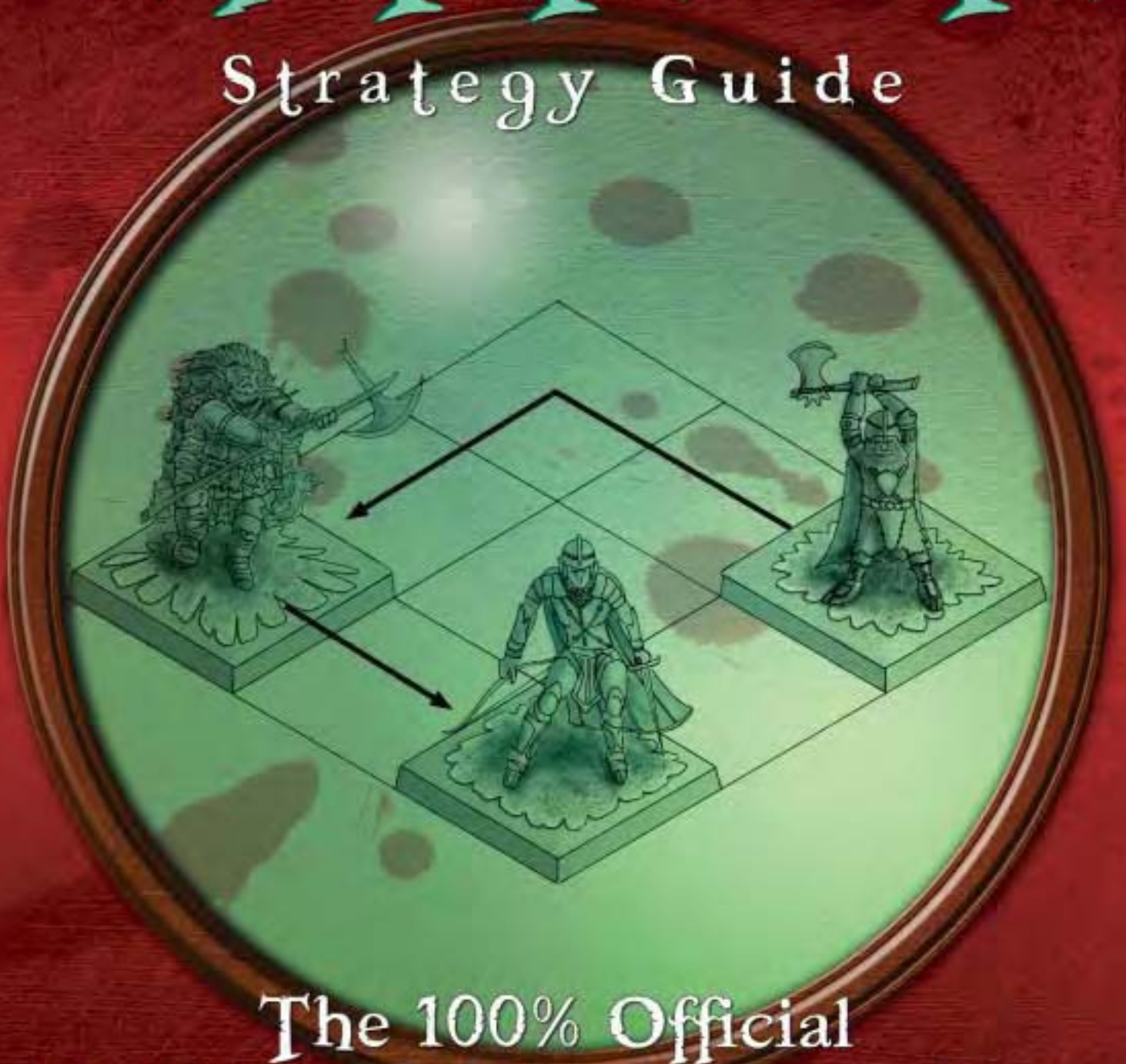


WARRIOR

Strategy Guide



The 100% Official
Guide to Kicking Monster Butt
and Winning the Game

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or you'll regret it.

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The Power Gamer's 3.5

WARRIOR

Strategy Guide

The 100% Official Guide to Kicking Monster Butt
and Winning the Game!

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Introduction

Building the Perfect Warrior

Min/maxing gets a bad rap. Sure, there's little role-playing involved in stat-monsters, and not a lot of background to create an immersive gaming experience. But in every gamer lurks the secret munchkin, wanting – even craving – a bad-ass character able to survive nearly any threat, overcome any trap, and kick the living crap out of anyone or anything getting in the way. This is where the Power Gamer's 3.5 Strategy Guides come into play.

The Warrior Strategy Guide gives you all the strategy and advice you need to play a combat character, whether you sling arrows or swing a sword. While most of this book covers fighters, barbarians, monks, rangers and paladins, there is sure to be useful information in this guide for any other character. Rogues, clerics and even druids can become combat monsters with multiclassing or the right selection of skills and feats. Likewise, war wizards can benefit from the information by studying the strengths and weaknesses of their enemy. In short, there's something for everyone.

Where's the New Stuff?

The Power Gamer's Strategy Guide's primary purpose is to make sure you can use it. Instead of loading this book with questionable prestige classes, sketchy feats, and yet another way to use the Profession skill, we've torn apart the mechanics of the 3.5 game, looked at them, and slapped them back together. With just the 3.5 core mechanics, this book gives you everything you need to roll up the character of your dreams. Moreover, because everything is straight out of the three core books, no one can stop you from using it. Period. It's 100% official.

How Do I Use this Book?

You use this book the same way a football coach uses a playbook, the same way a video game champion uses his cheat codes, and the same way an auto mechanic uses his repair manual. This book gives you the strategies and techniques you need for winning 3.5 combats. If you're rolling up a new character, the chapters on ability scores, races, and classes will help you get started on the right foot. If you have an existing character, the chapters on skills and feats will help you plan his progression. No

matter where you are in your campaign, the chapter on equipment will always be useful. And then there's the gold mine: Chapter 7, Combat. This chapter is all about how to kick monster ass in the most efficient manner possible. Like we said, it's a playbook, cheat code, and repair manual all wrapped into one handy guide for winning every combat you ever step into.

Listen Up! They're Called Archetypes

Instead of spending all of our time on specific classes, we use archetypes. What's an archetype? An archetype is a prototype, a kind of model everything else is based on. In this book, an archetype represents a particular style of warrior: archer, cavalry or tank. With the right feat and class choices, you can build a warrior modeled after any one of the archetypes. On the other hand, it's not necessary to use one of these types – there's plenty of info in this book to keep it useful no matter how you handle it. Nonetheless, the archetypes are handy for organization and thematic choices, perhaps opening a door to a combo or feature you hadn't thought of before. Figure out what kind of warrior you want to play, and see if one of the archetypes matches. If so, you won't be disappointed.

HIDE THIS BOOK!

While everything in this guide is legit – it comes straight out of the core rulebooks – you don't want your DM to read it. Just think, all these useful tips and suggestions in the hands of the guy who runs the monsters! Shudder. Keep this one tucked away or you'll regret it.

Archer

The archer's the guy in the movies that makes the impossible shot. Specializing in ranged attacks, most archers employ some sort of bow, but this could include anyone who makes more ranged attacks than melee attacks. Archers are typically fighters or rangers.

Cavalry

From the steel-encased knight to the lightly armored horse barbarian, any character fighting from the back of a mount lumps into this category. Mounted characters don't just ride horses. Small characters can employ riding dogs, while higher-level characters can gain cohorts, like dragons, to use instead of the more common steeds. Cavalry often consists of paladins or fighters.

Guerrilla

The guerrilla is a specialized warrior whose role is to take out a specific threat. Such opponents could include wizards, goblinoids, or even demons. These guys are super-specialized, but good enough to adapt to problems when the situation demands. Guerrillas are often rangers or monks.

Infantry, Heavy

Heavy infantry characters excel at wading into the thick of combat. Sometimes called bricks or tanks, the heavy infantry archetype uses heavy armor and high-damage weaponry, has a low Dexterity, and lacks any semblance of grace. When you think fighter, you're probably thinking of a tank, but some paladins and clerics fall into this category as well.

Skirmisher

Every group has to have a generalist. The skirmisher specializes in nothing, opting to fill other roles as needed. Don't let their lack of focus fool you; these guys are good in enough things to be able to do some serious damage. Moreover, they have the ability to get in where they're needed, and get out when things get too nasty. Multiclass warriors typically wind up as skirmishers.

NO PERFECT WARRIORS

Just because an archetype defines what you're good at, it doesn't mean it's the only way you'll be fighting. Cavalry can lose their mounts, archers are in deep trouble in melee, and heavy infantry drown when submerged. Your DM will challenge you. But you know what? There is no perfect warrior. Don't think this book or the archetypes presented make invulnerable characters. That's not what this is about. It's about staying alive as long as you can and winning the game you're not supposed to win.

OK, So Where Do I Go

From Here?

Now it's time to get started on the fun part: building the perfect warrior! It's helpful to have a copy of the PHB and your character sheet handy as you read through the rest of this book, since you'll be constantly thinking about how to get most juice out of both your character and your rules. Read carefully, think hard about your character, and be prepared to start winning lots of combats. And remember, there's nothing your DM can do about it. After all, every strategy we discuss comes straight from the PHB!

Infantry, Light

Light infantry characters are warriors who don't use much armor. Preferring mobility and speed to the slow pace of the tank, these characters are fast and effective at taking out the larger opponents. Despite their lack of protection, they still fight on the front lines. Light infantry consists most commonly of barbarians or monks.

Chapter One

Ability Scores

For many players, ability scores are their character's most important trait. Ability scores provide the blueprint for character creation, define the character's strengths and weaknesses, establish the framework for role-playing, and set the boundaries of the character's limitations. Of course, not all ability scores carry the same weight. Most warriors never have use for Charisma or even Intelligence, while Strength and Constitution are vital to almost all martial characters. This section overviews the abilities best suited to each archetype, and addresses the occasional exception in the monk, paladin, and ranger.

Abilities & What They Do

Strength

Here's one you should know already: Strength is your most important stat. It's vital for melee, special attacks like sunder and grapple, and breaking down doors. It functions as the key ability for most movement-related skills like Climb, Jump, and Swim. To access the best fighting feats, you need a 13 Strength.

Dexterity

Dexterity is nearly as good as Strength. It beefs up AC, Initiative, and Reflex saves, and for the mobile types, it serves as the key ability for Hide, Jump, Move Silently, and Tumble. Finesse characters, like the archer, light infantry, or guerrilla, need at least a 13 Dexterity.

Constitution

A solid Constitution is the best defense a warrior can have, even more so than Dexterity, because you keep gaining the bonus to your hit points every time you advance. Bonus hit points let you take damage and keep fighting. Despite its minimal impact on skills, a high Constitution improves your Fortitude save, beefing up your chances to resist negative energy levels, poison, and disease.

Intelligence

If there is a stat you can overlook, Intelligence should not be it. If you have two bad rolls, though, stick one of them here. Intelligence affects your skills. While important, skills don't define warriors like they do rogues. However, certain feats like Combat Expertise require a 13 or better Intelligence, so if an AC warrior is your path, you'd better suck it up and count on this attribute being among the better ones.

Wisdom

Enchantment spells wreak havoc on a party of adventurers. *Dominate person*, *suggestion*, and *even charm person* can pit you directly against your allies, bad news indeed for them. You want to avoid letting this happen. Wisdom improves your Willpower save, helping to resist those slimy spells. Put a decent stat in your Wisdom.

Charisma

Charisma sucks. About the only way it comes into play for warriors is for Intimidate checks and for feint maneuvers. Sure, rangers need it to cuddle with their critters, and paladins need it for smiting demons and boosting their saves, but for monks, fighters, and barbarians, there's just no reason to waste the roll. So, if you wind up with a 6, put it here.

Abilities and Archetypes

By now, you know why certain attributes are vital to warriors and why others aren't. More importantly, you need to know where to put them for the greatest effect. Each of the following sections recommends stat placement for the appropriate archetype using the assumption that you've rolled the following scores: 15, 14, 13, 12, 10, and 8. Use the archetypes as a model for placing the results of your die rolls.

Archer

Archers need Dexterity for accurate ranged attacks, to avoid ranged spells (they are likely to be in the back ranks), and to beef up their AC. Constitution is the next most important stat for obvious reasons (hit points), for with little to no armor, you need more staying power. Finally, Strength follows as it adds to damage from composite bows and thrown weapons. The rest falls in a logical order. Archers should place their initial stats as follows: Str 13, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8. Players with rangers as archers may want to adjust their stats slightly to help in spellcasting and the development of their animal companion: Str 14, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Cavalry

Strength is the key ability for mounted characters, for when using a lance on a charge, they multiply their Strength damage in addition to the dice rolled. In other words, Strength lets them do lots of damage. Constitution is the next best choice, with Dexterity being a close third as it's the key ability for Ride. Charisma comes in fourth, helping you to improve your mount through tricks (see Handle Animal in the PHB). Cavalry should place their die rolls as follows: Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12. Players with paladins as cavalry may want to place their stats differently to aid in spellcasting and their class abilities, perhaps as: Str 14, Dex 8, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Guerrilla

A guerrilla's stat placement should reflect the nature of the opponent. Against creatures who predominately use touch attacks, guerrillas should probably have a high Dexterity. Against creatures with a high AC, like constructs, a Strength score is critical. In general, guerrillas should place their stats in the following order, though see the ranger entry under archer (above) for another possibility: Str 14, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Infantry, Light

Dexterity and Constitution offer a higher AC and more hit points, which are vital components of this archetype. As damage potential relies on Strength, that's where the third good stat should go. Any extra high stat should always go into Wisdom, so as to resist those nasty spells. A recommended stat placement follows: Str 13, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8. If you're playing a monk, consider this variant: Str 12, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 8.

Infantry, Heavy

Heavy infantry need Strength and Constitution. Period. Anything else is an added benefit. Tanks follow this stat placement: Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Skirmishers

Skirmishers need higher stats to assist them in covering all the bases. These characters are just as likely to pick up a bow as they are to swing a greatsword. Given their varied techniques, its best to distribute your major stats thusly: Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Chapter Two

Races

With your archetype selected and stats placed, it's time to start thinking about what race to play. Some races clearly make better warriors, while others are suited to slinging spells or driving a knife between the bad guy's shoulder blades. This chapter takes a detailed look at what races are worth playing as warriors and the big benefits of each. Just because we say a race sucks as a fighter doesn't mean you shouldn't play them. Feel free to play a weirdo gnome paladin, or a half-elf bard. There are better strategic choices for your warrior, but then again, if you're looking for quirky oddball characters, you're probably not reading this book anyway.

Humans

Humans are the most popular race to play, and with good reason. Humans get extra skill points, a bonus feat at first level, and they are the best choice for multiclassing. But before we just give in and celebrate how cool humans are, we need to talk about what these benefits mean.

Skills

The bonus skill points don't mean much to fighters except to make up for low Intelligence. For other warrior classes, these skill points can help expand into other areas. Translating into 23 extra skill ranks by the time your character reaches 20th level, this racial feature offers something no other race provides. The ranger and the monk gain the biggest benefit from this racial feature, as neither character has to sacrifice a stat to beef up Intelligence to access the full range of skill choices.

Special Abilities

Before you get all sweaty about the bonus feat being the best feature of this race, consider what you sacrifice. This free feat is front-ended and does not give you the longer-lasting benefits of other races like dwarves and halflings. You're likely to use this free feat to start building a feat tree early, like Power Attack, Mounted Combat, or Point Blank Shot. If you're a fighter, though, the bonus feat is not as a big boon when you consider how many other feats you get. On the other hand, if you

play any other warrior class, the bonus feat gives you an extra resource.

Favored Class

Having no favored class allows you to fully min/max your character. Maybe you take 1 level of barbarian for the rage and fast movement, or pick up a few levels of fighter and a level or two of rogue, just to round things out. Of the other races, only half-elves have this capability, but their lack of useful warrior abilities makes them a less attractive choice. If you plan on multiclassing your character, pay special attention to this racial feature.

Best Archetypes

You can rest assured the human works best for any archetype or character class or multiclass combination, largely for the lack of ability score penalties and the enhanced benefits.

Dwarves

Dwarves have many racial abilities, more than any other race. They move at full speed in heavy armor. They still move at full speed when encumbered, and they can see in the dark, use exotic weaponry, and much more.

Skills

Though dwarves don't get the extra 23 skill ranks that humans gain, they have an impressive number of skill bonuses allowing them to surpass humans with equal ranks. With these bonuses, dwarves are always better at a particular thing than a human could ever hope to be. Still, some of the dwarven racial bonuses are not exactly the most useful for the combat monster dwarf. Not too many warriors spend their time crafting new items. Nor do warriors – at least those focused on combat – spend a lot of time determining the value of a metal urn. Stonecunning is useful, but better for dwarven rogues who have a knack for this sort of thing.

Special Abilities

Dwarves don't get bonus feats. Instead, they get racial abilities resembling feats. Against poison, they have a distinct advantage with their racial bonus, high Constitution, and great Fortitude saves. Spells and spell-like abilities have a tough time getting past the dwarf's natural resilience to such things. Giants can't hit them (+4 AC), and orcs and goblinoids fall before them like wheat to the scythe. They're stable. Don't forget about the two weapons they're familiar with, translating as two bonus feats for warriors, and darkvision, the equivalent of a permanent second level spell. If you add these abilities up, they far outweigh the benefits provided by a single bonus feat.

Favored Class

With fighter as a dwarf's favored class, they are free to pursue other classes, while using fighter levels to enhance their feat selection, hit dice, and base attack bonus.

Archetypes

Dwarves are best as heavy infantry. Look at the table below. It takes the standard ability scores for each archetype (as discussed in the previous chapter) and applies the dwarf's racial bonuses to them (+2 Constitution and -2 Charisma, in case you've forgotten). Notice how the dwarf retains its Strength, but has a higher Constitution. Coupled with their bonus to saves against spells and spell-like abilities, they are nearly bulletproof against magic. As cavalry and light infantry, dwarves are surprisingly not terrible. Using a mount helps with the character's awful speed. If they are a monk or barbarian, as light infantry, the class bonuses help to overcome their slow speed. Dwarves aren't too bad at archery and as skirmishers, but have no special advantage over any other class with these archetypes.

TABLE 2-1: DWARF STAT COMPARISON

Archetype	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
Archer	13	15	16	10	12	6
Cavalry	15	13	16	8	10	10
Guerrilla	14	15	15	12	10	6
Infantry, Light	13	15	16	12	10	6
Infantry, Heavy	15	12	16	10	13	6
Skirmisher	15	13	16	10	12	6

Elves

Elf racial abilities lend themselves to be useful with other classes like wizards and rogues. Nevertheless, of all the racial features suggesting another class choice, there is a benefit making elf warriors attractive. Elves have a +2 Dexterity, influencing ranged attacks, initiative, AC, and a ton of mobility skills. A bonus to such a score is a huge advantage. Of course, you can't forget low-light vision, effectively doubling your awareness in dungeons. You want to sink an arrow in a target before anyone else, and if you want to be sure you're going to hit, you'd better take a long look at this race.

Skills

Elves have a +6 total bonus broken up among three skills. Like dwarves, elves excel in these areas compared to humans. Listen is a class skill for barbarian, monk, and ranger, and Spot is one for monks and rangers. The bonuses to these skills have little to offer elven fighters, except at lower levels, where they are more likely to use them to avoid surprise.

Special Abilities

Elves don't get much in the way of useful feats. They get martial weapon proficiencies, something all warriors except monks already have. The immunity to sleep is a powerful benefit at low levels when Will saves for warriors are abysmal, but is less useful at higher levels. Coupled with the racial bonus to saves against enchantment spells and effects, your elf warrior has a bit more grit than initially expected.

Favored Class

One of the worst racial features for elven warriors is their favored class. In other party roles, a multiclass wizard could be an excellent option. As a warrior, however, unless you're working towards some prestige class or esoteric class combination, a warrior multiclassing into an arcane spell user is rarely an exemplary choice. In exchange for the ability to cast cantrips and a handful of 1st-level spells, you suffer an arcane spell failure check whenever you wear armor. You gain 2.5 hit points per level on average, and worst of all, wizards have the worst BAB (base attack bonus) in the game. These drawbacks potentially cripple a warrior, preventing elves from multiclassing effectively.

Archetypes

From the table on the facing page, it's clear the archer is the best choice for elves. They retain a Con bonus. They have a high Dex and a good Wisdom. Moreover, you can still deal some extra damage with the composite longbow. Elves also make great light infantry. They are not

bad as cavalry or guerrillas. As skirmishers, they get a solid Strength and Dexterity, allowing them to slip into the variety of rolls needed in the party.

Gnomes

Gnomes have a fair selection of interesting abilities, ranging from spell-like abilities, skill bonuses, attack modifiers against certain opponents, and a small size. On the other hand, with a low Strength, they carry less, wear lighter armor (medium or heavy drops their speed to 15 feet!), and are forced to use small weapons, winding up less effective in combat than almost any other race.

Skills

Gnomes receive +8 divided between three skills, one having zero value to warriors: Craft (alchemy). For warriors, this skill has absolutely no use. The bonuses to Listen (+2) and Hide (+4 due to size) aren't bad, but warriors should be engaging foes, not skulking about looking for the best opportunity to strike. This kind of tactic results in the monsters cutting the rest of the party into ribbons. If you're a multiclass rogue, these benefits are fine, but in short, not the best in the world for a front-line fighter.

Special Abilities

Proficiency with illusion magic confers a stackable Spell Focus (illusion). However, as warriors don't cast much in the way of illusion spells, this racial ability falls flat. Gnomes do get a +2 racial bonus to saves against illusions. Anything helping a warrior defend against magic is good. Their familiarity with the gnome hooked hammer (functioning as an Exotic Weapon Proficiency feat for warriors) and their bonus to attack kobolds and goblinoids (staple foes in this game) help to overcome the restrictions and other useless abilities granted by this race.

Favored Class

By multiclassing into the bard, you can make use of illusion spells, and even gain some better saves. Even though bards are the least desirable of the classes, a skilled gnome prankster can make an interesting, if not effective, warrior.

Archetypes

The favored class section hinted at it, but the best archetype for the gnome is a skirmisher. They retain a Strength and Dexterity modifier, have a solid Constitution and not too bad of a Wisdom. When used with the bard class, the gnome fills in where needed on the battlefield. Gnome cavalry do well, especially when using a riding dog. The dog gives the gnome speed and extra attacks, letting him close with his enemies quickly and efficiently. While not

awful as archers, this archetype should not be your first choice without exceptional ability scores. Gnomes are poor heavy infantry, being super-slow in heavy armor and lacking the punch needed to deal foe-dropping damage.

ELF SUBRACES

To make a kick-ass elf warrior, check with your DM to see if she allows elven subraces in her games. Of course, the only way you'd want to play an aquatic elf (+2 Dex, -2 Int!) is if you're in a water-based world; otherwise you're probably not going to have any fun. And drow, well, we'll talk about monsters later. Wild and wood elves, on the other hand, are awesome elven warriors. Wild elves get a +2 Dex and a -2 Intelligence. Sure, their favored class is sorcerer, but you could probably make it work. The best, by far is the wood elf. These guys are seriously cool. They have a +2 Strength, +2 Dexterity, -2 Constitution, -2 Intelligence, and a favored class of ranger – how can you go wrong with that?

TABLE 2-2: ELF STAT COMPARISON

Archetype	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
Archer	13	17	12	10	12	8
Cavalry	15	15	12	8	10	12
Guerrilla	14	17	11	12	10	8
Infantry, Light	13	17	12	12	10	8
Infantry, Heavy	15	14	12	10	13	8
Skirmisher	15	15	12	10	12	8

TABLE 2-3: GNOME STAT COMPARISON

Archetype	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
Archer	11	15	16	10	12	8
Cavalry	13	13	16	8	10	12
Guerrilla	12	15	15	12	10	8
Infantry, Light	11	15	16	12	10	8
Infantry, Heavy	13	12	16	10	13	8
Skirmisher	13	13	16	10	12	8

Half-elves

The smattering of skill bonuses in exchange for no bonus feat places the half-elf in the unfortunate position of being one of the worst races in the game. Despite this, half-elves are solid as multiclassed skill-oriented characters, putting them at their best in the specialized classes like ranger, paladin, and monk.

Skills

Half-elves get a total +7 bonus divided between 5 skills. Like the elf, Listen and Spot are real boons only for monks and rangers. Diplomacy is only useful to paladins and Gather Information is not useful for any warrior class whose function is to kill. Worse, half-elves lack the elf's knack for detecting secret doors.

Special Abilities

These poor guys don't get much here. Low-light vision is good, but half-elves are not the archers elves are, nor do they get the extra feat to shore up the differences. They have immunity to sleep and gain a racial bonus to saves against enchantment spells and effects, both of which are worthwhile, but not enough to justify selecting this race over the human.

Favored Class

Like the human, half-elves are best when abusing the multiclass rules. If you're committed to playing a half-elf, you'd better multiclass as much as possible. This is the only real appeal to this race as far as warriors go, and when humans get it too, it's hard to choose playing a half-elf over a human.

Archetypes

Half-elves are equally suited to any archetype, but probably the skirmisher stands out as their best choice. Through multiclassing, these characters can fill just about any role in the party. Just don't expect to be a heavy damage dealer.

Half Orcs

Half-orcs make great warriors. Their bonus to Strength is an advantage over other core races in the PHB. It lends itself to the character being more physical in regard to skills, allowing half-orcs to climb faster and jump further, all the while not being restrained by such irritating things as doors, locked chests, and any other obstacles. The Strength bonus boosts melee attacks and damage rolls, and if their Strength is high enough, they can be a true terror with Power Attack. In exchange, half-orcs sacrifice Intelligence and Charisma, the two least useful abilities for warriors in general.

Skills

Half-orcs don't get any bonuses to skills. In fact, the penalty to Intelligence cripples them in the skill department.

Special Abilities

Though half-orcs do not get any feats, they do get dark-vision. They can see in almost any combat condition, giving them an advantage over their human counterparts, especially as they are not stuck holding a torch or lantern, and are ready to fight at a moment's notice.

Favored Class

Half-orcs favor the barbarian class. That says it all. By blending in the bonus feats of the fighter class, you guarantee your half-orc will kick some serious butt on the battlefield.

Archetypes

Half-orcs are best at being the guerrilla archetype, especially when they use both the barbarian and fighter class. They do well as tanks and skirmishers, and as light infantry. They are not bad as archers, especially when using mighty composite longbows to deal a chunk of extra damage. As light infantry, they make surprisingly effective monks. Having a 6 Intelligence is crippling to a ranger, and half-orcs inclined to pursue this class should multiclass into barbarian and fighter to maximize their strengths and minimize their weaknesses.

Halflings

If you're thinking about playing a halfling warrior, first consider a few of their drawbacks. Halflings have a poor strength. They're slow (and even slower in heavier armor) and given their size, they're stuck using small weapons. With those drawbacks, halflings seem worse than gnomes. However, they have high Dexterity scores, bonuses to AC and attack rolls because of size, great

HOW MUCH ORC IS TOO MUCH?

Given the benefits of a high Strength, you might consider playing a full-blooded orc. Sure, they're stupid and lack any recognizable personalities, but so are most warriors, right? Orcs have no level adjustment, so you can play them right away. If you're stuck with a low Intelligence and Charisma, and your DM allows playing full-blooded orcs, you should consider it. After all, a PC's ability scores can't fall below 3 during character generation.

saves, and a number of other fantastic special abilities to overcome their few drawbacks.

Skills

Halflings get bonuses to a ton of skills, mostly physical. They receive bonuses to Climb and Jump, overriding their lower Strength. Their bonus to Move Silently, the size bonus to Hide, and the extra goodness for Listen all combine to make these characters awesome at assessing the battlefield and moving where they are most needed.

Special Abilities

As far as saves go, halflings are the best, especially against fear effects. They can also use thrown weapons with unmatched accuracy, though weakened by size and strength. Even with the size considerations, halflings can hold their own against humans, at least insofar as warriors go.

Favored Class

Multiclassing into rogue is rarely a bad thing. It opens the door to a great selection of skills, sneak attack, evasion, and a bunch of other combat options. However, by doing so, you lose the hit points of a fighter. This is dangerous considering armor's effect on a halfling's speed. If you can stand not being a frontline fighter, abuse the rogue class as much as possible.

Archetypes

Skip playing halfling heavy infantry; the armor not only slows the halfling down, but the whole party. Halflings make great cavalry; the mount helps overcome their slow speed. As archers, they are effective and accurate when using slings and thrown weapons. The best warrior archetype, however, is the guerrilla. The halfling's high Dexterity boosts their AC, and compliments two-weapon fighting and the archery paths nicely.

Other Races

For some reason, gamers keep going back to monsters to play as characters. Monsters look cool, they have cool abilities, and they fulfill a weird sense of verboten so many players want to explore. Better still, they're exotic and break the monotony of the standard fantasy fare.

Monstrous characters advance in their own racial levels, which grant specialized humanoid hit dice. Of all racial drawbacks, humanoid hit dice are the worst. They grant a cleric's BAB, low skill points, no class features, and in general, give nothing in return. Add to these worthless levels the level adjustment, and you've found the recipe for disaster. So, before you fall into the monster trap, always consider the trade offs for cool factor.

HALFLING SUBRACES

The MM lists two possible subraces of halflings you may consider. Tallfellows lose the bonuses to Climb, Jump, and Move Silently in exchange for the ability to detect secret doors as an elf and bonuses to Listen, Search, and Spot. Warriors, especially halflings, need to move around the battlefield. Avoid using a tallfellow for your halfling warrior. Deep halflings, on the other hand, trade their physical skill bonuses for darkvision, and some dwarf traits. Freeing your hands to wield more weapons is a proven benefit.

TABLE 2-4: HALF-ORC STAT COMPARISON

Archetype	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
Archer	15	15	14	8	12	6
Cavalry	17	13	14	6	10	10
Guerrilla	16	15	13	10	10	6
Infantry, Light	15	15	14	10	10	6
Infantry, Heavy	17	12	14	8	13	6
Skirmisher	17	13	14	8	12	6

TABLE 2-5: HALFLING STAT COMPARISON

Archetype	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
Archer	11	17	14	10	12	8
Cavalry	13	15	14	8	10	12
Guerrilla	12	17	13	12	10	8
Infantry, Light	11	17	14	12	10	8
Infantry, Heavy	13	14	14	10	13	8
Skirmisher	13	15	14	10	12	8

Nevertheless, some folk just don't listen. Just to make the point perfectly clear, have a look at the two characters below. Both are the equivalent of 4th level characters (ECL 4), and both started with the same base ability scores before modification for race.

Human Rgr 4 (ECL 4): HD 4d8+4; hp 22; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+3 Dex, +3 studded leather), touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk melee +7 (1d8+2/19-20, longsword) or ranged +8 (1d8+1/x3, longbow); Full Atk melee +7 (1d8+2/19-20, longsword), melee +6 (1d6+1/19-20, shortsword), or ranged +6/+6 (1d8+1/x3, longbow); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA animal companion (wolf-tricks: attack), combat style (two-weapon fighting), favored enemy (gnoll) (+2); SQ wild empathy +6; AL LG; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 16, Con

12, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +7, Hide +10, Listen +8 (+10 against gnolls), Move Silently +10, Spot +8 (+10 against gnolls), Survival +8 (+10 against gnolls); Endurance, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Track, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Spells (1; DC 11 + spell level): 1st-longstrider.

Gnoll Rgr 1 (ECL 4): HD 2d8+4 plus 1d8+2; hp 23; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+2 Dex, +3 studded leather), touch 12, flatfooted 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +6; Atk melee +6 (1d8+4/x3, battleaxe) or ranged +4 (1d8/x3, longbow); Full Atk melee +6 (1d8+4/x3, battleaxe) or ranged +4 (1d8/x3, longbow); Space/Reach 5 ft./ 5ft.; SA favored enemy (humans) +2; SQ wild empathy (+0); AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 6, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Listen +3 (+5 against humans), Spot +4 (+6 against humans), Survival +5 (+7 against humans); Cleave, Power Attack, Track.

Now look at tables 2-7 and 2-8. Looking at the numbers, the gnoll has an advantage in his attack modifier for melee attacks. He has an extra hit point and an impressive array of ability scores. Look closely at the human ranger. The human ranger has multiple attacks through Rapid Shot and through Two-Weapon Fighting (class ability). He gains the help of a wolf animal companion

trained to attack, meaning he has more opportunities to hit the target in a round of combat than gnoll. The more rolls you get, the better the chances are you're going to hit your foe and deal some damage.

Should you play a monster? In almost all cases, no. Monsters are threats to a party of adventurers. When conceived as player races, to maintain game balance, you have to put some restrictions on the monster to make it suitable for play, hence level adjustments. The big problem with the gnoll above is he's stuck with two levels of humanoid, offering nothing but hit points. If the player had stuck with a core race, he'd have gotten those hit points and a slew of cool abilities all by the time the party reached 4th level. Adding in the difficulty of the level adjustment, the monster-as-character never catches up to the other characters in versatility, usefulness, and raw combat potential, despite great stats and cool monster abilities that most humanoids lack. Don't get suckered into the monster option. It's just not worth it.

TABLE 2-7: HUMAN-GNOLL ANALYSIS

Category	Human	Gnoll
Hit Points	22	23
AC	16	15
Atk-melee	+7/+3 (6.5+4.5)*	+6 (8.5)
Atk-ranged	+8 (5.5)	+4 (4.5)
Full Atk-melee	+5/+4/+3 (6.5+4.5+4.5)*	+6 (8.5)
Full Atk-ranged	+6/+6 (5.5+5.5)	+4 (4.5)

*Includes wolf

TABLE 2-8: EXPECTED HITS (AND DAMAGE) DEALT OVER 4 ROUNDS

Target AC	10	15	20
Gnoll – Attack and full attack melee	3.4 hits (28.9)	2.4 hits (20.4)	1.4 hits (11.9)
Human* – Attack melee	6.4 hits (36)	4.4 hits (25)	2.4 hits (14)
Human* – Full attack melee	9 hits (46.9)	6 hits (31.4)	3.05 hits (15.9)
Gnoll – Attack and full attack ranged	3 hits (13.5)	2 hits (9)	1 hit (4.5)
Human – Attack ranged	3.8 hits (20.9)	2.8 hits (15.4)	1.8 hits (9.9)
Human – Full attack ranged	6.8 hits (37.4)	4.8 hits (26.4)	2.8 hits (15.4)

*Includes wolf

See page 16 for an explanation of how these numbers are calculated.

Chapter Three

Classes

Bar none, the most important component of your character is your class selection, and choosing a class best enhancing your intended archetype allows you to create a character capable not only of surviving, but also capable of kicking ass. This chapter takes a close look at the warrior classes, examining all the tricks and tweaks you can do to make your warrior the best he can be. Rangers and paladins muck things up a bit with their spellcasting capabilities, but their sections provide the skinny, in brief, on how these spells can make the difference for these characters. Throughout this chapter, everything balances against the fighter.

Fighter

One of the biggest mistakes in this game is when people hand off the fighter to the newbie who doesn't know the rules well. It's possible people are living in earlier editions of the game, where the fighter was nothing more than a simple tool, not so unlike the weapons he wields. However, in the current edition of the game, the fighter is just as important (and as complicated) as the wizard, cleric or any other class. The fighter uses a bunch of feats, has to worry about a slower speed due to armor, and worse, if the player screws up and the fighter dies, everyone else dies, too. Not much fun for anyone. So, if you have a newbie or some savant who doesn't know the rules, let them fool around with the wizard, or if you're cruel, a commoner.

Boons

Why is the fighter so good? Feats, lots and lots of feats. You get to choose what class features your fighter has. A good selection of feats gives you an extra edge in any conflict. No other character in the game has access to the sheer destructive capabilities of this class. The fighter has a great hit die, averaging 5.5 hit points per level before his Constitution modifier. He fights better than clerics, wizards, and rogues, being adept as a frontline combatant. He has a good Fortitude save, allowing him to resist poison and annoying spells. Furthermore, he can use just about any weapon he picks up, suit up in any armor, and take advantage of the awesome tower shield.

Banes

Even though the fighter has a number of advantages over other characters, he also falls short in a few areas. The fighter's skill selection, and the points allotted to them, is weak. His skills serve to help him move around on the battlefield; that's it. While this is good, he can add little to the party. He's not going to hear the bad guys around the corner. He's not going to know what the rune on the door means. He's not going to be the front man for the party. Finally, while feats are great, the fighter never gets anything else: no spells, no class abilities, nothing. For some, it's a willing sacrifice, but for most, the feat trees play themselves out too early, leaving the player yearning for something more.

Archetypes

All warrior archetypes do well by advancing in the fighter class.

Breaking the game

Feats: Feats get their own coverage a later chapter, so we're not going to waste space here saying the same things twice. However, a few things need mentioning. First, people who play fighters latch onto a feat tree at first level. The most common, of course, is the Power

THE CLASSES AND THE FIGHTER

All warrior classes start with the fighter. Period. Some classes reduce the hit dice (the monk and ranger). Another grants a higher die (the barbarian). Some classes knock off bonus feats in exchange for some cool abilities, or even knock off a few more feats for improved skill points, spells, or a bunch of other things. Regardless of how visible the fighter is in each of these other warrior classes, he's still there. All warrior classes are equal, right? Yeah, right. When it comes down to it, you have to ask yourself "Why shouldn't I play a fighter?" when creating your warrior. If you can come up with an answer, and there are several, then go ahead and try out another warrior class. Otherwise, stick with the fighter. It gives you all the tools you need to succeed.

Attack and Weapon Focus tree. While these are great choices – if they weren't, why would so many people take them? – if you select all the feats in both trees, they account for ten feats. Fighters, by the time they reach 20th level, have a total of 18 feats. So, what are you supposed to do with the other feats before you start digging in for epic play? Would you start a new feat tree at 12th level, starting with Point Blank Shot or Mounted Combat? If so, why? You've survived all those levels without needing a bow, and by the time you get to those levels, you may feel like you're just wasting feats. How many Weapon Focus feats do you need? This is called Early Fighter Burn-Out Syndrome (EFBOS).

EFBOS Prevention

Step 1–Eliminate Useless Feats: To avoid EFBOS, look at all 20 levels of your character. Over the course of 20 levels, a character gets 7 character feats. If the character is human, they get 8. The fighter class provides 11. So, a 20th level fighter should have 18 or 19 feats, depending on race. Each feat tree requires a set number of selections to derive all the benefits of the tree. Many trees require ability score requirements. Look at your attributes. If you can't take the feat immediately or you can say through ability score increases you cannot meet the required ability scores of the higher level feats to derive the full benefits of the feat tree, cross it off the list. For example, a fighter with a 13 Dex but with an 8 Intelligence should not even think about the Combat Expertise tree. He'd need to be 20th level without magic items to be able to take the first feat. The same is true for the fighter with the 8 Dex, who should eliminate Two-Weapon Fighting (he'll never meet the prerequisites), Dodge, Combat Expertise (no point if he can't attain the highest features), and probably dump Point Blank Shot.

Step 2–Select Trees: Once you eliminate the useless feats, look at those you can take. Of the ones left, count how many feats are available in each tree. For example, Mounted Combat has 5 feats and Power Attack has 6. If the number of feats is equal to or less than your maximum feats, you can move on to Step 3. The poor fighter with the 8 Dexterity has open to him the Mounted Combat, Power Attack, and Weapon Focus trees. The total number of feats from these trees equal 15. He has plenty of room, leaving 3 or 4 feats left unallocated. If you still have more feats than you know what to do with, focus on trees playing to your character's strengths, eliminating those of marginal to no benefit. In any event, you should restrict yourself to 3 or 4 feat trees.

Step 3–Planning: Looking at the feat trees open to you, you should determine at character creation the feats you plan to take and when, with a focus on versatility. Take your feats at the earliest levels you can get them. The greater the prerequisite, the better the feat. Then select from a good mixture of your feat trees to enhance your versatility and your usefulness. Don't be seduced by the virtues of Power Attack alone. It's a great feat, but you're going to wish you had Weapon Focus against the bastard

with the high AC. Of the feats in your tree, fill up your fighter bonus feats first in the planning stage to avoid slipping back into EFBOS.

Step 4–Fill in: At class levels where you don't have a selected feat, focus on feats enhancing your character like Run, Endurance, and Diehard, any of the save-enhancing feats (especially Iron Will), and so on. It won't hurt you to take them and they make you a more valuable member of the party when you can avoid the nasty stuff.

Exclusive Feats Analysis

The fighter gains access to three feats no one else can gain. They are Weapon Specialization, Greater Weapon Focus, and Greater Weapon Specialization. These feats give benefit to the key areas of your character: attacks and damage, useable with all of your attacks. The nature of these feats runs counter to the central idea behind the fighter class. Fighters are supposed to be versatile, unlike the ranger who fights with either two weapons or archery, or the barbarian who specializes in melee, or even the paladin who employs Mounted Combat to the greatest effectiveness. Placing four feats into one weapon could be dangerous when that weapon is vulnerable to attacks, such as a sunder or failed saving throw on your part. Further, using these feats require you to use the same kind of weapon throughout your character's career. What if you can't find a magic kukri? If you opt to use these feats for your fighter, make certain you choose a common weapon first, and then always carry spares. While they may not be as nifty cool as your +3 *axiomatic flaming warhammer*, a +1 version of the same weapon lets you keep on swinging.

The following table shows how the fighter-exclusive feats can assist a character. The table shows expected hits and average damage in each round of combat, against a given AC. It assumes use of a longsword (average damage 4.5), but does not include a Strength modifier nor does it take into account critical hits. The WF, WS, GWF, and GWS entries show the statistics of a fighter who has taken these feats, compared to a fighter without them.

What's apparent is Weapon Focus by itself offers little to fighters. It gives only a very slight advantage to average damage. Even with Weapon Specialization, it's hard to devote two feats for such a marginal gain at the lower levels. However, as your fighter gains multiple attacks each round, along with the benefits of Greater Weapon Focus and Greater Weapon Specialization, you double the amount of damage you can do before Strength and magical modifiers. If you plan to go the Weapon Focus path, be prepared to go the distance and take all four feats in order to secure any serious advantage.

