

# SHIFTER

Shifters are the answer to the age-old question "man vs nature?" They blend human ingenuity and adaptability with animal instincts and physical fitness, creating a unique hybrid that could survive, even thrive, in a variety of circumstances.

## PART MAN, PART BEAST

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Shifters take the benefits of being a two-legged, problem-solving, opposable-thumb-having human and combine it with the ferocity and instincts of a beast while making up for the shortcomings of each. Shifters have lost their claws, teeth, and thick hide as effective weapons and armor, but instead use crafted weapons and armor. They also lack the social etiquette and grace of humans, but instead interact with limited or non-verbal communication.

Shifters prefer to live in the untamed wilderness but can adapt to city life if necessary. Often the barrier to this is the attitude of the population; a rancher might not like living next to a shifter that looks kind of like the wolf that's been killing his sheep. A pack of shifters might also work with a village, keeping other predators away in exchange for food and a spot of land.

## UNKNOWN ORIGINS

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If there's one thing shifters can't agree on it is their own heritage. Some say that shifters are the end result of thousands of years of lycanthropy filtering through generation after generation until it reached a point of equilibrium between the man and the beast. Some say it worked in reverse, that shifters were created by the gods first, and some unfortunate individual was cursed to lose his bestial features, resulting in humans. Some scholars think shifters are the result of living too long in the woods and being too far removed from society.

Every pack of shifters has a different spin on their own origin story. In fact, during larger gatherings there is a competition to see who can come up with the best origin story. A few find this pastime insulting to their heritage, but can't do much about it since anyone's guess is as likely as any other.

## LAWS OF NATURE

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Being creatures of the wilderness shifters have an innate sense of the ecological state of their environment. They hunt and forage for only what they eat and save excess food, and their numbers remain fairly small compared to their prey. This can cause problems for shifters who are trying to transition to city life. Living as part of a larger population throws off this sense and can be difficult for a shifter to overcome. Since more food is available they tend to hoard food, either spending too much coin on it or by stealing it. With more people it is easy for a shifter to become overwhelmed in larger society.

For this reason when a shifter makes the move to the urban life they generally stick to villages and smaller towns. There are less people, often a popular hunting grounds nearby, giving them the opportunity to acclimate. From there they can set their sights on the city-life, if they so choose.

## SHIFTER TRAITS

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Your shifter character has a variety of natural abilities in common with all other shifters.

**Ability Score Increase.** Increase any ability score of your choice by 1.

**Age.** Shifters reach maturity around 12 years of age, and have an average lifespan of about 45 years.

**Size.** Shifters are the same general size as humans, not taking into account variance between shifter subraces. Your size is medium

**Speed.** Your base walking speed is 30 feet.

**Darkvision.** Your bestial heritage grants you the ability to see in dark conditions. you can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

**Predator's Instinct.** You may use your Wisdom modifier when determining your Initiative bonus, instead of using your Dexterity modifier.

**Shifting.** On your turn, you can tap into your feral instincts by shifting as a bonus action. Shifting lasts for 1 minute or until you end it on your turn as a bonus action. While shifting, you gain temporary hit points equal to your level + your Constitution modifier (minimum of 1). You also gain a feature determined by your shifter subrace, described below. You must finish a long rest before you can shift again.

**Languages.** You can speak, read, and write in Common and one other language of your choice.

**Subrace.** There are several subraces of shifter that exist, each displaying unique animalistic traits. Choose one of the options below.

### LUPINE SHIFTER

Lupine shifters display physical and behavioral characteristics of wolves. They form tight-knit packs and are ferocious when working together to bring down their prey.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Strength score increases by 2.

**Tracker.** You gain proficiency in the Perception skill.

**Shifting Feature.** While shifting, you can make a Claw attack with an empty hand as an action. This is a melee weapon attack that uses Strength for its attack roll and damage bonus and deals 1d6 slashing damage. You are proficient with this attack. If this attack hits a target that is your size or smaller, the target is also grappled.

### **FELINE SHIFTER**

Feline shifters thrive as solitary hunters, like the wild cats that they resemble. They live on their own or with their young, rarely living in groups larger 4 or 5. Their physical appearance can vary, much like wild cats, depending on their natural habitat.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Dexterity score increases by 2.

**Feline Agility.** Increase your movement speed by 5 ft.

**Shifting Feature.** While shifting, reduce all fall damage taken by an amount equal to your Dexterity score, and you gain advantage on ability checks made to balance, jump, or climb.

### **URSINE SHIFTER**

Ursine shifters are barrel-chested and broad-shouldered, resembling a bear in both size and spirit. They are highly territorial and will violently protect their family. While they are imposing and first glance, making friends with an ursine shifter will have you see their gentler, kinder side.

**Ability Score Increase.** Your Constitution score increases by 2.

**Thick Hide.** You have resistance to cold damage.

**Shifting Feature.** While shifting, you gain a +1 bonus to AC. If you are reduced to 0 hit points but not killed outright while you are shifted, you can drop to 1 hit point instead. You can only do this once before your Shifting feature ends.