

# POWER PROFILE: TIME POWERS



Time is literally “on your side”! Time powers can speed up or slow down the flow of time, perceive the future or the past, “sidestep” into parallel timelines, and even allow you to stop time altogether or change history!

## TIME DESCRIPTORS

The following are important descriptors for time powers and their effects.

- **History:** The sequence of events which occurred in the past. History is not necessarily fixed in a world where time travel and temporal manipulation are possible and, in some instances, a certain vagueness about historical events may conceal temporal paradoxes. For example, a time-traveling hero goes back into the past to investigate historical records of a mysterious stranger involved in a particular key point in history, only to become entangled in those events and discover he is the “mysterious stranger” who triggered his own investigation into the past!
- **Tachyon:** Tachyons are theoretical subatomic particles able to travel faster than the speed of light (from the Greek *tachys*, meaning “swift”). Because of their ability to violate causality as we understand it, tachyons are often used as an explanation for temporal powers: characters emit or control tachyons as a means of producing their effects. Tachyons are often treated as an exotic form of energy or radiation, allowing for various other power effects, similar to those found in the **Electrical Powers** and **Radiation Powers** profiles. Examples include tachyon-based energy blasts inflicting Ranged Damage (perhaps

Perception Ranged and Indirect, given their nature) and tachyon force fields providing Sustained Protection or other defensive benefits.

- **Time:** The passage and measurement of time as a game value is discussed on pages 11–12 of the *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS Hero's Handbook*, specifically in terms of ranks as measurements of values of time and the relationship between scenes (narrative time) and actions rounds (action time). Many effects in M&M use time ranks.
- **Countering:** Time powers can potentially counter each other, either through direct manipulation of the continuum or by applying equal and opposite changes (decelerating time the same amount as someone else accelerates it, for example). This may also allow time powers to counter speed powers, decelerating targets in time by the same amount as they speed up. Other uses of time powers to counter tend to be in the form of indirect tampering with history rather than a direct power vs. power contest, causing a particular effect to “un-happen” (or to never have happened in the first place). See the **Replay** power under **Utility Powers** for an example.

## TIME FEATURES

Feature effects associated with Time Powers include the following:

- **Chronal Memory:** You have the ability to “remember” other timelines. If someone changes history, your memory contains two versions of events: the current timeline and the original one. These differing

recollections let you know, first, that history has been changed and, second, may provide clues as to how and when it changed and what you can do about it.

- **Chronal Bulwark:** You are “fixed” in time such that when history is changed (see Temporal Tampering, following) you do *not* change with it. The difficulty is that only you (and others like you) remember the original timeline and you are now unfamiliar with the “new” world. If you have both this and the Chronal Memory Feature, you retain your traits from the original timeline, but remember both.

## TEMPORAL TAMPERING

The ability to alter time, especially to change history, has tremendous repercussions, and has been the subject of countless stories and theories. While time tampering and its effects are a common comic book plot device, they can cause considerable headaches for a MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS Gamemaster, if left entirely in the hands of a group of players. Settings generally take one of four approaches to temporal tampering and changing the past:

- **Immutable Time:** Historical events are essentially “fixed” in time and time-travelers *cannot* change them, no matter how much they try. Either time travelers are incorporeal phantoms, unable to interact with the past (in which case the Time Travel effect is unavailable; characters can only *observe* the past using Postcognition) or time itself seems to conspire to prevent time-travelers from changing anything other than the most inconsequential events. So, go back in time and try to prevent the assassination of a historical figure, for example, and you’ll find yourself stymied at every turn: stuck in traffic, trapped in a cave-in, your weapon malfunctioning, and so forth.
- **Resistant Time:** History can be changed, but it tends to resist change, trying to “snap back” to its previous shape and compensating for any changes. So, for example, if you eliminate Adolf Hitler before his rise to power in Germany, someone else takes his place as the demagogic leader of the National Socialist Party and Chancellor of Germany, and World War II still happens largely on schedule, with different details. Changes tend to “even out” over the long run and it is exceedingly difficult to create significant, lasting change in history.
- **Mutable Time:** Historical events are not fixed, and changing them creates a whole new sequence of events. Given the range of variables involved, it may be nigh-impossible to predict the outcome of any such changes, and the lack of “resistance” may make it difficult for the time-stream to recover from incidences of tampering without outside intervention (which is, itself, another form of tampering).
- **Quantum Time:** This is a combination of Mutable and Immutable Time; history can be changed, but the change creates an alternate timeline, “splitting off” from previous history at the change-point. In the new parallel universe, history takes a different course, but the original timeline still exists “somewhere” in

the greater continuum. Indeed, if quantum theory is correct, *every* possible universe may exist within a greater N-dimensional continuum or “omniverse”.

Gamemasters should note that these approaches to time tampering need not be universal. For example, time may, as a general rule, be immutable and immune to casual tampering by time travelers (including the heroes) but certain plot devices can render it mutable, so the villain possessing the Chronos Key *does* wield the power to change history, unless the heroes can stop him *without* changing history themselves!

## OFFENSIVE POWERS

Offensive time powers involve manipulating the flow of time in ways harmful or detrimental to targets, whether directly (causing rapid aging, for example) or indirectly (using stopped time to set up harmful circumstances).

### AGE MANIPULATION

Exerting control over a discrete portion of time, you can cause a target to rapidly grow older or younger, even to the point of death (or birth) where they cease to exist! The primary effect of this power is to strip away some of the target’s capabilities: reducing physical abilities due to extreme age or youth, perhaps even reducing or removing mental abilities due to infirmity or immaturity. Ultimately, the mechanical effects are similar. If you can shift a target’s aging both forwards or backwards, apply 1 rank of the Variable Descriptor modifier.

By default, this power only works on living beings you can touch. If you do not need to touch the target, apply Ranged or Perception Ranged. If you can also rapidly age objects, to the point of causing them to break down and decay, apply the Affects Objects modifier as well.

**Age Manipulation:** Cumulative Affliction (aging; Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Impaired, Disabled, Transformed) • 2 points per rank.

### TEMPORAL AMBUSH

By stopping (or vastly slowing) time, you can “set up” a target for an attack: placing an object to drop onto them, for example, or a projectile to hit them. When you restart time again, from the target’s perspective, the attack appears out of nowhere. This power is often used in conjunction with Temporal Shift, Temporal Movement, and Time Stop, which also rely on stopping time.

**Temporal Ambush:** Perception Ranged Damage (objects and hazards of opportunity), Indirect 4 • 4 points +3 points per rank.

### TIME FREEZE

You trap a target in a “bubble” of stopped (or vastly slowed) time, essentially freezing them from the perspective of the outside world. You must touch the target by default. If you can use this power at a distance, apply the Ranged or Perception Ranged modifiers.



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