For example, a level 3 fighter with Weapon Focus (longsword) would hit an AC 15 target 50% of the time, causing an average of 2.25 points of damage on each combat round. If he didn't have Weapon Focus, he would

hit only slightly less often (45%) and cause almost the same damage on average (2.025).

But now look at the 20th level fighter. With none of these feats against an AC 15 target, he causes an average of 14.625 damage each round. With just Weapon Focus, his average damage increases by barely one point, to 15.075. Adding Weapon Specialization causes a 44% jump in damage, to an average of 21.775. All those extra attacks each round really make even slight bonus damage more worthwhile. Adding Greater Weapon Focus causes only a nominal increase, but combining it with Great Weapon Specialization more than doubles average damage per round – an average of 29 points per round versus only 14 without the feats! That's a good reason to spend four feat slots, if you ask me.

TABLE 3-1: THE FIGHTER AND FIGHTER-EXCLUSIVE FEATS

Level	Feats	Attack Bonus (Damage Bonus)	Expected Hits (and Average Damage) per Round vs. Target AC			
			10	15	20	25
1	None	+1	.6 (2.7)	.35 (1.575)	.1 (.45)	.05 (.225)
	WF	+2	.65 (2.925)	.4 (1.8)	.15 (.675)	.05 (.225)
2	None	+2	.65 (2.925)	.4 (1.8)	.15 (.675)	.05 (.225)
	WF	+3	.7 (3.15)	.45 (2.025)	.2 (.9)	.05 (.225)
3	None	+3	.7 (3.15)	.45 (2.025)	.2 (.9)	.05 (.225)
	WF	+4	.75 (3.375)	.5 (2.25)	.25 (1.125)	.05 (.225)
4	None	+4	.75 (3.375)	.5 (2.25)	.25 (1.125)	.05 (.225)
	WF	+5	.8 (3.6)	.55 (2.475)	.3 (1.35)	.05 (.225)
	WF, WS	+5 (+2)	.8 (5.2)	.55 (3.575)	.3 (1.95)	.05 (.325)
5	None	+5	.8 (3.6)	.55 (2.475)	.3 (1.35)	.05 (.225)
	WF	+6	.85 (3.825)	.6 (2.7)	.35 (1.575)	.1 (.45)
	WF, WS	+6 (+2)	.85 (5.525)	.6 (3.9)	.35 (2.275)	.1 (.65)
6	None	+6/+1	1.45 (6.525)	.95 (4.05)	.45 (2.025)	.15 (.675)
	WF	+7/+2	1.55 (6.975)	1.05 (4.725)	.55 (2.475)	.2 (.9)
	WF, WS	+7/+2 (+2)	1.55 (10.075)	1.05 (6.825)	.55 (3.575)	.2 (1.3)
7	None	+7/+2	1.55 (6.975)	1.05 (4.725)	.55 (2.475)	.2 (.9)
	WF	+8/+3	1.65 (7.425)	1.15 (5.175)	.65 (2.925)	.25 (1.125)
	WF, WS	+8/+3 (+2)	1.65 (10.725)	1.15 (7.475)	.65 (4.225)	.25 (1.625)
8	None	+8/+3	1.65 (7.425)	1.15 (5.175)	.65 (2.925)	.25 (1.125)
	WF	+9/+4	1.7 (7.65)	1.25 (5.625)	.75 (3.375)	.3 (1.35)
	WF, WS	+9/+4 (+2)	1.7 (11.05)	1.25 (8.125)	.75 (4.875)	.3 (1.95)
	WF, GWF, WS	+10/+5 (+2)	1.75 (11.375)	1.35 (8.775)	.85 (5.525)	.35 (2.275)
9	None	+9/+4	1.7 (7.65)	1.25 (5.625)	.75 (3.375)	.3 (1.35)
	WF	+10/+5	1.75 (7.875)	1.35 (6.075)	.85 (3.825)	.35 (1.575)
	WF, WS	+10/+5 (+2)	1.75 (11.375)	1.35 (8.775)	.85 (5.525)	.35 (2.275)
	WF, GWF, WS	+11/+6 (+2)	1.8 (11.7)	1.45 (9.425)	.95 (6.175)	.45 (2.925)
10	None	+10/+5	1.75 (7.875)	1.35 (6.075)	.85 (3.825)	.35 (1.575)
	WF	+11/+6	1.8 (8.1)	1.45 (6.525)	.95 (4.05)	.45 (2.025)
	WF, WS	+11/+6 (+2)	1.8 (11.7)	1.45 (9.425)	.95 (6.175)	.45 (2.925)
	WF, GWF, WS	+12/+7 (+2)	1.85 (12.025)	1.55 (10.075)	1.05 (6.825)	.55 (3.575)
11	None	+11/+6/+1	2.4 (10.8)	1.8 (8.1)	1.05 (4.725)	.5 (2.25)
	WF	+12/+7/+2	2.5 (11.25)	1.95 (8.775)	1.2 (5.4)	.6 (2.7)
	WF, WS	+12/+7/+2 (+2)	2.5 (16.25)	1.95 (12.675)	1.2 (7.8)	.6 (3.9)
	WF, GWF, WS	+13/+8/+3 (+2)	2.6 (16.9)	2.1 (13.65)	1.35 (8.775)	.7 (4.55)
12	None	+12/+7/+2	2.5 (11.25)	1.95 (8.775)	1.2 (5.4)	.6 (2.7)
	WF	+13/+8/+3	2.6 (11.7)	2.1 (9.45)	1.35 (6.075)	.7 (3.15)
	WF, WS	+13/+8/+3 (+2)	2.6 (16.9)	2.1 (13.65)	1.35 (8.775)	.7 (4.55)
	WF, GWF, WS	+14/+9/+4 (+2)	2.65 (17.225)	2.2 (14.3)	1.5 (9.75)	.8 (5.2)
13	All	+14/+9/+4 (+4)	2.65 (22.525)	2.2 (18.7)	1.5 (12.75)	.8 (6.8)
	None	+13/+8/+3	2.6 (11.7)	2.1 (9.45)	1.35 (6.075)	.7 (3.15)
	WF	+14/+9/+4	2.65 (11.925)	2.2 (9.9)	1.5 (6.75)	.8 (3.6)
	WF, WS	+14/+9/+4 (+2)	2.65 (17.225)	2.2 (14.3)	1.5 (9.75)	.8 (5.2)
	WF, GWF, WS	+15/+10/+5 (+2)	2.7 (17.55)	2.3 (14.95)	1.65 (10.725)	.9 (5.85)
14	All	+15/+10/+5 (+4)	2.7 (22.95)	2.3 (19.55)	1.65 (14.025)	.9 (7.65)
	None	+14/+9/+4	2.65 (11.925)	2.2 (9.9)	1.5 (6.75)	.8 (3.6)
	WF	+15/+10/+5	2.7 (12.15)	2.3 (10.35)	1.65 (7.425)	.9 (4.05)
	WF, WS	+15/+10/+5 (+2)	2.7 (17.55)	2.3 (14.95)	1.65 (10.725)	.9 (5.85)
	WF, GWF, WS	+16/+11/+6 (+2)	2.75 (17.875)	2.4 (15.6)	1.8 (11.7)	1.05 (6.825)
15	All	+16/+11/+6 (+4)	2.75 (23.375)	2.4 (20.4)	1.8 (15.3)	1.05 (8.925)
	None	+15/+10/+5	2.7 (12.15)	2.3 (10.35)	1.65 (6.75)	.9 (4.05)
	WF	+16/+11/+6	2.75 (12.375)	2.4 (10.8)	1.8 (8.1)	1.05 (4.725)
	WF, WS	+16/+11/+6 (+2)	2.75 (17.875)	2.4 (15.6)	1.8 (11.7)	1.05 (6.825)
	WF, GWF, WS	+17/+12/+7 (+2)	2.8 (18.2)	2.5 (16.25)	1.95 (12.675)	1.2 (7.8)
16	All	+17/+12/+7 (+4)	2.8 (23.8)	2.5 (21.25)	1.95 (16.575)	1.2 (10.2)
	None	+16/+11/+6/+1	3.35 (15.075)	2.75 (12.375)	1.9 (8.55)	1.1 (4.95)
	WF	+17/+12/+7/+2	3.45 (15.525)	2.9 (13.05)	2.1 (9.45)	1.25 (5.625)
	WF, WS	+17/+12/+7/+2 (+2)	3.45 (22.425)	2.9 (18.85)	2.1 (13.65)	1.25 (8.125)
	WF, GWF, WS	+18/+13/+8/+3 (+2)	3.55 (23.075)	3.05 (19.825)	2.3 (14.95)	1.4 (9.1)
17	All	+18/+13/+8/+3 (+4)	3.55 (30.175)	3.05 (25.925)	2.3 (19.55)	1.4 (11.9)
	None	+17/+12/+7/+2	3.45 (15.525)	2.9 (13.05)	2.1 (9.45)	1.25 (5.625)
	WF	+18/+13/+8/+3	3.55 (15.975)	3.05 (13.725)	2.3 (10.35)	1.4 (6.3)
	WF, WS	+18/+13/+8/+3 (+2)	3.55 (23.075)	3.05 (19.825)	2.3 (14.95)	1.4 (9.1)
	WF, GWF, WS	+19/+14/+9/+4 (+2)	3.6 (23.4)	3.15 (20.475)	2.45 (15.925)	1.5 (9.75)
18	All	+19/+14/+9/+4 (+4)	3.6 (30.6)	3.15 (26.775)	2.45 (20.825)	1.5 (12.75)
	None	+18/+13/+8/+3	3.55 (15.975)	3.05 (13.725)	2.3 (10.35)	1.4 (6.3)
	WF	+19/+14/+9/+4	3.6 (16.2)	3.15 (14.175)	2.45 (11.025)	1.5 (6.75)
	WF, WS	+19/+14/+9/+4 (+2)	3.6 (23.4)	3.15 (20.475)	2.45 (15.925)	1.5 (9.75)
	WF, GWF, WS	+20/+15/+10/+5 (+2)	3.65 (23.725)	3.25 (21.125)	2.6 (16.9)	1.7 (11.05)
19	All	+20/+15/+10/+5 (+4)	3.65 (31.025)	3.25 (27.625)	2.6 (22.1)	1.7 (14.45)
	None	+19/+14/+9/+4	3.6 (16.2)	3.15 (14.175)	2.45 (11.025)	1.5 (6.75)
	WF	+20/+15/+10/+5	3.65 (16.425)	3.25 (14.625)	2.6 (11.7)	1.7 (7.65)
	WF, WS	+20/+15/+10/+5 (+2)	3.65 (23.725)	3.25 (21.125)	2.6 (16.9)	1.7 (11.05)
	WF, GWF, WS	+21/+16/+11/+6 (+2)	3.7 (24.05)	3.35 (21.775)	2.75 (17.875)	1.9 (12.35)
20	All	+21/+16/+11/+6 (+4)	3.7 (31.45)	3.35 (28.475)	2.75 (23.375)	1.9 (16.15)
	None	+20/+15/+10/+5	3.65 (16.425)	3.25 (14.625)	2.6 (11.7)	1.7 (7.65)
	WF	+21/+16/+11/+6	3.7 (16.65)	3.35 (15.075)	2.75 (12.375)	1.9 (8.55)
	WF, WS	+21/+16/+11/+6 (+2)	3.7 (24.05)	3.35 (21.775)	2.75 (17.875)	1.9 (12.35)
	WF, GWF, WS	+22/+17/+12/+7 (+2)	3.75 (24.375)	3.45 (22.425)	2.9 (18.85)	2.1 (13.65)
	All	+22/+17/+12/+7 (+4)	3.75 (31.875)	3.45 (29.325)	2.9 (24.65)	2.1 (17.85)

Barbarian

The amazing assortment of feats the fighter gets and the raw power of the ranger often overshadow the barbarian class. Despite its poor recognition, the barbarian is the easiest of the warriors to play, as its abilities are simple, flexible and straightforward. The barbarian is a cool alternative to the fighter class, considering its great class features.

Boons

The barbarian can take a lot of punishment with his d12 hit die, the best of all the warriors. Through 20 levels, a barbarian gains 20 more hit points than the fighter and paladin and 40 hit points over the ranger and monk. His ability to rage provides more hit points, better attacks, and greater Will saves. As the barbarian advances, he can

shrug off even more damage through damage reduction.

The barbarian is a living tempest of destruction, capable of dealing vast amounts of damage. He has a great selection of skills and good skill points, a great alternative to the brute fighter for creating a dynamic character. Finally, the barbarian's proficiency with simple and martial weapons, light and medium armors, and some shields allows him to switch tactics and weaponry based on the combat circumstances.

Banes

The barbarian has some serious drawbacks when compared to fighters. He has a limited selection of feats; he can pursue only one or two feat trees with any effect. Furthermore, his maneuverability relies on not wearing heavy armor. Hence, he has a lower AC, especially while raging, meaning he is more likely to take damage than another class choice. Last, though rage is his biggest

NUMBER CRUNCHING

There are many numerical tables in this book, full of statistics showing the expected number hits per round, with an average damage and all that. Here's how you do it and what it means.

1. Subtract attack bonus from AC. For example, AC 10 minus BAB +1 equals 9. This is the number needed to hit the AC.
2. One less than this number tells you the highest number you can roll and still miss. In this case, the number is 8. This is the miss value.
3. Divide the miss value by 20. The result is the miss percentage. In the above example, 8 divided by 20 equals 0.4 or 40%.
4. Subtract the result of the miss percentage from 1 or 100%. The result is your hit percentage. So, the hit percentage is 0.6 or 60%. This tells us you will hit 60% of the time with a BAB +1 against an AC 10, or you will have 0.6 hits per round on average. To find out the average hits over four rounds, simply multiply the hits per round by four. Thus, this character would hit 2.4 times over four rounds. Note: you always miss on a 1 and always hit on a twenty. The maximum number of hits per round is 0.95 and the minimum number of hits is 0.05. These charts do not account for critical hits, because some DMs may not use them or may modify them according to their own house rules.
5. For multiple attacks, figure each attack and BAB separately and add the results. For example, if the warrior has a BAB +6/+1 and he fights against an AC 10 opponent, he should have the following hits per round.
10 minus 6 equals 4. 4 minus 1 equals 3 (miss value). 3 divided by 20 is 0.15 (miss chance). 1 minus 0.15 is 0.85 (hit chance).
10 minus 1 equals 9. 9 minus 1 equals 8 (miss value). 8 divided by 20 is 0.4 (miss chance). 1 minus 0.4 is 0.6 (hit chance).
0.85 plus 0.6 equals 1.45, which is the expected number of hits per round on average.
6. Multiply the hits per round by the average damage result, with modifiers. Average damage is as follows.

d2:	1.5	d4:	2.5	d6:	3.5
d8:	4.5	d10:	5.5	d12:	6.5

So, if the warrior with the BAB +6/+1 wields a longsword, has no Strength modifier for damage, and fights an opponent with an AC 10, he should deal 6.525 points of damage per round. (1.45 [expected number of hits per round] times 4.5 [average damage].)

This is the secret behind the math. Confusing, huh? Don't worry too much. The tables are there to back up what we're talking about, giving you a comparison between the different classes or techniques. You can customize these tables to your own character by simply using the attack bonus row that incorporates your own BAB and Strength/Dexterity modifier. You can also change the expected damage based on the weapon you wield. It's all here.

Take a close look at these charts when building your character. An extensive analysis helps to maximize your character's potential.

asset, it is also his greatest danger. Why? Hit points gained by the rage are not lost first as temporary hit points, meaning when your rage ends, your hit point total falls by the same amount it increased. If a barbarian was down to just a few hit points at the end of the rage, his hit points could fall below 0, even lower than -10, resulting in a bad case of death.

Archetypes

Of the archetypes, several are suitable with the barbarian class. Cavalry is not a bad choice; the barbarian has access to Handle Animal and Ride. As guerrillas, they are great at getting in and out of tough spots to wipe out their particular foe, but when raging, their defenses are rather low. As light infantry, they are skilled, being mobile, fast, and destructive.

On the other hand, the barbarian lacks the necessary versatility to be an effective skirmisher. Moreover, though they have higher Dexterity scores, the archer archetype offers little to the barbarian, as this class's strengths rest on melee potential. The barbarian's armor restrictions prevent him from pursuing the heavy infantry archetype with success.

Breaking the Game

There are a couple of things to remember when playing a barbarian character. You have a crummy AC, and you're going to get hit a lot. While a great hit die and your ability to rage soak up a fair amount of this damage, if you're not careful you'll fall down. What follows are some tips on making sure your barbarian maximizes his class features to create the best barbarian you can.

Rage: Here's the big one. When you rage, don't mark your new hit point total anywhere on your character sheet. If your DM is finicky, write it on a post-it note stuck to the sheet, and when he's not looking, peel it off. You don't want to die, and seeing the adjusted hit point total deludes many players into thinking they have more than they have, resulting in dropping or outright dying when the rage ends.

Whenever your increased hit point total falls to between 0 to 6 hit points, run to a cleric and beg for healing, raging or not. Failing that, drink a potion - you can do this

TABLE 3-2: COMPARATIVE ATTACKS FOR BARBARIAN RAGE

Level	Attack Bonus Rage Attack (Dmg Mod)	Expected Hits (and Average Damage) Per Round vs. Target AC			
		10	15	20	25
1	+1	.6 (2.7)	.35 (1.575)	.1 (.45)	.05 (.225)
	+3 (+2)	.7 (4.55)	.45 (2.925)	.2 (1.3)	.05 (.325)
2	+2	.65 (2.925)	.4 (1.8)	.15 (.675)	.05 (.225)
	+4 (+2)	.75 (4.875)	.5 (3.25)	.25 (5.85)	.05 (.325)
3	+3	.7 (3.15)	.45 (2.025)	.2 (.9)	.05 (.225)
	+5 (+2)	.8 (5.2)	.55 (3.575)	.3 (1.95)	.05 (.325)
4	+4	.75 (3.375)	.5 (2.25)	.25 (1.125)	.05 (.225)
	+6 (+2)	.85 (5.525)	.6 (3.9)	.35 (2.275)	.1 (.65)
5	+5	.8 (3.6)	.55 (2.475)	.3 (1.35)	.05 (.225)
	+7 (+2)	.9 (5.85)	.65 (4.225)	.4 (2.6)	.15 (.975)
6	+6/+1	1.45 (6.525)	.95 (4.05)	.45 (2.025)	.15 (.675)
	+8/+3 (+2)	1.65 (10.725)	1.15 (7.475)	.65 (4.225)	.25 (1.625)
7	+7/+2	1.55 (6.975)	1.05 (4.725)	.55 (2.475)	.2 (.9)
	+9/+4 (+2)	1.7 (11.05)	1.25 (8.125)	.75 (4.875)	.3 (1.95)
8	+8/+3	1.65 (7.425)	1.15 (5.175)	.65 (2.925)	.25 (1.125)
	+10/+5 (+2)	1.75 (11.375)	1.35 (8.775)	.85 (5.525)	.35 (2.275)
9	+9/+4	1.7 (7.65)	1.25 (5.625)	.75 (3.375)	.3 (1.35)
	+11/+6 (+2)	1.8 (11.7)	1.45 (9.425)	.95 (6.175)	.95 (6.175)
10	+10/+5	1.75 (7.875)	1.35 (6.075)	.85 (3.825)	.35 (1.575)
	+12/+7 (+2)	1.85 (12.025)	1.55 (10.075)	1.05 (6.825)	.55 (3.575)
11	+11/+6/+1	2.4 (10.8)	1.8 (8.1)	1.05 (4.725)	.5 (2.25)
	+14/+9/+4 (+3)	2.65 (19.875)	2.2 (16.5)	1.5 (11.25)	.8 (6)
12	+12/+7/+2	2.5 (11.25)	1.95 (8.775)	1.2 (5.4)	.6 (2.7)
	+15/+10/+5 (+3)	2.7 (20.25)	2.3 (17.25)	1.65 (12.375)	.9 (6.75)
13	+13/+8/+3	2.6 (11.7)	2.1 (9.45)	1.35 (6.075)	.7 (3.15)
	+16/+11/+6 (+3)	2.75 (20.625)	2.4 (18)	1.8 (13.5)	1.05 (7.875)
14	+14/+9/+4	2.65 (11.925)	2.2 (9.9)	1.5 (6.75)	.8 (3.6)
	+17/+12/+7 (+3)	2.8 (21)	2.5 (18.75)	1.95 (14.625)	1.2 (9)
15	+15/+10/+5	2.7 (12.15)	2.3 (10.35)	1.65 (6.75)	.9 (4.05)
	+18/+13/+8 (+3)	2.85 (21.375)	2.6 (19.5)	2.1 (15.75)	1.35 (10.125)
16	+16/+11/+6/+1	3.35 (15.075)	2.75 (12.375)	1.9 (8.55)	1.1 (4.95)
	+19/+14/+9/+4 (+3)	3.6 (27)	3.15 (23.625)	2.45 (18.375)	1.5 (11.25)
17	+17/+12/+7/+2	3.45 (15.525)	2.9 (13.05)	2.1 (9.45)	1.25 (5.625)
	+20/+15/+10/+5 (+3)	3.65 (27.375)	3.25 (24.375)	2.6 (19.5)	1.7 (12.75)
18	+18/+13/+8/+3	3.55 (15.975)	3.05 (13.725)	2.3 (10.35)	1.4 (6.3)
	+21/+16/+11/+6 (+3)	3.7 (27.75)	3.35 (25.125)	2.75 (20.625)	1.9 (14.25)
19	+19/+14/+9/+4	3.6 (16.2)	3.15 (14.175)	2.45 (11.025)	1.5 (6.75)
	+22/+17/+12/+7 (+3)	3.75 (28.125)	3.45 (25.875)	2.9 (21.75)	2.1 (15.75)
20	+20/+15/+10/+5	3.65 (16.425)	3.25 (14.625)	2.6 (11.7)	1.7 (7.65)
	+24/+19/+14/+9 (+4)	3.8 (32.3)	3.6 (30.6)	3.15 (26.775)	2.45 (20.852)

while raging because it does not require a command word or a spell trigger to function. When the combat is over, your temporary hit points vanish. If you've followed this advice, you should never fall victim to those vanishing extra hit points.

Despite all the drawbacks, a barbarian's rage can be a powerful ally in combat. Table 3-2 assumes the barbarian uses a battleaxe (scoring an average damage of 4.5) without a Strength modifier. The table compares to the same barbarian raging. From the table, we can see there is no solid reason not to rage. At lower levels, the key benefit is not the additional number of times more the character is expected to hit; rather, it is the damage dealt. On average, your barbarian is going to deal twice the damage while raging. In fact, there is never a huge advantage to attack rolls when raging, but there is a clear benefit to damage.

Now compare the barbarian to the fighter, as shown on Table 3-1. At 4th level, a raging barbarian against an opponent with an AC 20 can expect to hit 1.4 times over four rounds and deal about 9.1 points of damage. (This is calculated by multiplying the expected hits and average damage on Table 3-2 by four, for four rounds.) The fighter of the same level and capabilities with Weapon Focus and Weapon Specialization should hit 1.2 times over four rounds and deal 7.8 points of damage. The disparity

between these two totals grows wider at higher levels. At 12th level, the same barbarian hits 6.6 times and deals 49.5 points of damage. The fighter at the same level with all the feats in the Weapon Focus tree hits 6 times and deals 51 points of damage. Granted, the fighter deals slightly more damage, but the barbarian maintains about the same damage without spending the four feats to get there. Looking at the 20th-level characters against the same AC, the barbarian hits 12.6 times and deals 107.1 points of damage. The fighter, on the other hand, hits 11.6 times and deals 98.6 points of damage. What does this tell us? If you consider the barbarian's class features and additional skill points, and its raw combat potential, the fighter, who "runs out" of feats to take, pales in comparison.

Monk

The monk is a weird one. While it's the sole class in this group with an average BAB, it has tons of special abilities. The monk is the hardest to play because monks rely on all of the special attack techniques in the Combat chapter in the PHB. Players have to be familiar with the rules that all of their special abilities require.

Boons

Monks are all about getting away from the bad guys and avoiding the hits before they fall. They have awesome saves, along with bonus feats, evasion, improved evasion, AC bonus and Wisdom bonus to AC, and so many other things it makes the head spin. Monks are virtually untouchable unless played foolishly. Their unarmed attacks are effective against damage reduction with remarkable success as they advance, emphasizing their awesome martial qualities.

Banes

Monks have substandard hit points for warriors. At first level, they'd be lucky to take two swings from a longsword and walk away. In addition, monks have a terrible selection of weapon proficiencies, none having a critical threat range beyond 20 or a multiplier greater than x2. As their weaponry lacks the punch of more traditional weapons, monks have to hit more in a round to deal the same damage as a fighter, placing them in harm's way more than not. Their base attack bonus is the same as a cleric's and unless they use flurry of blows they are less likely to hit the better-protected opponents.

Archetypes

Of the archetypes, the guerrilla and light infantry are the best choices for these classes. The monk can move around the battlefield, using terrain to her advantage, all the while wiping out the major opponents behind enemy lines. Their versatile nature makes the skirmisher a favorable choice as well. On the other hand, they lack any appreciable skill with horses. They're stuck with crossbows, so without dumping a feat into Rapid Reload, they function as average archers. Don't even think about making your monk heavy infantry.

Breaking the Game

Monks have many class features, making it sometimes hard to keep them all straight. However, over half of the abilities are defensive in nature, like Slow Fall, Still Mind, Purity of Body and so on. All of the defensive features help the monk to avoid attacks, a central idea behind this class.

TABLE 3-3: NO FLURRY/FLURRY ATTACK COMPARISON

Level	Base Attack Bonus Flurry Attack Bonus (Dmg)	Expected Hits (and Average Damage) Per Round Vs. Target AC			
		10	15	20	25
1	+0	.55 (1.925)	.3 (1.05)	.05 (0.175)	.05 (0.175)
	-2/-2 (1d6)	.9 (3.15)	.4 (1.4)	.1 (.35)	.1 (.35)
2	+1	.6 (2.1)	.35 (1.225)	.2 (.7)	.05 (0.175)
	-1/-1 (1d6)	1 (3.5)	.5 (1.75)	.1 (.35)	.1 (.35)
3	+2	.65 (2.275)	.4 (1.4)	.15 (0.525)	.05 (0.175)
	+0/+0 (1d6)	1.1 (3.85)	.6 (2.1)	.1 (.35)	.1 (.35)
4	+3	.7 (3.15)	.45 (2.025)	.2 (.9)	.05 (0.225)
	+1/+1 (1d8)	1.2 (5.4)	.7 (3.15)	.2 (.9)	.1 (.45)
5	+3	.7 (3.15)	.45 (2.025)	.2 (.9)	.05 (0.225)
	+2/+2 (1d8)	1.3 (5.85)	.8 (3.6)	.3 (1.35)	.1 (.45)
6	+4	.75 (3.375)	.5 (2.25)	.25 (1.125)	.05 (0.225)
	+3/+3 (1d8)	1.4 (6.3)	.9 (4.05)	.4 (1.8)	.1 (.45)
7	+5	.8 (3.6)	.55 (2.475)	.3 (1.35)	.05 (0.225)
	+4/+4 (1d8)	1.5 (6.75)	1 (4.5)	.5 (2.25)	.1 (.45)
8	+6/+1	1.45 (7.975)	.9 (4.95)	.55 (3.025)	.15 (0.825)
	+5/+5/+0 (1d10)	2.15 (11.825)	1.4 (7.7)	.65 (3.575)	.15 (0.825)
9	+6/+1	1.45 (7.975)	.9 (4.95)	.55 (3.025)	.15 (0.825)
	+6/+6/+1 (1d10)	2.3 (12.65)	1.5 (8.25)	.9 (4.95)	.25 (1.375)
10	+7/+2	1.55 (8.525)	1.05 (5.775)	.55 (3.025)	.2 (1.1)
	+7/+7/+2 (1d10)	2.45 (13.475)	1.7 (9.35)	.95 (5.225)	.35 (1.925)
11	+8/+3	1.65 (9.075)	1.15 (6.325)	.85 (4.675)	.25 (1.375)
	+8/+8/+8/+3 (1d10)	3.55 (19.525)	2.55 (14.025)	2.15 (11.825)	.65 (3.575)
12	+9/+4	1.7 (11.9)	1.25 (8.75)	.75 (5.25)	.3 (2.1)
	+9/+9/+9/+4 (2d6)	3.6 (25.2)	2.75 (19.25)	1.75 (12.25)	.8 (5.6)
13	+9/+4	1.7 (11.9)	1.25 (8.75)	.75 (5.25)	.3 (2.1)
	+9/+9/+9/+4 (2d6)	3.6 (25.2)	2.75 (19.25)	1.75 (12.25)	.8 (5.6)
14	+10/+5	1.75 (12.25)	1.35 (9.45)	.85 (5.95)	.35 (2.45)
	+10/+10/+10/+5 (2d6)	3.65 (25.55)	2.95 (20.65)	1.95 (13.65)	.95 (6.65)
15	+11/+6/+1	2.4 (16.8)	1.75 (12.25)	1.15 (8.05)	.5 (3.5)
	+11/+11/+11/+6/+1 (2d6)	4.3 (30.1)	3.45 (24.15)	2.4 (16.8)	1.2 (8.4)
16	+12/+7/+2	2.5 (22.5)	1.95 (17.55)	1.2 (10.8)	.6 (5.4)
	+12/+12/+12/+7/+2 (2d8)	4.4 (39.6)	3.75 (33.75)	2.5 (22.5)	1.4 (12.6)
17	+12/+7/+2	2.5 (22.5)	1.95 (17.55)	1.2 (10.8)	.6 (5.4)
	+12/+12/+12/+7/+2 (2d8)	4.4 (39.6)	3.75 (33.75)	2.5 (22.5)	1.4 (12.6)
18	+13/+8/+3	2.6 (23.4)	2.1 (18.9)	1.55 (13.95)	.7 (6.3)
	+13/+13/+13/+8/+3 (2d8)	4.5 (40.5)	4 (36)	2.95 (26.55)	1.6 (14.4)
19	+14/+9/+4	2.65 (23.85)	2.2 (19.8)	1.6 (14.4)	.8 (7.2)
	+14/+14/+14/+9/+4 (2d8)	4.55 (40.95)	4.1 (36.9)	3.1 (27.9)	1.8 (16.2)
20	+15/+10/+5	2.7 (29.7)	2.3 (25.3)	1.65 (18.15)	.9 (8.1)
	+15/+15/+15/+10/+5 (2d10)	4.6 (50.6)	4.2 (46.2)	3.25 (35.75)	2 (22)

Bonus Feats: At various levels, the monk gains a bonus feat. The bonus feats end after 6th level, so it's important to choose the right one. If your monk is the warrior in the party, you have to be offensive minded. Choose feats like Stunning Fist, Combat Reflexes, and Improved Trip. For a defensive strategy, where the monk is a second warrior, build Improved Grapple, Deflect Arrows, and Improved Disarm. These feats give you the tools to avoid attacks and render opponents impotent. Don't worry about feats you elect not to take, because you can pick them up later with your standard feats.

Flurry of Blows: Flurry of blows is the strongest feature of the monk class. Some folks believe the penalties for flurry of blows at earlier levels prevent you from hitting monsters with high ACs. That's a load of crap. The penalties apply a 10% lower likelihood of hitting a target per attack. Most monsters have AC tied to CR. Therefore, if you're first level, you should not see much more than an AC 14 or 15, meaning if you elect not to use flurry of blows, over four rounds you should hit 1.2 times dealing 4.2 damage, if of course you don't have a Strength modifier as Table 3-3 assumes. If you had used flurry of blows, you would hit 1.6 times for 5.6 points of damage. Weird, huh? You're less likely to hit per roll, but you receive two rolls to hit, thereby improving your chances with more opportunities to strike.

What's sick is when you compare the monk to the fighter. Now, most people assume the fighter is the big guy on the block, with all of those feats and weapons, but this table proves that one false by a long shot. Take the 12th-level fighter with all four feats. Over four rounds, and against a monster with an AC 25, he should hit 3.2 times dealing 27.2 points of damage. The monk, of the same level, same stats and against the same foe, should hit 3.2 times dealing 22.4 points of damage, and without all four of those feats, too. In fact, the monk surpasses the fighter at higher levels, hitting as often and inflicting more damage.

As you advance, the need for manufactured weapons starts to fade. Monks by 4th level are able to deal damage equal to any manufactured weapon. Some players spend their hard-earned gold on buying enchanted weapons for their monk characters. A much wiser investment is by putting your coin towards items boosting your stats and AC, which boosts your fighting abilities far more than a +2 *quarterstaff* could ever do.

Abundant Step: This ability has several combat uses. You could use it to get away from a nasty opponent, to beat a hasty retreat to avoid a spell, or to escape with the holy symbol that you snatched from the cleric on the previous round. Avoid using this ability to cover distances you could cover through your normal speed. At 12th-level, a Medium-sized monk should be able to cover 140 feet as a double move action, farther than he can see in a dungeon. Save this ability for when you need it.

Quivering Palm: Reserve quivering palm against powerful foes having low Fortitude saves, such as wizards,

sorcerers, and creatures like aberrations. You can use this ability once per week, so make certain of your target before using it. Also, don't be dramatic about it – nail the target with the effects of the palm as soon as it is advantageous. Your job is to kill bad guys, not screw around and let the bad guys cast more spells or get in more attacks.

Paladin

The paladin fights just as well as a fighter; he has spells, a loyal steed, and a ton of immunities; and he functions as a great supporting member of any party. There is just one small problem with all of this, though. He's primarily a supporting party member. He's not going to be the best choice for the only warrior in your party, as he places a greater burden on the rogues and clerics to pick up his slack.

Boons

Paladins shine the most when fighting evil. Their ability to smite evil allows them to deal an impressive amount of damage with those attacks. Considering most of what you should be fighting is evil in the first place, use smite evil as much as possible. Paladins can stand longer than other fighters can because they can heal themselves and their allies. Paladins never have to worry about disease or undead. If it's evil, the paladin can sense it, destroy it, or at least drive it away. If the party is short a cleric, the paladin is the next best thing to have.

Banes

For all their spell-like and supernatural abilities, paladins lack any sense of raw combat potential. Paladins need to have high Charisma scores, so many paladins sacrifice Dexterity for Charisma, forcing them to wear heavier armor. Heavy armor slows their speed, makes them clumsy, and is not as efficient as the lighter armors rangers and barbarians enjoy. Paladins also have specific abilities, useable against evil or undead opponents. Last, while removing disease is a useful ability at low levels, it ceases to be interesting at 18th level when the cleric of equal level can remove disease the same amount of times as the paladin, but per day instead of per week. The biggest problem with these characters is that the spells they can cast, along with smite evil, allow them to compete with other characters, but only for short durations, retarding usefulness in a protracted combat.

Archetypes

Two archetypes lend themselves to paladins. They are cavalry and heavy infantry. Paladins rarely have the Dexterity to pull off being a decent archer (also note that smiting requires a melee attack), and lack the speed to be good guerrillas or light infantry. Don't use them as skirmishers; they are far too specialized.

Breaking the Game

If you have your heart set on being a paladin, you've got your work cut out for you.

Smite Evil: Don't waste your smite evil attack; it's the only powerful offensive ability you have. If you're not certain about an opponent's alignment, take a 5-foot step and detect evil. This may seem like a wasted action, but it ensures you never use this ability against ineligible targets. Some players like to stack Power Attack with smite evil. Unless you're certain you can hit the bad guy, this is the best way to waste your smite evil attempt.

Spells: One way to make your paladin shine is with smart use of your spells. The problem with divine spells is they require a lot of time to set up. The other problem is paladins don't have a lot of spells to choose from. Here's a tour through some of the most popular spells paladins use.

Bless Weapon: Paladins fight evil, so this spell is good to have handy for several reasons. First, it aligns the weapon so it bypasses damage reduction/good. It can strike incorporeal creatures, and can strike evil creatures with damage reduction/magic. Furthermore, it confirms all critical hits against evil opponents, though it does not help with keen or vorpal weapons.

Divine Favor: This spell is not as cool as it appears. *Divine favor* lasts for 1 minute regardless of level. If you're going to use this spell, make sure you save it until the first round of combat. Now recall that the paladin's caster level equals one-half his paladin levels. Note the bonuses a paladin gains by casting this spell based on her actual level:

Paladin Level	Bonus
4-6	+1
7-12	+2
13-18	+3
19+	+4

Protection from Evil: As one of the most well-used spells in the game, any discussion of this spell has great benefits. The +2 deflection bonus can keep the paladin alive, and the extra save bonuses buttress his already solid saving throws. Finally, because this spell prevents possession, it's ideal to use when fighting undead. The spell's duration is measured in minutes, so cast it first, before other spells.

Buff Spells: *Bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, and *eagle's splendor* (what we call "buff spells") are all spells you should cast whenever possible. Providing a flat +4 bonus to any of these stats can save your paladin from a premature demise. In fact, if you have a feat and XP to burn, pick up Brew Potion and manufacture these spells as potions. Using these spells helps to level the playing field between you and other warriors, providing you with an extra advantage you need.

Prayer: If things look ugly for your party, a well-placed *prayer* can save the day. It gives all of your allies a bonus to hit, weapon damage, saves, and skill checks, while penalizing your foes. But don't rely too heavily on this spell, because by the time you're in the middle of combat, you're not going to be in a position to start tossing spells around.

Dispel Evil: Used defensively, *dispel evil* is a high-level paladin's dream come true. However, it has a short duration, so it's best used for short-term situations. Don't count on using this spell to send an evil extraplanar creature home; they are just about guaranteed to save against its effects when you cast it.

Holy Sword: Paladins of 14th-level or higher can make use of this spell. A 14th-level paladin at standard wealth levels should have 140,000 gp. A *holy avenger* has a market price of 120,630 gp. While your paladin probably does not have this weapon yet, he should be doing everything in his power to get one. *Holy sword* is a good way to fill in until you get your hands on a *holy avenger*. But compared to a *holy avenger*, this spell sucks. You need to get the real thing as soon as you can. Go on quests, kiss your temple's rear-end, beg your god for a favor, do whatever you have to do! Don't rely on this spell as a poor guy's avenger, because it lasts only 1 round per level!

Final Notes on The Paladin's Spells

If you plan on casting spells before you enter combat, *always* cast the spells with durations in minutes. Cast spells with durations in rounds while in combat, based on the situation as it unfolds. In a standard combat, avoid casting multiple spells; you're going to need them in other fights. Don't try to be the cleric. Let the cleric do his job and you do yours, which is to kill as many bad guys as you can.

Ranger

What was once the worst class in the game is now the best out of all the warriors. Rangers get spells, two good saves, bonus feats, and animal companions, all while retaining their speed and kicking the crap out of anything they meet. Forget 3.0, the new ranger is here, and he's a terror. If you want to be the best archer on the block or the two-weapon monster, this is the class for you.

Boons

Rangers fight as well as fighters, and better when they use two weapons. They get a feat tree free, allowing them to spend their normal feats in other areas. The addition of the animal companion gives them an extra attack per round as well as the ability to improve the animal through training. Two good saving throws and a slew of

skill points and favored enemies make this class hard to turn down.

Banes

Rangers lack proficiency in medium armor, so they need a high Dexterity to boost their AC. Furthermore, they need high stats to do well overall, with all six stats being important. Rangers have a monk's hit points, meaning they average 20 hit points less than a fighter by 20th level.

Archetypes

Rangers are good for just about any archetype except heavy infantry. They are excellent archers, devastating light infantry and guerrillas, and even perform well as cavalry. The ranger class is one of the best of all the warriors and you should consider it as your choice for any adventuring party.

Breaking the Game

It can't be stressed enough: rangers are tough. All of their abilities make them deadly combatants in any circumstances. There are a few points requiring highlighting to ensure your ranger can excel where others merely get by.

Favored Enemies: This ability looks great, but sucks if you make a bad choice at earlier levels. There is no reason a ranger should ever take dragon as his favored enemy at first level; the only CR 1 dragon in the game is a pseudodragon. While humanoids are tough, because they gain class levels, you should never let their scale dictate your choice of favored enemy because a humanoid with class levels, at higher levels, is going to be a rare thing, an important villain or something along those lines. Remember, the objective for your warrior is to hit often and hard. Overspecialization into one monster type tells the DM not to use the monster. You want to pick monsters your DM is likely to use and use frequently throughout your character's career. Creatures comprised of broad groupings are wise choices, such as Outsider (evil), Undead, Monstrous Humanoid, and Aberration. If you must choose a humanoid, stick with the basics, like Humanoid (goblinoid). Above all, stay away from weird stuff like Outsider (any other subtype besides evil), Elementals, or Plants. You're not going to encounter these creatures much, and a spellcaster can neutralize the threat easier than you can.

When selecting your favored enemy, choose it based on CR range. Table 3-4 shows a list of monster types and their standard CR ranges. Giants are an acceptable pick anywhere from 3rd to 17th level (or at 5th, 10th, or 15th level). They function as good in-between monsters, and you are prone to face a few giants in your career. You are not likely to be fighting giants other than an ogre or two before 5th level, so don't waste this class ability before then. Likewise, animals cease being much of a threat

individually after 9th level, so you shouldn't select animal as a favored enemy beyond 10th level, unless your evil ranger plans on taking a romp through a zoo.

Combat Styles: This class feature defines the ranger. It gives him bonus feats without having to meet the prerequisites, allows multiple attacks in a round, and lets the ranger deal tons of damage each round. Both styles – two-weapon combat and archery – are great and with the right tools, making the ranger exceptional. One thing to consider, though, is that to gain the benefits of a magic weapon with Rapid Shot, you need one magic weapon; the bow confers the magic onto its ammunition. With Two-Weapon Fighting, however, you need two magic weapons to be just as effective. Also, arrows have a constant damage range, but the two-weapon ranger must use a light weapon in his off hand to minimize the penalties for fighting with two weapons. The result is the two-weapon ranger deals less damage in a round than with the archer with a bow. Given how rangers can use their bows in close combat by taking a 5-foot step back, either option is viable. However, as the ranger advances with the two-weapon combat style he gains more attacks per round in melee, balancing the two paths.

