

A FISTFUL OF CHI

As *O.L.D.* has magic, and *N.E.W.* has psionics, *N.O.W.* also has a supernatural element—CHI. CHI (or *Ki*) is a natural energy force taught by certain martial arts disciplines. Technically translated as “breath” or “air”, CHI is used to perform supernatural feats of combat, traditional medicine, even the traditional art of geomancy the Chinese call *feng shui*.

In martial arts, Chi may be used to make one's body immovable, to walk across water, to heal, or to move at great speed.

CHI exists in many exotic martial arts cultures, although its name may change. Where the Chinese call it *Chi* or *Qi*, the Japanese refer to *Ki*, and the Koreans to *Gi*. Even ancient cultures recognise it: the ancient Greeks used *pneuma*, Hawaiians used *mana*, and Tibetan Buddhists refer to *lung*.

This preview introduces one career (Ninjutsu), and a small sample of stances and techniques, along with a ninja stat-block. Martial arts schools such as Ninjutsu, Tae Kwon Do, Boxing, or Gun-Fu are considered careers in the same way that many other character options such as Detective or Soldier are, and are obtained in the same way.



CHI POINTS

Chi points fuel supernatural techniques. While any character can learn an exploit such as *trip*, *throw*, *disarm*, or *flying kick*, only those with Chi points can use techniques. A character begins play with a number of Chi points equal to her CHI attribute.

Characters can meditate for 10 minutes to recover spent Chi points.

Attempting a technique requires an attribute check (determined by the technique's stance) and any attempted technique expends Chi points, whether the technique is successful or not.

A technique is listed in statistics as follows:

Stance [ATTRIBUTE] *Technique* (cost in chi points; Check Difficulty)

for example:

Breeze Stance [AGI] Walk as Wind (0 chi; Easy)

Performing a technique without paying the cost in Chi points is possible, but the the difficulty of the attribute check increases by one step and you use CHI as your attribute for the check (rather than the Stance's attribute). Certain Stances also make techniques cheaper, depending on the background of the character attempting them.

Your CHI attribute usually determines the power or effectiveness of a technique, but your WIL attribute is often what determines durations or concentration times.

NINJUTSU

1d6 years

Pre-requisites: Jujutsu III; AGI 4+

The skills and tactics of Japan's warriors of subterfuge, sabotage, and deception are known to you, either through a Ninja master that took you in as an apprentice, or by traveling to the ancestral homeland and earning the right to train among those who still practice ninjutsu.

STR +1, AGI +1, CHI +1

Acrobatics, Climbing, Disguise, Perception, Stealth

I: *Poison*. With one minute of preparation, you can craft poison that deals +1d6 damage for every grade in Ninjutsu you have attained; you must deal enough damage to bypass a target's SOAK to deal this poison damage. Preparing a weapon with poison during combat requires the use of an exploit dice.

II: *Fast Climb*. Able to almost walk up vertical surfaces, double your climb speed (although your climb speed cannot exceed your regular SPEED).

III: *Metsubushi*. By spending an action, you can deliver your poison as a dust or small burst of gas that ignores the target's SOAK.

IV: *Weapon Mastery*. You can draw and sheathe a staff, club, spear, katana, naginata, kusarigama, or shuriken as a free action. Choose two of these weapons; you always receive a +1d6 to damage with these weapons.

V: *Death Strike*. Once per day you may strike a creature that is not aware of your presence or does not realize you are an enemy with surprising, lethal force. Make an opposed CHI vs. END check. Success on this check means instant death for the target, but either way the target takes double damage.



STANCES

Stances represent disciplines within a martial arts career. The Stances and techniques listed below are a small sample of those to be found in the *N.O.W.* Rulebook. Stances contain techniques, which practitioners can pay CHI points to use. Certain martial arts styles are able to access particular Stances more easily than others; these style (or careers) gain a discount on the cost of the Stance. For example, practitioners of King Fu gain cheaper access to the Mountain Stance.

MOUNTAIN STANCE [STRENGTH]

A stance which emphasizes strength and solidity.

Career Discounts Kung Fu, Pankration



Granite Back (1 chi point)

Spend two actions focusing your CHI to move great weight.

