

# Mass Effect Biotics

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## *Introduction*

This is my first try (and first post) about GURPS, and Mass Effect 2. Being a fan of both system and video-games. I will try to compile here the ideas posted in the GURPS forums (see references) to represent the biotic powers from Mass Effect 1 and 2. Besides various approaches hit the forums I will put here the Powers style allowing a very different character on the game party.

Mass Effect are a sci-fi, space-opera and space tech scenario showed in a video-game with the same name, a comic book series and two novels. Bioware is the franchising owner and made deals with Microsoft on the first game and Electronic Arts in the second.

For people who don't play the games and pretend to, be warned there are spoilers here.

## *Basics*

The Biotics powers had a change in their mechanics between the first and two games, also in the novels some other minor applications appear or show in different ways. I didn't read the comics yet, and I sure we will see some interesting ideas there. I will try to put here a playable and reasonable set of powers from ideas gathered in various sources.

The Biotics, are the ability to manipulate mass effect fields through nodules created in the nervous system by exposition to element zero. In humans this normally have an in-fetus exposition and have a high chance to develop mortal cancer in the subject.

## **Unusual Background**

Being a biotic can require an Unusual Background from the GM. This could cost 10 points if biotics will be common in the campaign, 20 if uncommon, 30 if rare or

50 if very rare. This could change the cost of the Asari racial template once they are natural biotics.

## **Power Modifier**

Biotics can be shut down by technological means, the exact principle besides this are unclear, but probably have something to do with shutting down the biotic-amps installed in the user or creating a jamming field in the neurological system. Anyway, this is a -5% for Technological Countermeasures.

Biotics need to activate the nodules in the nervous system through particular moves, normally arm swings and body postures. This qualifies as Accessibility (Requires Gestures), -10%.

All biotics need a high caloric meal through the days to compensate the loss of energy in biotic applications. This is a Nuisant Effect (needs to ingest x1.5 more calories per day to recover the FP biotic costs), -5%. This could apply to HP lost in the process if the user runs out FP, using a lot of biotics in a day without a correct diet can even be fatal!

Also, all powers drain some level of body energy so a minimal cost is required, Cost 1 FP, -5%.

Some high power biotics need a biotic amplifier (biotic-amps) in order to function. All biotics can have a cybernetic socket for this (see Biotics-Amps section for costs) to attach biotic-amps. Not all powers need a biotic-amp, so this is not part of the power modifier and will be reflected in the specific abilities. Note that some biotic-amps have bonuses and other effects to powers.

This ends with a power modifier of Biotics, -25%.

## **Abilities**

All biotic abilities are perks and advantages,

which can be bought by anyone who paid the Unusual Background (if the GM requires it).

## Talent

The biotics talent will give a bonus to any attribute roll to use biotics from its area. There are three biotics power divisions: Telekinesis, Kinectic Fields and Distortion. Each one costs 5/level.

## How Biotics works

Mass Effect has examples to using biotics in not unusual ways (like the ME2 ending where you need to choose a powerful teammate to create an extended barrier and protect your team from the seeker swarm, Samara even make a throw with the cone enhancement at the end if you choose her). This qualifies for Power Techniques (Powers 172) and Extra Effort (Powers 160). Each ability with techniques will be noted in the Biotics Abilities session. For those GM who want cinematic high power games consider Using Abilities at Default (Powers 173).

Biotics Barriers and attacks based on Innate attack can be used to defend yourself against other biotics powers and bullets, this will be stated in each individual ability and use the rules for Power Parry (Powers 167) or Power Block (Powers 168).

All biotics require training to both use it correctly and achieve remarkable power. This makes it require the Skill for Everything (Powers 162)

For the more mental based abilities consider using the rules on the box Mental Maneuvers in (Psionics 11).

## Biotics Traits

Here a little explanation about using GURPS mechanics with the biotics.

## Modifiers

### Accessibility (B110, Powers 99)

Certain powers require the user to have a biotic-

amp installed on the cybernetic socket in order to be used. This is an Accessibility (Requires Biotic-Amp) and costs -10%, once the Amps are tiny pieces inserted in sockets at the skill base (on the back of the head). Retrieve and install one, require a technician or physician and one minute. Hit it on combat to damage the tech requires a -9 attack at the back of the head. The Biotic-Amp can be disabled by EMP and have HT 10 to resist (or 12 if rugged, the military often are).