The best way to exploit the combat styles is to select one and build the other through your standard array of feats. For example, if you choose the archery style, take Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting and the rest with your normal seven feats. This way, you play to your character's strengths.

See pages 94-95 for a statistical analysis of two-weapon fighting.

Spells: Spells are far less important to rangers than to paladins. If your ranger lost all of his spells, he would remain a viable warrior. Think of ranger spells as a second helping of usefulness. When selecting your spell arsenal, focus on things enhancing your strengths. Such spells include *longstrider*, *jump*, *resist energy*, and *magic fang*, all excellent choices. Better still, you get access to buff spells like *bear's endurance*

Table 3-4: CRs

Type	CR Range
Aberration	2-17
Animal	1/10-9
Construct	1/2-16
Dragon	1-26
Elemental	1-11
Fey	1-7
Giant	3-17
Humanoid (all)	1/4+
Magical Beast	1/2-20
Monstrous Humanoid	1-11
Ooze	3-11
Outsider (Air)	3-8
Outsider (Chaotic)	2-21
Outsider (Earth)	3-8
Outsider (Evil)	1-20
Outsider (Fire)	2-10
Outsider (Good)	2-23
Outsider (Lawful)	1/2-20
Outsider (Native)	1/2+
Outsider (Water)	2-9
Plant	1-8
Undead	1/3-18
Vermin	1/8-12

and *owl's wisdom*, great spells to keep you on your feet and to make what few offensive spells you do have nasty. There are no bad ranger spells; each helps you in many important ways. Consider your character's strengths, and use the spells to shore up your weaknesses.

Multiclassing Warriors

There are two major schools of thought on character classes. The first holds the character class helps define the character. A paladin acts as he does by dint of his class selection. Likewise, a ranger is woodsy, a barbarian angry, and a monk philosophical, all because of the nature of the classes. Multiclassed characters are slow to get the better class features, in some cases prevented from ever getting them. Therefore, excessive multiclassing, or even multiclassing at all, creates a kind of schizophrenia for characters, blurring their focus and thereby their usefulness to a party.

The other school of thought says each class is like an a la carte menu. Take a little from the fighter, a taste of the barbarian, perhaps a little ranger and rogue, and then pursue the paladin class for kicks. The more you multiclass, the more options at hand, the more versatile your character, and the better odds for your survival.

Both views are right and wrong. Sticking with one character class helps define your function and parameters in the group. You are also stuck, not as versatile, and in some cases ineffective against certain foes. Multiclassed characters can adapt to their environments, and retain some usefulness regardless of the opponent, but are never as good as a character advancing in just one class.

WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY OF MONSTER ASS KICKING

Dead Level (ded lev'uhl) Any level attained not conferring a feat, ability increase, or class feature, essentially sucking.

Gravy Level (gray'vee lev'uhl) The class levels featuring a feat and increases to all three saves, that is 6th, 12th, and 18th level. The juiciest class level is 12th, where the character gains in all three saving throws, gains a feat, and gains an ability score increase.

Skilled Multiclassing (skil'd muhl-tee clas-eng) Maximizing gravy levels while minimizing dead levels.

Killer Multiclassed Archetypes

The beauty of archetypes is you don't have to multiclass to build them. You could create an archer with just the fighter class, or a light infantry character with the monk. However, you may want to tinker with your class choices to specialize. You may also want to monkey around with blending archetypes such as a mounted archer character, or a guerrilla who is good

at filling many roles like a skirmisher. Sometimes you can get this level of diversification by changing the base class, or widening your focus on feats. Then again, you may want to pick up a few levels in another class, to complement the thematic idea behind your character.

This section details what elements you should focus on when multiclassing a character to

TABLE 3-5: THE FIGHTER

Level	Class Levels	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Avg. Hp	Gains
1	Ftr 1	+1	+2	+0	+0	10	Feat, fighter bonus feat
2	Ftr 2	+2	+3	+0	+0	15	Fighter bonus feat
3	Ftr 3	+3	+3	+1	+1	21	Feat
4	Ftr 4	+4	+4	+1	+1	26	Fighter bonus feat, ability increase
5	Ftr 5	+5	+4	+1	+1	32	—
6	Ftr 6	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	37	Feat, fighter bonus feat
7	Ftr 7	+7/+2	+5	+2	+2	43	—
8	Ftr 8	+8/+3	+6	+2	+2	48	Fighter bonus feat, ability increase
9	Ftr 9	+9/+4	+6	+3	+3	54	Feat
10	Ftr 10	+10/+5	+7	+3	+3	59	Fighter bonus feat
11	Ftr 11	+11/+6/+1	+7	+3	+3	65	—
12	Ftr 12	+12/+7/+2	+8	+4	+4	70	Feat, fighter bonus feat, ability increase
13	Ftr 13	+13/+8/+3	+8	+4	+4	76	—
14	Ftr 14	+14/+9/+4	+9	+4	+4	81	Fighter bonus feat
15	Ftr 15	+15/+10/+5	+9	+5	+5	87	Feat
16	Ftr 16	+16/+11/+6/+1	+10	+5	+5	92	Fighter bonus feat, ability increase
17	Ftr 17	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+5	98	—
18	Ftr 18	+18/+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+6	103	Feat, fighter bonus feat
19	Ftr 19	+19/+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+6	109	—
20	Ftr 20	+20/+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+6	114	Fighter bonus feat, ability increase

work with an archetype. In addition, there is an example progression for multiclassed characters under each heading. All of these combos assume the character is human to maximize the effects of multiclassing. We're here to show you the best combos, right? So, if you're playing a dwarf, and you want to multiclass as one of the example multiclass- es, you're going to have to tweak it a bit. Table 3-5 shows the fighter, for comparison. Notice that the fighter has six dead levels.

Multiclassed Archer

The archer is the easiest of the archetypes to make. The ranger class gives you all the tools you need to be a power- ful presence on the battlefield. Furthermore, the fighter class, by itself, gives you all the feats you could need to be the consummate archer and more. With the right ingredients, you can make an archer capable of kicking the crap out of the humdrum fighter any day. Start with the ranger, add a taste of fighter, and a pinch of rogue, and your archer cheesecake is ready to eat.

What you get: With the fighter bonus feats, you can gain Dodge and Mobility early, letting you set up for Shot on the Run. Your Fortitude and Reflex saves get a big boost. You only have one dead level, 17th. But by this level, noth- ing is likely to mess with you. The rogue levels add an additional dimension to the character class, giving you improved evasion, sneak attack for when you're hidden, and the ability to avoid booby traps designed to knock out the rear ranks of the party. Where you miss some of the freebie feats a fighter normally gets, you pick up so many additional abilities your character gains an edge in his versatility, letting him handle just about any situation.

What you lose: You give up a smidgen in the BAB department, your Will save progression is rancid, and you have almost 20 total hit points less than the fighter.

Important Stuff: Make sure you build your archer progression quickly, but not overlapping the combat styles given by the ranger class. So, build up the Shot on the Run tree first and fill in where you're missing in the Point Blank Shot tree. With this combo, you're going to have a decent Wisdom, for the spells of course, but you may want to invest in Iron Will to make up for your abysmal Will save. As for your animal companion, go with a large snake – readymade poison! Oh, and you're going to have to play a human or a half-elf to pull this off.

Stat Placement: Str 14, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 8; Dex 16 (4th), Wis 14 (8th), Dex 17 (12th), Dex 18 (16th), Dex 19 (20th).

TABLE 3-6: MULTICLASSED ARCHER

Level	Class Levels	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Avg. Hp	Gains
1	Rgr 1	+1	+2	+2	+0	8	Favored enemy, feat, Track, wild empathy
2	Rgr 2	+2	+3	+3	+0	12	Combat style
3	Rgr 2/Ftr 1	+3	+5	+3	+0	18	Feat, bonus fighter feat
4	Rgr 2/Ftr 2	+4	+6	+3	+0	23	Fighter bonus feat, ability increase
5	Rgr 3/Ftr 2	+5	+6	+3	+1	28	Endurance
6	Rgr 3/Ftr 2/Rog 1	+5	+6	+5	+1	32	Feat, sneak attack +1d6
7	Rgr 3/Ftr 2/Rog 2	+6/+1	+6	+6	+1	35	Evasion
8	Rgr 4/Ftr 2/Rog 2	+7/+2	+7	+7	+1	40	Animal companion, 1st-level spells, ability increase
9	Rgr 4/Ftr 2/Rog 3	+8/+3	+8	+7	+2	43	Feat, sneak attack +2d6, trap sense +1
10	Rgr 5/Ftr 2/Rog 3	+9/+4	+8	+7	+2	48	Favored enemy
11	Rgr 6/Ftr 2/Rog 3	+10/+5	+9	+8	+3	54	Improved combat style
12	Rgr 7/Ftr 2/Rog 3	+11/+6/+1	+9	+8	+3	59	Feat, woodland stride, ability increase
13	Rgr 8/Ftr 2/Rog 3	+12/+7/+2	+10	+9	+3	63	Swift tracker, 2nd-level spells
14	Rgr 9/Ftr 2/Rog 3	+13/+8/+3	+10	+9	+4	68	Improved evasion
15	Rgr 10/Ftr 2/Rog 3	+14/+9/+4	+11	+10	+4	72	Favored enemy, feat
16	Rgr 11/Ftr 2/Rog 3	+15/+10/+5	+11	+10	+4	77	Combat style master, 3rd-level spells, ability increase
17	Rgr 12/Ftr 2/Rog 3	+16/+11/+6/+1	+12	+11	+5	81	–
18	Rgr 13/Ftr 2/Rog 3	+17/+12/+7/+2	+12	+11	+5	86	Camouflage, feat
19	Rgr 14/Ftr 2/Rog 3	+18/+13/+8/+3	+13	+12	+5	90	4th-level spells
20	Rgr 15/Ftr 2/Rog 3	+19/+14/+9/+4	+13	+12	+6	95	Favored enemy, ability increase

Multiclassed Cavalry

Many view the cavalry archetype as a tank on a horse, the purview of the paladin, and ineffectual. However, as this book will show, mounted characters have some good advantages: increased speed, height advantage, and more. In the case of the paladin, the character gains the *pokemount*. This steed improves as the paladin advances. Want to take it a step further? Drop the paladin, but keep your alignment lawful good, and follow your code of conduct and all that good stuff. Pick up some levels as fighter, then ranger, and watch the speeding ginsu machine tear his way through the battlefield.

What you get: First, no dead levels; you get something every level. Your BAB stays where it needs to be: high. You have a decent Reflex save and your Will save never suffers too bad. Now, you've kept your alignment all sparkling clean to keep your paladin abilities, meaning you can still heal yourself (though not well), cast spells, turn undead and a bunch of other things, including the massive Charisma boost to your saves. The fighter levels wind up giving you four extra feats, while the ranger gives you the combat styles to win. With your special steed, you can zip anywhere you need on the battlefield, and once there, chop up your foes, smiting too, before moving onto the next bunch of baddies.

What you lose: You suck at turning undead. You never get evasion. You're about 8 hit points behind fighters. Your Will save improves in spurts, so you're liable to have long stretches of crummy resistance to mind-affecting spells and effects. Again, you'll need to be a human or half-elf to do this one too.

Important Stuff: Start building your Mounted Combat tree immediately. Use the fighter feats to build Weapon Focus and Specialization as soon as you get there. When you get to ranger, you have two choices: go the two-weapon fighting route, or become a mounted archer, which is also a viable choice. This is an effective combo, but is weakened in dungeon crawls, so having back-up tactics is necessary. You need a lot of good stats to do this combo well. If you only have three good stats, go another route. Keep a lawful good alignment and stick with the code of conduct; don't lose your paladin abilities. If you're faced with losing your paladin status, you'd better go for blackguard or be prepared for retirement.

Stat Placement: Str 14, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 15; Cha 16 (4th), Dex 14 (8th), Dex 15 (12th), Str 15 (16th), Dex 16 (20th).

TABLE 3-7: MULTICLASSED CAVALRY

Level	Class Levels	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Avg. Hp	Gains
1	Pal 1	+1	+2	+0	+0	10	Aura of good, detect evil, feat, smite evil 1/day
2	Pal 2	+2	+3	+0	+0	15	Divine grace, lay on hands
3	Pal 3	+3	+3	+1	+1	21	Aura of courage, divine health, feat
4	Pal 4	+4	+4	+1	+1	26	Turn undead, 1st-level spells, ability increase
5	Pal 5	+5	+4	+1	+1	32	Smite evil 2/day, special mount
6	Pal 6	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	37	Feat, remove disease 1/week
7	Ex-Pal 6/Ftr 1	+7/+2	+7	+2	+2	43	Fighter bonus feat
8	Ex-Pal 6/Ftr 2	+8/+3	+8	+2	+2	48	Feat, ability increase
9	Ex-Pal 6/Ftr 2/Rgr 1	+9/+4	+10	+4	+2	53	Favored enemy, feat, Track, wild empathy
10	Ex-Pal 6/Ftr 2/Rgr 2	+10/+5	+11	+5	+2	57	Combat style
11	Ex-Pal 6/Ftr 2/Rgr 3	+11/+6/+1	+11	+5	+3	62	Endurance
12	Ex-Pal 6/Ftr 3/Rgr 3	+12/+7/+2	+11	+6	+4	67	Feat, ability increase
13	Ex-Pal 6/Ftr 4/Rgr 3	+13/+8/+3	+12	+6	+4	73	Fighter bonus feat
14	Ex-Pal 6/Ftr 4/Rgr 4	+14/+9/+4	+13	+7	+4	77	Animal companion, 1st-level ranger spells
15	Ex-Pal 6/Ftr 4/Rgr 5	+15/+10/+5	+13	+7	+4	82	Favored enemy, feat
16	Ex-Pal 6/Ftr 5/Rgr 5	+16/+11/+6/+1	+13	+7	+4	87	Ability increase
17	Ex-Pal 6/Ftr 6/Rgr 5	+17/+12/+7/+2	+14	+8	+5	93	Fighter bonus feat
18	Ex-Pal 6/Ftr 6/Rgr 6	+18/+13/+8/+3	+15	+9	+6	97	Feat, improved combat style
19	Ex-Pal 6/Ftr 6/Rgr 7	+19/+14/+9/+4	+15	+9	+6	102	Woodland stride
20	Ex-Pal 6/Ftr 6/Rgr 8	+20/+15/+10/+5	+16	+10	+6	106	Swift tracker, 2nd-level ranger spells, ability score increase

Multiclassed Guerrilla

When designing a guerrilla, design the character with a particular opponent in mind, such as goblins, wizards, demons, or whatever. The ranger epitomizes the guerrilla, because the class uses favored enemies to deal additional damage, and skill bonuses against those foes. Adding classes to the guerrilla archetype is a good tactic. Additional classes help to focus on defeating a particular foe. The below example blends the monk, barbarian and ranger to create the quintessential, sneak-behind-enemy-lines, wreak havoc, get-the-hell-out-of-Dodge kind of guerrilla we all love and hate. Note that unlike the paladin, monks retain their abilities even if their alignment changes.

What you get: With a strong monk foundation, this guerrilla provides a ton of mobility and defensive abilities, while also getting all the flurry of blows attacks one could ever want. With great saves and cool class features this multiclassed character can withstand just about anything he would face. One thing monks lack is ranged attacks. The ranger levels allow the character to develop ranged combat skills for higher level play. On the other hand, how about a monk that kicks ass with a quarterstaff? Double weapon, ranger combat techniques, mega-strength, high AC... deadly. Finally, the barbarian levels are the coup de grace, so to speak. The rage-inflated Strength and Constitution more than make up for the lost abilities monks gain at higher levels. Oh, and there aren't any dead levels here either.

What you lose: By 20th level, this multiclassed character should average about 11 hit points less than a regular fighter. The favored enemy ability does not carry the extra effect it has in straight-classed rangers, and many of the monk's abilities rely on no armor to function. In addition, flurry of blows is only useful if you're using monk weapons. So, when you pick up your barbarian levels, it's best to stick with the basics and stay with the low-damage-yielding monk weaponry.

Important Stuff: This is another combo requiring a human or a half-elf. In this case, you want to play a human for

TABLE 3-8: MULTICLASSED GUERRILLA

Level	Class Levels	Attack	Flurry	Fort	Ref	Will	Avg. Hp	Gains
1	Mnk 1	+0	-2/-2	+2	+2	+2	8	Bonus feat, flurry of blows, unarmed strike (1d6), feat
2	Mnk 2	+1	-1/-1	+3	+3	+3	12	Bonus feat, evasion
3	Mnk 3	+2	+0/+0	+3	+3	+3	17	Feat, still mind, Spd +10
4	Mnk 4	+3	+1/+1	+4	+4	+4	21	Ki strike (magic), slow fall (20 ft.), ability increase, unarmed strike (1d8)
5	Mnk 5	+3	+2/+2	+4	+4	+4	26	Purity of Body, AC +1
6	Mnk 6	+4	+3/+3	+5	+5	+5	30	Bonus feat, slow fall (30 ft.), Spd +20 ft.
7	Mnk 7	+5	+4/+4	+5	+5	+5	35	Wholeness of Body
8	Mnk 8	+6/+1	+5/+5/+0	+6	+6	+6	39	Slow fall (40 ft.), unarmed strike (1d10), ability increase
9	Mnk 9	+6/+1	+6/+6/+1	+6	+6	+6	44	Feat, improved evasion, Spd +30 ft.
10	Mnk 10	+7/+2	+7/+7/+2	+7	+7	+7	48	Ki strike (lawful), slow fall (50 ft.), AC +2
11	Mnk 11	+8/+3	+8/+8/+8/+3	+7	+7	+7	53	Diamond body, greater flurry
12	Ex-Mnk 11/Bbn 1	+9/+4	+9/+9/+9/+4	+9	+7	+7	59	Fast movement, feat, rage 1/day, ability increase
13	Ex-Mnk 11/Bbn 2	+10/+5	+10/+10/+10/+5	+10	+7	+7	66	Uncanny dodge
14	Ex-Mnk 11/Bbn 2/Rgr 1	+11/+6/+1	+11/+11/+11/+6/+1	+12	+9	+7	70	Favored enemy, Track, wild empathy
15	Ex-Mnk 11/Bbn 2/Rgr 2	+12/+7/+2	+12/+12/+12/+7/+2	+13	+10	+7	75	Combat style, feat
16	Ex-Mnk 11/Bbn 3/Rgr 2	+13/+8/+3	+13/+13/+13/+8/+3	+13	+11	+8	81	Trap sense +1, ability increase
17	Ex-Mnk 11/Bbn 3/Rgr 3	+14/+9/+4	+14/+14/+14/+9/+4	+13	+11	+9	86	Endurance
18	Ex-Mnk 11/Bbn 4/Rgr 3	+15/+10/+5	+15/+15/+15/+10/+5	+14	+11	+9	92	Feat, rage 2/day
19	Ex-Mnk 11/Bbn 4/Rgr 4	+16/+11/+6/+1	+16/+16/+16/+11/+6/+1	+15	+12	+9	97	Animal companion, 1st-level spells
20	Ex-Mnk 11/Bbn 5/Rgr 4	+17/+12/+7/+2	+17/+17/+17/+12/+7/+2	+15	+12	+9	103	Improved uncanny dodge

the extra feat. Your feat selection should follow a monk's normal selection (see above) and include fewer of the ranger/barbarian feats. This guerrilla should operate safely, waiting for the right opportunity to strike. Also, start acting a bit chaotic around 11th-level to justify your alignment change at 12th-level.

Stat Placement: Str 12, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 8; Wis 16 (4th), Dex 15 (8th), Dex 16 (12th), Dex 17 (16th), Dex 18 (20th).

Multiclassed Heavy Infantry

Heavy infantry is the domain of the fighter, a warrior encased in steel who stands on the frontlines, hacking through the front ranks of any who threaten them. While these characters are great fun to play, without the proper support, they can find themselves in the unfortunate predicament of having no hit points and no way to get away. This combo addresses the problem by tossing in a few levels of cleric and paladin to complement the fighting abilities of the fighter without compromising the role of the character.

What you gain: Aside from domains, granted powers, turning undead, 3rd-level spells, and paladin abilities through 8th-level, you get to keep on fighting. Your Will save is better than most fighters, a good thing when facing enchantment spells. In addition, you gain three fighter bonus feats, giving you an extra feat tree. With the cleric spells and paladin abilities, you can keep fighting long after other front-line characters go down. And, no dead levels.

What you lose: You lose many feats with this multiclass combo. It's not so bad, because heavy infantry's primary role is to deal damage. By 20th level, you're behind the fighter in hit points by 5. Your Reflex save stinks, so you'll have to watch out for traps. You're BAB is 2 points behind the fighter, but with all the buff spells and support mechanisms, it's a small trade-off.

Important Stuff: You need many good stats to pull this combo off: Strength, Constitution, Wisdom, and Charisma. Also, you'd better plan on playing a human, preferred, or a half-elf to do this, as paladin is not a favored class for any of the core races. This combo pretty much relegates your cleric levels as means to support your fighting abilities, so you're not going to be able to do much against the bad guys with spells considering your lower-than-normal Wisdom. These characters are melee warriors. Don't waste any time or effort on ranged attacks. Let your special mount carry you to the bad guys when you need to get somewhere quick.

Stat Placement: Str 15, Dex 8, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14; Str 16 (4th), Wis 13 (8th), Con 14 (12th), Str 17 (16th), Str 18 (20th).

TABLE 3-9: MULTICLASSED HEAVY INFANTRY

Level	Class Levels	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Avg. Hp	Gains
1	Ftr 1	+1	+2	+0	+0	10	Feat, fighter bonus feat
2	Ftr 2	+2	+3	+0	+0	15	Fighter bonus feat
3	Ftr 2/Clr 1	+2	+5	+0	+2	20	Feat, 1st-level spells, turn undead
4	Ftr 2/Clr 2	+3	+6	+0	+3	24	Ability increase
5	Ftr 2/Clr 3	+4	+6	+1	+3	29	2nd-level spells
6	Ftr 3/Clr 3	+5	+6	+2	+4	34	Feat
7	Ftr 4/Clr 3	+6/+1	+7	+2	+4	40	Fighter bonus feat
8	Ftr 4/Clr 4	+7/+2	+8	+2	+5	44	Ability increase
9	Ftr 4/Clr 5	+7/+2	+8	+2	+5	50	Feat, 3rd-level spells
10	Ftr 4/Clr 5/Pal 1	+8/+3	+10	+2	+5	55	Aura of good, detect evil, smite evil 1/day
11	Ftr 4/Clr 5/Pal 2	+9/+4	+11	+2	+5	61	Divine grace, lay on hands
12	Ftr 4/Clr 5/Pal 3	+10/+5	+11	+3	+6	66	Aura of courage, divine health, feat, ability increase
13	Ftr 4/Clr 5/Pal 4	+11/+6/+1	+12	+3	+6	72	1st-level spells, turn undead
14	Ftr 4/Clr 5/Pal 5	+12/+7/+2	+12	+3	+6	77	Smite evil 2/day, special mount
15	Ftr 4/Clr 5/Pal 6	+13/+8/+3	+13	+4	+7	83	Feat, remove disease 1/week
16	Ftr 4/Clr 5/Pal 7	+14/+9/+4	+13	+4	+7	88	Ability increase
17	Ftr 4/Clr 5/Pal 8	+15/+10/+5	+14	+4	+7	94	2nd-level spells
18	Ftr 4/Clr 5/Pal 9	+16/+11/+6/+1	+14	+5	+8	99	Feat, remove disease 2/week
19	Ftr 4/Clr 5/Pal 10	+17/+12/+7/+2	+15	+5	+8	105	Smite evil 3/day
20	Ftr 4/Clr 5/Pal 11	+18/+13/+8/+3	+15	+5	+8	109	3rd-level spells, ability increase

Multiclassed Light Infantry

Light infantry characters need mobility, the ability to get in and out of ugly fights, and maneuverability to gain flanks. Monks and barbarians make the best light infantry characters, but sometimes you just have a craving to be a little more destructive. Start with the barbarian (12 hit points of course and decent skill points), then add the ranger, fighter, rogue, and you're a death-dealing horror, capable of wading through just about any fight, dodging most spells, and with the hit points to back up your threats.

What you gain: With this combination, you don't have any dead levels. You're fast, thanks to the barbarian levels, and you can inflate Strength and Constitution by raging, while still being quick and good enough to avoid many of the hits. You have a great Fortitude and Reflex save but 10 hit points less than the fighter by 20th level. Even though you don't have the feats of a regular fighter, you get enough other class features to replicate feats, or which are so awesome in their own right you'll hardly miss the feats. Plus, you gain the ranger's combat style at 3rd level. Throw in some spells, and you're ready for anything.

What you lose: Your Will save is awful; stack on a feat like Iron Will to make up for the deficiency. You have to wait until 19th level to pick-up Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, you'll never get combat mastery, and you're limited to one rage per day until 17th level. This combo exemplifies how the higher-level abilities can become unattainable.

Important Stuff: Use your rage sparingly, because you're usually only going to have it for one combat. Spend your feats on things enabling you to boost your AC, like Combat Expertise, Dodge, and Mobility. In combat, take positions giving you flanks. Above all else, use your speed and mobility to your advantage, fighting the fights you can win, and getting away from those you can't.

Stat Placement: Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8; Str 16 (4th), Wis 11 (8th), Con 14 (12th), Dex 15 (16th), Dex 16 (20th).

MULTICLASSING AND ROGUES

Ask any player, and they're sure to tell you that the first level in a multiclassed character should always be rogue. Yep, they're right... most of the time. A first level rogue gets 32 skill points before stat modifiers or racial modifiers, and with sneak attack, they're pretty nasty. However, when you're making a warrior, isn't it your job to kill things, to stay up fighting when all else fails? Yep. With 6 hit points, and a cleric's BAB, a first level rogue as a party's sole warrior doesn't do anyone any good. If you want the skills, go with ranger or barbarian. You'll be glad you did when you don't have to roll up a new character.

TABLE 3-10: MULTICLASSED LIGHT INFANTRY

Level	Class Levels	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Avg Hp	Gains
1	Bbn 1	+1	+2	+0	+0	12	Fast movement, feat, rage 1/day
2	Bbn 1/Rgr 1	+2	+4	+2	+0	16	Favored enemy, Track, wild empathy
3	Bbn 1/Rgr 2	+3	+5	+3	+0	21	Combat style, feat
4	Bbn 1/Rgr 2/Ftr 1	+4	+7	+3	+0	26	Bonus fighter feat, ability increase
5	Bbn 1/Rgr 2/Ftr 1/Rog 1	+4	+7	+5	+0	30	Sneak attack +1d6
6	Bbn 1/Rgr 2/Ftr 1/Rog 2	+5	+7	+6	+0	33	Evasion, feat
7	Bbn 2/Rgr 2/Ftr 1/Rog 2	+6/+1	+8	+6	+0	40	Uncanny dodge
8	Bbn 2/Rgr 2/Ftr 2/Rog 2	+7/+2	+9	+6	+0	45	Fighter bonus feat, ability increase
9	Bbn 2/Rgr 2/Ftr 2/Rog 3	+8/+3	+10	+6	+1	49	Feat, sneak attack +2d6, trap sense +1
10	Bbn 2/Rgr 3/Ftr 2/Rog 3	+9/+4	+10	+6	+2	53	Endurance
11	Bbn 2/Rgr 3/Ftr 2/Rog 4	+10/+5	+10	+7	+2	57	Improved uncanny dodge
12	Bbn 2/Rgr 3/Ftr 3/Rog 4	+11/+6/+1	+10	+8	+3	62	Feat, ability increase
13	Bbn 2/Rgr 4/Ftr 3/Rog 4	+12/+7/+2	+11	+9	+3	67	Animal companion, 1st-level spells
14	Bbn 2/Rgr 5/Ftr 3/Rog 4	+13/+8/+3	+11	+9	+3	71	Improved combat style
15	Bbn 3/Rgr 5/Ftr 3/Rog 4	+14/+9/+4	+11	+10	+4	78	Feat, Trap sense +1
16	Bbn 3/Rgr 5/Ftr 4/Rog 4	+15/+10/+5	+12	+10	+4	83	Fighter bonus feat, ability increase
17	Bbn 4/Rgr 5/Ftr 4/Rog 4	+16/+11/+6/+1	+13	+10	+4	90	Rage 2/day
18	Bbn 4/Rgr 5/Ftr 4/Rog 5	+16/+11/+6/+1	+13	+10	+4	93	Feat, sneak attack +3d6
19	Bbn 4/Rgr 6/Ftr 4/Rog 5	+17/+12/+7/+2	+14	+11	+5	98	Improved combat style
20	Bbn 5/Rgr 6/Ftr 4/Rog 5	+18/+13/+8/+3	+14	+11	+5	104	Improved uncanny dodge, ability increase

Multiclassed Skirmisher

The skirmisher is the warrior who needs to be good at just about everything, to fill in where needed and pick up the slack when a better warrior falls. Most skirmishers are multiclassed characters, combining elements of warrior classes with rogue, wizard, or cleric. In the example below, we build the true bard, a throwback to an earlier edition, to capture the feeling of the true skirmisher.

What you get: Everything. You get hit points, great saves all across the board, divine and arcane spells, animal companions, the ability to rage... the list goes on. The barbarian forms the backbone of this combo, providing the best hit points, and the inflatable stats. Druid comes next to give the skirmisher more control over the battlefield, with access to such spells as *entangle*, the ability to swap spells for *nature's ally* and, most importantly, the ability to heal. The bard, while an undesirable class option for most warriors, complements the combo, boosting the Reflex and the Will saves, while also opening up the character to using different kinds of magic items to improve his versatility. Fighter is added for pure cheese, while the ranger enhances the druid abilities, while also advancing the character's BAB.

What you lose: Focus. You'll never cast spells with the same potency of other characters. Though you have some combat potential, you don't get your first iterative attack until 8th-level. Though the bard provides some extra abilities, few of its spells are useful. The schizophrenic results of this class temper what gains you pick up.

Important Stuff: First, any race can pull this one off, as there aren't any level gaps, so play whatever you want. Insofar as spells go, don't waste time with cute stuff. Select spells giving you an advantage in combat, namely buff spells. Seeing as you share spells with your animal companion, whatever you buff yourself with, so too does your companion buff. Finally, play like a skirmisher should. Don't be the first to enter combat. Use your abilities to help where most needed: defending the wizard, filling in gaps in the front ranks, using the aid another action when useless. The joys of this combo are you can pretty much do anything in a combat round.

Stat Placement: Str 15, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 12; Str 16 (4th), Con 11 (8th), Con 12 (12th), Str 17 (16th), Str 18 (20th).

TABLE 3-11: MULTICLASSED SKIRMISHER

Level	Class Levels	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Avg Hp	Gains
1	Bbn 1	+1	+2	+0	+0	12	Fast movement, feat, rage 1/day
2	Bbn 1/Drd 1	+1	+4	+0	+2	16	Animal companion, nature sense, wild empathy, 1st-level spells
3	Bbn 2/Drd 1	+2	+5	+0	+2	23	Feat, uncanny dodge
4	Bbn 2/Drd 1/Brd 1	+2	+5	+2	+4	26	Bardic music, bardic knowledge, countersong, fascinate, inspire courage, 0-level spells, ability increase
5	Bbn 2/Drd 2/Brd 1	+3	+6	+2	+5	31	Woodland stride
6	Bbn 3/Drd 2/Brd 1	+4	+6	+3	+6	37	Feat, trap sense +1
7	Bbn 3/Drd 2/Brd 2	+5	+6	+4	+7	41	1st-level spells
8	Bbn 3/Drd 3/Brd 2	+6/+1	+6	+5	+7	45	Trackless step, 2nd-level spells, ability increase
9	Bbn 4/Drd 3/Brd 2	+7/+2	+7	+5	+7	52	Feat, rage 2/day
10	Bbn 4/Drd 3/Brd 2/Ftr 1	+8/+3	+9	+5	+7	57	Fighter bonus feat
11	Bbn 4/Drd 3/Brd 2/Ftr 2	+9/+4	+10	+5	+7	63	Fighter bonus feat
12	Bbn 4/Drd 3/Brd 3/Ftr 2	+10/+5	+11	+5	+7	66	Feat, inspire competence, ability increase
13	Bbn 4/Drd 3/Brd 3/Ftr 2/Rgr 1	+11/+6/+1	+13	+7	+7	71	Favored enemy, Track, wild empathy
14	Bbn 4/Drd 3/Brd 3/Ftr 2/Rgr 2	+12/+7/+2	+14	+8	+7	75	Combat style
15	Bbn 4/Drd 4/Brd 3/Ftr 2/Rgr 2	+13/+8/+3	+15	+8	+8	80	Feat, resist nature's lure
16	Bbn 5/Drd 4/Brd 3/Ftr 2/Rgr 2	+14/+9/+4	+15	+8	+8	86	Improved uncanny dodge, ability increase
17	Bbn 5/Drd 4/Brd 3/Ftr 2/Rgr 3	+15/+10/+5	+15	+8	+9	91	Endurance
18	Bbn 5/Drd 4/Brd 3/Ftr 2/Rgr 4	+16/+11/+6/+1	+16	+9	+9	95	Animal companion, feat
19	Bbn 5/Drd 5/Brd 3/Ftr 2/Rgr 4	+16/+11/+6/+1	+16	+9	+9	100	Wild shape, 3rd-level spells
20	Bbn 6/Drd 5/Brd 3/Ftr 2/Rgr 4	+17/+12/+6/+2	+17	+10	+10	106	Trap sense +2, ability increase

Chapter Four

Skills

“Skills? Who needs skills?” Given the warrior’s heavy focus on combat, the use of skills does not rate high on their wish list. Combined with the low skill points and limited selection of most warrior classes, players may even be tempted to disregard skills as useless fluff for their characters. Skills certainly won’t help the warrior swing her sword or loose her arrows. But with proper planning, the shrewd application of skills both before and during combat can have a dramatic effect on the battle’s outcome.

Even more than with feats, the overall usefulness of any given skill depends greatly upon the campaign setting and the environment within which the characters are adventuring. You may find the usefulness of your skills fluctuating significantly from session to session. For this reason, this chapter does not focus on assigning arbitrary values of usefulness to each skill. Instead, skills are grouped by their overall function relative to their typical application by warriors (i.e., how well they help you kill stuff).

Combat Mobility

Often underrated, the mobility of a warrior is vital to her success in battle. Distance and movement are integral elements of the 3.5 combat system. Five feet can mean the difference between a standard attack and a full attack, and something as simple as a Tumble check can mean the difference between multiple attacks of opportunity and none whatsoever. The mobility skills should be examined carefully. They’re most important to the light infantry and guerilla archetypes. Though heavy infantry and cavalry warriors could find the mobility-oriented skills useful, chances are that they will be rendered ineffective by heavy armor or a preference for fighting while mounted.

However, more than anything, it should be noted that the most frequent and important applications of the mobility skills involve running away from enemies like a massive coward. As long as you accept this and later return to destroy the thinned-out, wheezing, prone ranks of your foes, you will prosper.

Balance

The practical usefulness of Balance is questionable in all but the most unique of campaign settings. Its application is limited to environments with “difficult” surfaces or surfaces less than twelve inches wide. Before spending a single skill point on Balance, think seriously about how often your DM has thrown your party into such places.

With that cautionary preface out of the way, it should be said that ranks in Balance can be a sound investment for monk characters, as they are the only warrior class with class skill access to Balance. Combined with a monk’s potential for tactical mayhem using the Jump skill, an enterprising player can make the most of an environment to either traverse terrain through alternate routes (the rafters of a barn, chains across a chasm, and so on) or simply to use an escape route that is perilous for other characters to follow.

For non-monk characters of the light infantry or guerilla archetypes, the cost of Balance may be excessive considering its narrow application (no pun intended). Again, this analysis is left to the player for her specific character and campaign.

To properly use the Balance skill to a warrior’s advantage, the player has to make every effort to control where a battle takes place. Open, level terrain renders the skill completely worthless. If a battle starts in such an environment and odds are against the Balance-invested warrior, it may be to her advantage to draw opponents towards a more restricted location. Suitable environments might include a ruined castle courtyard, a frozen lake, a muddy creek spanned by fallen trees, or even a dusty stone floor made slick with water.

Characters who run from melee opponents will force their opponents to choose new tactics or pursue. Running demands a Balance check on hazardous surfaces, and even if the check is successful, the character’s movement rate is halved. If the check is failed, opponents will be halted or, better yet, fall flat on their collective faces. The high-Balance character may either completely shake her opponents or face them at uneven intervals as they individually cross the hazardous terrain at mixed rates.

Climb

All standard warrior classes but paladins have access to Climb as a class skill, and in many campaigns, characters will frequently have opportunities to climb surfaces during combat. DMs playing clever archers, spellcasters and other long-distance foes may place those enemies on elevated surfaces like cliffs, ledges, and roofs. If a melee warrior cannot reach those targets, she is effectively out of the battle. Conversely, a warrior of the archer archetype may wish to position herself in such a location prior to an ambush. Without the use of magic items or the assistance of another character, such warriors must rely on the use of the Climb skill.

However, it has to be said that while characters often find many opportunities to climb, there are a wide variety of spells and magic items that make ranks in the Climb skill a questionable investment (see sidebar).

DON'T BE A CHUMP. USE POTIONS, NOT POINTS!

A simple perusal of the PHB spell section and the DMG magic item section reveals several dozen ways to cheaply enhance many skills. Several skills are overrepresented and most are underrepresented. Between *potions of invisibility*, *cloaks of elvenkind*, and armor with the *shadow* property, it's a wonder that anyone ever makes any Spot checks in a well-stocked campaign. Notice anything that grants a bonus to Spot? No? That's because there's a grand total of one.

As always, availability of magic for your character depends on party composition and how rich in magic the campaign is. But if, for example, a *potion of spider climb* in your campaign costs anywhere near the price listed in the DMG, potions may be a better investment than skill ranks. *Spider climb* not only gives a climb speed of 20 ft. (Climb normally allows only 1/4 movement rate), but the subject doesn't even need to make checks while climbing on horizontal or vertical surfaces! At a duration of 10 min./level, it is almost guaranteed to last until the end of any battle. Though it could be argued that a warrior wastes a standard action just drinking a potion (and more if she had to retrieve it), she will make up the lost time in accelerated movement if the distance of the climb is twenty feet or greater. Plus, with a duration of 30 minutes or more, you can just drink a potion every half-hour or so – how many times have you wandered through a dungeon and not met an opponent within half an hour?

A warrior spending trivial amounts of skill points in a skill can still make important checks with the right equipment. It doesn't matter if your warrior makes a Hide check by one point or thirty; if you make it, you make it. For that reason, put your points in skills that are difficult to enhance with relatively common magic. Warriors typically do not get a lot of skill points per level, making them precious, especially when compared to the trivial cost of most basic magic items. Stock up on potions of *spider climb*, *jump*, and *invisibility*; save your skill points for Listen, Tumble, and Ride.

Jump

Except for paladins, who can only jump when their god says so, all of the standard warrior classes can advance Jump as a class skill. In many campaigns, the potential for using Jump will be fair at best, but it's still better than Balance. As with many of the other combat mobility skills, light infantry, guerilla, and some archer characters will probably get the most out of this skill in any applicable environment. Heavy infantry characters will fall to their richly-deserved deaths and cavalry characters may find it redundant when they're sitting on an animal that's likely to be five times better at jumping than they will ever be.

Assuming you want to buy into it, the tricky thing about Jump isn't finding things to jump over; it's finding enough room to make the required 20-foot running start. Though it's possible to make standing long jumps at double the DC, there usually aren't practical situations where this is a safe bet to make. Unlike Balance, where most failed checks result in either moving slowly or falling down for a round, a failed Jump check in many circumstances will result in leaving the fight as quickly as your DM can find 20d6. If your typical adventure locations have names like "The Endless Chasms of Sorrow" or "The Hellish Canyons of At Least Two Hundred Foot Drops," it would be wise to accept that you should avoid jumping unless you're quite sure you can make the check.

However, for the character with a high Jump bonus, this can also be a great advantage. DMs will realize the danger of Jumping in some circumstances, too. Though Sir Stoneshoes might not hesitate to attempt a Balance check on a slick floor, he may balk at trying to jump over a 20-foot ravine just so he can follow your crazy monk.

It's arguable that warriors could infrequently use Jump to clear small creatures, but you'd probably be better off investing in Tumble for such occasions, since Tumble technically allows you roll right on through enemy creatures even when they're adjacent to each other. For monks, this is an exceptionally good idea. Monks get both Tumble and Jump as class skills and they both grant synergy bonuses to each other after five ranks. Combined with the Acrobatic feat, it's unlikely that anyone other than another monk would be able to follow you as you hop around the battlefield.

Swim

It is very rare that a player *expects* her character to be swimming on any given adventure, unless the setting obviously lends itself to such activities. Often, players suddenly find their characters in water or at the edge of a cliff with a horde of creatures close behind. Making a Swim check is just as often involuntary as voluntary, and it can be just as dangerous as jumping over a chasm. In fact, due to the lethality of drowning rules in the DMG, it is usually more deadly to a fighter than a long fall.

Because the checks are often involuntary, this is the only combat mobility skill where the fighters in the heaviest armor can benefit from having maximum ranks. If your heavy infantry or cavalry characters get thrown into the drink, that nice suit of full plate armor has double the armor check penalty that it does for other movement skills. Without high Strength and maximum ranks in Swim, a warrior could die very quickly. With no other modifiers, the -12 from full plate makes the check statistically impossible.

Does this really matter to you? To answer this, you must analyze your DM's style of setting up encounters. Does she note that Bob's paladin wears all metal armor and has all metal weapons, then drop rust monsters right next to him? Does she note that Suzy's wizard memorizes only fire spells, then sends a group of salamanders straight for her? Basically, if your DM loves to sucker-punch the PCs and your warrior wears heavy armor, it is in your best interest to buy ranks of Swim for insurance.

