suits of the Gundam saga.*



GIANT ROBOT

As the name implies, these mecha are robots several stories high. While this size would make them ideal weapon platforms, they are oddly lacking in most forms of weaponry except a couple of energy weapons and maybe missiles of some sort. Otherwise, they are built to fight same-scaled enemies hand-to-hand. Some will have melee weaponry designed for their size.

A giant robot's crew may consist of a single pilot or up to five, which is most often the case if the giant robot is actually an amalgam of smaller mecha combined together, with the individual pilots become the bridge's crew.

There can be cases like the Macross SDF-1, which was actually an interplanetary colony ship that could assume a semi-humanoid form in order to fire its devastating main weapon, but otherwise its mobility was very limited.

- **Example:** The Eva Units from *Neon Genesis Evangelion*.

GESTALT

A gestalt mecha is a component of a larger, more massive mecha. The number of elements varies from a mere two to a couple of dozen, depending on the final size and purpose of the composite mecha. A gestalt element mecha often has the transformable type, too, having one natural form in which it operates individually and its form as a part of a greater whole.

- **Example:** *The components of Voltron.*

GUARDIAN

A mecha with a special purpose and some glimmer of self-awareness is a guardian. Guardian mecha tend to have a mythical nature and capabilities outside the experience of science and technology. Whether they can be piloted or ridden, they have a special link to their masters and may even grant a few powers through that link.

- **Example:** *The Mashin of Magic Knight Rayearth.*

SPIDER MECHA

While most mecha have a humanoid design, the multi-legged approach has many advantages, mainly in balance and stability. Spider mecha are not humanoid at all; their design principle is to put legs on a more conventional vehicle in order to circumvent difficult terrain and the jostling movement that messes up aiming. They come in any size, from small infiltration units barely the size of a van to gigantic weapon platforms that are, for all purposes, walking fortresses.

Example: *The giant walking weapon batteries from the Appleseed OVA or first CGI movie.*

TRANSFORMABLE

A subtype that can apply to other types, the transformable mecha has an alternate form that it can assume by mostly mechanical means, although magic and space-bending are not unheard of. A mecha can transform into a normal vehicle of another type or into a mechanized beast. It can have different modes of combat in each of its different forms. In some forms, the pilot may be expelled as the mecha operates on its own artificial (or magical) intelligence. This type of mecha is easily represented by the Mechamorph feature, described in this chapter.

- **Example:** *The Valkyries of the Macross saga.*

WALKER

This mecha is basically a tank with legs and possibly arms. The simplest models are nothing more than a platform to carry a single large weapon or weapon array, more versatile than a conventional vehicle but not as much as a humanoid mecha. Walkers hardly ever use hand-held weapons, sporting instead an impressive arsenal of mounted weaponry. Cheap walkers are actually operated remotely or by an artificial intelligence, since they are little more than walking artillery. In settings where the mecha are in their early stages of development, walkers may be the only models available.

- **Example:** *The HAVWC (High Agility Versatile Weapon Carrier) of FLAG.*

CREATING MECHA

There is no secret behind creating a mecha for your series. Mecha have most of the traits heroes can have, and they can be bought at the same costs. The difference is that mecha are not heroes (most of the time... there are mecha that are simply not what meets the eye), but rather accessories for the heroes to do their stuff.

In most mecha series, heroes are limited by what a regular (if extraordinarily skilled) human can do, which makes fighting giant aliens rather difficult. A hero can spend all those power points he cannot raise over his humanity's limits in a mecha, purchasing it either as equipment or as a Device, with the limitations and characteristics each option entails.

To create a mecha, follow these steps:

- **Select Size:** A mecha's size determines its initial cost, as well as the starting values of its base traits.
- **Increase Base Traits:** You can increase a mecha's Strength, Dexterity, and Toughness directly.
- **Purchase Cockpit and Control Features:** Add base systems and features that increase the pilot's control of the mecha, as well as his protection from the environment.
- **Purchase Movement Features:** In addition to just walking, a mecha can be made to fly, roll, or even travel through space.
- **Purchase Sensory and Communications Features:** The pilot is isolated in a mecha's cockpit; these systems allow him to perceive his environment and communicate with his allies.
- **Purchase Defense and Countermeasure Features:** A mecha is already an impressive protection for its pilot; these base systems and features make that protection all that more impregnable.
- **Purchase Targeting System Features:** To increase a mecha's effectiveness in combat, you can add base systems and features that allow him to hit better and more often.
- **Purchase Miscellaneous Features:** Add unique and utility capabilities to the mecha, taking it beyond the original specs.
- **Choose Drawbacks:** For a drop of realism, or simply to tone down a mecha's power, choose drawbacks that represent less-than-optimal performance.
- **Purchase Weapon Systems:** Give the mecha its offensive capabilities, which can range from oversized melee weapons to advanced energy weaponry.
- **Calculate Costs:** Add the costs of size, increased traits, base systems, and features. Add +4 for every TL by which the base systems exceed the setting's, and +2 for every TL for complementary systems. Subtract