### Based on (Different Attribute) (B102)

The biotics can be turned on with precise movements and mnemonics. So is rational based then on DX.

### Controlled Knockback, +20%

You can control the direction your target will knockback. This is usually used along the No Wounding limitation (B111) or the Fraction Wounding limitation (below).

### Malediction (B102)

Most of the attacks from biotics uses Malediction 1, this is more rational than hurl a projectile to hit the target and affect it. See Based on (Different attribute) above for another important rationale.

### Fraction Wounding, Variable

This attack limitation allows your damage causes only a fraction of the dice rolled (round down). All other effects (knockback, double knockback, blunt trauma, etc.) use the full dice roll. For example, if you have an innate attack of 3d with Fraction Wounding 1/2 and roll 6, 3 and 1, you cause only  $6+3+1=10/2=5$  points of damage but use the full value (10) to cause a 1 yard knockback to a ST 10 foe and still causing 1 point of blunt trauma if applicable. The fraction determines the cost.

Fraction	Limitation
1/2 damage	-10%
1/3 damage	-20%
1/5 damage	-30%
1/10 damage	-40%

## Reverse Knockback, +0%

The resulting knockback from an innate attack is reversed from the impact angle. This could be used in many telekinesis biotics because the various effects to pull instead push the adversary to a point. This is usually used in conjunct with No Wounding (B111) limitation (B111) or the Fraction Wounding Limitation (above).

## Disadvantages

### Gluttony (B137)

The high diet of some biotics can trigger an increased appetite which qualifies Gluttony.

### Social Stigma (B155)

Among humans the biotics are considered dangerous and there are those who think they can perform mind control. The biotics military training have a bad reputation in no-military grounds because they are seen like a Nietzschean super-soldier program. If the biotics will encounter this kind of racism in the adventure this could qualify a Social Stigma for -5.

## *Biotics Abilities.*

The biotics abilities are divided in three fields. Telekinesis, group all abilities capable to move objects using mass effect fields. Kinetic Barriers, group all abilities to generate shields and to pin an object in place. And finally, distortion, capable to cause swift changes in the gravity fields capable to dismantle targets.

Essentially all abilities control gravity in many ways.

## Telekinesis

All telekinesis is based in negating the gravity field of a target or manipulate it to point in another axis, but not the gravity center of a planet or artificial gravity.

This allows biotics users hurl his foes at great distances or cause chaos between the battle field.

## Lift [122 points]

[Skill: Lift \(DX/Hard\)](#)

The most common Telekinesis ability requires a biotic-amp to function. This causes a gravity null field around the target, effectively putting the target in Zero-G.

Lift is an malediction attack, roll against the skill -1 per hexes from the subject versus the target HT, for each point of success your foe starts to levitate by 1 second. If the target is protected by Biotic Barriers or Shields it is immune to this effect.

Once lift negates the gravity field in the target, it must make a HT roll like stated in Gravity and Acceleration (B434) and suffer the effects of a free fall.

Note that doesn't render the foe incapacitated like in the game, he can still act (and shoot) and can use Free Fall skill (B197) to try to maneuver near a wall, ceiling, etc or avoid penalties in fighting. This is a more realistic treatment of this power to fit it in more realistic games.

While limited in range and with a high cost, Lift is a very tactical power to use in battle field. You can catch foes behind cover (-5 to additional penalty if you are not seeing him/her), the momentum of the attacker are conserved while in Zero-G so a charging enemy will continue its trajectory allowing others team-mates shot at him while he/she approaches the range.

Also, while an object suffering a null gravity field can be hurled around without much effort the air still applies resistance, so any knockback damage can be multiplied by a factor of 4 while the subject is affected. This permits the biotic to smash your foes in walls with Throw with brutal effectiveness.

[Statistics: Affliction \(HT, Accessibility \(Cannot affect through Kinetic Barriers and Shields\), -20%; Accessibility \(Requires Biotics-Amps\), -10%; Advantage: Flight \(Light Than Air, -10%\), +360%; Based on DX, +20%; Biotic, -25%; Disadvantage: Vulnerability \(Knockback, x4\), +600%; Malediction 1, +100%; Reduced Duration, 1/60, -35%\) \[112\] + Affliction \(HT; Nauseated, +30%; Follow](#)

up (the Affliction above), +0%; Reduced Duration, 1/60, Lift repertory.  
-35%) [10].

### Area Lift (H)

Default: Lift-5; cannot exceed Lift.