If you are playing one of the lightly armored warrior archetypes, a few ranks in Swim can help if you ever want to get to an inaccessible position. This is especially useful for archers. If our heavily armored foe Sir Stoneshoes hesitates to jump over a chasm, there is no way he is diving into the water to see if he can swim out to your archer.

Tumble

By this point in time, it may seem that the combat mobility skills are only useful for warriors if you are playing cowardly ninnies. Tumble almost makes up for that. However, more than any of the combat mobility skills, the usefulness of Tumble is negated by high encumbrance. In fact, you cannot use Tumble at all if your movement rate has been reduced due to encumbrance or armor. Therefore, it is only useful for archers, light infantry, guerillas, and some skirmishers, period.

There are two functions that make Tumble especially useful for warriors. The first is its ability to allow the warrior to completely avoid attacks of opportunity while moving through threatened spaces. As if that were not enough, high Tumble checks can actually allow the warrior to move through areas occupied by opponents.

The player should decide if she wants to have a "casual" tumbler or a "dedicated" tumbler. A casual tumbler only worries about avoiding attacks of opportunity when moving threatened areas. A dedicated tumbler tries to make those hellish DC 25 checks for tumbling through an area occupied by an enemy. The casual tumbler's check to avoid attacks of opportunity really isn't that difficult to make, and even if the character fails, she can still move; she just has to deal with the attack of opportunity. A +5 bonus to Tumble means you can avoid attacks of opportunity 50% of the time, statistically speaking. With a good Dexterity, you can get a +5 bonus at first level. And a +10 bonus, achievable a few levels later, means

you avoid attacks of opportunity 75% of the time. With a solid AC or the Mobility feat, the character will rarely suffer for a failed check.

In contrast, moving through occupied squares is a lot harder and can have dire consequences. Not only is the character's movement halted, but she takes an attack of opportunity for her efforts. You need a +15 on Tumble simply to hit a 50% chance of success. If you want to make use this aspect of Tumble, you need to max out your ranks, ramp up your Dexterity, and add as much Dexterity-enhancing magic as fast as you can.

Guerillas will find this skill invaluable if they take maximum ranks at every level, get the synergy bonus from Jump, and take the Acrobatic feat. Because they often go after targets like wizards and archers, they will frequently need to find a way around or through the meat shields that guard them. Short of magic, there is nothing that does this more effectively in combat than Tumble. Even if the meat shields decide to pursue the tumbling warrior, their ranks will likely be broken. This allows allies to move through the space the meat shields were blocking and take control of the terrain.

Combat Staging

Perhaps even more important than mobility is getting the jump on the competition before combat begins. When you start the battle, you choose the terrain, allied positions, and time of attack. It also gives the warrior's support crew time to load her up with beneficial spells and potions. In an otherwise evenly matched battle, the elements of surprise and preparation will almost always turn the tide in the aggressor's favor.

The skills of combat staging are traditionally the skills of the scouting rogue: Hide, Listen, Move Silently, and Spot. Though two classes, monk and ranger, have access to all four of these skills as class skills, they can still be useful to warriors of other classes provided they are of the appropriate archetype.

Hide and Move Silently

For practical purposes, Hide should be grouped with Move Silently. It is a stealth skill, and when one check is made, the other is usually made simultaneously. If a monk or ranger warrior wishes to invest in Hide, the player should always try to match Hide ranks with Move Silently ranks. However, there are a few choice ways to manipulate this skill setup in a way that does not drain other characters' entire available skill point pool every level.

The first rule to follow is simple: if the warrior does not have Hide and Move Silently as class skills, only put points in Move Silently. If you attempt to put points in both, you will wind up spending all of your points to get a mediocre skill that will often fail against opposed Spot

and Listen checks. If the warrior puts maximum points in just Move Silently, she can travel in the wake of a "legitimate" scout character like the party rogue. The rogue scouts, waits until no one is watching, and lets the warrior know when the coast is clear. If there is no line of sight to the warrior, no Spot check can be made to detect the character. If someone could spot the warrior, well, that is what *potions of invisibility* are for. Unless your character has to sneak by a hydra in full daylight, the +20 bonus to the warrior's Hide check should suffice.

The character will never match a monk or ranger, much less a rogue, for sheer ranks, but using the skill in the manner listed above will allow the warrior to successfully reach monitored locations either for her benefit or for the benefit of the scout.

As might be obvious, the heavy infantry and cavalry archetypes will find these skills close to useless. Not only are heavy infantry and cavalry characters unlikely to be monks or rangers, but they tend to carry around large plates of shiny metal on their bodies. Horses are also notoriously poor scouts, having given up subtlety for the ability to kick a grown man through a barn door. Hide and Move Silently are of the greatest use for guerillas and skirmishers. Choosing their position allows them

to choose their target. Since guerillas are dedicated to taking out specific types of enemies and skirmishers often play "cleanup," these skills can be their key to maximum efficiency early in a battle. Archers with good combat mobility skills like Climb and Jump may also find these skills valuable, as stealth can allow them the cover they need to reach their destination prior to combat.

Listen and Spot

Not surprisingly, Listen and Spot go together as well as Hide and Move Silently. The skills are both used to detect enemies before they spot you or, worse, before they are about to catch you flat-footed. Though on the surface, it may seem that both are of roughly equal value, it is normally Listen that is of greater value for the defender. First, any creature with a friendly spellcasting companion or a cheap potion can turn invisible. But there is only one common spell that helps with quiet movement: *silence*. Unfortunately for would-be assassins and guards, *silence* extends outwards from them. This not only potentially hurts them, but it also tips off noisy warriors when all sound ceases. The only case in which a player should be concerned about this is when a rogue is attempting to attack from range between thirty and fifteen feet of the target. Though this is a notable exception, it is just that: an exception.

Remember these maxims:

- Number of spells in the PHB that directly increase Move Silently: zero
- Number of skill points scouts or defensive warriors should put into Listen: as many as you can

Listen allows the warrior to detect enemies on top of wall, behind a door, and even under cover of darkness. All a warrior needs to worry about is tipping off enemies while scouting or being surprised and flat-footed during an ambush. Whether the goal is reconnaissance or simple defense, it is always better to have a high chance of making one check to detect an enemy than having two low chances to detect an enemy.

Archers or guerillas may also find Spot to be as useful as Listen, since it can allow them to locate remote targets in the middle of a large battle or in wide-open spaces. For the ranger archer and the monk guerilla, both of whom have access to Listen and Spot as class skills, equal investment in both can prove to be very useful.

Survival

Forget all about foraging for food and water. Forget about bonuses to Fortitude saves against severe weather. Skip everything listed in the Survival task table except tracking. This is the only application of Survival that has any significant merit for the dedicated warrior. Tracking is very useful for combat staging as it can tip the party

HOW TO SPEND YOUR POINTS, OR WHY

GENERALISTS SUCK AT HIGH LEVELS

In general, 3.5 favors the specialist. The game uses an unweighted progression for skills, attack bonuses, saving throws, and most other important things. As character bonuses and DCs increase, your character's bonus becomes far more relevant than the d20 roll to which it is added. Once the character's bonus to a die roll exceeds half the die's average value, you have passed that point. In other words, once you hit +10 in a skill, the influence of the random die roll starts to diminish rapidly. At low levels, the die roll makes or breaks a character's actions; at high levels, it is often a mere formality.

While it is fine to spend broadly at low levels, especially for skirmishers, after fifth or sixth level, players should start focusing their warriors' points on a fixed number of skills. The skills chosen should be advanced with maximum points every level. If you would have to alternate spending on a skill every other level, consider cutting it from your list of "must-have" skills. It is better to consistently make checks for one skill than to frequently fail checks for two skills.

Also, if a character has enough ranks and bonuses to consistently make skill checks against the only static DCs you care about, do not spend any more points in the skill. For example, if you want to use Spellcraft to identify spells as they are cast, there is no reason to spend any more points on the skill once the warrior's total bonus is +14. +14 gives you a 55% chance of identifying a 9th level spell, and an even higher chance of identifying lower-level spells (95% versus 1st level spells!), so unless you want absolute certainty of each spell effect, you're entering the realm of diminishing marginal returns. Of course, for skill checks where the DC is an opposed skill check, continual spending may be necessary, since what's important is having more skill ranks than the other guy.

off to the size and composition of a group of potential enemies. In many cases, tracking can be an effective form of "pre-reconnaissance reconnaissance." You don't need to risk sneaking into the caves full of ettins to know they're in there. Tracking can also allow a fast-moving archer, cavalry, or light infantry warrior to locate and run down a fleeing opponent who chooses to duck out of the battle when no one is looking.

For rangers, taking ranks in this skill is almost a no-brainer. They get the Track feat for free, and it can be useful on a regular basis. For other warriors, it's very questionable. Barbarians are the only other characters for whom it would not be a total waste. Even then, spending a feat on Track when it could be spent on Power Attack... that's a cardinal sin in the Church of Power Gaming.

Combat Tactics

Bluff, Concentration, Escape Artist, Heal, Intimidate, Ride, Sense Motive, and Spellcraft certainly do not seem to share much in common. With a mixed bag of potential applications, the combat tactics skills are often best used by a particular warrior archetype to achieve an advantage in combat. These skills will never take the place of a lucky critical hit, but they can certainly maximize a warrior's chances of success in battle. More than for any of the other skills listed, if a warrior archetype is not listed in conjunction with a combat tactics skill, assume that it is a poor investment for that type of character.

Bluff

Normally the domain of weakling rogues and bards who would rather talk their way out of a fight than get their hair messed up, Bluff can also be useful for light and heavy infantry warriors fighting highly agile opponents. At low levels, a quick-footed rogue or a nimble bard with a few protective spells active can be frustratingly difficult to hit. Most of those low-level characters will not invest their early skill points in Sense Motive. This makes them ripe for a feint via the Bluff skill. The feint negates their Dexterity bonus to armor class for your warrior's next single attack which can mean the difference between a spectacular miss and a solid hit.

It must be said, for several reasons, that this skill is not a good long-term investment for any warrior except a multi-classed rogue looking for some cheap sneak attacks. First, the player must accept that no standard warrior class has access to Bluff as a class skill. The characters most likely to be frustratingly agile are also the characters most likely to have Sense Motive, which opposes Bluff. Feint checks also allow the defender to add their base attack bonus to the roll. In the long run, enemy characters, even spending casually on Sense Motive, will have defending bonuses that far outstrip your warrior's Bluff bonus. Also, the feint takes up your warrior's standard action and, even if it is successful, only applies to the first attack on the next round. For

characters with iterative attacks, the bluff is a waste of a full attack action and ultimately does not help with iterative attacks after the first.

The optimal cut-off time for a warrior investing in Bluff is fourth or fifth level. After that point, the warrior will fail most feints against targets that matter and will have the necessary attack bonus to strike most targets with their primary attack. However, the clever skill-focused warrior can stop spending when they have five ranks in the skill, since it grants a whopping total of +8 in synergy bonuses to four different skills.

Concentration

Immediately, this skill seems out of place for warriors. It's a skill for spellcasters. But if you play a paladin or a ranger, it is vital for the successful use of spells at higher levels. Neither class has a huge arsenal of magic at its disposal, but a timely *bless weapon* or *longstrider* can be quite potent. Unlike wizards, sorcerers, bards, and even the occasional cleric or druid, paladins and rangers are expected to be in the thick of combat often. If your paladin or ranger is an infantry warrior or guerilla, Concentration is a must to avoid spell disruption. Archers and cavalry characters will normally be able to keep a safe enough distance that they can cast spells without fear of reprisal.

Escape Artist

This skill can be useful for any warrior attacked by a grappling monster or stuck in a web or similar effect. It is most useful for low-strength warriors, especially monks who tend to have higher Dexterity than Strength and lower base attack bonuses overall. Though monks are the best at starting grapple attacks because they have Improved Unarmed Strike, they are, statistically speaking, at a disadvantage when trying to escape from them through a standard grapple check. The three principle elements of a grapple check are base attack bonus, Strength modifier, and a special size modifier. More often than not, when going up against a heavy infantryman or any other melee warrior type, the monk will be at a disadvantage for at least two of these statistics if she needs to escape. If the opponent doing the grappling is monstrous, chances are that it will be both stronger and larger than the warrior being attacked. In such cases, a monk with a high Dexterity has a much better chance by relying on Escape Artist than on a standard check.

Though overall this skill has a very narrow application, it may be useful for guerillas and archers, who tend to fight alone and on foot, often separated from their fellow party members. An opponent who grapples your warrior with three of your comrades standing adjacent to the brawl is easily dispatched. An opponent who grapples the archer at the back of the room or the guerilla making a bee-line for the enemy wizard has a much better chance to make your warrior's soon-to-be-short life hell.

Handle Animal

Useful primarily for rangers with a steady cash flow, Handle Animal is a poor man's (or woman's) route to cheap combat and tracking labor. Summon monster... what? Leadership feat... huh? Why spend valuable spell and feat slots when guard dogs are 25 gp each? Guard dogs have only two hit dice, but they have a high base movement rate, the easily-abused Scent ability (which you should feel free to abuse), impressive bonuses to track, and, most annoying of all, gain free trip attacks on every bite attack without reprisal. To automatically command them for trained tasks, all you need is a +9 to Handle Animal, or +11 if they are wounded.

A ranger with four trained guard dogs is almost guaranteed to make all but the most difficult tracking checks, detect invisible opponents, and run down fleeing opponents with ease. From a min/max perspective, this is awesome. From a role-playing perspective, rangers probably shouldn't use guard dogs as fodder. Be sure to keep a freshly peeled onion under the table when dogs #17-20 die so the DM is confident that you are deeply affected by the loss. Then wait at least five minutes before purchasing dogs #21-24.

Your DM may charge high prices for pre-trained dogs or other animals. In such cases, you may find it useful to spend more skill points on Handle Animal and train the

creatures yourself. High checks will also allow your character to tame and train wild creatures like wolves, which are even more useful than standard dogs.

Non-ranger cavalry characters will also find this skill useful, if expensive and difficult, for the purpose of training mounts to perform specific tasks. Usually, however, this is not necessary for cavalry warriors to be effective. Still, the synergy bonus to Ride from five ranks in Handle Animal can come in useful.

Heal

Heal is a skill used by warriors to preserve the lives of their more frail comrades until a party healer can arrive and provide proper aid. Beneficial more for the mobile warrior types near the front line, Heal will often be underused by remote archers, occupied guerrillas, and heavy infantry with low movement rates.

The key to successful first aid use of the Heal skill is timeliness. A warrior who is unable to break free of her current engagements and administer aid at exactly the right time is useless. A cavalry warrior has the speed of movement to be timely at leisure, as does a light infantry character right next to the heart of the action. Skirmishers, who specifically play to the current needs of the group, will also find frequent use of the Heal skill to be invaluable.

In terms of character classes, this skill will be best used with rangers and paladins. Both classes have access to Heal as a class skill, and both classes gain additional class benefits for having a high Wisdom. Even at low levels, paladins often fall into the role of second string healer, so the Heal skill makes a good tertiary backup until the cleric or druid shows up.

The required check for a first aid check is static, sitting at a 15 DC. To guarantee success, get the basic check up to +12 and carry around a healing kit at all times. However, for casual healers or characters with Heal as a cross-class skill, you may wish to only get the Heal bonus into the +7 to +9 range. As long as your warrior reaches the dying character with at least an additional round to spare, your chances of making the check in two rounds are extremely high.

Note that in particularly brutal campaigns, the DM may make the path to a fallen comrade difficult to traverse. In these cases, mounted cavalry warriors will often have the best means to get the job done: overruns and bull rushes performed by a large steed with hooves the size of an enemy's head are generally very effective.

Intimidate

Besides being the only speech skill available as a class skill to barbarians and fighters, Intimidate has a very specific use in battle: demoralizing opponents. On the surface, this looks like it may be more useful than the feint

DON'T PLAY THE ROGUE'S GAME, TOUGH GUY. YOU'LL LOSE. BADLY.

You're playing a warrior. Always remember that. Even a warrior with a high Intelligence and decent class skills still only gets, at most, six skill points per level. Most get two or four. That's pretty pathetic compared to a rogue. Skills are the domain of rogues and bards. Though there are exceptions to this general rule, do not accept a rogue's invitation to a challenge of skills. In most cases, you will fail. Warriors will do best with skills when they are making checks against static DCs. The player knows what to expect, knows her character's bonuses, and can often make the check with confidence in the outcome.

Think about rogue and bard players in your party. They have more points than they know what to do with, make most checks by a huge margin, and typically are given most skill-enhancing magic items when loot is found. How often do they say, "Man, I wish I had some more skills to spend all these points on?" How often do they say, "The DC's fifteen? Oh, I made it by... twenty-two, I guess." How often do they say, "Well, with my twelve ranks, plus six Dexterity bonus, plus five competence bonus from my cloak, plus two racial bonus for being a halfling, plus two synergy bonus..." Do you really want to go up against that?

If your character is particularly well-suited for the use of a particular skill, by all means, ignore the caution given above. A warrior must choose her battles carefully, but do not hesitate to seize the opportunity if you are confident of your chances. But in general, focus on your strength (killing stuff), not on skills.

option offered by the Bluff skill. After all, the opponent's roll to defend has nothing to do with an opposed skill check and the penalties apply to the target's rolls, not just your attacks against the target. Unfortunately, it suffers the same long-term drawbacks as the feint: the use of a standard action wastes iterative attacks at higher levels. Also, those who are mostly likely to be cowed by the warrior's intimidation will typically be less important for neutralization purposes. Demoralizing a second level rogue for one round is not very important if a raging barbarian is power attacking you round after round. Still, it can be useful in the right situations.

Though it requires a bit of forethought, demoralization can be very effective when used in conjunction with special attacks like disarm or trip. Make a standard move towards the opponent and then demoralize her as your standard action. On the next round, make a disarm or trip attack. Not only will the target be at a disadvantage to hit your warrior, but she will be at a penalty to all opposed attack rolls and ability score checks required for the resolution of your special attacks. Another perk of demoralization is that any adjacent allies can take advantage of the opponent's shaken state. Even if your warrior does not have Improved Trip or Improved Disarm, one of your allies can still get the job done.

Overall, this skill is best taken by barbarians and fighters of the light infantry, heavy infantry, and cavalry archetypes. Archers who rarely enter combat, guerillas who fight opponents with low attack bonuses, and characters without Intimidate as a class skill will find it underused for the cost.

Ride

Without spoiling the great mystery, it must immediately be stated that the Ride skill is of paramount importance to the cavalry archetype. Though possession of a powerful mount, heavy armor, and numerous mounted combat feats is very useful, the Ride skill is necessary for cavalry characters to be effective. There is no special trick to using the Ride skill successfully as long as the campaign setting permits its frequent use.

For the dedicated cavalry character, Ride allows free cover, access to a mount's terrific Jump skill, superior mount movement, and free action mounts and dismounts. Archer characters, especially rangers, may also find Ride helpful as it allows them to quickly reposition themselves on an open battlefield. This is useful for running down fleeing opponents or moving away from incoming attackers. A mounted archer, even on a heavy warhorse with plate barding, will still be capable of evading all but the quickest and most dedicated pursuers.

Sense Motive

To combat-oriented warriors, this skill is useful for one thing: protecting against feints, usually from rogues. Rogues, being crafty types, may take the Improved Feint

feat, which allows them to feint as a move action. This is very bad for warriors, since it can open them up to repeated sneak attacks every round. Warriors other than monks and paladins will have trouble keeping pace with a rogue's Bluff skill because of the cross-class skill cost, but in the long run, the warrior classes' superior base attack bonus will balance out the Bluff-heavy rogue. For that reason, Sense Motive is a worthwhile investment for any melee-oriented character archetype fighting on foot. Archer and cavalry characters will find the skill underused.

Spellcraft

On the surface, this skill would seem almost worthless for warriors, especially since no standard warrior classes have access to it as a class skill. However, for the archer, guerilla, and skirmisher, it can be invaluable. In combat, the typical use of Spellcraft is for counterspelling enemy magic. Identification of the spell is a key component of counterspelling, and it can also be a key component of choosing which casters will be annihilated by a warrior's attacks. It will find the best use with archers who have readied actions covering a field with multiple enemy casters. As a free action, your warrior can try to recognize any spell being cast and determine if intercession is needed. Failure has no negative consequence. For characters with limited attacks of opportunity in melee combat with casters, it can help determine if an attack of opportunity should be used against a specific caster, or if the warrior should wait for another character to provoke a more important attack.

For guerillas dedicated to taking out spellcasters, this skill has another free advantage: identifying spells that are already in place. When running up to a fragile wizard ripe for melee attacks, the last thing a guerilla wants to do is find out the hard way that the old geezer is protected by a *fire shield*. As with identifying spells during casting, identifying spells in place is an unlimited-use free action with no penalty for failure.

How High Should You Go?

As alluded to previously, it's not always wise to keep ramping up skill ranks indefinitely. Beyond a certain point, you get diminishing marginal returns. What's the real difference between a 90% chance of success and 95%, especially when there's no cost to failure? Not much. Unless you truly have nothing better to spend your skill points on, you're better off learning a new skill at that point. Table 4-1 on the following page summarizes at what point the typical warrior should stop advancing in a skill, and the following paragraphs explain why.

Balance: At this point, the character's ranks and bonuses will usually make it more than 75% likely that he'll cross any narrow or difficult surface while running or charging, even with one of the worst surface modifiers. Unless you regularly cross severely obstructed, slippery,

sloped surfaces less than two inches wide, you should be fine.

Bluff: Warriors will not be able to successfully feint against most opponents after about 7th or 8th level. The five ranks in Bluff will give a +2 synergy bonus to four other skills, though.

Climb: Ten ranks of Climb will suffice for all “normal” climbing situations. For exceptional situations, use one of the myriad magic items that boost Climb to insane levels.

Concentration: Once a ranger or paladin reaches fifteen ranks in Concentration, they will be able to cast defensively with a very high success rate. Since their highest level spell is 4, their highest DC for casting defensively is 19. Even with only slight bonuses, they will almost always make their checks.

Escape Artist: A monk with Escape Artist is likely to be able to escape most grapples by the time she hits fifteen

ranks. And at that level, it will be pretty rare that an enemy chooses to grapple instead of using more powerful attacks.

Handle Animal: At fifteen ranks, even slight bonuses to Handle Animal will allow the character to do whatever she wants to do with animals. Most characters can even get away with ten or twelve ranks.

Heal: At ten ranks, the character will have at least a 75% chance of successfully administering first aid. Add bonuses on top of ranks, and it’s almost assured. Since characters usually get first aid long before –9 hit points, multiple chances make it extremely unlikely that the Heal check won’t succeed in time.

Hide: The first breakpoint is when most “casual” buyers should stop. If the warrior isn’t the primary scout for the party, she should accompany the primary scout and only move when the coast is clear. The second breakpoint is for warriors like rangers and monks who may, in fact, be doing the majority of the party’s scouting.

Intimidate: Up until about this point, it is acceptable to try to demoralize an opponent instead of making a full attack. After this point, it simply is not; you’re wasting two or more attacks a round for every Intimidate check you make. Once the secondary attack gains a bit of a bonus, lay off the Intimidate unless it’s a special occasion.

Jump: At five ranks, the casual buyer with slight bonuses can be reasonably confident of clearing a 10 foot wide obstacle. The five ranks also give a +2 synergy bonus to Tumble. Character classes biased towards jumping, like monks and barbarians, can feel free to buy the skill to the very limit. They will be able to make increasingly absurd jumps that their opponents could not dream of clearing.

Listen: The casual or “secondary” scout can use five ranks in Listen just to remain competitive with low-level rogues and sneaky monsters of all kinds. If the character is the primary scout and has Listen as a class skill, feel free to take it all the way to the maximum allowed.

Move Silently: As described in the skill analyses, Move Silently will generally be more important to a “tag-along” scout than Hide. Accordingly, warriors should buy up to about ten ranks and stop there unless there is a pressing need to push it. Dedicated scouts, as usual, should always max out this skill.

Ride: Unless the character is a serious cavalry warrior, only one rank of Ride is required. That’s all that’s necessary for taking Mounted Combat and, more importantly, the feats beyond it. Anyone who wants to make use of Mounted Combat will need to spend more on the Ride skill, but the exact amount depends on the level of commitment to fighting from horseback. Cavalry characters, on the other hand, should always max out this skill and use it to full effect.

Sense Motive: If feints from rogues are really a big

TABLE 4-1 WHEN TO STOP IMPROVING SKILLS

Skill	Ranks:				
	0	5	10	15	20+
Balance	*	*	Stop	–	–
Bluff	*	Stop	–	–	–
Climb	*	*	Stop	–	–
Concentration	*	*	*	Stop	–
Escape Artist	*	*	*	Stop	–
Handle Animal	*	*	*	Stop	–
Heal	*	*	Stop	–	–
Hide	*	Stop	*	*	Stop
Intimidate	*	*	Stop	–	–
Jump	*	Stop	*	*	Stop
Listen	*	Stop	*	*	Stop
Move Silently	*	Stop	*	*	Stop
Ride	Stop	*	*	*	Stop
Sense Motive	*	*	*	*	Stop
Spot	*	Stop	*	*	Stop
Spellcraft	*	*	*	Stop	–
Survival	*	*	*	*	Stop
Swim	*	*	Stop	*	Stop
Tumble	*	*	Stop	*	Stop

* Keep adding skill points.

problem, characters with Sense Motive as a class skill will need to continually advance the skill. If the rogues aren't feinting you that often, or if the warrior's class doesn't have good access to the skill, don't bother with it.

Spot: As with many of the combat staging skills, Spot doesn't need to be advanced much for the secondary scout or guard. For primary scouts and guards, it should be kept at maximum ranks.

Spellcraft: For guerillas, fifteen ranks marks the spot where spell identification starts to become really easy. Even a 9th level spell will have a 50% chance of being identified. With even slight bonuses, guerillas should have no problem.

Survival: A ranger will want to continually keep this skill at maximum ranks as the DCs for tracking can be high. Besides, few things are more satisfying than telling the DM that you made the check to track the moonlit week-old grig trail over snow-covered stone.

Swim: Archers, guerillas, and light infantry can comfortably stop at about ten ranks in Swim. This will allow them to make their checks more often than not, even if the water is fairly choppy. Cavalry, heavy infantry, and some skirmishers in heavy armor will need to max this skill out or find reliable magic to prevent their deaths when they fall into water in their armor.

Tumble: Tumble effectively has two breakpoints which are important for the character. The first is ten ranks, which makes it very likely for them to be able to tumble past opponents without provoking an attack of opportunity. If the character wants to reliably tumble through a blocked area, she is going to need close to twenty ranks or significant bonuses.

Synergy Recap

It's been said before but it's worth saying again: if you're going to take a skill, take at least 5 ranks, because more often than not that will give you a synergy bonus. The Skills chapter in the PHB has the super-handly table 4-5 for identifying which skills give synergies to which other skills. Read it carefully and keep it in mind as you allocate your skills. For the typical low-skill-points warrior, skill synergies are not a common occurrence, but simply being aware of the possibilities might change the way you build your character.

Chapter Five

Feats

Deciding your feat selection is one of the most important parts of character generation. Where a spellslinger has arcane magic, a thief has skills, and holies have granted powers or class features, warriors often have a smaller and weaker assortment of class features. Those warriors overlapping with wizards or druids find their spell capacity is sorely limited and learn quickly not to depend on them. This is where feats come in.

Several things affect a feat's usefulness, such as the campaign world, contextual usefulness, or even a long list of mediocre prerequisites. Worse, you start working for a prestige class only to discover that the class doesn't function as you thought, and now you're stuck with Endurance and Alertness – ugh! Screwing up your feat selection has far greater consequences than any other department in your character. See, a bad spell can be replaced. A handful of poorly thought-out skill point placements is no big deal. But typical characters get seven feats. Period. And unless you're human, or sacrifice other potential cool abilities for levels in fighter, you're pretty much stuck with just a few feats.

So how do you avoid taking the wrong feats? This chapter will give a comprehensive overview to help you plan your warrior's feats throughout his career. We're not going to level a bunch of forests by droning on about the worthless ones, except for maybe a few words here and there about fool's gold. Instead, we'll spend our time talking about the best feats in the game, focusing on the core feats in a given feat tree.

Fool's Gold

Lots of feats look cooler than they actually are. In fact, many are common feats that seem enticing on paper, but in play, they suck. Here's a list of the prime offenders. They're rarely a good choice for warriors

Skill Buff Feats (SBFs)

Any feat that adds a +3 bonus to one skill or +2 bonus to X and Y checks are SBFs. Such feats include Acrobatic, Agile, Deceitful, and the rest. These are common through the d20 system. In fact, for warriors they are like viruses, deluding the player into thinking that a Hide check of +27 is just that much better than +25, like Spot +3 will make that much difference over Spot +1. Maybe these skills are acceptable for other classes, or for role-playing (like that matters), but for characters built to maximize killing potential, count these as wasted feats.

Armor Feats

Another stinker is the Armor Proficiency feats. It seems these were included for completeness, mechanics, and for options, but in fact they have next to no impact on game play. Some warrior classes have a limited selection of armor, true. However, if you want to beef up your armor selection, just take a level in fighter. Then you get all the weapons and armor one could possibly ever want, while gaining a bonus feat to boot.

Metamagic and Item Creation Feats

In almost every case, there are better feats for warriors to invest in than sacking a feat for a quirky metamagic feat,

WHAT'S A FEAT TREE?

Feat trees are the obvious combos in the feats chapter of the PHB. They usually start with a basic feat, then progress into a list of other feats with the basic feat as a prerequisite. For example, Power Attack is the root of its own feat tree. Its branches are Cleave, Improved Sunder, Great Cleave, and so on. The PHB has several species of feat trees and they are as follows:

Armor Proficiency	Combat Expertise
Dodge	Endurance
Improved Unarmed Strike	Mounted Combat
Point Blank Shot	Power Attack
Shield Proficiency	Spell Focus
Spell Penetration	Two-Weapon Fighting
Weapon Focus	

or the experience-point draining item creation variety. However, the paladin would do well to invest in Brew Potion. Lacking the martial punch of the other combat characters, the paladin can fulfill other needed roles in the party through simply manufacturing potions and oils. Just think – an entire party with *blessed* weapons! And with *potions of cure light wounds* for everyone.

Miscellaneous Suckness

Several other feats defy classification. They may look good on paper, but have very limited usefulness.

Endurance: It doesn't matter how you dress this up, this feat still reeks, even as a prerequisite to Diehard. What is sad is that Endurance covers all the rules most DMs gloss over, such as sleeping in armor, extended swimming, extended running, and so on. When compared to Cleave or Spring Attack, there is really no reason to dump one of your seven feats here. However, if you're playing a fighter, and you have a spare feat at around 12th level, like so many do, go ahead, Diehard could be worth it.

Improved Initiative: This is an example of how a feat looks great, but actually sucks. Giving its greatest benefit to the rogue and spellcasting classes, Improved Initiative offers no tactical advantage to warriors whatsoever. Melee warriors often benefit from going after their opponents. Most opponents start separated by more than five feet on the battlefield. This means that if they wish to engage in melee, they need to close the distance. Moving more than five feet means they only get a single attack – whereas if they only step five feet, they can take the full attack action and swing, swing, swing! Given two combatants separated by any significant distance, the first combatant to make an attack almost always winds up making a single attack, followed by the opposition's full attack. The higher the levels of the warriors, the worse the loss – if both characters have three attacks, the first attacker loses two attacks simply to get in the first blow! Since warriors rarely drop significant opponents in a single attack, this actually makes the slower warrior more likely to win the battle.

Improved Overrun: The problem with Improved Overrun is that it actually takes away a potential advantage for your warrior. If we determine that the purpose of an overrun is to move past someone, and that the purpose of a bull rush is to push someone back, Improved Overrun makes it *more difficult* for your character to succeed at an overrun because it disallows the target from stepping out of the way. If all targets are forced to block, your warrior always has to roll a check. Granted, you have a +4 bonus to that check, but having to make a check at all is worse than a forfeit by the defender. The other thing to remember is that overruns do not provoke attacks of opportunity like a bull rush. Ultimately, Improved Bull Rush will help you make bull rushes far more than Improved Overrun helps overruns. If you just want to knock someone over, that's what the trip action is for.

Improved Sunder: Sunder seems like a great tactic, better when used by heavy hitters such as cavalry, heavy infantry, and the occasional beefy skirmisher. The way the rules are set up, hitting and destroying a piece of equipment is easy. The only annoying part is the attack of opportunity the special attack provokes. This takes care of that problem easily. Considering that the only feat prerequisite is Power Attack, itself a useful feat for heavy hitters (not to mention one which potentially augments the results of a successful sunder attempt), Improved Sunder is a good value, right?

This is all true. However, any time you destroy a piece of equipment on the battlefield, you destroy a part of your treasure. Say the big scary ogre fights with a +2 *greatclub* and is making mince meat out of your frontline. Do you sunder? Hell no. Disarm, trip, or anything else achieves a similar result, putting the opponent at a disadvantage, while keeping that tasty 2,000+ gp intact. Say you're fighting a bunch of orcs. Do you sunder their weapons or do you hack them apart? I think the answer is obvious. The only time to use sunder is when your opponent is using an item of no value to you, such as an evil weapon, artifact, poison and so on. Otherwise, sheathe this feat.

Toughness: Toughness is almost unequivocally one of the worst feats for any character. It is even less useful for a warrior. At low levels, the bonus hit points can be marginally useful, occasionally saving a character from going down, but as the levels increase, so do the amounts of damage dealt to your character. High level characters, especially fighters, often don't enter the dying state at all. Instead, they will frequently go from positive hit points to well below -10. As challenges rise, the warrior will feel the significance of that three-point buffer less and less. When a 14th level fighter with 30 hit points left gets roasted by a red dragon's 72-point fire attack, which will be more useful: +3 hit points, or +2 to Reflex saves?

All-Star Feats

What follows is analysis of the feats you ought to take. If it's not mentioned here or as a fool's gold feat, it's probably safe to take, but it's not going to help all that much either. Here, you're going to see all the analysis one could ever want, with tables comparing Power Attack and damage dealt to standard attacks, the effects of Combat Expertise, and great combos for the others. As feats are the bread and butter for most warriors, you'd better pay close attention. Oh, and in case I forget, the feats here are organized by tree, with the bad limbs pruned. Don't look for Weapon Focus in this chapter, as that feat tree gets some discussion under the fighter class in the Classes chapter, and Two-Weapon Fighting is under combat styles in the Combat chapter.

TABLE 5-1 IS SUPER IMPORTANT

Dog-ear this page. All of the following tables compare to the 5-1 to show the most basic chances for a warrior to hit an opponent based on BAB and AC, using a constant damage value.

TABLE 5-1: STANDARD ATTACK PROGRESSION FOR UNMODIFIED WARRIOR BAB WITH UNMODIFIED LONGSWORD

BAB	Average Damage	Typical Chance of Hitting and Damage Per Round Versus Given AC							
		15	Damage	20	Damage	25	Damage	30	Damage
+1	4.5	0.35	1.575	0.1	0.45	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+2	4.5	0.4	1.8	0.15	0.675	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+3	4.5	0.45	2.025	0.2	0.9	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+4	4.5	0.5	2.25	0.25	1.125	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+5	4.5	0.55	2.475	0.3	1.35	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+6/+1	4.5	0.95	4.275	0.45	2.025	0.15	0.675	0.1	0.45
+7/+2	4.5	0.9	4.05	0.55	2.475	0.2	0.9	0.1	0.45
+8/+3	4.5	1	4.5	0.65	2.925	0.25	1.125	0.1	0.45
+9/+4	4.5	1.1	4.95	0.75	3.375	0.3	1.35	0.1	0.45
+10/+5	4.5	1.2	5.4	0.85	3.825	0.35	1.575	0.1	0.45
+11/+6/+1	4.5	1.8	8.1	1.05	4.725	0.5	2.25	0.2	0.9
+12/+7/+2	4.5	1.95	8.775	1.2	5.4	0.6	2.7	0.25	1.125
+13/+8/+3	4.5	2.1	9.45	1.35	6.075	0.7	3.15	0.3	1.35
+14/+9/+4	4.5	2.25	10.125	1.5	6.75	0.8	3.6	0.35	1.575
+15/+10/+5	4.5	2.3	10.35	1.65	7.425	0.9	4.05	0.4	1.8
+16/+11/+6/+1	4.5	2.75	12.375	1.9	8.55	1.1	4.95	0.55	2.475
+17/+12/+7/+2	4.5	2.9	13.05	2.1	9.45	1.25	5.625	0.65	2.925
+18/+13/+8/+3	4.5	3.05	13.725	2.3	10.35	1.4	6.3	0.75	3.375
+19/+14/+9/+4	4.5	3.2	14.4	2.5	11.25	1.55	6.975	0.85	3.825
+20/+15/+10/+5	4.5	3.25	14.625	2.6	11.7	1.7	7.65	0.95	4.275

How to read Table 5-1: This table isn't nearly as complicated as it looks. Let's look at the fifth line. This tells you the stats for a warrior with a BAB of +5. He's using a longsword (that's the point of the example), which does 1d8 damage on a hit. The average result for a 1d8 is 4.5, so that's the "Average Damage" column. The mess of numbers that follows is pretty straightforward. Based on the basic math for calculating hit percentages (which is explained on page 16), a fighter with a BAB of +5 has a 55% chance (or 0.55 on the table above) of hitting an AC 15 opponent. So he basically has a 55% chance of doing damage each round. Thus, we multiply the average damage (4.5) by the chance of doing damage each round (in this case 0.55) to get the typical damage per round against that AC (in this case, 2.475 points). If the +5 warrior fought an AC 15 opponent for 10 rounds, he would do, on average, 24.75 points of damage (2.475 x 10).

Right now this table might not seem too amazing, but wait till you see the comparisons that follow. Then you'll see why it's important...

Combat Expertise Tree

Number of Feats in Tree: 5

Additional Trees Required?: Yes, Dodge

Entry: Int 13

Exit: Dex 13

Archetypes: The guerilla is the most apt to take this tree, but usually can only attain the prerequisites by 4th level, if using the stat array in Chapter 1.

Combat Expertise

Many players see Combat Expertise as an awesome and easy way to boost their AC without much in the way of drawbacks, and in a party of just one character, this is true. However, by dropping your attacks to boost your AC, you reduce your chances to hit in a round, allowing the monsters more opportunities to hit you and more importantly, your allies. If your allies fall dead, you're pretty much dead meat too. The best time to use Combat Expertise is against heavy hitters with a low AC. This lets you minimize your chances of being hit, while still giving you a good chance of hitting your foe as well. Check out the comparison below. At 1st level, the warrior's AC increases by +1, +2 at 2nd, +3 at 3rd, +4 at 4th and +5 at 5th and above. His attack bonus ("Adjusted BAB" in the table) decreases by the same amount. The result is that the warrior hits about half as much as a standard warrior and does about half as much damage at the higher levels.

TREE ENTRIES EXPLAINED

Number of Feats in Tree: This is the total number of feats in the tree, including the bad ones.

Additional Trees Required?: Lists what other trees are necessary to take the whole tree, if any.

Entry: The prerequisite stat to take the first feat in the tree

Exit: The prerequisite stat to take the last feat in the tree.

Archetypes: Based on required stats, and referring to Chapter 1: Ability Scores, this lists which archetypes are likely to make use of the tree.

TABLE 5-2: MAX'D COMBAT EXPERTISE

Adjusted BAB (Expertise Mod)	Average Damage	Typical Chance of Hitting and Damage Per Round Versus Given AC							
		15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50
+0 (-1)	4.5	0.3	1.35	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+0 (-2)	4.5	0.3	1.35	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+0 (-3)	4.5	0.3	1.35	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+0 (-4)	4.5	0.3	1.35	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+0 (-5)	4.5	0.3	1.35	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+1/-4 (-5)	4.5	0.45	2.025	0.15	0.675	0.1	0.45	0.1	0.45
+2/-3 (-5)	4.5	0.4	1.8	0.2	0.9	0.1	0.45	0.1	0.45
+3/-2 (-5)	4.5	0.5	2.25	0.25	1.125	0.1	0.45	0.1	0.45
+4/-1 (-5)	4.5	0.6	2.7	0.3	1.35	0.1	0.45	0.1	0.45
+5/+0 (-5)	4.5	0.7	3.15	0.35	1.575	0.1	0.45	0.1	0.45
+6/+1/-4 (-5)	4.5	1.05	4.725	0.5	2.25	0.2	0.9	0.15	0.675
+7/+2/-3 (-5)	4.5	1.2	5.4	0.6	2.7	0.25	1.125	0.15	0.675
+8/+3/-2 (-5)	4.5	1.35	6.075	0.7	3.15	0.3	1.35	0.15	0.675
+9/+4/-1 (-5)	4.5	1.5	6.75	0.8	3.6	0.35	1.575	0.15	0.675
+10/+5/+0 (-5)	4.5	1.65	7.425	0.9	4.05	0.4	1.8	0.15	0.675
+11/+6/+1/-4 (-5)	4.5	1.9	8.55	1.1	4.95	0.55	2.475	0.25	1.125
+12/+7/+2/-3 (-5)	4.5	2.1	9.45	1.25	5.625	0.65	2.925	0.3	1.35
+13/+8/+3/-2 (-5)	4.5	2.3	10.35	1.4	6.3	0.75	3.375	0.35	1.575
+14/+9/+4/-1 (-5)	4.5	2.45	11.025	1.55	6.975	0.85	3.825	0.4	1.8
+15/+10/+5/+0 (-5)	4.5	2.6	11.7	1.7	7.65	0.95	4.275	0.45	2.025

Improved Trip

This feat is extraordinarily powerful for the right characters. Improved Trip, like Cleave, is a “reward for winning” feat. Not only does it make the mechanics of pulling off a trip maneuver more favorable for the warrior, but he also receives a bonus attack whenever he succeeds. On top of those sizeable benefits, there’s the implicit attack of opportunity the warrior will get when the poor sap tries to regain her feet. Combined with an adjacent ally, this sets the opponent up for a brutal series of attacks, with the advantage of targeting a prone opponent. You can make this just that much nastier by using it while mounted. The character gains an addition +1 for higher ground, and with a charge and a lance, let’s just say it’s over for that bad guy.

