**How to Make a Shadowrun Character that Doesn’t Suck**

**Step One: Get Resources and Set up Campaign-Relevant Stuff in Chummer**

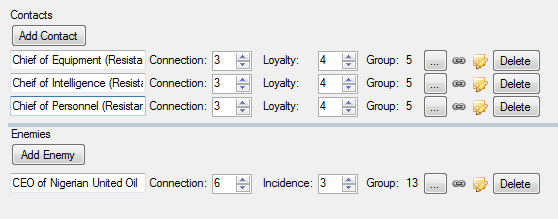
The first order of business is to get [Chummer](http://www.chummergen.com/downloadchummer.aspx) and The Rulebooks if you don’t already have them. Chummer is a character creator which automatically computes a lot of Shadowrun’s internal stat stuff. When you create a new character in Chummer, set the BP to 350 and the Max Availability to 10. BP is a rough estimate of how strong your character will be. At 350 BP, you’re not quite a rookie and you’re not quite good enough to call yourself “experienced.” You’ve got your flight wings, so to speak, but that’s about all you’ve got. Max Availability indicates the quality of stuff you’ll have access to in this campaign. As you’re in a disadvantaged area, cool stuff is much harder to come by. Select “Human” for metatype for now: you can change it later.

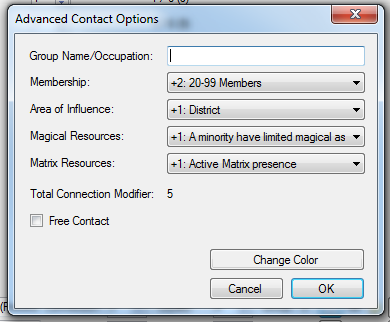
Now it’s time to plug in our rulebooks and house rules. Go to Tools, then Options, then check the following books (this means all the extra equipment and so on in these books will be put directly in Chummer):

* Arsenal
* Augmentation
* Digital Grimoire
* Ghost Cartel
* Runner’s Companion
* Running Wild
* Shadowrun 4th edition
* Street Magic
* Unwired

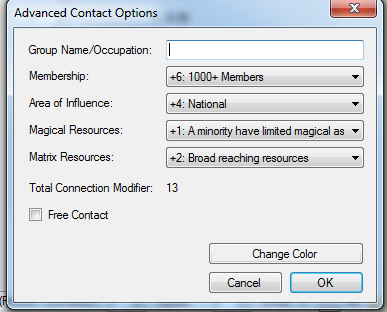
This will add a shitton of content and give you a very large array of options for character creation: New qualities, equipment, vehicles, weapons, and so on. Next, go to optional rules and Use Maximum Armor Modifications, Use Armor Suit Capacity, and Allow Armor Degradations. Finally, in House Rules, check Free Contact Points CHA x2 and Free Contact Points BP. Give yourself 12 points.

Exit options and then make the contacts and enemies section of your Contact List (at the bottom of the Common tab) look like this:

 (Organization name is “Resistance,” a working name until I flesh out more of the story.) In order to add points to the group section, click on the dotted line next to Group to add the following options for Contacts (Add Group Name: Resistance):



And the following options for the Enemy (Add Group Name: Nigerian United Oil:

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Now that you’ve set up everything campaign sensitive, let’s get to making your character.

**Step Two: Pick Qualities and Choose Metatype**

Chummer forces you to choose your metatype before anything else. You can change your metatype under the Special drop-down menu. It’s better to choose your metatype after you have an idea of what you want your character to do, so we’ll go over the races later.

The first thing you want to do is take a look at the qualities. Most of the qualities are in the Main Rulebook or Runner’s Companion, but there’s a few in other books as well. Each quality has a reference that says what book it comes from and on what page it is: 

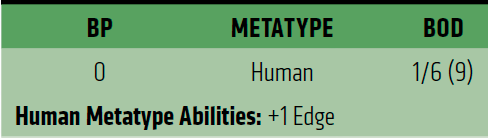
**Reference-Book Legend:**

* SR4=Main Rulebook
* RC=Runner’s Companion
* SM=Street Magic
* UN=Unwired
* AU=Augmentation

You don’t need to understand exactly how different qualities, positive or negative, are affecting your character just yet. Right now, use them to start filling in what you want your character to be good at or bad at. Some qualities might have stories linked to them that could build your character’s background as well. You can always go back and change them later.

*Metatypes*

“Metatype” is Shadowrun’s special snowflake word for races. **The main rulebook outlines all the metatypes on page 81 in a very nice table.** Go check it out. Here’s a description of what that table means, exactly:



**BP:** This is how many Build Points, or BP, you need to spend for your character to be this metatype. Humans don’t cost anything, making them a popular choice.

Metatype: If I have to spell this out for you…

**Bod:** The Body stat, one of several stats a metatype affects. It’s here so you can learn what those weird numbers under it mean.

The “1” on the left of the slash is what your stat starts at for that metatype. Humans aren’t especially tough, so they start at 1.

The “6” on the right side of the slash is your natural maximum. You can’t have a body any higher than that with magical or cybernetic support.

The “9” in parentheses is your maximum with cybernetic or, in most cases, magical assistance. You can temporarily increase your stat past that with magic, but it’s very difficult.

You’ll notice the Ork race has Bod 4/9 (13). That means an Ork can have a really high body stat if, on top of putting lots of points into that attribute, he gets cybernetics to amplify it even further.

Again, I suggest choosing “Human” so it won’t fuck up your BP count, playing with Qualities until you have a character concept you like, *then* choosing your metatype.

**Step Three: Choosing Attributes and Skills**

Page 67 describes all the attributes and how they’ll affect you in the game in brief. Attributes are *directly* linked with how well you’ll do in skills, so it’s a good idea to peak over to the skills tab and see what looks interesting. Attributes cost 10 BP per point, and it costs 25 points to max out an attribute. That makes them relatively expensive, but it’s still worth getting as many attribute points as you can. 1 attribute will affect many skills and may also affect attribute-only tests (see SR4 138) You’re only allowed to spend 50% of your total BP (meaning 175 total) on attributes, not counting special attributes like Edge, Magic, or Resonance. (Magic and Resonance are grayed out unless you pick the Magician, Mystic Adept, Adept, or Technomancer.)

If you do that, you’ll notice two ways you can add skill points: By Skill Group on the left, and by “Active Skills” (read: all skills) on the right. Levelling a skill by itself, on the Active Skills list, costs 4 BP for each point. You can level a skill up to 6, unless you get the “Aptitude” quality for that skill, which lets you raise it to 7. For 2 BP, you can gain a specialization in a certain skill: for example, Archery (Bows). This gives you twice the benefit of a skill point for that specific use of the skill.

Skill groups usually have 3 or 4 skills under their purview. Athletics has 5, but one of them is “flight,” which only matters if your character has wings. Leveling a skill group costs 10 BP, but levels all the skills in the group. This is more efficient than leveling skills individually, but you can only level a skill group to 4, and once you’ve leveled a skill as part of a skill group, you can’t add points to it individually, and you can’t specialize in it either.