Rolling against this technique, the biotic can lift all foes in an 2 hex radius area (double this for each 5 points of success). To simplify the resistance roll the GM could use the best (or average) of the HT for resistance. An detailed alternative is roll for each foe and compare with the biotic roll.

### Enhanced Lift (H)

Default: Lift-5; cannot exceed lift.

The biotics does not suffers the -1 per hex when try to affect the target (this is upgrade Malediction to level 2).

### Extended Lift

Default: Lift-3. Cannot exceed Lift.

Using this technique, for each margin of success you can shift two levels up in the Reduced Duration Limitation from Psionics 21 to figure time duration to a maximum of  $x1/2$ . This feat is normally and easily achieved by Biotics-Amps.

### Target Selection

Default: Lift-2. Cannot exceed Lift. Prerequisite: Area Lift.

This technique allows the biotic choose what target will be affected if he/she are using an area attack. This adds Selective Area (B108) to the Lift.

### Smash [23]

Skill: None. Prerequisite Lift.

This is a delayed follow up to the Lift ability. It's an alternative to the solution presented on Controlled Direction Technique from Throw (bellow) for the Smash ability showed in the game.

Essentially, Smash is an Throw from up to down in a Lifted target. Add the optional ability bellow in the

Technically the lifted target is hit by a blow from above with 10d crushing damage, no damage is caused but roll it for knockback purposes. Multiply the final damage by 8 to figure the distance and impact force... against the floor.

Statistics: Innate Attack 10d (crushing; Biotics, -25%; Double Knockback, +20%; Follow up (Lift), 0%; No Wounding, -50%; Reversed Knockback (down), +0%) [23]

### Singularity

Skill: Singularity (DX/Hard)

Singularity creates a mini black hole in a sub-atomic level and drags everything around it. This area attack pull all things in the target area to the center and pin all in the center for the duration time.

Each level doubles the radius (the event horizon) allowing to affect more targets. It's an attack with 1/2 D n/A, Max 20, Acc 0, RoF 1, Shots N/A.

### Throw 1/dice, max dice Telekinesis Talent x 2.

Skill: Throw (DX/Hard)

Indeed this ability encompass a series of others in the game, mainly because it's powers techniques. Essentially the Throw send a projectile of mass effect field that suddenly switch the gravity pull direction on impact, hurling the foe in the process. This affects shielded targets and is a attack with 1/2 D 5, Max 50, Acc 0, RoF 1, Shots N/A.

While great to send enemies around in the battle field, this power causes very few damage. Divide all damages caused by Throw by a factor of 10 (round down), however use the full damage rolled for kcnokcbak and double it. For example, if you roll 18 for your 5d Throw, it will only causes 1 point of damage, but for purposes of knockback you use  $18 \times 2 = 36$ ! Just enough to send an poor foe various yards behind him. Note that if the target was affect by Lift (above) will have another x4 multiplier for a

amazing  $36 \times 4 = 144$  of knockback damage! In the space no one can hear you... smashing a geth on a wall!

In cinematic games you can use Throw to parry other sundelly shifts of gravity axis like singularity. Use the Power Parry rules in Powers 167 using the Throw Skill like base.

Innate Attack 1d (crushing; Aecessibility (Requires Biotics-Amps), -10%; Biotics, -25%; Double Knockback, +20%; Fraction Wounding 1/10, -40%; Innacurate -3, -15%; Reduced Range  $\times 1/2$ , -10%) [1]

### **Arch (H)**

Default: Throw-3. Cannot exceed Throw.

You can make your Throw do an arched path before hit your target, allowing you to hit him behind some covers and other benefits. This apply the Overhead enhancement (B107). Use this only in cinematic games, it intent to simulate the biotics shots from ME2.

### **Cone (H)**

Default: Throw-6, cannot exceed Throw.

You can hurl the gravity switch in an cone form. This is incompatible with Controlled Direction, once the force of the Throw comes from the center of the cone (the user). Your cone have 1 yard of width per 1 of the margin of suuccess of hitting the target.

### **Controlled Direction (H)**

Default: Throw-2, cannot exceed Throw.

With this technique, the user can choose the direction of the knockback to send the user to a speciffic way. This could represent a limited Pull ability from ME2 and with Lift the Smash ability showed by Miranda in ME2 game and Jack in her previews videos (See also the Smash ability). This aply the Controlled Knockbak Enhancement to the Throw.