Touch attacks are a breeze against most foes, removing the opponent’s natural, armor, and shield bonus to his AC. The table below assumes the character makes the trip on the first attempt and shows the effectiveness of the second (normal) attack against the tripped sucker’s penalized AC. (Remember the -4 AC penalty for being prone in melee?) Compare this table to Table 5-1 for an accurate mechanical comparison.

The advantage of Improved Trip is obvious. You make an initial attack at a lower AC (because it’s a touch attack), then if you make the Strength check (which you get a bonus to thanks to the feat), you get a normal attack at a lower AC, plus attacks of opportunity when the guy tries to stand up. And if he doesn’t try to stand, he’s got a -4 AC and attack penalty until he does. If you think you can win that opposed Strength check, you can’t go wrong with this feat.

TABLE 5-3: THE ADVANTAGE OF IMPROVED TRIP: 2ND (NORMAL) ATTACK AGAINST TRIPPED OPPONENT

BAB	Average Damage	Typical Damage Per Round Versus Given AC at -4 Penalty							
		11 (15)	Damage	16 (20)	Damage	21 (25)	Damage	26 (30)	Damage
+1	4.5	0.55	2.475	0.3	1.35	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+2	4.5	0.6	2.7	0.35	1.575	0.1	0.45	0.05	0.225
+3	4.5	0.65	2.925	0.4	1.8	0.15	0.675	0.05	0.225
+4	4.5	0.7	3.15	0.45	2.025	0.2	0.9	0.05	0.225
+5	4.5	0.75	3.375	0.5	2.25	0.25	1.125	0.05	0.225
+6/+1	4.5	1.35	6.075	0.85	3.825	0.35	1.575	0.1	0.45
+7/+2	4.5	1.45	6.525	0.95	4.275	0.45	2.025	0.15	0.675
+8/+3	4.5	1.55	6.975	1.05	4.725	0.55	2.475	0.2	0.9
+9/+4	4.5	1.65	7.425	1.15	5.175	0.65	2.925	0.25	1.125
+10/+5	4.5	1.7	7.65	1.25	5.625	0.75	3.375	0.3	1.35
+11/+6/+1	4.5	2.3	10.35	1.65	7.425	0.9	4.05	0.4	1.8
+12/+7/+2	4.5	2.4	10.8	1.8	8.1	1.05	4.725	0.5	2.25
+13/+8/+3	4.5	2.5	11.25	1.95	8.775	1.2	5.4	0.6	2.7
+14/+9/+4	4.5	2.6	11.7	2.1	9.45	1.35	6.075	0.7	3.15
+15/+10/+5	4.5	2.65	11.925	2.2	9.9	1.5	6.75	0.8	3.6
+16/+11/+6/+1	4.5	3.25	14.625	2.6	11.7	1.7	7.65	0.95	4.275
+17/+12/+7/+2	4.5	3.35	15.075	2.75	12.375	1.9	8.55	1.1	4.95
+18/+13/+8/+3	4.5	3.45	15.525	2.9	13.05	2.1	9.45	1.25	5.625
+19/+14/+9/+4	4.5	3.55	15.975	3.05	13.725	2.3	10.35	1.4	6.3
+20/+15/+10/+5	4.5	3.6	16.2	3.15	14.175	2.45	11.025	1.55	6.975

Whirlwind Attack

The big difference between Great Cleave and Whirlwind Attack is where and when you take the extra attacks. Both feats allow you to make attacks at multiple opponents, but Great Cleave requires you to drop a target, whereas Whirlwind attack allows you to take a number of attacks at all foes you threaten. While it's often best to devote your full attention to one foe at a time, dropping it before focusing on another, there is an advantage to Whirlwind Attack that Cleave just cannot give you.

When making a cleave attack, your extra free attack uses the attack modifier of the last attack made. Whirlwind Attack lets you attack all of your opponents at once with your highest attack bonus. The route to choose depends on the types of foes and your positioning in combat. If you're surrounded by a bunch of little guys, whose hit points on average are equal to or less than your maximum damage, use this feat. On the other hand, if your foes are bigger and nastier, stick with the Great Cleave option, dropping one at a time.

To demonstrate the differences, we'll run two scenarios comparing the two feats. Our hero is a 6th level human fighter surrounded by 8 bad guys with 11 hp each. Our fighter has Str 16, Dex 14, and the following feats: 1st-level: Combat Expertise, Dodge, Mobility; 2nd-level: Power Attack; 3rd-level: Cleave; 4th-level: Spring Attack; 6th-level: Great Cleave, Whirlwind Attack. His melee attack is a *+1 greatsword* at +10/+5 melee (2d6+5/19-20), dealing 12 points of damage on average per hit. The bad guys are CR 1 gnolls (EL 6) with AC 15 and 11 hit points each. In this comparison, the gnolls surround the fighter. In the first example, the fighter uses Whirlwind Attack. In the second example, the fighter uses Great Cleave. See what happens.

Note: There's one important thing to remember with this feat: By making a Whirlwind Attack, you forfeit any extra attacks ordinarily gained by Cleave or *haste*.

Whirlwind Attack Option: The fighter makes eight separate attacks against each of the opponents. With any given attack, he should hit 80% of the time, so for eight rolls, he should hit 6.4 times, killing at least six of the gnolls.

Great Cleave Option: The fighter makes a full attack, with the same chances of hitting and killing his target as in the above example. Statistically speaking, he should hit 80% of the time with his first attack (the one at a +10 bonus). If things go well, he'll hit with 80% of his first five attacks; and if things go really well, he'll hit with the first four attack rolls, meaning he drops a gnoll with his normal attack then kills three more with a cleave. But after missing that fifth roll (which, statistically, he will), he has to start using his second attack (the one with a +5 bonus), which only has a 55% chance to hit. He has only slightly more than a 50/50 chance of getting a cleave on this next attack. Over the course of three swings at the

remaining three gnolls, he'll hit 1.65 times, likely killing a fifth gnoll, but not a sixth.

In short, against the gnolls, this fighter did far better with Whirlwind, able to drop at least one more opponent. The same chances are basically there for the Great Cleave option, and for lucky characters, they very well could kill off all the bad guys with great rolls. Nevertheless, statistically, the Whirlwind Attack character hits and kills more foes than the Great Cleave character.

Dodge Tree

Number of Feats in Tree: 3

Additional Trees Required?: No

Entry: Dex 13

Exit: Dex 13

Archetypes: Archers, guerillas and skirmishers all do well with this feat tree, being able to spend feats on this tree at 1st level.

Dodge

Dodge has limited applications for characters fighting in the heart of the conflict. Ultimately, Dodge is less useful than Combat Expertise, though Dodge does not require the character to sacrifice anything for her dodge bonus. The good news, however, is that dodge bonuses stack and this feat can be used in conjunction with Combat Expertise.

The lure of Dodge comes from the fact that it is a prerequisite for both Mobility and Spring Attack. Before moving down that path, be sure to analyze both of those feats for their genuine usefulness for your character. If you don't plan to purchase either of those feats further down the road, it is hard to recommend Dodge.

Table 5-4 (following page) shows how many hits you should take per round, based on your AC and your opponent's attack modifier. To calculate how many hits you'll take over multiple rounds, simply multiply the fraction by the number of rounds of combat. For example, Rex the Barbarian has AC 18. The monster has a melee attack bonus of +4. Looking at the table, that means the monster will hit 0.35 times per round on average. Over five rounds of combat, Rex should take 1.75 hits or, rounding off, 2 hits. If Rex has the Dodge feat, his AC climbs to 19. Over five rounds, Rex would instead take 1.5 hits, rounding off, probably only 1 hit. But the statistical difference is slight – generally only a 5% reduction in the chance of taking a hit each round. You have to go through twenty monster attacks before this feat has statistically really helped you.

Mobility

Ideal for archers and skirmishers, useful for heavy and light infantry, Mobility has only one, mildly useful, prerequisite: Dodge. Archers and skirmishers find they often need Mobility to get away from melee opponents, and the infantry characters will often have to deal with covering large threatened areas to reach a target. Cavalry characters are better off using their Ride skill to take cover when they are attacked while moving into and through threatened spaces. Guerillas typically will not face extraordinarily dangerous melee opponents, though they may find Mobility useful if they are regularly harassed on their way to more important targets.

When using this feat, it is important to specify the most dangerous adjacent melee opponent as your Dodge target for the round. This effectively changes your dodge bonus to armor class to +5 when that opponent takes her attack of opportunity against you.

To see the effects of Mobility, simply refer to Table 5-4 and adjust your AC up by 4 for attacks of opportunity, or 5 for AoOs made by your Dodge target.

Spring Attack

Spring Attack is less of a warrior feat and more of a combat rogue feat, but it does have occasional uses for guerillas, skirmishers, and some light infantry characters. The drawback to Spring Attack is that it sacrifices a full attack action for a move and a standard attack. Though this may be fine for low-level characters, the feat becomes less useful at higher levels, where iterative attacks are important. On the other hand, if you know you have to move through the enemy's front ranks, you can use Spring Attack to move, engage, and then move past the defender to get to the real target. This allows you to make an attack, and keep moving towards your goal.

In perfect circumstances, a heavy infantry character

TABLE 5-4: CHANCES OF A HIT BASED ON YOUR AC AND ENEMY'S ATTACK MODIFIER

Enemy Attack	Your AC															
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
+0	0.55	0.5	0.45	0.4	0.35	0.3	0.25	0.2	0.15	0.1	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
+1	0.6	0.55	0.5	0.45	0.4	0.35	0.3	0.25	0.2	0.15	0.1	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
+2	0.65	0.6	0.55	0.5	0.45	0.4	0.35	0.3	0.25	0.2	0.15	0.1	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
+3	0.7	0.65	0.6	0.55	0.5	0.45	0.4	0.35	0.3	0.25	0.2	0.15	0.1	0.05	0.05	0.05
+4	0.75	0.7	0.65	0.6	0.55	0.5	0.45	0.4	0.35	0.3	0.25	0.2	0.15	0.1	0.05	0.05
+5	0.8	0.75	0.7	0.65	0.6	0.55	0.5	0.45	0.4	0.35	0.3	0.25	0.2	0.15	0.1	0.05
+6	0.85	0.8	0.75	0.7	0.65	0.6	0.55	0.5	0.45	0.4	0.35	0.3	0.25	0.2	0.15	0.1
+7	0.9	0.85	0.8	0.75	0.7	0.65	0.6	0.55	0.5	0.45	0.4	0.35	0.3	0.25	0.2	0.15
+8	0.95	0.9	0.85	0.8	0.75	0.7	0.65	0.6	0.55	0.5	0.45	0.4	0.35	0.3	0.25	0.2
+9	0.95	0.95	0.9	0.85	0.8	0.75	0.7	0.65	0.6	0.55	0.5	0.45	0.4	0.35	0.3	0.25
+10	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.9	0.85	0.8	0.75	0.7	0.65	0.6	0.55	0.5	0.45	0.4	0.35	0.3
+11	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.9	0.85	0.8	0.75	0.7	0.65	0.6	0.55	0.5	0.45	0.4	0.35
+12	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.9	0.85	0.8	0.75	0.7	0.65	0.6	0.55	0.5	0.45	0.4
+13	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.9	0.85	0.8	0.75	0.7	0.65	0.6	0.55	0.5	0.45
+14	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.9	0.85	0.8	0.75	0.7	0.65	0.6	0.55	0.5
+15	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.9	0.85	0.8	0.75	0.7	0.65	0.6	0.55
+16	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.9	0.85	0.8	0.75	0.7	0.65	0.6
+17	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.9	0.85	0.8	0.75	0.7	0.65
+18	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.9	0.85	0.8	0.75	0.7
+19	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.9	0.85	0.8	0.75
+20	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.9	0.85	0.8

would be able to tackle the hard-hitting opponents by herself, but sometimes that isn't possible. Also, the light infantry character may be the only true warrior in the party. In those circumstances, Spring Attack may be useful. Skirmishers and guerillas, who often have to move into, through, and out of threatened areas, also find the feat useful, but still not consistently.

If a player finds the need to be in multiple places at once on the battlefield, constantly harassing a number of opponents, try to think of the Spring Attack's movement like a knight's chess piece. Bounce off the initial target then hop next to another enemy to threaten them. If the warrior needs to move out of that threatened space on the next turn, the player can assign her character's Dodge bonus to the threatening character, leaving the Mobility bonus to help deflect the majority of the potential hazards. However, movement from Spring Attack never provokes AoOs from the defender. If used in this way, the player will have to think ahead of the turn, much like the cavalry players employing Ride-By Attack. Given room to move, the warrior can also cause dread and apprehension in a number of weaker opponents, employing the same tactics as used in the classic chess maneuver known as the knight's fork (see sidebar).

Improved Unarmed Strike Tree

Number of Feats in Tree: 5

Additional Trees Required?: No

Entry: None

Exit: Dex 15, Wis 13

Archetypes: In a perfect world, an archer should never be in a situation where he would use these feats. However, he meets the prerequisites, and Improved Unarmed Strike is useful when the bad guys close on his position, letting the archer drop his bow as a free action and lash out with an unarmed full attack that doesn't provoke an AoO. Light infantry, especially monks who get many of these feats free, do well with this tree, as do skirmishers, though they have to divert some of the ability score improvements to Wisdom to exit the tree.

Improved Unarmed Strike

This feat only ever comes into play if your character is disarmed. Otherwise, you probably won't see much use out of it unless you're a monk. The good news is that you're never, ever disarmed. Having your hands free helps with grab attacks, and is great for grappling, letting you deal lethal damage instead of nonlethal and more. However, unless you have the monk's ever-increasing damage die for these attacks, a weapon is your best bet for fighting.

The Rest of the Tree

The other feats in this tree are self-explanatory. No one complains when they can automatically deflect a ranged weapon, or catch the weapon and hurl it back from whence it came. Improved Grapple is cool as a defensive measure to stave off being swallowed whole and the like. Moreover, even Stunning Fist isn't too bad. The big problem, though, is that if you're attracted to these feats, just go after the monk class and don't waste your time here as one of the other archetype characters. Dabbling in one or two here is okay, but this should not be the first feat tree selected for any non-monk warrior.

THE KNIGHT'S GUERILLA'S FORK

In chess, there is a common maneuver employed with the knight piece called the "knight's fork." Knights are peculiar in chess because they can jump over pieces on their moves. They must always move in an "L" shape: two spaces forward, one space over. Because of this, knights are impossible to contain using other pieces as barriers. They can only be contained strategically. It is dangerous to let an enemy knight hop around in a section of the board densely populated with your pieces. If the knight gets into a sweet spot, it can effectively threaten one, two, or even three pieces without fear of immediate capture or reprisal. This is the danger of the fork: it forces the defender to make difficult decisions. Lose your bishop or lose your rook? No player wants to decide, because either choice results in a painful loss.

Highly mobile guerillas (especially monks) and some light infantry characters can also force the enemy to make difficult decisions. If the guerilla makes effective use of their movement rate in conjunction with the Tumble skill and the Mobility and Spring Attack feats, they can put themselves in positions where they have the option of attacking different opponents from round to round. Normally, the "whittle down" method of attacking opponents is not preferred to simply beating one opponent to death round after round, but showing yourself to be a potent threat to multiple targets at once can quickly put the enemy on the defensive. Instead of assuming that you won't attack or assuming that they'll get in a solid attack of opportunity, enemies will start to ready actions, move to engage, or try to move to a safe distance. You are forcing them to react to what you might do instead of what you will do. When you accomplish that, you are not only wasting their time, but dictating their actions. The warrior who dictates the actions of her opponents gains a significant measure of control over the battle at hand.

Mounted Combat Tree

Number of Feats in Tree: 5

Additional Trees Required?: No

Entry: None

Exit: None

Archetypes: Cavalry, of course, should put every available feat into this tree.

Mounted Combat

A must for any cavalry character, Mounted Combat is both useful and the foundation for all other cavalry-oriented feats. With the exception of archers, it is rare that any other warrior archetype is more annoying than cavalry. Given that after a few levels a cavalry warrior is more difficult to kill than her mount, the mount will eventually be the object of enemy ire. Mounted Combat and a high Ride skill can help keep the cavalry warrior's trusty steed safe from any harm requiring an attack roll.

Mounted Archery

Not only is this feat great for cavalry, it also enhances the usefulness of the archer, for what's worse than a highly mobile archer on the battlefield? Combine this with Shot on the Run, yikes! Few creatures can match pace with a running warhorse, much less actually close to melee. A -4 penalty is still hefty, but when compared to the -8 default penalty, it isn't bad at all. And remember: it's the mount that's taking the move action. A warrior shooting from a moving mount can take full round actions.

To see just how cool this feat is, compare firing from the back of the mount normally to firing from the back of the mount with Mounted Archery, as shown on Table 5-5 (facing page). The tables assume the archer uses a long-bow. As you can see, it makes a difference, adding up to a full point of damage per round on average. The difference is even more dramatic when the mount is running.

Ride-By Attack

Perhaps the most annoying of all cavalry-related feats, Ride-By Attack gives the clever player almost free reign (no pun intended) to harass opponents otherwise occupied on the battlefield. The question for cavalry players should not be, "Should I take Ride-By Attack?" but rather, "How do I effectively use Ride-By Attack?"

The key to successful use of Ride-By Attack lies in moving in the right direction to the right distance. Think of your cavalry warrior's position as you would think of the cue ball in a game of pool. It's not enough to simply hit a ball and knock it off of the table; you need to position your warrior for the next round of attacks. Remember,

Ride-By Attack can only be used in conjunction with a charge. You need a minimum of 10 feet for the charge, but have a maximum of twice your mount's movement. When choosing your target for the round at hand, think about where the enemies may be next round and what spaces you can move to at the end of this round. Ideally, at the end of every Ride-By Attack, you should be in a position that will potentially allow you to do a Ride-By Attack on two enemies. This makes it almost impossible for the enemies to predict whom you are going to attack. As a result, if they choose to ready actions against you, at least one of them will waste their turn.

Another optimal choice for employing Ride-By Attack is attacking on the flanked side of an opponent. Ideally, the cavalry character should make her charges perpendicular to the standard advances of enemies and allies. Once two enemies meet in melee, they will often retain that facing. This gives the cavalry warrior repeated opportunities to ride perpendicular to the enemy's facing and strike from the space opposite their ally. Combined with the bonus from charge, this gives the warrior a respectable +4 attack bonus.

Point Blank Shot Tree

Number of Feats in Tree: 7

Additional Trees Required?: Yes, Dodge

Entry: None

Exit: Dex 19

Archetypes: Archers naturally advance in this feat, but many guerillas benefit from the added options the archery tree represents. Skirmishers and light infantry come next, seeing as they rely on high Dexterity for protection and versatility. Heavy infantry and most cavalry do not derive much benefit from these feats.

Point Blank Shot

This one's a no-brainer. Though Point Blank Shot's benefits only apply within 30 feet, much of your adventuring takes place in areas no larger than this. Further, it is the prerequisite for every other archery-related feat in the PHB. Because the bonus applies to both attack and damage rolls, and can be used with any ranged or thrown weapons, it is far better than the weapon-specific Weapon Focus feat (+1 to attack at any range). Compare Table 5-6 (on page 48) to Table 5-1 to see the benefits of Point Blank Shot in action. Both the attack bonus and average damage are higher at every step of the way.

Rapid Shot and Manyshot

Rapid Shot is a valuable feat for archers and sometimes for skirmishers. Though the character takes a -2 penalty to all attacks, this is really no worse than a monk's flurry of blows ability. The potential for an extra arrow's

TABLE 5-5: MOUNTED ARCHERY COMPARISONS

Double Move with No Feat (-4 penalty)

Attack Bonus	Average Damage	Typical Damage Per Round Versus Given AC							
		15	Damage	20	Damage	25	Damage	30	Damage
-3	4.5	0.15	0.675	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
-2	4.5	0.2	0.9	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
-1	4.5	0.25	1.125	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+0	4.5	0.3	1.35	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+1	4.5	0.35	1.575	0.1	0.45	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+2/-3	4.5	0.55	2.475	0.2	0.9	0.1	0.45	0.1	0.45
+3/-2	4.5	0.5	2.25	0.25	1.125	0.1	0.45	0.1	0.45
+4/-1	4.5	0.6	2.7	0.25	1.125	0.1	0.45	0.1	0.45
+5/0	4.5	0.7	3.15	0.35	1.575	0.1	0.45	0.1	0.45
+6/+1	4.5	0.8	3.6	0.45	2.025	0.15	0.675	0.1	0.45
+7/+2/-3	4.5	1.2	5.4	0.6	2.7	0.25	1.125	0.15	0.675
+8/+3/-2	4.5	1.35	6.075	0.7	3.15	0.3	1.35	0.15	0.675
+9/+4/-1	4.5	1.5	6.75	0.8	3.6	0.35	1.575	0.15	0.675
+10/+5/+0	4.5	1.65	7.425	0.9	4.05	0.4	1.8	0.15	0.675
+11/+6/+1	4.5	1.9	8.55	1.05	4.725	0.5	2.25	0.2	0.9
+12/+7/+2/-3	4.5	2.1	9.45	1.25	5.625	0.65	2.925	0.3	1.35
+13/+8/+3/-2	4.5	2.3	10.35	1.4	6.3	0.75	3.375	0.35	1.575
+14/+9/+4/-1	4.5	2.45	11.025	1.55	6.975	0.85	3.825	0.4	1.8
+15/+10/+5/+0	4.5	2.6	11.7	1.7	7.65	0.95	4.275	0.45	2.025
+16/+11/+6/+1	4.5	2.75	12.375	2	9	1.1	4.95	0.55	2.475

Double Move with Mounted Archery Feat (-2 Penalty)

Attack Bonus	Average Damage	Typical Damage Per Round Versus Given AC							
		15	Damage	20	Damage	25	Damage	30	Damage
-1	4.5	0.25	1.125	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+0	4.5	0.3	1.35	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+1	4.5	0.35	1.575	0.1	0.45	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+2	4.5	0.4	1.8	0.15	0.675	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+3	4.5	0.45	2.025	0.2	0.9	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+4/-1	4.5	0.75	3.375	0.3	1.35	0.1	0.45	0.1	0.45
+5/+0	4.5	0.7	3.15	0.35	1.575	0.1	0.45	0.1	0.45
+6/+1	4.5	0.8	3.6	0.45	2.025	0.15	0.675	0.1	0.45
+7/+2	4.5	0.9	4.05	0.45	2.025	0.2	0.9	0.1	0.45
+8/+3	4.5	1	4.5	0.65	2.925	0.25	1.125	0.1	0.45
+9/+4/-1	4.5	1.5	6.75	0.8	3.6	0.35	1.575	0.15	0.675
+10/+5/+0	4.5	1.65	7.425	0.9	4.05	0.4	1.8	0.15	0.675
+11/+6/+1	4.5	1.8	8.1	1.05	4.725	0.5	2.25	0.15	0.675
+12/+7/+2	4.5	1.95	8.775	1.2	5.4	0.6	2.7	0.15	0.675
+13/+8/+3	4.5	2.1	9.45	1.35	6.075	0.7	3.15	0.3	1.35
+14/+9/+4/-1	4.5	2.45	11.025	1.55	6.975	0.85	3.825	0.4	1.8
+15/+10/+5/+0	4.5	2.6	11.7	1.7	7.65	0.95	4.275	0.45	2.025
+16/+11/+6/+1	4.5	2.75	12.375	1.9	8.55	1.1	4.95	0.5	2.25
+17/+12/+7/+2	4.5	2.9	13.05	2.1	9.45	1.25	5.625	0.55	2.475
+18/+13/+8/+3	4.5	3.05	13.725	2.3	10.35	1.4	6.3	0.75	3.375

damage is high for the dedicated archer, and the archer always has the option of not utilizing the feat against well-armored opponents. Though it may seem that Rapid Shot is eventually rendered obsolete by Manyshot, Rapid Shot will always be able to provide an additional attack and a higher average attack bonus. For example, a 16th level fighter using Rapid Shot can attack at +14/+14/+9/+4/-1 and not move or she can attack with Manyshot at +8/+8/+8/+8 and still retain a move. Use Rapid Shot when you want to take a full round action and use Manyshot when you can only get off a standard attack.

Manyshot is a perfect fit for many archers. But before you jump all over this feat, you should be aware of its inherent costs and limitations. First, it has two feat prerequisites in addition to its Dexterity requirements. Both are useful feats, but neither of them is Precise Shot. You'll need Precise Shot for your archer to make good use of this feat. Because the maximum range at which Manyshot can be effective is 30 feet, it's quite likely that any targets the archer uses Manyshot against are probably closing to melee, if not already in it.

The major benefit of Manyshot is not its multiple attacks, but the fact that its multiple attacks are performed as a standard action. One attack roll, up to four arrows, and the attacker can still take a move action! However, as can

be seen on Table 5-7, Rapid Shot is the superior fighting technique.

Power Attack Tree

Number of Feats in Tree: 6

Additional Trees Required?: No

Entry: Str 13

Exit: None

Archetypes: Cavalry, guerrillas, heavy infantry, and skirmishers all benefit from selecting this feat tree. Of the four, however, only the heavy infantry should focus on Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, and Improved Sunder, as they are the archetype most likely to use these feats.

Power Attack

When players think of the typical power-attacking warrior, they imagine a knight in full plate armor using a greatsword to slice through some poor sap. In practice, heavy infantry are just behind archers in having the fewest opportunities to use the feat. Heavy infantry and, to a lesser extent, light infantry, are the characters most

TABLE 5-6: POINT BLANK SHOT

Adjusted BAB	Average Damage	Typical Damage Per Round Versus Given AC							
		15	Damage	20	Damage	25	Damage	30	Damage
+2	5.5	0.4	2.2	0.15	0.825	0.05	0.275	0.05	0.275
+3	5.5	0.45	2.475	0.2	1.1	0.05	0.275	0.05	0.275
+4	5.5	0.5	2.75	0.25	1.375	0.05	0.275	0.05	0.275
+5	5.5	0.55	3.025	0.3	1.65	0.05	0.275	0.05	0.275
+6	5.5	0.6	3.3	0.35	1.925	0.1	0.55	0.05	0.275
+7/+2	5.5	1.05	5.775	0.55	3.025	0.2	1.1	0.1	0.55
+8/+3	5.5	1	5.5	0.65	3.575	0.25	1.375	0.1	0.55
+9/+4	5.5	1.1	6.05	0.75	4.125	0.3	1.65	0.1	0.55
+10/+5	5.5	1.2	6.6	0.85	4.675	0.35	1.925	0.1	0.55
+11/+6	5.5	1.3	7.15	0.95	5.225	0.45	2.475	0.15	0.825
+12/+7/+2	5.5	1.95	10.725	1.2	6.6	0.6	3.3	0.25	1.375
+13/+8/+3	5.5	2.1	11.55	1.35	7.425	0.7	3.85	0.3	1.65
+14/+9/+4	5.5	2.2	12.1	1.5	8.25	0.8	4.4	0.35	1.925
+15/+10/+5	5.5	2.3	12.65	1.65	9.075	0.9	4.95	0.4	2.2
+16/+11/+6	5.5	2.4	13.2	1.8	9.9	1.05	5.775	0.5	2.75
+17/+12/+7/+2	5.5	2.9	15.95	2.1	11.55	1.25	6.875	0.65	3.575
+18/+13/+8/+3	5.5	3.05	16.775	2.3	12.65	1.4	7.7	0.75	4.125
+19/+14/+9/+4	5.5	3.15	17.325	2.45	13.475	1.55	8.525	0.85	4.675
+20/+15/+10/+5	5.5	3.25	17.875	2.6	14.3	1.7	9.35	0.95	5.225
+21/+16/+11/+6	5.5	3.35	18.425	2.75	15.125	1.9	10.45	1.1	6.05

**TABLE 5-7: RAPID SHOT AND MANYSHOT COMPARISON
(INCLUDING MODIFIERS FROM POINT BLANK SHOT)**

Rapid Shot

Adjusted BAB	Average Damage	Typical Damage Per Round Versus Given AC							
		15 Damage	20 Damage	25 Damage	30 Damage				
+0/+0	5.5	0.6	3.3	0.1	0.55	0.1	0.55	0.1	0.55
+1/+1	5.5	0.7	3.85	0.2	1.1	0.1	0.55	0.1	0.55
+2/+2	5.5	0.8	4.4	0.3	1.65	0.1	0.55	0.1	0.55
+3/+3	5.5	0.9	4.95	0.4	2.2	0.1	0.55	0.1	0.55
+4/+4	5.5	1	5.5	0.5	2.75	0.1	0.55	0.1	0.55
+5/+5/+0	5.5	1.4	7.7	0.65	3.575	0.15	0.825	0.15	0.825
+6/+6/+1	5.5	1.55	8.525	0.8	4.4	0.25	1.375	0.15	0.825
+7/+7/+2	5.5	1.7	9.35	0.95	5.225	0.35	1.925	0.15	0.825
+8/+8/+3	5.5	1.85	10.175	1.1	6.05	0.45	2.475	0.15	0.825
+9/+9/+4	5.5	2	11	1.25	6.875	0.55	3.025	0.15	0.825
+10/+10/+5/+0	5.5	2.45	13.475	1.45	7.975	0.7	3.85	0.2	1.1
+11/+11/+6/+1	5.5	2.65	14.575	1.65	9.075	0.85	4.675	0.3	1.65
+12/+12/+7/+2	5.5	2.85	15.675	1.85	10.175	1	5.5	0.4	2.2
+13/+13/+8/+3	5.5	3.05	16.775	2.05	11.275	1.15	6.325	0.5	2.75
+14/+14/+9/+4	5.5	3.15	17.325	2.25	12.375	1.3	7.15	0.6	3.3
+15/+15/+10/+5/+0	5.5	3.55	19.525	2.5	13.75	1.5	8.25	0.75	4.125
+16/+16/+11/+6/+1	5.5	3.7	20.35	2.75	15.125	1.7	9.35	0.9	4.95
+17/+17/+13/+7/+2	5.5	3.9	21.45	3.05	16.775	1.95	10.725	1.1	6.05
+18/+18/+14/+8/+3	5.5	4	22	3.3	18.15	2.15	11.825	1.25	6.875
+19/+19/+15/+9/+4	5.5	4.1	22.55	3.45	18.975	2.35	12.925	1.4	7.7

Manyshot

Adjusted BAB	Average Damage	Typical Damage Per Round Versus Given AC							
		15 Damage	20 Damage	25 Damage	30 Damage				
+2	5.5	0.4	2.2	0.15	0.825	0.05	0.275	0.05	0.275
+3	5.5	0.45	2.475	0.2	1.1	0.05	0.275	0.05	0.275
+4	5.5	0.5	2.75	0.25	1.375	0.05	0.275	0.05	0.275
+5	5.5	0.55	3.025	0.3	1.65	0.05	0.275	0.05	0.275
+6	5.5	0.6	3.3	0.35	1.925	0.1	0.55	0.05	0.275
+3/+3	5.5	0.9	0	0.4	2.2	0.1	0.55	0.1	0.55
+4/+4	5.5	1	5.5	0.5	2.75	0.1	0.55	0.1	0.55
+5/+5	5.5	1.1	6.05	0.6	3.3	0.1	0.55	0.1	0.55
+6/+6	5.5	1.2	6.6	0.7	3.85	0.2	1.1	0.1	0.55
+7/+7	5.5	1.3	7.15	0.8	4.4	0.3	1.65	0.1	0.55
+6/+6/+6	5.5	1.8	9.9	1.05	5.775	0.3	1.65	0.15	0.825
+7/+7/+7	5.5	1.95	10.725	1.2	6.6	0.45	2.475	0.15	0.825
+8/+8/+8	5.5	2.1	11.55	1.35	7.425	0.6	3.3	0.15	0.825
+9/+9/+9	5.5	2.25	12.375	1.5	8.25	0.75	4.125	0.15	0.825
+10/+10/+10	5.5	2.4	13.2	1.65	9.075	0.9	4.95	0.15	0.825
+9/+9/+9/+9	5.5	3	16.5	2	11	1	5.5	0.2	1.1
+10/+10/+10/+10	5.5	3.2	17.6	2.2	12.1	1.2	6.6	0.2	1.1
+11/+11/+11/+11	5.5	3.4	18.7	2.4	13.2	1.4	7.7	0.4	2.2
+12/+12/+12/+12	5.5	3.6	19.8	2.6	14.3	1.6	8.8	0.6	3.3
+13/+13/+13/+13	5.5	3.8	20.9	2.8	15.4	1.8	9.9	0.8	4.4

likely to be engaged by opposition heavy infantry and light infantry characters. Typically, the armor classes of those enemies will be too high for the warrior to sacrifice any significant attack bonus for damage. When you consider the inherent penalties of iterative attacks, dropping five points of attack bonus when going up against a blue dragon doesn't seem like a good plan.

Skirmishers and guerillas, on the other hand, often find themselves attacking characters with low armor classes. Whether they're wheezing old sorcerers trying to hide in the corner or a swarm of annoying kobold runts, Power Attack can help make quick work of their easily-struck hides. Cavalry characters may also find use in Power Attack if they have the space and range to choose poorly armored targets on a battlefield. Power Attack combined with a timely Ride-By Attack can take the wind out of anyone's sails.

Unfortunately, though heavy infantry may not find much use for Power Attack at higher levels, it is the prerequisite for a large number of traditional heavy infantry feats.

Players will have to decide if the long-term depreciation of the feat is an acceptable price for the feats her character needs.

The real question when using Power Attack is, "How much attack bonus should I trade off?" It depends on your base attack bonus and the enemy's AC. Don't worry, we've done the math for you! Tables 5-8 and 5-9 show how to max out Power Attack. First, Table 5-8 gives a numerical analysis of using Power Attack to varying degrees against enemies of different ACs. The table assumes the warrior wields the weapon in two hands to get the better damage. Strength modifiers to hit and damage are not included.

From Table 5-8, you can see the relationship between damage and chances of hitting. Look at the first section, which examines a 5th level fighter with a BAB of +5. Against an opponent of AC 15, he normally averages 2.475 points of damage each round. If he power attacks for +1, his chance of hitting drops from 0.55 to 0.5, but his base damage rises to 6.5, resulting in average damage

TABLE 5-8: AVERAGE DAMAGE FROM POWER ATTACK

		Average Damage Per Round Versus Given AC									
BAB		Base	AC	Average	AC	Average	AC	Average	AC	Average	
		Damage	15	Damage	20	Damage	25	Damage	30	Damage	
Ftr 5	+5	4.5	0.55	2.475	0.3	1.35	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225	
<i>BAB Adjusted with Power Attack:</i>											
	+4 (-1 to attack)	6.5	0.5	3.25	0.25	1.625	0.05	0.325	0.05	0.325	
	+3 (-2 to attack)	8.5	0.45	3.825	0.2	1.7	0.05	0.425	0.05	0.425	
	+2 (-3 to attack)	10.5	0.4	4.2	0.15	1.575	0.05	0.525	0.05	0.525	
	+1 (-4 to attack)	12.5	0.35	4.375	0.1	1.25	0.05	0.625	0.05	0.625	
	+0 (-5 to attack)	14.5	0.3	4.35	0.05	0.725	0.05	0.725	0.05	0.725	
Ftr 10	+10/+5	4.5	1.35	6.075	0.85	3.825	0.35	1.575	0.1	0.45	
<i>BAB Adjusted with Power Attack:</i>											
	+9/+4 (-1 to attack)	6.5	1.25	8.125	0.75	4.875	0.3	1.95	0.1	0.65	
	+8/+3 (-2 to attack)	8.5	1.15	9.775	0.65	5.525	0.25	2.125	0.1	0.85	
	+7/+2 (-3 to attack)	10.5	1.05	11.025	0.55	5.775	0.2	2.1	0.1	1.05	
	+6/+1 (-4 to attack)	12.5	0.95	11.875	0.45	5.625	0.15	1.875	0.1	1.25	
	+5/+0 (-5 to attack)	14.5	0.85	12.325	0.35	5.075	0.1	1.45	0.1	1.45	
Ftr 15	+15/+10/+5	4.5	2.3	10.35	1.65	7.425	0.9	4.05	0.4	1.8	
<i>BAB Adjusted with Power Attack:</i>											
	+14/+9/+4 (-1 to attack)	6.5	2.2	14.3	1.5	9.75	0.8	5.2	0.35	2.275	
	+13/+8/+3 (-2 to attack)	8.5	2.1	17.85	1.35	11.475	0.7	5.95	0.3	2.55	
	+12/+7/+2 (-3 to attack)	10.5	1.95	20.475	1.2	12.6	0.6	6.3	0.25	2.625	
	+11/+6/+1 (-4 to attack)	12.5	1.8	22.5	1.05	13.125	0.5	6.25	0.2	2.5	
	+10/+5/+0 (-5 to attack)	14.5	1.65	23.925	0.9	13.05	0.4	5.8	0.15	2.175	
Ftr 20	+20/+15/+10/+5	4.5	3.25	14.625	2.6	11.7	1.4	6.3	0.95	4.275	
<i>BAB Adjusted with Power Attack:</i>											
	+19/+14/+9/+4 (-1 to attack)	6.5	3.15	20.475	2.45	15.925	1.3	8.45	0.85	5.525	
	+18/+13/+8/+3 (-2 to attack)	8.5	3.05	25.925	2.3	19.55	1.2	10.2	0.75	6.375	
	+17/+12/+7/+2 (-3 to attack)	10.5	2.95	30.975	2.15	22.575	1.1	11.55	0.65	6.825	
	+16/+11/+6/+1 (-4 to attack)	12.5	2.85	35.625	2	25	1	12.5	0.55	6.875	
	+15/+10/+5/+0 (-5 to attack)	14.5	2.75	39.875	1.85	26.825	0.9	13.05	0.45	6.525	

TABLE 5-9: SUGGESTED POWER ATTACKS

One Handed: Take the indicated penalty to attack against the given AC to maximize average damage

AC	BAB																			
	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8	+9	+10	+11	+12	+13	+14	+15	+16	+17	+18	+19	+20
10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	12	13	13
11	1	2	3	4	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	12	13
12	1	2	3	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	12
13	1	2	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12
14	1	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11
15	1	2	3	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11
16	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10
17	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10
18	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9
19	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9
20	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8
21	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8
22	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7
23	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7
24	1	2	3	4	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6
25	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6
26	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5
27	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5
28	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4
29	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4
30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3

Two Handed: Take the indicated penalty to attack against the given AC to maximize average damage

AC	BAB																			
	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8	+9	+10	+11	+12	+13	+14	+15	+16	+17	+18	+19	+20
10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	12	13	13	14	14
11	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	12	13	13	14
12	1	2	3	4	5	5	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	12	13	13
13	1	2	3	4	5	5	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	12	13
14	1	2	3	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	12
15	1	2	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12
16	1	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11
17	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11
18	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10
19	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10
20	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9
21	1	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9
22	1	2	3	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8
23	1	2	3	4	5	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8
24	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7
25	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7
26	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6
27	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6
28	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5
29	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	2	2	3	3	4	5	5
30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	2	2	3	3	4

of 3.25 per round. In this example, the optimal combination of attack bonus and base damage is taking a -4 to attack, resulting in a net attack bonus of +1. That gives him a lower chance of hitting (only 0.35) but because his base damage rises to a whopping 12.5, he'll do an average of 4.375 damage each round - 75% higher than an unpowered attack! The result for taking -5 causes even more damage, but the lower chance of hitting results in a slightly lower average damage.

The really interesting part of Table 5-8 is the impact of Power Attack against foes with high ACs. If you're fighting an enemy who you can only hit with a natural 20, then why not go full Power Attack? It won't affect your chances of hitting! Look again at the 5th level fighter. His best option for Power Attacking foes of AC 25 and AC 30 is to go the full +5, since it has no impact on his chances of hitting but causes substantially more damage if he actually hits.

Table 5-8 isn't meant to be a complete analysis of every possible Power Attack. Instead, it shows you a slice of data at several different points. Table 5-9 takes this information and compiles it into a complete reference table for use in your games.

Table 5-9 is everything you'll ever need to Power Attack with confidence. By cross-referencing your BAB with your opponent's AC, Table 5-9 shows you the number you should subtract from your attack roll to get the statistically maximum average damage. For example, a warrior with BAB +10 fighting one-handed against a monster of AC 14 should swap 6 points of attack for damage. (Note that there are two tables, for one-handed and two-handed attacks; make sure you're looking at the right one.) This recommended Power Attack figure is based on the same chance-of-hitting-and-base-damage analysis you see in Table 5-8, but adapted to every possible combination of AC and BAB. You don't get the "guts" of the calculations, but you don't need them; all you really need to know is that you if you use the number on the table, you'll be in line to do the statistically maximum amount of damage that you can possibly do. These tables consider single attacks for one-handed weapons and two-handed weapons. Strength and other enhancements to damage are not included, but since they are uniform across all possible Power Attack options, they don't affect the calculations. You should include bonuses to attack when you look up your BAB - for example, if your BAB is +4 and you have a +1 weapon and a 16 Strength (+3 bonus), use the column for a +8 BAB (+4 +1 +3 = +8).

Dog-ear the page with Table 5-9. Trust me, if you have Power Attack you will use this table - a lot.

Cleave and Great Cleave

Who doesn't love a free attack? This feat is most worthwhile for heavy infantry, light infantry, and skirmishers. Archers won't make use of it, cavalry often take up too much space to threaten multiple opponents, and guerillas usually pursue single targets. Think of Cleave as a reward for winning. The more often you down opponents in the thick of melee, the more often you will be rewarded. Unlike Combat Reflexes, this feat does not require the enemy to *let you* use it. The skirmisher may wind up making the greatest use of the Cleave feat if they work "cleanup," picking off groups of low level punks while a heavy infantry warrior takes on the tough guys. If you play a "head for the boss" type of character, this feat may be underused. For best tactical advantage, use it against the weakest of all threatened opponents first. The quicker they go down, the quicker you can use your free attack against the toughest hombra in the mix.