Increase your carrying capacity by 50% without any negative effects for a number of hours equal to your Willpower attribute.

OR

Gain a number of bonus exploding dice equal to your CHI dice pool to your next Strength check to lift one object of up to five times your carrying increment for a number of rounds equal to half your Willpower attribute.

Foot of the Mountain (2 chi points)

Spend one action focusing your CHI to make an attack that sends your target flying.

Use the *Knockback* exploit in a subsequent action in the same turn and knock our target back 5' for each point of CHI.

Hand as Rock (3 chi points)

Spend two actions focusing your CHI to become more durable to attack.

Gain a SOAK value equal to your CHI attribute for a number of rounds equal to your WIL attribute.

WARRIOR STANCE [STRENGTH]

A stance which emphasizes skill and attack.

Career Discounts Modern Specialist, Southern Shaolin



Focused Meditation (1 chi point)

Spend one action focusing your CHI to meditate swiftly.

Regain a number of chi points equal to half your CHI attribute. These chi points must be spent on Strength-based techniques.

Focused Strike (2 chi points)

Spend one action focusing your CHI to make a momentous attack.

Gain a number of exploding dice to your next melee damage roll in the same round equal to

your CHI dice pool; you must make this attack before moving.

Infuse Throw (3 chi points)

Spend one action focusing to charge thrown weapons with your CHI.

A number of weapons equal to your CHI attribute become more accurate (+1d6 to attack), do more damage (+1d6 to damage), and double their range. Targets of these weapons do not benefit from anything less than total cover.

BREEZE STANCE [AGILITY]

A stance which emphasizes motion and speed.

Career Discounts Capoeira, Ninjutsu



Walk as Wind (1 chi point)

Spend one action focusing your CHI to move without making any noise at all (no matter the conditions).

On a success you do not emit any noises unless you intend to do so for a number of rounds equal to half your WIL attribute. This also grants you a +2d6 bonus to attempts at stealth.

Feet of the Zephyr (2 chi points)

Focusing your CHI while running to travel across the surface of a liquid at full speed.

On a success you may travel across a surface that would not typically support your weight until the end of your turn (at which point this technique's effects disappear). You must move your full SPEED to benefit from this technique.

Gust of the Dragon (3 chi points)

Focusing your CHI, you move can temporarily sprint much faster than you should normally be able to.

On a success, your SPEED score is doubled for a number of rounds equal to half your WIL attribute.

TEMPEST STANCE [AGILITY]

A stance which emphasizes speed and ferocity.

Career Discounts Boxing, Krav Maga



Slashing Zephyr (1 chi point)

Focusing your CHI, you move faster than even your eyes can detect, striking a target so swiftly that they cannot see it coming.

On a success, your melee or ranged attack goes unnoticed; anyone that fails a Demanding [21] INT check cannot be certain of the source of the attack (though if the weapon typically emits noise, like a gun shot or crossbow thwack, it may give you away).

Gusting Step (2 chi points)

Focusing your CHI, you charge your body and wait to dodge an attack until the very last possible moment, moving so fast that you seem not to move at all.

On a success, you negate a melee attack against you, move up to 3 squares to another adjacent

position to your attacker, and gain a free melee attack against the target.

First Wind (3 chi points)

Focusing your CHI in an unsettling rush, you spring into action with a moment's notice.

On a success, you immediately move to the top of the initiative order; this incurs a -1d6 penalty to any actions you take this round. This does not ever grant you additional actions, but can be used whenever Initiative is rolled.

A-CHI-ON!

Below are two examples of a Ninja in *N.O.W.* using CHI to his advantage. The Ninja below only knows a few techniques from the *Breeze* and *Tempest* Stances—these are AGILITY-based, so any time that the Ninja goes to use one of these techniques, he is rolling 4d6 (skills never affect an attribute check to utilize a technique, either directly or indirectly).