Great Cleave and Power Attack with a two-handed weapon allow you to mop up the floor with all but the biggest and toughest monsters in the game. For example, assume your 8th-level barbarian (BAB +8) is raging and now has a 21 Strength (+5 bonus). He wields a two-handed greatsword dealing 2d6+7 points of damage. Now, this barbarian faces off against a bunch of ogres, each with AC 16 and 29 hit points. Using Table 5-9, the barbarian should Power Attack for 8, reducing his attack modifier to +5. (See Table 5-9 to understand this calculation: BAB +8 plus +5 for Strength = adjusted BAB of +13, cross-referenced against AC 16 on the two-handed part of Table 5-9.) If he hits, he deals thirty points of damage on average (the normal 2d6+7 (average 14) plus an extra 16 for Power Attack), enough to drop a single ogre with each hit. Furthermore, he has a 50% chance to hit each ogre, good odds. (See Table 5-4: attack bonus of +5 against AC 16 means he hits 50% of the time.) More than likely, he'll cut through the ogres with little effort, and with a 50% shot with every Cleave attack, he'll probably do it on just a standard attack.

In short, Power Attack + Cleave + Great Cleave should be the basis for every high-Strength, Weapon-Focused-warrior in the game.

Other Feats

Improved Critical

Another solid feat for the weapon specialists, Improved Critical is best used with weapons that already have a high threat range. However, do not let the lure of frequent critical hits blind you to the fact that often a feat like Weapon Specialization on a higher-damage, lower-threat weapon will produce more damage over time than Improved Critical on a lower-damage, higher-threat weapon.

Table 5-10 shows the percentage chance of achieving a critical hit, based on the indicated threat range, your BAB, and the opponent's AC. I know this sounds complicated, but it's not. First, here's how to read it. Let's say you're using a rapier, which has a threat range of 18-20 (crit x2) and does 1d6 damage. If you take Improved Critical, you'll improve your threat range to 15-20, or a 30% chance of inflicting a critical threat. Now let's say you're using that rapier while you have BAB +1 and

your opponent has AC 12. Looking at the section of Table 5-10 for weapons whose threat range goes from 18-20 to 15-20, you can cross-reference BAB +1 and AC 12 to see that you have a 15% chance of actually scoring a critical hit with this weapon. You'll get the critical threat 30% of the time, but the table shows you how often this will translate into a real critical hit, based on your chance of hitting with the second attack.

TABLE 5-10: IMPROVED CRITICAL: PERCENTAGE CHANCE OF SCORING A CRITICAL HIT, GIVEN YOUR BAB AND AN OPPONENT'S AC (CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGE)

Threat Range 18-20 (which becomes 15-20 with Improved Critical, or a critical threat 30% of the time)

BAB	Enemy AC																				
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
+1	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%	6%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+2	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%	6%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+3	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%	6%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+4	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%	6%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+5	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%	6%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+6	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%	6%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+7	27%	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%	6%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+8	29%	27%	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%	6%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%
+9	29%	29%	27%	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%	6%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%
+10	29%	29%	29%	27%	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%	6%	4%	2%	1%	0%
+11	29%	29%	29%	29%	27%	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%	6%	4%	2%	1%
+12	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	27%	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%	6%	4%	2%
+13	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	27%	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%	6%	4%
+14	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	27%	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%	6%
+15	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	27%	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%
+16	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	27%	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%
+17	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	27%	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%
+18	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	27%	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%
+19	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	27%	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%
+20	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	27%	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%

Threat Range 19-20 (which becomes 17-20 with Improved Critical, or a critical threat 20% of the time)

BAB	Enemy AC																				
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
+1	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+2	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+3	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+4	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+5	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+6	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+7	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+8	19%	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%
+9	19%	19%	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%
+10	19%	19%	19%	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	2%	1%	0%
+11	19%	19%	19%	19%	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	2%	1%
+12	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	2%
+13	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%
+14	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%
+15	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%
+16	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%
+17	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%
+18	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%
+19	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%
+20	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%

So how do you evaluate this? Well, start with the weapon for which you took Improved Critical, then figure out how much more damage you'll be doing on average. Let's say it's a rapier. Looking at the section of Table 5-10 for threat range 18-20 (which becomes 15-20 with Improved Critical), you can see the greatest chance of achieving a critical is 29%. If you always fought against low-AC foes, you could make a critical hit a whopping

29% of the time. Thus, in a best-case scenario, your maximum possible extra damage from Improved Critical is an extra 1d6 (the rapier's damage is 1d6 and its crit is x2) 29% of the time. Since 1d6 damage has an average result of 3.5, that means your maximum average damage is 3.5 + (3.5 x 0.29), or 4.515 – essentially the same as using a weapon that does damage 1d8 (average 4.5) without Improved Critical.

TABLE 5-10, CONTINUED

Threat Range 20 (which becomes 19-20 with Improved Critical, or a critical threat 10% of the time)

BAB	Enemy AC																				
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
+1	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+2	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+3	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+4	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+5	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+6	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+7	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+8	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%
+9	10%	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	0%	0%
+10	10%	10%	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	0%
+11	10%	10%	10%	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%
+12	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%
+13	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%
+14	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%
+15	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%
+16	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%
+17	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%
+18	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%
+19	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%
+20	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%

Threat Range 20 only (not affected by Improved Critical; a critical threat 5% of the time)

BAB	Enemy AC																				
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
+1	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+2	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+3	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+4	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+5	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+6	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+7	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+8	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%
+9	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%
+10	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%
+11	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%
+12	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%
+13	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%
+14	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%
+15	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%
+16	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%
+17	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%
+18	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%
+19	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%
+20	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%

Now let's compare two weapons. Let's say your other option (in addition to that rapier) is a warhammer, which has a threat range of 20 and a x3 crit on 1d8 damage (average 4.5). Looking at the section of Table 5-10 for threat range 20 (increased to 19-20 with the feat), we can see that your maximum chance of critting is 10%. On the other hand, you do an extra 2d8 damage because it's a x3 weapon. Assuming you spend all your time fighting foes with a 10% of critting (the best-case scenario), Improved Critical increases your maximum average damage to $4.5 + ((4.5 + 4.5) \times .010)$, or 5.4 damage. Surprisingly, Improved Critical with a warhammer has a bigger impact than with a rapier.

The thing to remember with this feat is that it's not necessarily about which weapon you should take the feat with; it's also about whether this feat can give you more oomph than another feat. Improved Critical with a warhammer increases your max average damage from 4.5 to 5.4, or 0.9 points. Can another feat increase your average damage by more than 0.9? If so, that other feat is probably the better option. If you do opt for Improved Critical, think in terms of combining it with Weapon

Specialization and other such feats where all that extra damage stacked together can really make a difference, instead of just taking it by itself.

For more information on the impact of critical hits on weapon selection, see Chapter 6: Equipment.

Leadership

For many characters, this is a so-so feat. A character's effective Leadership score is affected by her Charisma, which is a low-priority statistic for most warriors. For paladins, however, a high Charisma is highly desirable. Leadership just piggy-backs onto those benefits. This feat is best taken above eighth level, when the cohort will be high enough level to really do some good and not need constant babysitting. This also practically ensures that your warrior will gain several 1st level assistants that can come in handy, if used carefully. If you need more convincing, consider this: for the cost of one feat, you get an extra ally, two levels lower than your warrior. Your level minus two in hit points, feats, and skills. It's a steal.

Suggested Feat Trees

Buying individually valuable feats is enough to make a potent warrior, but if the ultimate warrior is what you had in mind, you'll need to think ahead when buying feats. Here are some suggested feat trees organized by warrior archetype and class combinations. By using these examples and creating your own variants, you should be able to build a warrior to be reckoned with.

Archers

Fighter Archer

The fighter archer build is constructed to take quick advantage of the fighter's massive amount of bonus feats. The pattern here is to take all of the most important archery and bow specialization feats as quickly as possible. By the time the character hits 12th level, all of the most important feats will be accounted for. Feats from 14th to 20th level are purchased to help round out the character defensively in case she is engaged in melee. Iron Will at 9th gives the fighter a little added insurance against typical anti-archer magic like *hold person* or *dominate person*. Otherwise, this build produces an all-out ranged offense monster.

Ranger Archer

Due to the ranger archer's lower hit points and reliance on staying in light armor for the benefits of the archery combat style, Dodge and Mobility appear earlier in this build than in the fighter archer tree. Rangers are more likely to have a higher Wisdom score to bolster their low Will save, but the ranger archer still picks up Iron Will at 15th level to close that widening gap towards high levels.

TABLE 5-11: FIGHTER ARCHER FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Point Blank Shot
1st (bonus)	Rapid Shot
2nd (bonus)	Precise Shot
3rd	Weapon Focus (longbow)
4th (bonus)	Weapon Specialization (longbow)
6th	Manyshot
6th (bonus)	Far Shot
8th (bonus)	Greater Weapon Focus (longbow)
9th	Iron Will
10th (bonus)	Improved Critical (longbow)
12th	Improved Precise Shot
12th (bonus)	Greater Weapon Specialization (longbow)
14th (bonus)	Dodge
15th	Mobility
16th (bonus)	Shot on the Run
18th	Quick Draw
18th (bonus)	Weapon Focus (longsword)
20th	Weapon Specialization (longsword)

Cavalry

Fighter Cavalry

As with many of the other fighter trees, the fighter cavalry feat tree shown here takes advantage of the fighter's high number of bonus feats to build a highly specialized, devastating melee combatant. Players may be tempted to focus on the lance as their early weapon of choice, but

TABLE 5-12: RANGER ARCHER FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Point Blank Shot
2nd (style)	Rapid Shot
3rd	Precise Shot
6th	Dodge
6th (style)	Manyshot
9th	Mobility
11th (style)	Improved Precise Shot
12th	Far Shot
15th	Iron Will
18th	Improved Critical (longbow)

TABLE 5-13: FIGHTER CAVALRY FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Mounted Combat
1st (bonus)	Ride-By Attack
2nd (bonus)	Spirited Charge
3rd	Weapon Focus (greatsword)
4th (bonus)	Weapon Specialization (greatsword)
6th	Skill Focus (Ride)
6th (bonus)	Trample
8th (bonus)	Greater Weapon Focus (greatsword)
9th	Power Attack
10th (bonus)	Improved Sunder
12th	Improved Critical (greatsword)
12th (bonus)	Greater Weapon Specialization (greatsword)
14th (bonus)	Quick Draw
15th	Cleave
16th (bonus)	Weapon Focus (lance)
18th	Weapon Specialization (lance)
18th (bonus)	Mounted Archery
20th	Weapon Focus (longbow)

TABLE 5-14: PALADIN CAVALRY FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Mounted Combat
3rd	Ride-by Attack
6th	Spirited Charge
9th	Leadership
12th	Power Attack
15th	Cleave
18th	Trample

lances have dire limitations when not mounted; leave the lance feats for later levels. As with the fighter archer build, the fighter cavalry character comes into full bloom at about 12th level.

Paladin Cavalry

Compared to the fighter cavalry build, the paladin cavalry may seem downright boring. With only the standard feats given every three character levels, players must be very careful about what they buy. This character build emphasizes melee aspects only, starting first with cavalry-enhancing feats then moving to general melee combat feats at higher levels. As paladins are generally more capable of protecting their magnificent mounts in combat, archery and defensive crossover feats are excluded entirely. Because cavalry warriors can be very vulnerable when forced to fight on foot, the paladin cavalry build takes Leadership at 9th level. The cohort earned with the feat will probably be about 7th level, and could serve in a variety of supporting roles. A mounted cleric of the paladin's faith would be particularly helpful. For characters more likely to spend significant time fighting on foot, players may wish to switch Spirited Charge with Power Attack and Leadership with Cleave.

Ranger Cavalry

The ranger cavalry build is significantly different from the other two cavalry feat trees. This progression utilizes the ranger's optional archery feats to make a formidable cavalry archer. Some players may wish to substitute melee-oriented feats for Weapon Focus (longbow), Far Shot, and Improved Critical (longbow). This may produce a more well-balanced character at high levels.

Guerilla

Fighter Guerilla

The fighter guerilla has far more feats than her monk counterpart, but she does not have the naturally strong Will and Reflex saves. Both builds start out similarly, but the fighter takes Weapon Focus and Weapon Specialization followed up with the very useful Iron Will feat. Given a variety of supernatural or magic-using opponents, the Blind-Fight feat will undoubtedly come into play on a regular basis.

In the mid-levels, the guerilla gets serious damage potential with Greater Weapon Focus and Greater Weapon Specialization. Because Reflex saves are important but not vital, the Lightning Reflexes feat is put off until 12th level. In the mid-teens, the fighter takes a number of feats to reinforce special attacks. This is all rounded off with the entire Weapon Focus tree in the flail, a weapon that is particularly useful when making said special attacks.

Monk Guerilla

Unlike the other two guerilla builds, the monk guerilla doesn't bother with Iron Will or Lightning Reflexes. Her saving throws are uniformly good and once Diamond Soul kicks in, most mid-level casters will have a difficult time affecting her. This guerilla goes the route of more traditional feats that improve combat effectiveness. Dodge and Mobility are still useful for getting by those pesky meat-shields on the way to more important business, but at 6th level, the monk buys Power Attack. Lacking the weapon flexibility that their fighter and ranger cousins possess, the monk can use Power Attack to turn up the heat as the need arises. After Blind-Fight, the monk buys Stunning Fist even though she skipped over it at 1st level. There's no penalty for buying it late, and the monk will be able to slap down at least a dozen Stunning Fists every day from the time of purchase. The high-level Weapon Focus and Improved Critical feats are there to add a bit of oomph that the monk seriously needs at higher levels.

As for the monk's bonus feats, they are purchased specifically for her role as a guerilla. Though Stunning Fist could arguably be as useful as Improved Grapple, a grapple is particularly troublesome for enemy spellcasters, even clerics. Choosing between Combat Reflexes and Deflect Arrows is like choosing to be stung by wasps or to be thrown down a flight of stairs. Neither is particularly desirable, but Combat Reflexes may come in handy if the monk is threatening multiple casters.

Ranger Guerilla

Melee rangers are encouraged to go down the slightly sub-optimal route of two-weapon fighting, so this ranger guerilla build has a bit of predestination built in. Dodge, Mobility, and Combat Expertise come early for this build because the lightly armored, d8 hit die ranger needs a little extra insurance. At 12th level, Two-Weapon Defense gets thrown in for added protection. Iron Will gets skipped since rangers will tend to have higher Wisdom scores, but Lightning Reflexes comes in at the stratospheric 18th level just in case. It can be difficult to pick the mid- and high-level feats since the ranger is picking around bonus combat style feats. This build takes Blind-Fight for use against concealed and invisible opponents and Spring Attack for an added buffer against particularly dangerous opponents.

Heavy Infantry

Fighter Heavy Infantry

Building a proper fighter heavy Infantry tree can be difficult because it's tempting to overload on every feat associated with Power Attack. This example build takes advantage of the fighter's many proficiencies not for insane specialization, but for a surprising amount of diversity. The fighter sacrifices the shield arm for the

awesome power and flexibility of a spiked chain put to good use: reach without the hassles, solid damage, and the opportunity for trips galore. At the higher levels, instead of buying the remainder of the Power Attack tree, this fighter diversifies by buying another entire set of the Weapon Focus tree, but takes spear for a melee and

TABLE 5-15: RANGER CAVALRY FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Mounted Combat
2nd (style)	Rapid Shot
3rd	Mounted Archery
6th	Point Blank Shot
6th (style)	Manyslot
9th	Precise Shot
11th (style)	Improved Precise Shot
12th	Weapon Focus (longbow)
15th	Far Shot
18th	Improved Critical (longbow)

TABLE 5-16: FIGHTER GUERILLA FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Dodge
1st (bonus)	Mobility
2nd (bonus)	Combat Expertise
3rd	Weapon Focus (longsword)
4th (bonus)	Weapon Specialization (longsword)
6th	Iron Will
6th (bonus)	Blind-Fight
8th (bonus)	Greater Weapon Focus (longsword)
9th	Greater Weapon Specialization (longsword)
10th (bonus)	Spring Attack
12th	Lightning Reflexes
12th (bonus)	Improved Trip
14th (bonus)	Improved Critical (longsword)
15th	Improved Disarm
16th (bonus)	Weapon Focus (flail)
18th	Weapon Specialization (flail)
18th (bonus)	Greater Weapon Focus (flail)
20th	Greater Weapon Specialization (flail)

TABLE 5-17: MONK GUERILLA FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Dodge
1st (bonus)	Improved Grapple
2nd (bonus)	Combat Reflexes
3rd	Mobility
6th	Power Attack
6th (bonus)	Improved Trip
9th	Blind-Fight
12th	Stunning Fist
15th	Weapon Focus (unarmed)
18th	Improved Critical (unarmed)

thrown weapon combination that prevents her from being too mired in melee.

Paladin Heavy Infantry

This paladin heavy infantry build sacrifices two feats for the sake of bolstering the class abilities of the paladin, namely the paladin mount and the spellcasting ability. While this book is about warriors, it is important to

remember that both paladins and rangers have small but significant spellcasting ability. For the paladin heavy infantry character, any spells they use will often be cast within an enemy's threatened space. And though this character will not be as effective on horse as a paladin cavalry warrior, the mounted paladin can still use her steed to great effect; protecting it with the paladin's Ride skill is a wise investment.

By the time the paladin buys Leadership at 9th level, the cohort she gains should be about 7th level. For the paladin heavy infantry warrior, the best cohort may be a fighter who can dish out serious damage alongside her patron.

Light Infantry

Barbarian Light Infantry

Barbarians can make devastating light infantry characters. The combination of their increased speed, brutal damage potential, and ability to suck up massive punishment is unmatched. This build focuses immediately on raw damage potential. Power Attack is immediately followed by Cleave and Great Cleave. These simply reinforce the barbarian's already awesome melee abilities. At the very high levels, the barbarian can use her Improved Bull Rush to slap lesser creatures out of the way wherever she goes. While using greater rage, it would take a truly massive creature to prevent the barbarian from getting her way.

Despite all this offensive potential, the barbarian starts to feel the need for more defense as the mid-levels come to a close. Barbarians can take a lot of abuse, but it's better to avoid a few hits than to assume she can absorb everything thrown at her. Dodge and Combat Expertise are purchased in sequence to give the barbarian defensive flexibility. Mobility comes in at 18th level. The challenges around that time are often so suddenly fatal that the barbarian would be wise to make a momentary retreat when things get too hot.

Monk Light Infantry

The monk has neither the feat potential of the fighter nor the d12 hit die of the barbarian. She has many special abilities and a good unarmored AC potential, but that only goes so far. The monk starts out with an offensive trio of feats: Power Attack, Stunning Fist, and Combat Reflexes. As the challenges rise, she deviates from the barbarian's progression by taking Dodge and Mobility for added defense. She takes Combat Expertise at 12th level for the defensive flexibility, but the rest of the upper level feats are all offensive. By 15th level, her various bonuses to AC should be significant, so Improved Disarm and Improved Critical are taken for more combat flexibility and more damage potential, respectively.

TABLE 5-18: RANGER GUERRILLA FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Dodge
2nd (style)	Two-Weapon Fighting
3rd	Mobility
6th	Combat Expertise
6th (style)	Improved Two-Weapon Fighting
9th	Blind-Fight
11th (style)	Greater Two-Weapon Fighting
12th	Two-Weapon Defense
15th	Spring Attack
18th	Lightning Reflexes

TABLE 5-19: FIGHTER HEAVY INFANTRY FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Power Attack
1st (bonus)	Cleave
2nd (bonus)	Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain)
3rd	Weapon Focus (spiked chain)
4th (bonus)	Weapon Specialization (spiked chain)
6th	Combat Expertise
6th (bonus)	Improved Trip
8th (bonus)	Greater Weapon Focus (spiked chain)
9th	Great Cleave
10th (bonus)	Blind-Fight
12th	Iron Will
12th (bonus)	Greater Weapon Specialization (spiked chain)
14th (bonus)	Combat Reflexes
15th	Dodge
16th (bonus)	Weapon Focus (spear)
18th	Weapon Specialization (spear)
18th (bonus)	Greater Weapon Focus (spear)
20th	Greater Weapon Specialization (spear)

TABLE 5-20: PALADIN HEAVY INFANTRY FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Power Attack
3rd	Cleave
6th	Mounted Combat
9th	Leadership
12th	Combat Casting
15th	Weapon Focus (longsword)
18th	Improved Critical (longsword)

Ranger Light Infantry

As with many melee ranger builds, the light infantry character is encouraged to take the two-weapon fighting style that is offered to rangers. Though this fighting style is sub-optimal when compared to the use of two-handed weapons, the ranger quickly makes up for the offensive difference by buying Power Attack. With the automatic bonus feat Greater Two-Weapon Fighting at 11th level, the ranger will start to have a hard time landing her third off-hand attack. Proactively, she buys Weapon Focus (shortsword) to gain a small but significant bonus when she's making that tertiary off-hand attack at -10. Even at a slight damage disadvantage, she'll still be dropping opponents on a regular basis, so the Cleave feat at 15th level should get a healthy amount of use.

The rest of the ranger's build is devoted to defense. She takes Two-Weapon Defense before Dodge since its bonus applies to all opponents instead of just one. Still, Dodge is useful on its own merits and as a gateway to Mobility, so both are purchased later in her career. Spring Attack, though arguably an offensive feat, is used by the ranger light infantry warrior in a defensive capacity. She can't charge the same powerful foes that the heavy infantry fighter beats to death, but Spring Attack can help her take pot shots until a new target gains priority or the target's fate is sealed.

Skirmisher

Fighter Skirmisher

Though some may think of a fighter skirmisher as a "waste" of the fighter's potential for massive specialization, the fact is that because fighters get so many feats, it's very easy for them to have excellent capabilities in both melee and ranged combat. Since this character will be a multi-role warrior, the first feats she takes are focused on getting out of threatened spaces and quickly switching weapons. After that, taking advantage of the fighter's specialization capability will help sustain her in melee combat.

The mid-levels are a mish-mash of ranged feats, melee feats, and a couple of miscellaneous feats. Point Blank Shot and Precise Shot are taken first. Primarily, the skirmisher will be pulling archery duty at close range, usually at targets that are engaging her allies. Both feats help in those circumstances. Once that's out of the way, she takes Power Attack for the increased offensive capability required for someone who isn't a two-handed melee weapons specialist. This is followed by two miscellaneous feats: Iron Will helps protect against the inevitable mind-affecting spells and Blind-Fight allows the skirmisher to deal with concealment in case the rest of the party is incapable of doing so. Rapid Shot and Cleave round out the most consistently useful feats available from the Point Blank Shot and Power Attack feat trees. The high-level feats are reserved for building Weapon

Focus trees for both longsword and longbow. Despite what seems to be a lack of singular focus, this fighter skirmisher is actually as well equipped to deal with both melee and ranged combat as many non-fighter infantry or archer characters.

Ranger Skirmisher

Quick Draw is the key to this build's success. With it, the ranger can not only draw two weapons simultaneously, but she can also make multiple thrown weapon attacks in a single round. Though she could use two heavier melee weapons or a longbow when she expects one form of combat to dominate an encounter, her two typical weapons are longsword and throwing axe. Yes, you read that right: a throwing axe. Remember: the goal of the

TABLE 5-21: BARBARIAN LIGHT INFANTRY FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Power Attack
3rd	Cleave
6th	Great Cleave
9th	Dodge
12th	Combat Expertise
15th	Improved Bull Rush
18th	Mobility

TABLE 5-22: MONK LIGHT INFANTRY FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Power Attack
1st (bonus)	Stunning Fist
2nd (bonus)	Combat Reflexes
3rd	Dodge
6th	Mobility
6th (bonus)	Improved Trip
9th	Cleave
12th	Combat Expertise
15th	Improved Disarm
18th	Improved Critical (unarmed)

TABLE 5-23: RANGER LIGHT INFANTRY FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Power Attack
2nd (style)	Two-Weapon Fighting
3rd	Two-Weapon Defense
6th	Dodge
6th (style)	Improved Two-Weapon Fighting
9th	Weapon Focus (shortsword)
11th (style)	Greater Two-Weapon Fighting
12th	Mobility
15th	Cleave
18th	Spring Attack

skirmisher is not to be devastating at one form of combat, but to remain flexible at all times. The throwing axe in the off-hand is a light weapon (reduces penalties) and has a range increment of 10 feet.

When combined with Point Blank Shot and Far Shot, the throwing axe becomes fairly respectable. At 11th level, the Greater Two-Weapon Fighting feat allows the ranger skirmisher to do some pretty bizarre things with her weapon combos. Consider a full attack action that consists of three melee attacks with longsword followed by a 5 foot step and three ranged throwing axe attacks within 20 feet (increased range increment thanks to Far Shot)! If you don't mind the idea of your skirmisher

looking like a wandering axe salesman, she could sheath the longsword and make a whopping six attacks within 20 feet at +10/+5/+0, +10/+5/+0! Impractical? Possibly. Totally awesome? Definitely. It's certainly flexible, and that's what the skirmisher is all about.

At higher levels, the ranger buys Power Attack and Cleave for increased melee capabilities as the challenges rise. The purchase of Improved Critical can certainly help whether the axes are used for ranged or melee combat. The sheer number of attacks the ranger gets by that point in time practically guarantees regular critical hits on every adventure.

TABLE 5-24: FIGHTER SKIRMISHER FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Dodge
1st (bonus)	Mobility
2nd (bonus)	Quick Draw
3rd	Weapon Focus (longsword)
4th (bonus)	Weapon Specialization (longsword)
6th	Point Blank Shot
6th (bonus)	Precise Shot
8th (bonus)	Power Attack
9th	Iron Will
10th (bonus)	Blind-Fight
12th	Rapid Shot
12th (bonus)	Cleave
14th (bonus)	Weapon Focus (longbow)
15th	Weapon Specialization (longbow)
16th (bonus)	Greater Weapon Focus (longsword)
18th	Greater Weapon Specialization (longsword)
18th (bonus)	Greater Weapon Focus (longbow)
20th	Greater Weapon Specialization (longbow)

TABLE 5-25: RANGER SKIRMISHER FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Quick Draw
2nd (style)	Two-Weapon Fighting
3rd	Point Blank Shot
6th	Precise Shot
6th (style)	Improved Two-Weapon Fighting
9th	Far Shot
11th (style)	Greater Two-Weapon Fighting
12th	Power Attack
15th	Cleave
18th	Improved Critical (throwing axe)

Chapter Six

Equipment

Next to experience points, loot is the basis for building your character. The more loot, the more you can buy. The more you buy, the better equipped you are. And the better equipped you are, the better your chances for survival. All the great feat choices, good skill point distributions, and great stat rolls mean nothing if the guy you're facing has a +5 *vorpal greatsword of wounding* or a +4 *unholy flaming composite [+4] longbow* with Rapid Shot. Of course, in the hands of a commoner, these weapons are worthless, but in the hands of a reasonably competent warrior, equipment, more often than not, makes or breaks the fight.

This chapter's focus is on weapons and armor, with extra attention on weapons, because they're cool. We're not gonna chat about magic items, the virtues of smokesticks, or why you should use a silk rope over hemp rope, because if you're that hung up on general PHB equipment, well, you should probably switch classes and go for rogue. Just keep your mind on the damage dealer and the damage stopper, and you'll be fine.

Weapons

First off, if you're a historical type looking for reality in this game, you've chosen the wrong system. The weapons in the d20 system have only a tenuous link to any reality, and instead serve to simulate combat in as smooth a manner as possible. All weapons have characteristics, just like spells, skills or feats. To decide which weapon is best for you, consider the various components of each weapon.

Weapon Components

Proficiency

Each weapon requires some modicum of proficiency to use properly. Most warriors – all but monks – are proficient with all simple and martial weapons. Clerics are proficient with all simple weapons, while everybody else has specific lists of weapons they can use.

Simple: Even a commoner could use these real basic

weapons. Simple weapons include unarmed strikes, clubs, sickles, and quarterstaves.

Martial: These are the better weapons that are made for war, as implied by the proficiency name. These weapons are all the traditional things you'd find on the battlefield, such as longswords, warhammers, and longbows.

Exotic: This proficiency group covers just about everything else. Exotic weapons need not be from weird locales. Instead, they just have unusual or special rules associated with them, higher than normal damage, race-specific origins, or are just plain weird. Examples include the bastard sword, dwarven waraxe, shuriken, and the infamous two-bladed sword (see, forget about reality!).

Categories

Each weapon falls into one or more of the following categories.

Unarmed: This includes attacks made while wearing gauntlets.

Light: These weapons are small and don't take a lot of room to use. Weapons in this category include the dagger, kama, and short sword. When you're grappled, swallowed whole, or engulfed, you can use a light weapon to cut your way free. These are the best weapons to use in your off-hand if you fight with two weapons.

One-Handed: The category says it all. These weapons include longswords, the morningstar, and the whip.

Two-Handed: This category includes greatswords, most double weapons (quarterstaff to the dwarven urgosh), and longspears. You get one-and-a-half times your Strength modifier with attacks made with one-handed weapons wielded in two hands, or with two-handed weapons. When you use Power Attack with a two-handed weapon, you trade attack for damage points on a 1-for-2 basis.

Ranged: Includes both thrown and projectile weapons, such as the javelin and the longbow.

Size: A weapon's size reflects the intended size of the

weapon's wielder. For example, a longsword, as written, is the same thing as a Medium longsword (1d8 points of damage). However, there is a difference between a Small longsword (1d6 points of damage, a longsword intended for a Small wielder such as a halfling), and a Large longsword (2d6 points of damage, a longsword constructed for a Large wielder, like an ogre). The weapon's size changes the weapon's damage value. The default damage values of a weapon are listed under the Dmg (M) column, while those for Small are under the Dmg (S) column. For other sized weapons, look at Table 7-4: Tiny and Large Weapon Damage in the PHB.

Cost: The weapon's cost. This typically is unimportant beyond 2nd or 3rd level, since by that point you should have enough cash to buy just about anything you want in the PHB.

Damage: A weapon's damage is always in whole die increments. Gone are the days of a weapon dealing 1d6+1 damage. Damage values are based on the weapon's category.

Light:	1d3 to 1d6
One-handed:	1d3 to 1d10
Two-handed:	1d6 to 2d6
Ranged:	1d4 to 1d10

Critical: All weapons have a listed critical threat range. A weapon threatens a critical when the number indicated comes up on the die and hits with the added modifiers. So, a longsword threatens on a 19-20. If you rolled a 19, and hit the target with modifiers, you can roll a second 1d20. If you hit with the second roll, you get a critical hit. For more info, see the section preceding the weapons in the PHB.

Range Increment: A weapon, if a projectile or thrown weapon, has some distance listed here. Thrown weapons have double value, since a character can make a full attack action, then use Rapid Shot to throw the weapon in their hand, then pull another to replace it with Quick Draw. In most fights, the battlefield rarely extends beyond one range increment.

Type: There are three types of weapons: Slashing, Piercing, and Bludgeoning. Most of the time, a weapon's type has little game effect, though some monsters (such as the skeleton and zombie) have damage reduction against a particular type of weapon.

A Martial Weapon's Value

First, skip simple weapons. You're a warrior, after all. (And if you're a monk, stick with unarmed attacks; they'll serve you better.) Exotic weapons are probably not going to be what you want to focus on either. Why? When was the last time your treasure haul included a *+1 orc double axe*, or a *+3 siangham*? How about a *+3/+2 dire flail*? Probably never, and it probably won't ever. See, DMs have to add that crap to their adventures. If they're randomizing treasure, they first have to roll a

magic weapon and then face a 70% chance that the weapon included is a common weapon. Finally, anything we're talking about below can also apply to exotics, simples, and even weapons of different sizes with just a little extrapolation.

First off, a weapon's value rests entirely on how the damage dealt magnifies through a critical hit. Remember the Feats chapter in this book? Remember all those percentages? They apply here too, but worse. What follows is an extensive look at the potential damage based on weapon and crit range. Look them over, and you'll see which weapons are best.

A weapon with a crit range of 20 indicates you will have a 5% chance to get a critical threat. A range of 19-20 gives you a 10% chance, while a range of 18-20 gives you a 15% chance. Compare the heavy pick with the short sword. The heavy pick has a x4 multiplier, but only threatens on a 20. On the other hand, the short sword has a x2 multiplier, but threatens on a 19-20. If you manage to score a critical hit with the heavy pick, you get 4d6 damage, an average of 14 points of damage before modifiers. The short sword only deals 7 points of damage, but you achieve a critical twice as often. Balanced? Consider this: It takes 20 rolls to guarantee a natural 20 (statistically speaking), while it only takes 10 rolls to guarantee a 19-20. Every additional round you spend in combat is another round you might take damage.

The tables below compare weapons based on their damage and critical range. The calculations include the chances of getting a critical, and the added damage on average. The tables demonstrate how the average damage changes based on expected hits on a standard attack and the critical multiplier against ACs ranging from 10 to 20. From these tables, you can compare expected damage between weapons of different damage dice, such as when determining if a light pick or a short sword is the better off-hand weapon, or which weapon is better for two-handed attacks.

"Average damage" is the average damage resulting from the dice rolled for the weapon's damage. "Average critical damage" is the average damage you'll do when you roll a crit (influenced by the weapon's crit multiplier), while the "adjusted critical damage" is the average additional critical damage multiplied by the chance of actually getting a critical (5%, 10%, or 15%, as discussed above). In other words, adjusted critical damage is balanced for how often that crit damage is actually going to occur. If you add average damage plus adjusted critical damage, you get the true average amount of damage the weapon will do, including percentage chances of criticals and the extra damage those crits will do above and beyond the normal damage.

"True average damage" is the average damage from a normal, non-critical hit, plus the average extra damage from a critical hit adjusted for the chance of actually getting the critical hit. In other words, if you attacked 100 times and got a critical exactly as many times as you

should (10 times or 10% for a 19-20 weapon, 15 times or 15% for a 18-20 weapon, etc.), and every other attack landed with average damage rolls, the true average damage is the total damage over those 100 attacks divided by 100. It's the only true measure of a weapon's damage potential over the course of many battles.

(For you math wonks out there, note that the true average damage number never appears on the table of average damage based on AC and BAB. This is because there is always a 5% chance of any attack failing (on a roll of natural 1). To get from true average damage to the numbers on the tables, multiply each component of damage by the chance of actually hitting.)

Weapon Analysis

1d4/x2: light hammer

Cost: 1 gp

Average Damage: 2.5

Average Critical Damage: 5

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.125

True Average Damage: 2.625

While clearly one of the worst weapons in the martial proficiencies, insofar as damage goes, you shouldn't discount this weapon altogether, considering the fact that it has a range increment. Like the hand axe, it can be thrown, but farther. In fact, it has the best thrown range increment in the game. And, at one-eighth the cost of a throwing axe, you can afford to throw these weapons away.

For cheap fun, use light hammers in conjunction with Two-Weapon Fighting, Quick Draw, Point Blank Shot, and Rapid Shot. Armed with any one-handed weapon and a light hammer, make a full attack action, but apply a -2 penalty to your melee attack rolls. At the end of your full attack, take a five-foot step away from your opponent if he is still alive. With Rapid Shot, throw the light hammer at the target, or any other target within 30 ft, gaining a +1 bonus to the ranged attack and damage. Finally, with Quick Draw, replace the thrown weapon and repeat as necessary.

1d4/18-20: kukri

(also the Small scimitar)

Cost: 8 gp

Average Damage: 2.5

Average Critical Damage: 5

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.375

True Average Damage: 2.875

The kukri sure seems like a good bargain. With a 15%

base chance to critically threaten your target with each swing... well, you'll be hitting criticals frequently, especially if you get a magical kukri with enchantment bonuses or the *keen* quality. At that point you'll crit with nearly every swing. The kukri is not bad, really, but it lacks the versatility of the light hammer, dagger, or throwing axe, as it is a melee weapon only. And, with only a x2 multiplier, you're still dealing just 2d4 points of damage on a successful critical hit, just like a dagger.

The kukri is best when paired with the scimitar in Two-Weapon Fighting. First, get the kukri enchanted and with the *keen* quality. Next, take Improved Critical (scimitar). Now, both your scimitar and your kukri have threat ranges of 15-20. With two swings, you have a 40% chance of nailing a critical hit each round.

TABLE 6-1: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1D4/X2 WEAPON
(EXAMPLE: LIGHT HAMMER)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	1.575	1.444	1.313	1.181	1.05	0.919	0.788	0.656	0.525	0.394	0.263
+2	1.706	1.575	1.444	1.313	1.181	1.05	0.919	0.788	0.656	0.525	0.394
+3	1.838	1.706	1.575	1.444	1.313	1.181	1.05	0.919	0.788	0.656	0.525
+4	1.969	1.838	1.706	1.575	1.444	1.313	1.181	1.05	0.919	0.788	0.656
+5	2.1	1.969	1.838	1.706	1.575	1.444	1.313	1.181	1.05	0.919	0.788
+6	2.231	2.1	1.969	1.838	1.706	1.575	1.444	1.313	1.181	1.05	0.919
+7	2.363	2.231	2.1	1.969	1.838	1.706	1.575	1.444	1.313	1.181	1.05
+8	2.494	2.363	2.231	2.1	1.969	1.838	1.706	1.575	1.444	1.313	1.181
+9	2.494	2.494	2.363	2.231	2.1	1.969	1.838	1.706	1.575	1.444	1.313
+10	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.363	2.231	2.1	1.969	1.838	1.706	1.575	1.444
+11	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.363	2.231	2.1	1.969	1.838	1.706	1.575
+12	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.363	2.231	2.1	1.969	1.838	1.706
+13	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.363	2.231	2.1	1.969	1.838
+14	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.363	2.231	2.1	1.969
+15	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.363	2.231	2.1
+16	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.363	2.231
+17	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.363
+18	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494
+19	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494
+20	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494

TABLE 6-2: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1D4/18-20 WEAPON
(EXAMPLE: KUKRI)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294	1.15	1.006	0.823	0.719	0.575	0.431	0.275
+2	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294	1.15	1.006	0.823	0.719	0.575	0.431
+3	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294	1.15	1.006	0.823	0.719	0.575
+4	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294	1.15	1.006	0.823	0.719
+5	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294	1.15	1.006	0.823
+6	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294	1.15	1.006
+7	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294	1.15
+8	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294
+9	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438
+10	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581
+11	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725
+12	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869
+13	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013
+14	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156
+15	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3
+16	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444
+17	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588
+18	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731
+19	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731
+20	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731

TABLE 6-3: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1d4/x4 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: LIGHT PICK)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294	1.15	1.006	0.863	0.719	0.575	0.431	0.288
+2	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294	1.15	1.006	0.863	0.719	0.575	0.431
+3	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294	1.15	1.006	0.863	0.719	0.575
+4	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294	1.15	1.006	0.863	0.719
+5	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294	1.15	1.006	0.863
+6	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294	1.15	1.006
+7	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294	1.15
+8	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294
+9	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438
+10	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581
+11	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725
+12	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869
+13	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013
+14	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156
+15	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3
+16	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444
+17	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588
+18	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731
+19	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731
+20	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731

TABLE 6-4: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1d6/x2 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: THROWING AXE)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	2.205	2.021	1.838	1.654	1.47	1.286	1.103	0.919	0.735	0.551	0.368
+2	2.389	2.205	2.021	1.838	1.654	1.47	1.286	1.103	0.919	0.735	0.551
+3	2.573	2.389	2.205	2.021	1.838	1.654	1.47	1.286	1.103	0.919	0.735
+4	2.756	2.573	2.389	2.205	2.021	1.838	1.654	1.47	1.286	1.103	0.919
+5	2.94	2.756	2.573	2.389	2.205	2.021	1.838	1.654	1.47	1.286	1.103
+6	3.124	2.94	2.756	2.573	2.389	2.205	2.021	1.838	1.654	1.47	1.286
+7	3.308	3.124	2.94	2.756	2.573	2.389	2.205	2.021	1.838	1.654	1.47
+8	3.491	3.308	3.124	2.94	2.756	2.573	2.389	2.205	2.021	1.838	1.654
+9	3.491	3.491	3.308	3.124	2.94	2.756	2.573	2.389	2.205	2.021	1.838
+10	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.308	3.124	2.94	2.756	2.573	2.389	2.205	2.021
+11	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.308	3.124	2.94	2.756	2.573	2.389	2.205
+12	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.308	3.124	2.94	2.756	2.573	2.389
+13	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.308	3.124	2.94	2.756	2.573
+14	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.308	3.124	2.94	2.756
+15	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.308	3.124	2.94
+16	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.308	3.124
+17	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.308
+18	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491
+19	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491
+20	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491

TABLE 6-5: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1d6/18-20 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: SCIMITAR)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811	1.61	1.409	1.208	1.006	0.805	0.604	0.385
+2	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811	1.61	1.409	1.208	1.006	0.805	0.604
+3	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811	1.61	1.409	1.208	1.006	0.805
+4	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811	1.61	1.409	1.208	1.006
+5	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811	1.61	1.409	1.208
+6	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811	1.61	1.409
+7	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811	1.61
+8	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811
+9	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013
+10	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214
+11	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415
+12	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616
+13	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818
+14	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019
+15	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22
+16	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421
+17	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623
+18	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824
+19	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824
+20	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824

1d4/x4: light pick

(also a Small heavy pick)

Cost: 4 gp

Average Damage: 2.5

Average Critical Damage: 10

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.375

True Average Damage: 2.875

This is the big off-hand weapon, best for the reckless high rollers. Sure, you only have a 5% chance of getting a critical threat, but you're probably going to get the confirmation when you do make that big roll. The key benefit, as evidenced on Table 6-3, is the damage potential. It's also cheaper than the kukri. However, despite this weapon's virtues, it carries some flaws. Like the kukri, it's not made to be thrown. The short sword consistently deals more damage. Finally, piercing weapons are often less successful in damaging opponents than slashing or bludgeoning, since many monsters have resistances to piercing weapons.

Want to beef this weapon up a bit? Add a "fill in energy type here" burst weapon. For the price of a +2 bonus, your light pick deals an extra 3d10 points of energy damage on a critical hit. Mix with Power Attack, and it's all over.

1d6/x2: throwing axe

Cost: 8 gp

Average Damage: 3.5

Average Critical Damage: 7

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.175

True Average Damage: 3.675

This one's real simple. Itty-bitty axe, deals itty-bitty damage. For 8 gp, you could buy 4 daggers with the same range increment. Really, the big benefit here is the added damage per hit. You're not going to crit all that often, and for the price, it's probably better to look at cheaper and expendable thrown weaponry.

Whenever using thrown weaponry, you must invest in the Quick Draw feat. It allows you to use your normal rate of attacks with thrown weaponry, provided of course you have enough of them on hand. One more thing: many warriors make the mistake of dumping 35 or 50 gp into a crossbow. The only people who should ever, ever use a crossbow are the 95-pound weaklings, with a Strength of 9 or less. A crossbow requires reload time. To avoid or minimize the reload time, you have to buy a super-specialized feat (Rapid Reload, that is). On the other hand, 50 gold pieces gets you 50 light hammers or, for the more reasonable, 6 throwing axes. And with thrown weapons, you get a Strength bonus to damage.

1d6/18-20: scimitar

Cost: 15 gp

Average Damage: 3.5

Average Critical Damage: 7

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.525

True Average Damage: 4.025

Of the two high-critical-threatening one-handed weapons, scimitars are consistently superior to rapiers. Scimitars are slashing, which means they are eligible for the *keen edge* spell and magic enhancement. The rapier is piercing, which means you'd have to spend a feat to increase this effectiveness of this weapon. If you're a warrior, there is bound to be more effective weaponry out there; take a look at the game's most popular weapon: the longsword. On the other hand, you can use Weapon Finesse with a rapier, something you can't use with a scimitar.

In short, if you have a high Dexterity, a mediocre Strength, and Weapon Finesse, a rapier and a kukri are the weapons for you. On the other hand, if you want to start ripping through the bad guys, invest in a +X *keen scimitar*, and you won't be sorry.

1d6/19-20: short sword
(also a Small longsword)

Cost: 10 gp

Average Damage: 3.5

Average Critical Damage: 7

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.35

True Average Damage: 3.85

The short sword is undoubtedly the game's most popular off-hand weapon. What can match the high critical threat range at such a great price? Compared to the kukri, the short sword deals more damage on average, despite its 5% less likelihood of scoring a critical threat. It even weighs less than most of the martial light weapons. Is there a reason not to use this weapon as an off-hand? Probably not; thousands of gamers can't be wrong, right?

Seriously, as off-hand weapons go, this one is fine. However, you can't throw it. It's also the most expensive of the light martial weapons, and worse, it's piercing. In this department, the kukri is a better investment, despite the lower damage on average. Plus, the kukri does slashing damage, which lets you put some *keen* action into it. In fact, a *keen*-edged kukri has almost the same damage potential as the short sword.

TABLE 6-6: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1D6/19-20 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: SHORT SWORD)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733	1.54	1.348	1.155	0.963	0.77	0.578	0.35
+2	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733	1.54	1.348	1.155	0.963	0.77	0.525
+3	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733	1.54	1.348	1.155	0.963	0.7
+4	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733	1.54	1.348	1.155	0.875
+5	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733	1.54	1.348	1.05
+6	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733	1.54	1.225
+7	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733	1.4
+8	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.575
+9	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.75
+10	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31	1.925
+11	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.1
+12	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.275
+13	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.45
+14	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.625
+15	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273	2.8
+16	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465	2.975
+17	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.15
+18	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.325
+19	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.325
+20	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.325

TABLE 6-7: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1D6/X3 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: HANDAXE)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733	1.54	1.348	1.155	0.963	0.77	0.578	0.385
+2	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733	1.54	1.348	1.155	0.963	0.77	0.578
+3	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733	1.54	1.348	1.155	0.963	0.77
+4	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733	1.54	1.348	1.155	0.963
+5	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733	1.54	1.348	1.155
+6	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733	1.54	1.348
+7	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733	1.54
+8	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733
+9	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925
+10	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118
+11	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31
+12	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503
+13	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695
+14	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888
+15	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08
+16	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273
+17	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465
+18	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658
+19	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658
+20	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658

TABLE 6-8: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1D6/X4 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: HEAVY PICK)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811	1.61	1.409	1.208	1.006	0.805	0.604	0.403
+2	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811	1.61	1.409	1.208	1.006	0.805	0.604
+3	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811	1.61	1.409	1.208	1.006	0.805
+4	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811	1.61	1.409	1.208	1.006
+5	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811	1.61	1.409	1.208
+6	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811	1.61	1.409
+7	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811	1.61
+8	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811
+9	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013
+10	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214
+11	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415
+12	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616
+13	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818
+14	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019
+15	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22
+16	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421
+17	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623
+18	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824
+19	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824
+20	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824

TABLE 6-9: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1D8/x2 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: FLAIL)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	2.835	2.599	2.363	2.126	1.89	1.654	1.418	1.181	0.945	0.709	0.473
+2	3.071	2.835	2.599	2.363	2.126	1.89	1.654	1.418	1.181	0.945	0.709
+3	3.308	3.071	2.835	2.599	2.363	2.126	1.89	1.654	1.418	1.181	0.945
+4	3.544	3.308	3.071	2.835	2.599	2.363	2.126	1.89	1.654	1.418	1.181
+5	3.78	3.544	3.308	3.071	2.835	2.599	2.363	2.126	1.89	1.654	1.418
+6	4.016	3.78	3.544	3.308	3.071	2.835	2.599	2.363	2.126	1.89	1.654
+7	4.253	4.016	3.78	3.544	3.308	3.071	2.835	2.599	2.363	2.126	1.89
+8	4.489	4.253	4.016	3.78	3.544	3.308	3.071	2.835	2.599	2.363	2.126
+9	4.489	4.489	4.253	4.016	3.78	3.544	3.308	3.071	2.835	2.599	2.363
+10	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.253	4.016	3.78	3.544	3.308	3.071	2.835	2.599
+11	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.253	4.016	3.78	3.544	3.308	3.071	2.835
+12	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.253	4.016	3.78	3.544	3.308	3.071
+13	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.253	4.016	3.78	3.544	3.308
+14	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.253	4.016	3.78	3.544
+15	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.253	4.016	3.78
+16	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.253	4.016
+17	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.253
+18	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489
+19	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489
+20	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489

TABLE 6-10: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1D8/19-20 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: LONGSWORD)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228	1.98	1.733	1.485	1.238	0.99	0.743	0.45
+2	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228	1.98	1.733	1.485	1.238	0.99	0.675
+3	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228	1.98	1.733	1.485	1.238	0.9
+4	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228	1.98	1.733	1.485	1.125
+5	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228	1.98	1.733	1.35
+6	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228	1.98	1.575
+7	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228	1.8
+8	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.025
+9	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.25
+10	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.475
+11	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.7
+12	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465	2.925
+13	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.15
+14	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.375
+15	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.6
+16	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.825
+17	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.05
+18	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.275
+19	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.275
+20	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.275

TABLE 6-11: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1D8/x3 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: BATTLEAXE)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228	1.98	1.733	1.485	1.238	0.99	0.743	0.495
+2	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228	1.98	1.733	1.485	1.238	0.99	0.743
+3	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228	1.98	1.733	1.485	1.238	0.99
+4	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228	1.98	1.733	1.485	1.238
+5	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228	1.98	1.733	1.485
+6	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228	1.98	1.733
+7	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228	1.98
+8	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228
+9	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475
+10	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723
+11	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97
+12	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218
+13	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465
+14	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713
+15	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96
+16	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208
+17	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455
+18	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703
+19	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703
+20	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703

1d6/x3: handaxe

(also a Small battleaxe)

Cost: 6 gp

Average Damage: 3.5

Average Critical Damage: 10.5

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.35

True Average Damage: 3.85

The handaxe is an interesting and oft-overlooked alternative to the short sword. It has the same damage potential as the short sword, it's cheaper, and it's slashing. Again, where you have to stack a feat on the short sword to improve its critical threat, the hand axe improves with a simple magical oil or enchantment.

1d6/x4: heavy pick

Cost: 8 gp

Average Damage: 3.5

Average Critical Damage: 14

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.525

True Average Damage: 4.025

This bruiser is a great weapon for reckless characters who believe they have a better chance at nailing the natural 20 than other characters. While this is an acceptable weapon, better than the hand axe and on par with the short sword, it can't be used as effectively as an off-hand weapon without taking some extra penalties to the attack roll. As a primary weapon, though you may occasionally get lucky with a swing, you're probably not going to pull off a miracle every game session.

1d8/x2: flail

Cost: 8 gp

Average Damage: 4.5

Average Critical Damage: 9

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.225

True Average Damage: 4.725

On the surface, this looks like one of the crummiest weapons in the game. Alas, many players fall into this trap by not reading the weapon description. Flails, either regular or their bigger brother, the heavy flail, grant their wielder a +2 bonus on opposed attack rolls made to disarm an enemy and to avoid being disarmed on a failed attempt. Better still, this so-called yuck weapon also lets you trip bad guys. If you were thinking about multiclassing a fighter/monk and want to play with the Improved Trip feat a bit, this weapon is an 8 gp gem in the rough, having a reasonable damage value, especially compared to the beloved pick.

1d8/19-20: longsword

Cost: 15 gp

Average Damage: 4.5

Average Critical Damage: 9

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.45

True Average Damage: 4.95

Yeah, yeah. It's a great weapon. Not much in the perks or originality department, but +1 *longswords* are more common than half-elves these days. It's a staple weapon. You're going to use it, and there's nothing anyone can say about it.

1d8/x3: battleaxe

Cost: 10 gp

Average Damage: 4.5

Average Critical Damage: 13.5

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.45

True Average Damage: 4.95

Same average damage potential as the longsword, you say? Five gold cheaper? Better top-end damage potential? Slashing, too? Yep, you're still going with the longsword, aren't you?

2d4/18-20: falchion

Cost: 75 gp

Average Damage: 5

Average Critical Damage: 10

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.75

True Average Damage: 5.75

This is a really strange weapon. It costs 25 gp more than a greatsword, still requires two hands to use, and deals less damage. Granted, it does give you an extra 5% chance for a critical threat, and does slightly more adjusted critical damage, but who are we kidding? Oh yeah, it's also 4 pounds lighter. This is somewhat cool with the right magical enhancements, but if you ask any warrior, they'll hand you a greatsword instead.

TABLE 6-12: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 2D4/18-20 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: FALCHION)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588	2.3	2.013	1.725	1.438	1.15	0.863	0.55
+2	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588	2.3	2.013	1.725	1.438	1.15	0.863
+3	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588	2.3	2.013	1.725	1.438	1.15
+4	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588	2.3	2.013	1.725	1.438
+5	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588	2.3	2.013	1.725
+6	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588	2.3	2.013
+7	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588	2.3
+8	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588
+9	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875
+10	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163
+11	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45
+12	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738
+13	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025
+14	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313
+15	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6
+16	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888
+17	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175
+18	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463
+19	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463
+20	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463

TABLE 6-13: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 2D4/X3 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: GUISARME)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	3.3	3.025	2.75	2.475	2.2	1.925	1.65	1.375	1.1	0.825	0.55
+2	3.575	3.3	3.025	2.75	2.475	2.2	1.925	1.65	1.375	1.1	0.825
+3	3.85	3.575	3.3	3.025	2.75	2.475	2.2	1.925	1.65	1.375	1.1
+4	4.125	3.85	3.575	3.3	3.025	2.75	2.475	2.2	1.925	1.65	1.375
+5	4.4	4.125	3.85	3.575	3.3	3.025	2.75	2.475	2.2	1.925	1.65
+6	4.675	4.4	4.125	3.85	3.575	3.3	3.025	2.75	2.475	2.2	1.925
+7	4.95	4.675	4.4	4.125	3.85	3.575	3.3	3.025	2.75	2.475	2.2
+8	5.225	4.95	4.675	4.4	4.125	3.85	3.575	3.3	3.025	2.75	2.475
+9	5.225	5.225	4.95	4.675	4.4	4.125	3.85	3.575	3.3	3.025	2.75
+10	5.225	5.225	5.225	4.95	4.675	4.4	4.125	3.85	3.575	3.3	3.025
+11	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	4.95	4.675	4.4	4.125	3.85	3.575	3.3
+12	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	4.95	4.675	4.4	4.125	3.85	3.575
+13	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	4.95	4.675	4.4	4.125	3.85
+14	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	4.95	4.675	4.4	4.125
+15	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	4.95	4.675	4.4
+16	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	4.95	4.675
+17	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	4.95
+18	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225
+19	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225
+20	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225

TABLE 6-14: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 2D4/X4 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: SCYTHE)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588	2.3	2.013	1.725	1.438	1.15	0.863	0.575
+2	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588	2.3	2.013	1.725	1.438	1.15	0.863
+3	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588	2.3	2.013	1.725	1.438	1.15
+4	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588	2.3	2.013	1.725	1.438
+5	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588	2.3	2.013	1.725
+6	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588	2.3	2.013
+7	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588	2.3
+8	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588
+9	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875
+10	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163
+11	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45
+12	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738
+13	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025
+14	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313
+15	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6
+16	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888
+17	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175
+18	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463
+19	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463
+20	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463

2d4/x3: guisarme

Cost: 9 gp

Average Damage: 5

Average Critical Damage: 15

Adjusted Damage: 0.5

True Average Damage: 5.5

Pole-arms are underrated. Lots of damage potential, great critical hits and reach. Every multiclassed fighter/cleric should wield a pole arm. You want a weapon you can trip with? This is it.

2d4/x4: scythe

Cost: 18 gp

Average Damage: 5

Average Critical Damage: 20

Adjusted Damage: 0.75

True Average Damage: 5.75

At a certain level, the scythe is somewhat cool. High damage potential, not too expensive, and rather effective. On the other hand, who are you kidding? What, your character's going to stroll into a random town clutching a scythe? This weapon sets off some alarms. However, it can be used for making trip attacks. When it comes right down to it, if you're going to use a two-handed weapon, a greatsword consistently outperforms, trip or no trip.

This weapon gets real sick with the *energy burst* magic weapon property. Real sick. You'll do so much damage on a critical hit, you'll think the world was ending.

1d10/x2: greatclub

Cost: 5 gp

Average Damage: 5.5

Average Critical Damage: 11

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.275

True Average Damage: 5.775

There's just one reason to use this weapon: it's cheap. Take out a loan from the cleric and buy a heavy flail instead.

TABLE 6-15: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1D10/x2 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: GREATCLUB)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	3.465	3.176	2.888	2.599	2.31	2.021	1.733	1.444	1.155	0.866	0.578
+2	3.754	3.465	3.176	2.888	2.599	2.31	2.021	1.733	1.444	1.155	0.866
+3	4.043	3.754	3.465	3.176	2.888	2.599	2.31	2.021	1.733	1.444	1.155
+4	4.331	4.043	3.754	3.465	3.176	2.888	2.599	2.31	2.021	1.733	1.444
+5	4.62	4.331	4.043	3.754	3.465	3.176	2.888	2.599	2.31	2.021	1.733
+6	4.909	4.62	4.331	4.043	3.754	3.465	3.176	2.888	2.599	2.31	2.021
+7	5.198	4.909	4.62	4.331	4.043	3.754	3.465	3.176	2.888	2.599	2.31
+8	5.486	5.198	4.909	4.62	4.331	4.043	3.754	3.465	3.176	2.888	2.599
+9	5.486	5.486	5.198	4.909	4.62	4.331	4.043	3.754	3.465	3.176	2.888
+10	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.198	4.909	4.62	4.331	4.043	3.754	3.465	3.176
+11	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.198	4.909	4.62	4.331	4.043	3.754	3.465
+12	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.198	4.909	4.62	4.331	4.043	3.754
+13	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.198	4.909	4.62	4.331	4.043
+14	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.198	4.909	4.62	4.331
+15	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.198	4.909	4.62
+16	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.198	4.909
+17	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.198
+18	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486
+19	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486
+20	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486

TABLE 6-16: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1D10/19-20 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: FLAIL)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723	2.42	2.118	1.815	1.513	1.21	0.908	0.55
+2	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723	2.42	2.118	1.815	1.513	1.21	0.825
+3	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723	2.42	2.118	1.815	1.513	1.1
+4	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723	2.42	2.118	1.815	1.375
+5	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723	2.42	2.118	1.65
+6	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723	2.42	1.925
+7	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723	2.2
+8	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.475
+9	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328	2.75
+10	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.025
+11	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.3
+12	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.575
+13	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538	3.85
+14	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.125
+15	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.4
+16	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445	4.675
+17	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	4.95
+18	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.225
+19	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.225
+20	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.225

TABLE 6-17: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1D10/x3 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: HALBERD)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723	2.42	2.118	1.815	1.513	1.21	0.908	0.605
+2	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723	2.42	2.118	1.815	1.513	1.21	0.908
+3	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723	2.42	2.118	1.815	1.513	1.21
+4	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723	2.42	2.118	1.815	1.513
+5	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723	2.42	2.118	1.815
+6	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723	2.42	2.118
+7	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723	2.42
+8	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723
+9	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025
+10	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328
+11	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63
+12	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933
+13	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235
+14	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538
+15	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84
+16	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143
+17	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445
+18	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748
+19	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748
+20	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748

1d10/19-20: heavy flail

2d6/19-20: greatsword

Cost: 15 gp

Cost: 50 gp

Average Damage: 5.5

Average Damage: 7

Average Critical Damage: 11

Average Critical Damage: 14

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.55

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.7

True Average Damage: 6.05

True Average Damage: 7.7

See the entry for flail on why you should always keep a flail handy.

Of all the two-handed weapons, this one consistently deals the most damage. Compared to the greataxe, the greatsword can rack up the hits just as nicely, and it hits critically twice as often. This is the badass of all weapons.

1d10/x3: halberd

Cost: 10 gp

Average Damage: 5.5

Average Critical Damage: 16.5

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.55

True Average Damage: 6.05

Wow, this weapon is cool. First, it has a great damage range. It's only 10 gp. You can trip folks with it. It deals either piercing or slashing damage. Finally, it's not a reach weapon, so you're always threatening the 5 feet around you, for those AoOs you'd like to take.

1d12/x3: greataxe

Cost: 20 gp

Average Damage: 6.5

Average Critical Damage: 19.5

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.65

True Average Damage: 7.15

Damage. This weapon is about raw damage potential. It can deal the most critical damage of any weapon in the game, though some others still deal more damage on average. Really, this item is all about prestige. Seeing a player dusting off his d12 for damage just says something about him.

If you've ignored our warnings about playing monsters as characters, that's fine. Just make sure your character is a Large creature and wields a Large version of this weapon. That's 3d6 points of damage, 9d6 on a critical hit. Add in Power Attack, and the fight's over.

TABLE 6-18: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1D12/X3 WEAPON
(EXAMPLE: GREATAXE)

BAB	AC	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	4.29	3.933	3.575	3.218	2.86	2.503	2.145	1.788	1.43	1.073	0.715	
+2	4.648	4.29	3.933	3.575	3.218	2.86	2.503	2.145	1.788	1.43	1.073	
+3	5.005	4.648	4.29	3.933	3.575	3.218	2.86	2.503	2.145	1.788	1.43	
+4	5.363	5.005	4.648	4.29	3.933	3.575	3.218	2.86	2.503	2.145	1.788	
+5	5.72	5.363	5.005	4.648	4.29	3.933	3.575	3.218	2.86	2.503	2.145	
+6	6.078	5.72	5.363	5.005	4.648	4.29	3.933	3.575	3.218	2.86	2.503	
+7	6.435	6.078	5.72	5.363	5.005	4.648	4.29	3.933	3.575	3.218	2.86	
+8	6.793	6.435	6.078	5.72	5.363	5.005	4.648	4.29	3.933	3.575	3.218	
+9	6.793	6.793	6.435	6.078	5.72	5.363	5.005	4.648	4.29	3.933	3.575	
+10	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.435	6.078	5.72	5.363	5.005	4.648	4.29	3.933	
+11	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.435	6.078	5.72	5.363	5.005	4.648	4.29	
+12	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.435	6.078	5.72	5.363	5.005	4.648	
+13	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.435	6.078	5.72	5.363	5.005	
+14	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.435	6.078	5.72	5.363	
+15	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.435	6.078	5.72	
+16	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.435	6.078	
+17	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.435	
+18	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	
+19	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	
+20	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	

TABLE 6-19: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 2D6/19-20 WEAPON
(EXAMPLE: GREATSWORD)

BAB	AC	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	4.62	4.235	3.85	3.465	3.08	2.695	2.31	1.925	1.54	1.155	0.77	
+2	5.005	4.62	4.235	3.85	3.465	3.08	2.695	2.31	1.925	1.54	1.155	
+3	5.39	5.005	4.62	4.235	3.85	3.465	3.08	2.695	2.31	1.925	1.54	
+4	5.775	5.39	5.005	4.62	4.235	3.85	3.465	3.08	2.695	2.31	1.925	
+5	6.16	5.775	5.39	5.005	4.62	4.235	3.85	3.465	3.08	2.695	2.31	
+6	6.545	6.16	5.775	5.39	5.005	4.62	4.235	3.85	3.465	3.08	2.695	
+7	6.93	6.545	6.16	5.775	5.39	5.005	4.62	4.235	3.85	3.465	3.08	
+8	7.315	6.93	6.545	6.16	5.775	5.39	5.005	4.62	4.235	3.85	3.465	
+9	7.315	7.315	6.93	6.545	6.16	5.775	5.39	5.005	4.62	4.235	3.85	
+10	7.315	7.315	7.315	6.93	6.545	6.16	5.775	5.39	5.005	4.62	4.235	
+11	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	6.93	6.545	6.16	5.775	5.39	5.005	4.62	
+12	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	6.93	6.545	6.16	5.775	5.39	5.005	
+13	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	6.93	6.545	6.16	5.775	5.39	
+14	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	6.93	6.545	6.16	5.775	
+15	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	6.93	6.545	6.16	
+16	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	6.93	6.545	
+17	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	6.93	
+18	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	
+19	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	
+20	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	

Summing It All Up

This chapter introduces a number of new ways to evaluate weapons. Here's a summary of weapons with the new stuff included, as well as anything special you should know about them. The table ranks the weapons by true average damage – it's the real stat you should be looking at, after all. All the stats in this table are for Medium size weapons of the given type. The table only includes the weapons listed above in the examples. For other weapons, simply find the entry for the same damage and crit modifier.

Weapon	Dmg	Crit	True Avg. Damage	Range Increment	Type	Notes
<i>Light Melee Weapons</i>						
Hammer, light	1d4	x2	2.625	20 ft.	B	
Kukri	1d4	18-20	2.875	–	S	
Pick, light	1d4	x4	2.875	–	P	
Axe, throwing	1d6	x2	3.675	10 ft.	S	
Sword, short	1d6	19-20	3.85	–	P	
Handaxe	1d6	x3	3.85	–	S	
<i>One-Handed Melee Weapons</i>						
Scimitar	1d6	18-20	4.025	–	S	
Pick, heavy	1d6	x4	4.025	–	P	
Flail	1d8	x2	4.725	–	B	+2 disarm, can trip
Longsword	1d8	19-20	4.95	–	S	
Battleaxe	1d8	x3	4.95	–	S	
<i>Two-Handed Melee Weapons</i>						
Guisarme	2d4	x3	5.5	–	S	Reach, can trip
Falchion	2d4	18-20	5.75	–	S	
Scythe	2d4	x4	5.75	–	P or S	
Greatclub	1d10	x2	5.775	–	B	
Flail, heavy	1d10	19-20	6.05	–	B	+2 disarm, can trip
Halberd	1d10	x3	6.05	–	P or S	Double damage against charge, can trip
Greataxe	1d12	x3	7.15	–	S	
Greatsword	2d6	19-20	7.7	–	S	

Armor

In previous editions of this game, armor was vital to the survival of any warrior. However, with all the options available to players through feats like Combat Expertise and Dodge, or classes like the monk, armor's usefulness begins to ebb. What follows is a brief analysis of the three categories of armor, and some things to think about when selecting armor.

Armor Categories

There are three main categories of armor: light, medium, and heavy.

Light Armor: These armors provide armor bonuses ranging from +1 to +4, allow characters with Dexterity scores of 18 or higher to retain their Dexterity bonus, have minimal armor check penalties, and do not reduce speed. Swimmers, light infantry, some guerillas, and archers should stick with this armor.

Medium Armor: These armors provide armor bonuses ranging from +3 to +5, allow characters with Dexterity scores of 14-18 to retain their Dexterity bonus, have moderate armor check penalties, and reduce speed. Some guerillas and skirmishers should wear this armor.

Heavy Armor: These armors provide armor bonuses ranging from +6 to +8, for the most part don't allow characters with high Dexterity scores to retain their Dexterity bonus, have severe armor check penalties, and reduce speed. Heavy infantry and cavalry should wear this armor.

Selecting Armor

Armor selection is important, especially at the lower levels. Depending on the archetype, the need for armor diminishes as your character advances. Light infantry and archers have less use for armor than do cavalry and heavy infantry. Moreover, the heavier types of armor severely retard many of the character's Strength- and Dexterity-based abilities, such as Climb, Jump, Move Silently, and Tumble. Last, armor can dramatically reduce your character's speed, unless you're a dwarf, so your character's reliance on movement is also a critical consideration.

Many players are tempted to dismiss armor altogether, once they realize the effects of the armor check penalty and speed reductions. Before you fall into this trap, consider the cost of magic items to replicate armor's bonus to AC. For example, a suit of full plate with all of its disadvantages costs a steep 1,500 gp. *Bracers of armor +8*, however, cost 64,000 gp. The solution? A happy medium of magic enhancement and armor always does the trick.

Table 6-20 (following page) is an analysis of all the armors in the PHB, modified by Dexterity modifiers and shield bonuses. Looking at this table, you should have a good idea of where your character should be for the money spent. If you're playing a two-handed weapon warrior, then focus on the no-shield row. If a -2 armor check penalty is too steep for your agile character, consider the light shield rows. If you're a tank, check out the heavy shield row, or the tower shield if you're proficient. Note that all shields are priced at their minimum value. You can always buy at least two wooden shields for the price of a steel shield.

TABLE 6-20: AC BY ARMOR, DEXTERITY, AND SHIELD

Armor	Dexterity Modifier								Shield?	Cost (gp)
	-1	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6		
Padded	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	None	5
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Light	8
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	Heavy	12
	14	15	16	16	16	16	16	16	Tower	35
Leather	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	None	10
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	Light	13
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Heavy	17
	15	16	17	18	18	18	18	18	Tower	40
Studded Leather	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	18	None	25
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	19	Light	28
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	20	Heavy	32
	16	17	18	19	19	19	19	19	Tower	55
Chain Shirt	13	14	15	16	17	18	18	18	None	100
	14	15	16	17	18	19	19	19	Light	103
	15	16	17	18	19	20	20	20	Heavy	107
	17	18	19	20	20	20	20	20	Tower	130
Hide	12	13	14	15	16	17	17	17	None	15
	13	14	15	16	17	18	18	18	Light	18
	14	15	16	17	18	19	19	19	Heavy	22
	16	17	18	19	19	19	19	19	Tower	45
Scale Mail	13	14	15	16	17	17	17	17	None	50
	14	15	16	17	18	18	18	18	Light	53
	15	16	17	18	19	19	19	19	Heavy	57
	17	18	19	20	20	20	20	20	Tower	80
Chainmail	14	15	16	17	17	17	17	17	None	150
	15	16	17	18	18	18	18	18	Light	153
	16	17	18	19	19	19	19	19	Heavy	157
	18	19	20	21	21	21	21	21	Tower	180
Breastplate	14	15	16	17	18	18	18	18	None	200
	15	16	17	18	19	19	19	19	Light	203
	16	17	18	19	20	20	20	20	Heavy	207
	18	19	20	21	21	21	21	21	Tower	230
Splint mail	15	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	None	200
	16	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	Light	203
	17	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	Heavy	207
	19	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Tower	230
Banded mail	15	16	17	17	17	17	17	17	None	250
	16	17	18	18	18	18	18	18	Light	253
	17	18	19	19	19	19	19	19	Heavy	257
	19	20	21	21	21	21	21	21	Tower	280
Half-plate	16	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	None	600
	17	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	Light	603
	18	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	Heavy	607
	20	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	Tower	630
Full plate	17	18	19	19	19	19	19	19	None	1500
	18	19	20	20	20	20	20	20	Light	1503
	19	20	21	21	21	21	21	21	Heavy	1507
	21	22	23	23	23	23	23	23	Tower	1530

Chapter Seven

Combat

Or, How To Impress Your DM and Win The Game

By now, you know everything you need to know to make your warrior great. You've analyzed ability score placement, racial choice, class choice, skills, and feats, all to help you build the uberwarrior. You're feeling confident about your character, ready to poke a hot stick in the eye of a cyclops, beard the dragon, maybe even go on a genocidal rampage through an orc tribe. However, before you traipse off and get yourself in trouble, wait a bit longer. This is the most important chapter in the book, for what good is your min/maxed fighter when you're going to fight the same way you always have? This chapter is not going to waste time covering material explicitly spelled out in the PHB. Instead, it gives you the tools to succeed. Sit tight a little longer, and get ready to learn how to survive nearly every combat.

Risk Assessment

Melee combat kills characters more than traps, spells, or other hazards. A failed Reflex save made to avoid a pit trap has spelled the end for many a character, but combat places characters in direct danger. Not knowing the monster's capabilities, not taking advantage of the battlefield's features, or simple bad positioning can all mean the end of an adventuring party. To avoid these situations, consider the three foundations of risk assessment.

1. Qualify the Battlefield
2. Qualify the Opponents
3. Establish an Action Plan

By qualifying the battlefield, you identify traps, poor terrain, cover and other important environmental concerns. Qualifying the opponents reveals who's who, who's in charge, the combatants you need to deal with first, and any pertinent details about your enemy. From steps 1 and 2, develop an action plan, a course of action maximizing the advantages and minimizing the disadvantages to give you a quick win. It may not be possible to do everything in the flash of a sudden fight, but the more information you ascertain, the better prepared you are for fighting your foes.

Qualify the Battlefield

Never overlook the battlefield's features. Difficult terrain stops charges, cover improves AC and Reflex saves, hidden traps complicate an otherwise straightforward combat, and other entrances can hide more opponents. This section discusses ways to analyze the basic indoor conflict, such as those fought in a dungeon, temple, or in any of a myriad of locales common in this game.

Tunnel Fighting

Tunnel fights occur in passageways. There, opponents can strike at you from where the corridor travels, either ahead or behind you. The more adjoining tunnels, the more points the enemy can engage. The tunnel reduces your movement choices and attack options. Some special attack options are difficult to achieve. Flanking is impractical with the restricted movement spaces. Your allies block charge attempts. Even simple 5-foot steps can be hard with the cramped environment. Control is vital. To take control, you have to be prepared. And preparation is best achieved by marching order.

LIGHTING

Light does not affect characters with darkvision. Light has adverse effects on monsters predominately dwelling underground, such as derro, drow, and duergar. As these are common monsters, make certain you carry some light source. Of those available in the PHB, the sunrod is the best. For 2 gp each you get six hours of light. It only takes a couple of these to equip you through most dungeon crawls. An *everburning torch* lasts forever, but it costs 55 times as much (a cost justified only after many, many dungeon crawls) and it doesn't illuminate as well – an *everburning torch* has a bright light radius of 20 ft. and a shadowy radius of 40 ft., while a sunrod has a 30 ft. bright and 60 ft. shadowy radius.

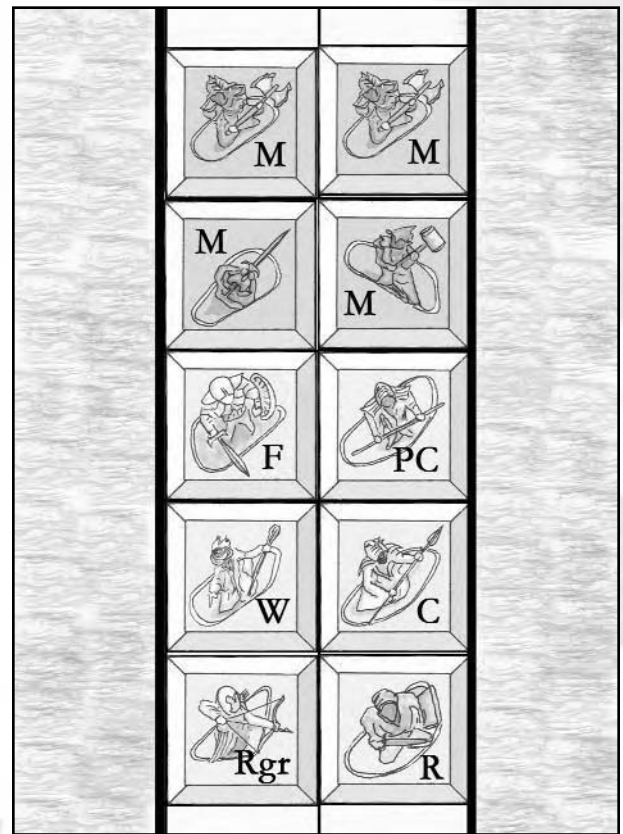
Marching Order Basics

Protect the weaker members of the party. Wizards, sorcerers, bards, and other support characters should always go to the middle. In addition, non-spellcasters should

employ reach weapons to threaten enemies ahead. The slowest and best-protected melee warrior should always stand in the front, while the fastest and most versatile member of the party should stand in the rear. Parties with more than 4 characters, or those with cohorts, should follow the same model, by simply adding more to the appropriate locations.

Each position has a certain responsibility while marching in this order. The responsibilities for each follow. In the example shown in Diagram 7-1, the fighter (F) and the multiclassed warrior (PC) take the front ranks and engage the monsters (M). The wizard (W) and the cleric (C) hold the mid-ranks, where the wizard casts support spells, and the cleric heals the frontline fighters or uses a long spear (simple weapon with reach) to attack the monsters threatening the fighter or multiclass warrior. The ranger (Rgr) and the rogue (R) hold the rear guard, employing ranged attacks against the second rank of monsters.

Diagram 7-1: Marching Order



FOUR FOOD GROUPS OF PARTY COMPOSITION

It's no coincidence there are four major character groupings: Combat, Arcane, Divine, and Roguery. Party balance relies on a character presence from each of the groups. Each group fulfills a particular function. The Combat characters fight, Arcane deal direct damage and have utility magic, Divine heal and reinforce the party, while Roguery builds on all three groups and can defeat specific threats such as traps or a monster's special attacks.

A balanced four-character party should have a fighter, cleric, wizard, and rogue. By balanced, we mean the basic elements are present and no two characters have redundant abilities. If a four-character party had two fighters, a rogue and a wizard, it would lack the cleric or druid's healing and reinforcement qualities, thereby crippling the adventurers and making their escapades harder than they need to be.

Based on party size, a balanced party needs the following elements:

4 players: Fighter, Cleric, Wizard, Rogue

5 players: Fighter, Cleric, Wizard, Rogue, warrior type

6 players: Fighter, Cleric, Wizard, Rogue, Bard, warrior type

7 players: Fighter, Cleric, Wizard, Rogue, Bard, warrior type, multiclassed character

8 players: Fighter, Cleric, Wizard, Rogue, Bard, warrior type, 2 multiclassed characters

The above is a suggestion, not a rule, but you should always have a representative of the basic four. You could substitute, but each time you do, you weaken your party. For example, a paladin is a specialized fighter, weakening the overall offensive capabilities, but adds to the reinforcement/healing department. Likewise, the sorcerer gains spell levels slower than the wizard does, functioning less as a utility character and more of an offensive character. While these character classes serve parties well, they blur the lines of the four food groups, taking something from one area while building on another.

Frontline: Characters in the front ranks face the greatest risk. They open doors, trigger traps the rogues miss, open chests, and all around function as the first line of defense. These characters protect the party from immediate danger, giving the rest of the group time enough to assess the situation and react appropriately.

Mid-ranks: Not surprisingly, this is where the least combat-effective characters wind up. It's here where the wizards and sorcerers should stay, where the bard can help the front or rear guard and where the seriously wounded go. Characters in this position hold the light source. Mid-rank characters, if possible, also wield reach weaponry to fight the foes beyond the frontline. Likewise, all spell support comes from this position.

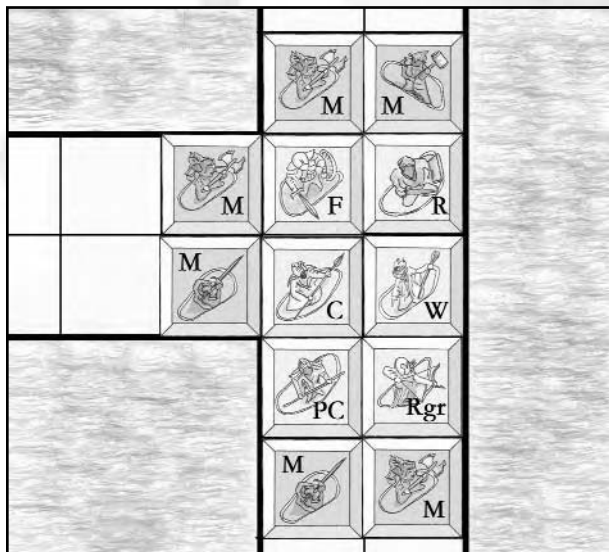
Rearguard: The most mobile warrior in the group holds the rearguard. Of the positions in the marching order, rearguard is the most important. These characters can move about, helping where most needed, by protecting against ambush attacks from behind, or sending volleys of arrows over the heads of their allies.

Marching Order in Intersections

The more adjoining corridors, the more complicated the situation, and the more like a room the environment becomes. While the basic premise remains the same, the circumstances change the PCs' optimal placement. In the situation below, the fighter holds his position, blocking four opponents from reaching the wizard, while also blocking flanks. The rogue occupies the multiclass war-

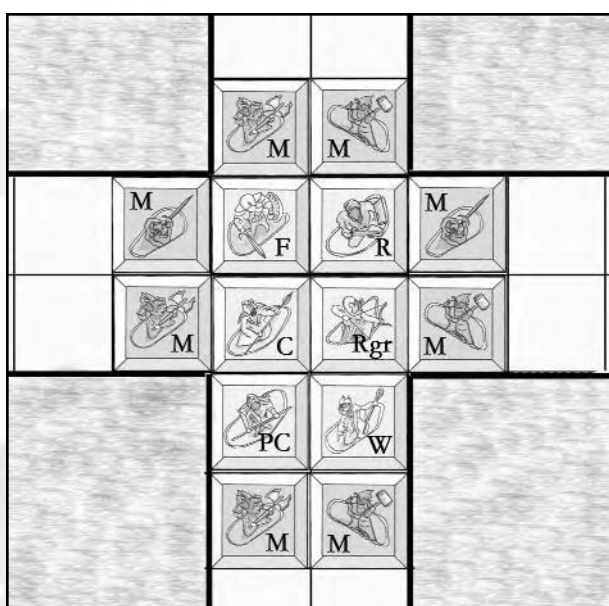
rior's position, reducing the foes the rogue must face to allow support when he dispatches the foe, and to steal flanks if possible. The multiclass warrior blocks the monsters from reaching the spellcaster, while the ranger positions himself to dispatch one foe and rain arrows on the others. The cleric is at risk, but, between his and the fighter's efforts, he can dispatch his enemy quickly and use support spells to aid his allies, using a reach weapon to strike the bad guys.

Diagram 7-2: Marching Order, 3-Way Intersection



A fourth tunnel increases the threat, for the fighter types must cover more opponents. At the mouth of each corridor is a warrior presence; the fighter faces the north and west, while the ranger holds the eastern tunnel, minimizing the threat to the wizard. The multiclass warrior serves the same purpose, working alongside the cleric to keep the monsters at bay. The wizard faces two opponents, but with help from the multiclass warrior, he should survive to bear his arcane magic against the enemy.

Diagram 7-3: Marching Order, 4-Way Intersection



Room Fighting

Where tunnel fighting is straightforward, room dynamics are complicated. A rigid party position is never the solution. Enemy spellcasters use area of effect spells to catch groups of PCs. Instead of the standard tunnel-fighting tactics, use the features of the room to your advantage, while protecting weaker characters. Before you do this, though, consider the battlefield.

Exits

Look for exits out of the room first. Exits are entrances for more monsters. An exit is a door, portal, corridor, stairway, or anything else allowing escape or entrance into the room. Protecting exits is vital for two reasons. First, you control escape. Second, you prevent new combatants from entering the fray.

After identifying the exits, secure them. Spells like *arcane lock* block the door and let you get back to helping the warriors fight. Rogues can jam locks with a DC 10 Disable Device check. Clerics can cast *silence* on the doors to prevent sounds of combat from luring monsters and other threats to the battle. Wounded characters should fall back to block a suspicious door, to listen for approaching enemies, or to hammer spikes preventing the door from opening.

Secret doors pose a dire threat to an unprepared party in the thick of a combat. To keep secret doors from being a problem, have an elf run the perimeter of the room. Her innate ability to detect secret doors merely by passing them lets you identify these suspicious exits without devoting a full-round action to searching.

If the room features several entrances, and the inhabitants are not yet aware of you, fall back and study the area in secret rather than tackling the room all at once. Too many ways in and out of a room present a real possibility of an ambush.

THE ULTIMATE DOORJAMB

For 5000 gp, an *immovable rod* blocks doors from opening or closing, stops traps from resetting, keeps collapsing ceilings from squishing characters, and so on. Invest. You won't be sorry.

Architecture

A room's architecture tells of its function, and its function says a lot about its inhabitants. For example, a table, a couple of chairs, and a cot in a small chamber probably denotes the room serves as a guard post or checkpoint. Bunk beds or a more lavish bed in the same room may suggest a living area or barracks. Guard posts mean you're facing guards, with more nearby.

Knowing a room's architecture may allow a combat advantage. For example, if a shrine has several columns, line spells and ranged attacks are less useful. A dais provides higher ground, while reflecting pools provide cover if you dare enter them, or at the least, reflect what may be hiding behind the columns. Look for cover; it's a free way to improve AC and retard the monster's ability to hit you with spells. These miscellaneous features may seem like window dressing, but with a little thought, you can turn this scenery to an advantage.