Example #1 - *Mack Packett just rescued Senator Bullshaff's daughter from the compound and Duke's distraction in the center of the camp has drawn the attention of most of the guards; with only one boat docked at the pier, it looked like the plan was going to work out just right (for once). A Ninja noticed Mack's hasty exit, however, and is sprinting to the water's edge!*

The Ninja chasing down our surly ex-cop and the damsel in distress knows the Feet of the Zephyr technique; he makes an AGILITY check while running, rolling 4d6 to do so. To successfully run across the water, the Ninja needs a 10 on the check and gets a 13 on the roll, running right across the water with mystical finesse (at the cost of 1 chi point).

The boat is still out of reach, however, and the Ninja needs to move faster to catch up to Mack and the senator's daughter. He makes an AGILITY check to use the Gust of the Dragon technique, a more difficult check requiring a 13 to succeed; rolling 4d6, the Ninja only gets a 12 and his speed does not increase. Mack laughs at the Ninja as the mystical momentum falters, leaving the sprinting warrior to splash into the water (at the cost of 2 chi points).

Example #2 - *In search of anyone that might know the location of the Obsidian Condor, Fei-Hung has wandered into and back out of the wrong gambling den. A Ninja follows the martial artist, stalking across poorly-shingled rooftops, waiting for the right moment to strike.*

Unconcerned with being seen, the Ninja forgoes making a Stealth check to remain unnoticed and instead uses his knowledge of the supernatural to become perfectly silent, attempting to use the Walk as Wind technique: rolling 4d6 (the ninja's AGI attribute), he gets an 11, making no noise at all while leaping across alleyways and hustling over chimneys (for 0 chi points).

The Ninja discounted Fei-Hung's intuition, however, and the martial artist senses someone is following him—he looks up and sees his stalker! They both roll Initiative and Fei-Hung gets a higher result, but the Ninja attempts to use the First Wind technique. Rolling 4d6, he gets a 16, just enough to move him up to the top of the initiative order (for 3 chi points) and giving the Ninja the first action in the round; will Fei-Hung be able to survive the impending flurry of poisoned shuriken coming down from above?!

NINJA

Medium sentient mammal; level 7 (900 XP)

STR 8 (3d6) **AGI** 10 (4d6) **END** 8 (3d6)
INT 8 (3d6) **LOG** 4 (2d6) **WIL** 8 (3d6) **CHA** 4 (2d6)
CHI 6 (3d6)

---MOVEMENT-----

INITIATIVE 5d6
PERCEPTION 3d6
SPEED 10 (50'); **CLIMB** 7 (35'), **JUMP** 23'/11'
CARRY 160 lb

---DEFENSE-----

HEALTH 32
DEFENSE 18 (SOAK 4; leather armor)
MENTAL DEFENSE 16
RESISTANCES none
VULNERABILITIES none

---ATTACKS-----

NATURAL DAMAGE 2d6
KATANA 6d6 (3d6 edged damage)
SHURIKEN 4d6 (1d6 piercing damage; range 20')
MARTIAL ARTS 5d6 (2d6 blunt damage)

---ABILITIES-----

TECHNIQUES (6 chi points)

Breeze Stance [AGI] *Walk as Wind* (0 chi; Easy), *Feet of the Zephyr* (1 chi; Routine), *Gust of the Dragon* (2 chi; Challenging)

Tenpest Stance [AGI] *Slashing Zephyr* (1 chi; Routine), *Gusting Step* (2 chi; Challenging), *First Wind* (3 chi; Difficult)

EXPLOITS *throwing flurry, aim, feint, blinding attack, charge, death from on high, trip, throw*

SKILLS *reactions, tactics, climbing 3, jumping 3, martial arts, swords, stealth, disguise*

EQUIPMENT hq katana, shuriken, leather armor, climbing kit, smoke bombs



"It is odd. People always look nervous when they see me. But they have it reversed. They should be worried when they cannot see me."

Samurai may once have ruled the open battle field, but not all battles are won in the open. Sabotage, espionage, and assassination are the tools of the ninja, and these can do far more damage in today's modern environment. Those obsessed with codes of honor often look down upon the ninja for what they perceive as shameful tactics, and many believe all ninja are ruthless mercenaries who sell their services to the highest bidder. While true of some ninja, many ninja dedicate themselves to serving a particular employer or to protecting the less fortunate.