Columns, walls, massive trees, doors, and so on are all impassable. These obstructions determine the boundaries of the battlefield, offer cover, and break up line of sight helping to avoid spells. Other features may inform you of hidden threats such as constructs, monsters, or traps. Be suspicious of statues, pedestals, pools, and pillars. These structures often hide hidden and dangerous features. Animated objects are also something to watch for, common in temples or sanctuaries. The wizard can identify these potential hazards with *detect magic* and a sweep of the room. Better yet, instead of blowing the spell, drop 375 gp and buy a *wand of detect magic*. Any character with ranks in Use Magic Device or with the spell on their spell list can use it.

COVER

Nearly all rooms provide some sort of cover. Always seek cover when using ranged attacks. Cover boosts AC by +4 and grants a bonus to Reflex saves. Walls, columns, trees, and anything else blocking a line between your space and your opponent's space all serve this end.

When fighting against creatures with cover, remember that you may have cover against their attacks as well. When approaching their position, stick with objects that block line of sight rather than charging across the battlefield and exposing yourself to their attacks.

SOFT COVER

Any time a creature blocks line of sight to you, you have soft cover. You can derive soft cover from enemies you engage in melee combat and allies standing near you. Dangerous and skilled warriors draw much of the fire from the enemies, especially when they cut through the enemy in rapid succession. Always position yourself where another body separates you from the opposing archer. Note that, with the recent errata, characters can derive soft cover against ranged attacks only.

CONCEALMENT

Fog, foliage, natural darkness, and magical effects such as *darkness*, *invisibility*, and *obscuring mist* all create concealment. Where concealment comes into play, your attackers have the same chance of missing that you do. If you can't get around the miss chance and your opponent is having the same troubles, keep the combat in the area of concealment, thus leveling the playing field.

Perils

Rooms may feature dangerous characteristics beyond the standard trap/monster fare. Dripping green slime, a rainbow of molds, darkness, or unusual magical effects such as wild magic, impeded magic, or even enhanced magic all affect the nature of conflict. Many times, it's impossible to anticipate or identify features until you stumble over them, but the common hazards are easy to find if you know what to look for.

There are three major identifiers of a peril. First is monster behavior. Do they avoid certain places in the room? Do they try to lure you back to some other area, tunnel, or trap? Second is a monster's type. What kind of monsters do you face? Does the luring monster have cold resistance? If so, it's possible it draws you to an area with brown mold. Third are spells and spell-like abilities. Do creatures normally having spell-like abilities refrain from using them? Do enemy wizards avoid or favor certain areas in the room? All of these are indicators of something fishy about the room's effect on magic.

Sand Traps

Anything slowing your movement falls into the catchall category, sand trap. Sand traps include rubble, debris, ice, or an uneven floor. Light permitting, always look for those sections before jumping into combat, as sand traps prevent charging, slow your movement, and, in the case of ice, cause you to lose your balance. Identify sand traps the same way you look for other perils, by examining monster behavior, placement, and room dynamics. In natural caverns, expect treacherous footing. In worked areas, the floor is normally level, but where the floor is predominately hazardous, seek cover and let them come to you, while peppering them with ranged attacks.

Unusual Features

Rooms always have some sort of extra feature. Such things could include pedestals, curtains, sarcophagi, chimneys, tables, beds, shelves, and anything else not falling into the above categories. Astute players ask for a description of the room before starting combat to both visualize the scenario and identify important features. If a room's description prominently features an altar to a dark god, you can bet your magic sword it's important. Sometimes these objects have magical properties; other times they are simply mundane. Regardless, having a sense of what's in the room helps you maximize the environment to let you succeed, by exploiting the room's contents.

Qualify the Opponents:

Monster Archetypes

Monsters have archetypes just like warriors. Knowing the monster's archetype tells you how to fight it. Below are the several archetypes and their sub-groupings. In each section is an example of what a party should do in the first round of combat against a sample monster. Example parties are assumed to have four characters of each of the basic classes – fighter, wizard, cleric, and rogue. These are good examples of what you should do whenever fighting a monster of the particular archetype.

Critters

These creatures are the creepy-crawlies of a dungeon. They include monstrous centipedes, spiders, wolves, and other low-powered creatures. They have simple motives, namely to make a meal of you and your allies. Critters include the following creature types: Animals, most Magical Beasts, Oozes, Plants and Vermin. Animals are creatures with existing or former real world counterparts, such as dinosaurs, wolves, and horses. Magical beasts are fantastic animals like the pegasus, worgs, and winter wolves, many with special abilities. Oozes are giant single-celled organisms similar to amoebas or paramecium, except much bigger and dangerous. Plants are monsters with some modicum of movement and sentience. Vermin are insects, usually the big ones.

Parlay: Not usually. Critters are motivated by instinctual needs such as fear, protect, and hunger.

Critter Tactics: Multiple critters attack en masse. Single critters attack the nearest combatant. You shouldn't have to worry about the non-warriors being the targets, as these creatures don't differentiate between meats. On the other hand, they attack the nearest target, and if just so happens to be the wizard, well, he's out of luck.

Archers: When fighting a bunch of critters, focus your attacks on the rear numbers, letting the other warriors handle the frontlines. This reduces the number of creatures to fill in the gaps, while keeping a warrior back to protect other characters.

Cavalry: Avoid staying in one place where the monsters can swarm you. Use Ride-By Attack to erode their numbers until they flee, then ride them down.

Guerrillas: Use multiple attacks whenever possible, such as Rapid Shot or Two-Weapon Fighting. You want maximum damage potential to reduce the numbers.

Light Infantry: Fight defensively with Combat Expertise to reduce the number of attacks against you. On the other hand, if your AC is high, use your speed and agility to move through their ranks, taking flanks whenever able.

Heavy Infantry: Charge into combat and direct your attacks against one foe at a time. Use Power Attack and Cleave to maximize your damage.

Skirmishers: Hold your position until you're needed. If a batch of critters breaks past the heavy infantry, move up to assist. Otherwise, aid your allies with ranged attacks.

TABLE 7-4: CRITTERS

Type	HD	Good Saves	Special Notes
Animal	d8	Fort and Ref	Low-light vision, always neutral
Magical Beast	d10	Fort and Ref	Darkvision and low-light vision
Ooze	d10	None	Mindless, blind, immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, critical hits, flanking
Plants	d8	Fort	Low-light vision, immune to mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, polymorph and stunning, immune to critical hits
Vermin	d8	Fort	Mindless, darkvision

Example: Monstrous Spiders (CR 1/4 to 11)

Monstrous spiders are easy threats for most parties. However, these creatures have potent abilities. They come in a variety of sizes, and the bigger they are, the more toxic their venom. There are two kinds of spiders: hunters and web spinners. Hunters stalk you. Web spinners snare you with their webs.

Preparation: A spider's best weapons are poison and webs. To beat the poison, drink antitoxin before engaging them. *Cloaks of resistance* and *potions of bear's endurance* also help to fight off the effects of their venom. Against webs, boost your Strength.

TIPS VS. MONSTROUS SPIDERS

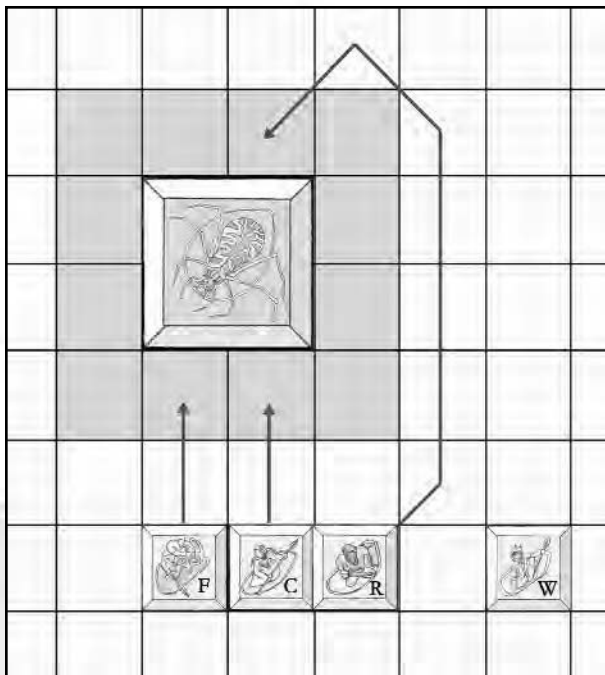
Spread out

Boost your Fortitude saves

Use ranged attacks

Fight defensively to avoid bite attacks

Use fire to destroy webs



First Round Tactics

Opponent: Large Monstrous Hunting Spider (CR 2)

Party: Ftr 2, Wiz 2, Clr 2, Rog 2

Round 1:

Fighter: Move (do not charge) and attack

Wizard: Load crossbow, cast *true strike*, 5 ft. step back

Cleric: Cast *shield of faith* on rogue, move to threaten

Rogue: Double move to circle behind the spider, using Tumble if necessary

Spider: Attacks fighter or cleric

TABLE 7-6: FIENDS

Type	HD	Good Saves	Special Notes
Dragon	d12	All	Darkvision and low-light vision, immune to magic sleep and paralysis
Elemental	d8	Varies	Darkvision, immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, critical hits and flanking; these creatures do not sleep, eat, or breathe
Outsider	d8	All	Darkvision, extraplanar outsiders do not need to eat or sleep

The fiend category includes Elementals, Dragons and Outsiders. Elementals are creatures composed of one or more of the four classic elements – air, earth, fire or water. Summoned like fiends, they are less willing to negotiate and many are of low Intelligence. Evil outsiders, on the other hand, can eclipse many dragons in sheer power and malevolence. With their spell-like abilities and the possibility of summoning assistance, fiends are a threat only the most prepared or lucky heroes can hope to overcome. You should know what a dragon is.

Parlay: Sometimes, but don't trust anything fiends tell you, as they are all universally motivated by mortal destruction, either physically or spiritually. Elementals don't normally parlay.

Fiend Tactics: Fiends typically employ a mixture of special attacks such as spell-like abilities to soften their foes before finishing them off with melee attacks. Against particularly well-armed opponents, they retreat and *summon* an ally (for outsiders), usually another of their kind or something a bit nastier. Fiends, regardless of type, are more than capable of wiping out a party. Confront them with caution.

Archers: Use ranged attacks to interrupt the fiend's spell-like abilities, forcing a Concentration check every time it tries something. While your attacks may not deal a lot of damage, you're sure to tick them off and make them do something irrational.

Cavalry: Use mounted charges or Ride-By Attacks to maximize the damage and mobility. Avoid staying in one place too long. Don't do anything provoking attacks of opportunity, such as overruns or bull rushes, unless you're positive you'll succeed.

Guerrillas: Paladins make the best fiend hunters. To further reinforce your combat potential, make sure you boost low saves with save buff feats like Lightning Reflexes or Iron Will, or get your friends to cast spells or make potions that likewise give a bonus (like *cat's grace* or *owl's wisdom*).

Light Infantry: Keep moving. The more you move, the less likely the fiend can strike you with multiple attacks. Position yourself to help rogues gain flanks, distract and otherwise control the fiend's movement. Watch out for its spell-like abilities. If you don't have levels in monk, you're more susceptible to its mind-affecting effects.

Heavy Infantry: Charge and don't give it time to enhance its own defenses. Once you've drawn its attention from the rest of the party, your allies should be able to make short work of this threat.

Skirmishers: Though you lack the focus of other warriors, you have a variety of tools at your disposal. If multiclassed as a rogue, nail the fiend with sneak attacks. If you have spells, use them to enhance your own fighting

potential by building your stats, AC, and saving throws. Finally, be a supporting character and defend other characters by boosting their own abilities with spells or simply using the aid another action.

Example: Bearded Devils (CR 5)

Bearded devils, while lacking the spell-like abilities of other fiends, are brutal opponents with a number of special attacks. Damage they inflict continues each additional round. They get a beard attack with two successful claw attacks, and can slip into a battle frenzy similar to a barbarian's rage. Worse, if the creature catches you, it may infect you with devil chills with its disease-ridden beard. At a CR 5, these creatures have a slight AC advantage, solid hit points and a number of other defenses. To bypass their damage reduction you need silver or good weapons. Don't bother with fire, poison, acid or cold, as their resistances and immunities block most of these attacks.

Preparation: Having the right tool for the job goes a long way when fighting these devils, and the cheapest tools to use against these monsters are *silversheen* and *oil of bless weapon*. The first temporarily changes the metal of the weapon to silver: an adamantite weapon becomes silver for 1 hour, for example. At 250 gp, you had better be certain you're fighting a lot of monsters requiring silver to bypass DR. *Oil of bless weapon*, while cheaper at only 100 gp, has a duration of 1 minute per caster level, or for the list price, 2 minutes. A cheaper solution is to invest in silver arrows. A quiver of 20 costs 20 gp.

First Round Tactics

Opponent: Bearded Devil (CR 5)

Party: Ftr 5, Clr 5, Wiz 5, Rog 5

Round 1

Fighter: Charges

Cleric: Casts *prayer*, faces new devil

Rogue: Move and ranged attack

Wizard: Moves and casts *bull's strength* on fighter

Devil: Summons another bearded devil

Devil 2: Battle frenzy full attack on cleric (assuming the first devil made his Concentration check for the summoning)

TIPS VS. BEARDED DEVILS

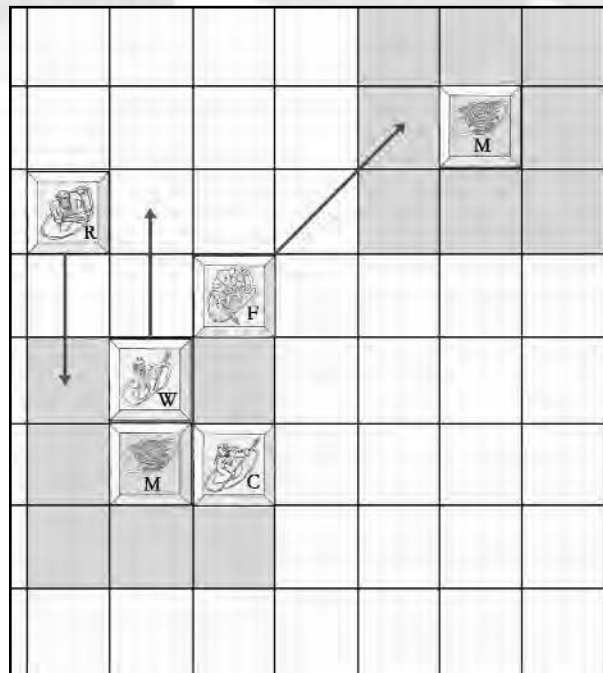
Avoid letting the devil take full attacks

Interrupt summon devil ability

Fight defensively

Spread out

Diagram 7-7: Round 1 vs. Fiend



Terrors

Where critters are creatures of lower intelligence, terrors are smarter and deadlier. Example terrors include gibbering mouther, aboleths, and winter wolves. Terrors are Aberrations, Constructs, evil Fey and Magical Beasts. Aberrations are a catchall classification for unusual creatures with odd anatomies and mindsets not fitting in anywhere else. Constructs are the exception to the lower intelligence bit, because many lack Intelligence scores altogether. Worse, they gain bonus hit points based on size, and many have hardness scores too. Fey are the fairies, creatures with low hit points but powerful magical abilities. Magical Beasts we covered above, but those qualifying as terrors are the smarter breeds like aranea and sphinxes.

Parlay: Unlikely. These creatures want to kill you just as badly as critters, but they're smarter about it. Evil fey are likely to abuse and maim you, while aberrations, if not hungry, exploit you. Smart magical beasts are true terrors, for they have the hit points and the special abilities to give parties a really hard time.

Terror Tactics: Terrors normally don't have minions,

being forces of destruction rather than leaders. Exceptions do exist. Aboleths spawn skum and other aberrations make thralls out of humanoid races, but for the most part these creatures are normally solitary or grouped with their own kind. Terrors with special abilities target spellcasters first, for they are the ones most likely to do them harm, or keep the other characters fighting.

TABLE 7-8: TERRORS

Type	HD	Good Saves	Special Notes
Aberrations	d8	Will	Darkvision
Construct	d10	None	Low-light vision, darkvision, immune to mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects and necromancy effects; also immune to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage or drain and just about anything affecting a living creature
Fey	d6	Ref and Will	Low-light vision
Magical Beasts	(see Table 7-4: Critters for details)		

Archers: Stick with the spellcasters and target the terrors from afar. Keep out of range of the terror's special abilities. Against solitary opponents, the terrors will use your allies for soft cover, so you may have to move around a lot to get a clear shot.

Cavalry: Focus on Ride-By Attacks, because terrors have plenty of weapons to take your steed out from under you. Keep moving to reduce their attacks per round, so they have to follow you. Even if they ready an action to attack when you approach, they can only ready a standard action. And, by constantly moving, you're harder to target with their spell-like abilities especially if you're out of range.

Guerrillas: Play against a terror's weaknesses by using poison, as most have poor Fortitude saves (but remember that poison doesn't affect constructs). Build up defenses against their special attacks through effective selection of

TIPS VS. THE CHUULS

- Build up your saves
- Attack quickly and often
- Keep heavy hitters away from the rest of the party
- Choose your own battlefield by luring it out of its territory
- Let spellcasters do their jobs

magic items. Such things would again be *cloaks of resistance*, stat boosts and the like. Finally, *bane* weapons are never a bad idea. Purchase 20 +1 *bane arrows*, but make sure you have a good mix of types.

Light Infantry: Work with rogues to maximize their effectiveness when fighting terrors. These monsters rely on their special attacks, many affecting the mind, calling for Will saves. Make certain you have the proper defense against these kinds of attacks, lest you turn on your party, or worse, become easy pickings for these horrors.

Heavy Infantry: Avoid becoming a dangerous puppet and another opponent for your party to face by fighting alone and keeping your distance from your allies. If you turn against them, such as by the aboleth's domination ability, they should notice what you're doing and be able to avoid you until the combat is over.

Skirmishers: As always, fill in the obvious gaps left by the other warriors. Employ ranged attacks where able, but, like the heavy infantry, isolate yourself from the other characters in case you lose control over your character. Finally, use poison and things targeting Fortitude saves like thunderstones and the like to keep the combat in your favor.

Example: Chuuls (CR 7)

Chuuls are unusual aquatic aberrations dwelling in temperate marshes. The nature of their favored terrain ensures a difficult fight given the bogs, underbrush, and uncertain footing. These monsters have a high AC, though their touch AC is low and easy to hit by 7th-level characters with the right types of spells. These creatures strike with their claw attacks to get a hold, dealing constriction damage until their target succumbs. They also use paralytic tentacles. Given their human-level intellect, they focus on spellcasters and wounded characters, employing group strategies and tactics when in numbers.

Preparation: First, get a magic weapon of some sort to hit their high AC – a chuul has an AC 22. CR 7 creatures have ACs around 20. Without a magic weapon and a 16 Strength, a 7th-level fighter should hit this creature on a 12 or better. Hence, you need at least a +2 weapon to even the odds. The good news is a chuul only has a 5 ft. reach, and a speed of 30, so you should be able to outmaneuver this monster easily with a little effort. Finally, don't waste your time with poison; they're immune.

First Round Tactics

Opponent: Chuul (CR 7)

Party: Ftr 7, Clr 7, Wiz 7, Rog 7

Note: The example assumes impeded movement, with each square costing 2 spaces of movement.

Round 1:

Fighter: Ranged attack, move and draw melee weapons

Cleric: Casts *prayer* on allies and stays with the wizard

Rogue: Ranged attack and move

Wizard: Casts *blink* and moves

Chuul: 5-ft. step and full attack on cleric

Tough

Toughs fill the roll of the villain's underlings, soldiers and servants. Toughs include Giants, Humanoids and Monstrous Humanoids. Giants are large humanoids, though some have unusual special abilities, like the troll for example. Monstrous Humanoids are humanoids with animal characteristics, such as the minotaur, harpy, or centaur. The more powerful monstrous humanoids have supernatural and extraordinary abilities. Finally, Humanoids are the most common opponent, being composed of goblins, lizard folk, and orcs.

Parlay: Many of these creatures are willing to negotiate, especially if they're losing the battle.

Tough Tactics: Toughs employ complex strategies, traps and direct conflict depending on their intelligence and alignment. As all toughs can advance in character classes, many keep a spellcaster nearby. Specifically, giants prefer to soften their enemies with ranged attacks before closing for melee combat. Monstrous humanoids, however, use their spell-like abilities to confuse, beguile, and disrupt their enemy. Note many monstrous humanoids have other movement modes aside from land speed, and they always use them to gain tactical advantage if possible.

Archers: Employ Rapid Shot when possible to weaken several of the opponents before they reach the fighter with Cleave. Against larger and more solitary opponents, draw attention from the spellcasters who can quickly overcome most toughs with no problem.

Cavalry: Use a trample to crush standard humanoids, while employing Ride-By Attacks to harass giants. Against monstrous humanoids, charge first and hammer into them, using your size to help and achieve flanks.

Guerrillas: Develop the Power Attack tree to hack through multiple opponents and Spring Attack for fighting giants and creatures with reach. As these foes are bipedal, use bull rush and trip attacks to unbalance them.

Light Infantry: Like the guerrilla, use trip attacks against monstrous humanoids, and work with other characters to gain flanks.

Heavy Infantry: Charge and start chopping up the bad guys. Get up close to giants as soon as possible to avoid their ranged attacks. Against monstrous humanoids, make sure you have the proper defenses in place before engaging, such as antitoxin, Wisdom buff spells and so on.

Diagram 7-9: Round 1 vs. the Chuul

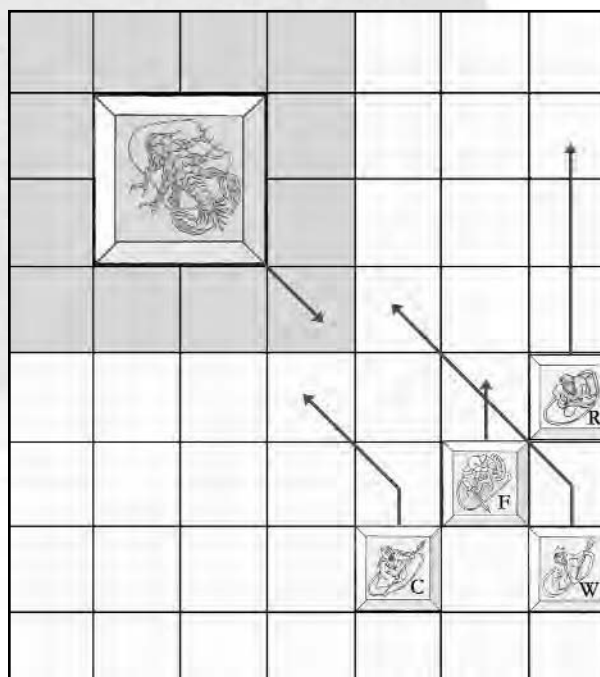


TABLE 7-10: TOUGHS

Type	HD	Good Saves	Special Notes
Giant	d8	Fort	Low-light vision
Humanoids	Usually by character class		
Monstrous Humanoids	d8	Ref, Will	Darkvision

Skirmishers: Focus on defense. Toughs can swarm in and attack weak links, targeting the wounded, the wizards, and rogues in the party. Don't let yourself get bogged down by one combat and focus on keeping other party members alive.

Example: Grimlocks (CR 1)

Grimlocks are dangerous underground. These creatures have blindsight to 40 ft., so they're immune to any special attacks relying on vision. For CR 1, they have a slightly higher AC than normal, so they're harder to hit than other creatures of an equal power level. One thing to note though is they have scent, so even if you're outside of their blindsight radius, they can still detect you.

Preparation: Though grimlocks have hit points, numbers, and the advantage underground, there are things you can do. Rely on sound-based attacks. Thunderstones can deafen and confuse them. *Silence* and *gust of wind* mask your approach. *Blindness/deafness* (the *deafness* effect of course) gives you concealment as if you were invisible. Essentially, any spell or effect masking sound adds a decided advantage whenever you face these creatures.

TIPS VS. GRIMLOCKS

Use sound-based attacks to deafen them

Wounded and spellcasters should stay 40 ft. or more away from them

Use multiple attacks to overcome their high hit points

First Round Tactics

Opponent: 3 Grimlocks (EL 3)

Party: Ftr 3, Clr 3, Wiz 3, Rog 3

Round 1:

Fighter: Charge the two grimlocks closest together

Cleric: Cast *doom* on the third grimlock and move

Rogue: Ranged attack at the third grimlock and move

Wizard: Move and cast *silence* on rogue's arrow/bolt

Grimlocks: Two grimlocks attack the fighter. The third grimlock engages cleric. All three fight as though their opponents had total concealment, though the monsters function as if they had the Blind-Fight feat.

Diagram 7-11: Round 1 vs. Grimlocks

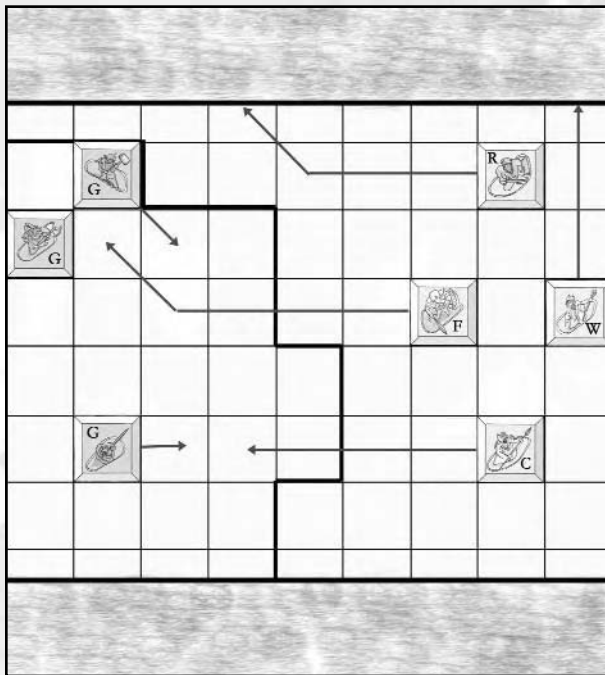


TABLE 7-12: UNDEAD

Type	HD	Good Saves	Special Notes
Undead	d12	Will	No Constitution; darkvision; immune to all mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, crits, nonlethal damage, etc.

Undead

The last of the monster archetypes is undead. Undead come in two varieties: corporeal and incorporeal. Corporeal undead include common types like zombies, wights, and skeletons. Incorporeal undead include spectres, ghosts, and wraiths. The more powerful the undead, the more negative energy levels it bestows or ability drain it deals, suggesting you need special defense whenever fighting these creatures. Likewise, there is a 50% miss chance from any attack made against an incorporeal undead, unless the weapon has the *ghost touch* quality. Many undead creatures, especially those of a low CR, are mindless, but the more powerful ones are smarter and nastier, decked out with an arsenal of life-draining powers.

Parlay: Sometimes, but only the more intelligent types of undead such as ghosts and vampires. The hunger for life compels mindless or extremely savage undead, like zombies, ghouls, and wraiths, to ignore the pleas of the living.

Undead Tactics: Mindless undead swarm their opponents, intent on devouring the living. Liches, vampires and other powerful undead use minions and servants for combat, confronting PCs when no other options remain. These undead use special abilities to drain the physical and spiritual resources from their foes.

Archers: Archers are not successful against these opponents. Piercing weaponry is ineffective against skeletons. Unless you have a *ghost touch* bow or other ranged weapon, you're not going to prevail against incorporeal undead either. Focus on the undead's minions, leaving more powerful foes for the clerics and paladins to handle.

Cavalry: The mounted charge is virtually ineffective against undead opponents as they are immune to critical hits. Worse, undead monsters can scare the crap out of mounts, having abilities like an unnatural aura. Like the archer, you're not much help except to have the means to beat a hasty retreat.

Guerrillas: Target the bigger and nastier undead with the cleric's help. You're not going to have the modifier for turn attempts to make much headway against the bigger foes, but with the right spells and magic items (stat buffs, *death ward*, and *ghost touch* weapons, for example), you can handle just about anything undead your DM throws at you.

Light Infantry: Touch AC is important against incorporeal undead, so you're the best opposition against these types of creatures. Distract these foes and give your allies the time to mount a proper defense.

Heavy Infantry: Heavy infantry are great at taking on weaker undead, but awful at facing the incorporeal foes. Make sure you carry a weapon of each damage type to overcome the damage reduction.

Skirmishers: You have a number of tools useful against these creatures. With cleric levels, spend an action turning away the smaller and weaker undead. Against more powerful opponents, use aid another actions to boost your allies' ACs and attack rolls. Heal fallen comrades, and be where you're most needed.

Example: Wights (CR 3)

Nobody likes fighting wights. They deal crippling damage, bestowing a negative energy level with each hit. Whenever these foul creatures slay a living creature, the corpse animates as a wight in 1d4 rounds to side against you. Coupled with the other undead traits, these are tough monsters to face for the unprepared.

Preparation: Build up your AC. If the wight can't hit you, it can't bestow negative energy levels. For after the fight, invest in save-buffing magic items, like *cloaks of resistance*, *potions of bear's endurance*, *potions of resistance*, and anything helping you remove those negative energy levels. Last, protect the cleric. Give him anything he needs to stay alive. Without a cleric, you have no advantage against these monsters.

First Round Tactics

Opponent: 1 Wight (CR 3)

Party: Ftr 3, Clr 3, Wiz 3, Rog 3

Round 1:

Fighter: Ranged attack and retrieve flask of alchemist's fire, moving 5 ft.

Cleric: Turn undead and draw weapon

Rogue: Ranged attack and move

Wizard: Moves and casts *scorching ray*

Wight: If turned, it flees. Otherwise, it charges the cleric

Prioritizing Opponents

At the start of combat, assess the greatest threat to the party and address it first. While it may be tempting to cut through the horde of CR 1/2 goblins, the 7th-level evoker tossing the *lightning bolts* is the bigger problem. Consult Table 7-14 to gauge which opponents to face first.

TIPS VS. WIGHTS

Fight defensively

Use ranged attacks

Use fire or electricity attacks

Forget flanks, they're immune

Withdraw whenever you fall below 10 hit points or one-half your levels

Diagram 7-13: Round 1 vs. Wight

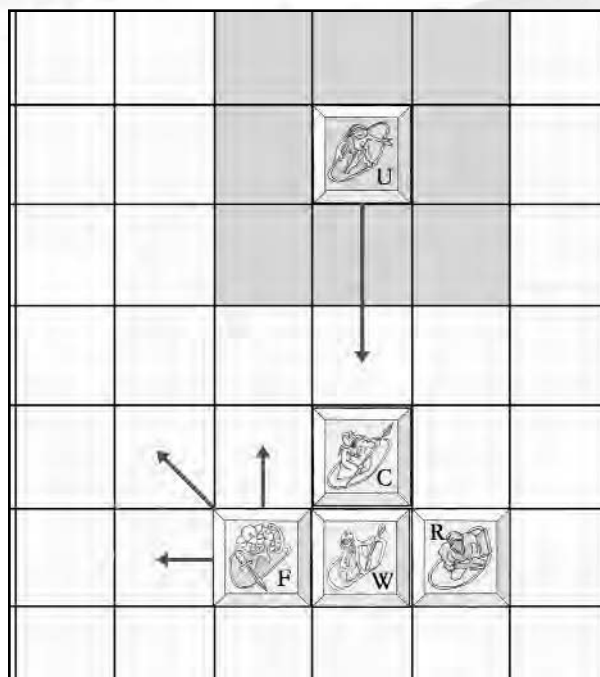


TABLE 7-14: THREAT PRIORITY

- Fiends
- Spellcasting NPCs
- Other NPCs
- Powerful Undead
- Terrors
- Toughs
- Critters
- Weak Undead

Action Plan

Having examined the battlefield and the foes you face, you need to come up with an action plan. It's good to have several contingency plans in place prior to combat, because in many instances a prolonged discussion on what everyone should do is not practical or even possible. This final section details what to do and not to do in combat, with some analysis on the techniques and special attacks available to you. By the end of this section, you'll have all the tools not only to survive combat, but to win.

Initiative

There are special things you can do with your initiative. The two initiative-modifying actions are ready and delay. For most warriors, when you act in a round is not as critical, but occasionally there are times when adjusting your initiative to some later or earlier point can mean the difference between life and death. What follows are tips on both actions.

Delay: Never, ever, delay on the first round of combat. Delay is not an action. That means you're flatfooted until you do act. But if you'd rather move earlier in the round, delay allows you to adjust your initiative to any point between the time you act and the time when you act again. Essentially, you can delay to a point allowing you to act earlier in the subsequent rounds. (This replaces refocus from 3.0.)

Ready: Readied actions are far more complex than simply delaying your initiative count. You can ready any standard, move, or free action provided you specify the action and the triggering condition allowing you to take

DO SOMETHING — ANYTHING!

Each round of combat presents an opportunity to overcome your enemies. Many players believe erroneously they can do nothing against a foe and waste entire rounds lamenting their fates. Not having the right kind of weapon to bypass damage reduction, or being so low in hit points they're afraid of taking any more damage, or worse, using poor knowledge of the rules to do something they just can't do. What they don't realize is by not stepping up and contributing, the party functions as if they had one less PC. In larger groups, this is almost a forgivable sin, but in smaller parties with 4 or 5 players, the loss of a character causes the whole team to unravel.

This game is about action. Period. There is always something to do, no matter what the situation. Even if you failed your initial save against *hold person*, you can still try a new saving throw on the next round. The trick is you have to do the right action. If you can't swing a sword, cast a spell, or ambush a foe with a sneak attack, there are things available to allow you to contribute. Take a close look at the Special Attack sections of Chapter 8: Combat in the PHB. There are some real nuggets in there. Remember, if everything else fails, use the aid another action to help another party member; at least there, you're doing something.

that action. Clarity is your best ally here. Don't be ambiguous or too specific; simply state what it is you want to do and under what circumstances you'll do it. Being ambiguous creates a possibility that you may never see the results of your readied action. The same holds true if you're too specific. For example, "I ready my long spear to attack when the ogre charges me," is too specific. If the orc fighter charges you instead, you have no action. Likewise, "I hurl an axe at the next thing I see moving through the door," is too broad. You may wind up tossing the axe into an ally. Find the happy middle ground, and all should be well for you and readied actions.

Attacks of Opportunity (AoO)

No matter how much clarity the PHB provides for attacks of opportunity (AoO), it seems there will always be some debate as to what actions trigger an AoO. The best rule of thumb before we move into particulars is if you do anything other than focus your entire attention on defeating your opponent, you provoke an AoO.

You trigger an AoO when in a threatened square. You only take an AoO against an opponent who you threaten. You threaten all the squares you can reach. So, if you have a 5-foot reach, you threaten all squares adjacent to your position (see diagram 7-15). Monsters with a 10-foot reach threaten two squares from their base (see Diagram 7-16). Weapons with reach do not threaten the square adjacent to you. They instead threaten a square the indicated distance away (see Diagram 7-16 for a 10-foot reach weapon). You can't take an AoO if you're flatfooted. Being flatfooted deprives you of your Dex bonus (if any) to AC, but being deprived of your Dex bonus to AC does not make you flatfooted.

Moving to engage a target does not provoke an AoO unless the target has natural reach, such as with a Large creature. Looking at Diagram 7-18 (page 86), we can see the character provokes an AoO because he leaves a threatened square to enter a position where he can attack his opponent.

While in a threatened square, four basic actions provoke attacks of opportunity: movement, casting a spell, attacking with a ranged weapon, and special actions.

Movement

While threatened, movement suggests you are doing something other than responding to the threat your opponent represents. If you move more than 5 feet while threatened you provoke an AoO. Other move actions also provoke AoOs, such as controlling a frightened mount, loading a weapon, moving a heavy object, picking up an item, sheathing a weapon, retrieving a stored item, or even standing up from a prone position. For a full list of move actions and those provoking AoOs, consult Chapter 8: Combat in the PHB.

Diagram 7-15: 5-foot reach

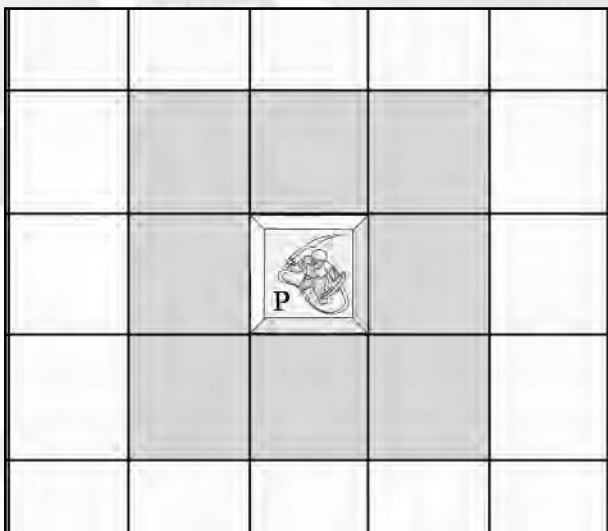
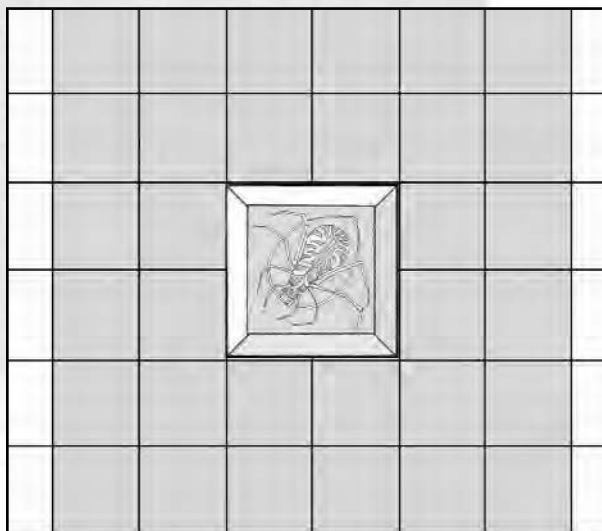


Diagram 7-16: 10-foot reach



The best way to avoid attacks of opportunity from movement is to avoid moving until your opponent is dead. No combat is this easy, of course, and there are times when you need to reposition yourself to gain an advantage or to avoid a dangerous predicament. There are three ways to move without provoking an AoO: Tumble, which is covered in Skills; withdraw; and the 5-ft. step.

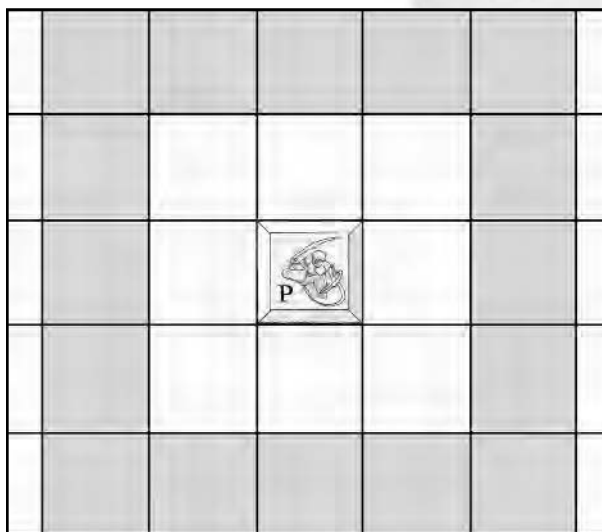
Withdraw: Provided your opponent does not have a 10-foot or greater reach, you can always safely get away from him by withdrawing. This is a full-round action that allows you to move up to twice your speed away from a target, preventing a visible foe from making an AoO. However, if you are unaware of the foe, it still gets an AoO. See Diagram 7-19 (next page). IM is an invisible monster and it gets an AoO against the character because the withdrawing character is unaware of his position and moves through a threatened square. (See the Full-Round Actions section of Chapter 8: Combat in the PHB for full details on the withdraw action.)

5-foot Step: If you don't actually move in the round, you can always take a 5-foot step in a round to adjust your position, even if you take a move-equivalent action. This never provokes an AoO unless you do something else in the round normally provoking an AoO. This is especially handy when fighting with a reach weapon against an opponent who advances beyond the threat range, allowing you to step back and readjust. This is also effective against foes with reach weapons, and when you need to get in an attack.

Casting a Spell

There are two sure ways, and one not-so-sure way, to avoid attacks of opportunity when casting spells in combat. First, never cast a spell while in a threatened square. The spell effect is almost never worth the damage you could take. Second, if in a threatened square, use a 5-foot step to get out of the threatened square before casting it. In most cases, this isn't a problem. Just reposition to use the spell to the most advantageous effect. Third, if you have Combat Casting, aside from ignoring everything in this book, you could use the cast on the defensive option. However, there is so much wrong with your warrior wiggling fingers and muttering incantations when he should be cutting his way through the bad guys that you deserve the attack of opportunity.

Diagram 7-17: Reach weapon



THINGS LIKE SPELLS

The following actions are like spells and provoke AoOs:

- Drink a potion
- Apply an oil
- Read a scroll
- Use a spell-like ability

Diagram 7-18: AoO from Movement

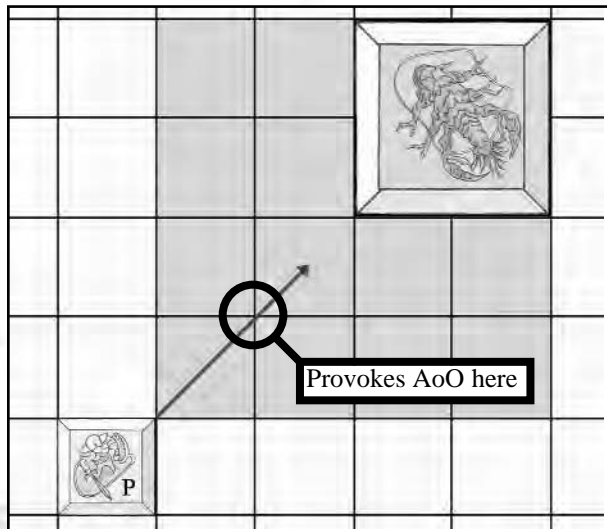
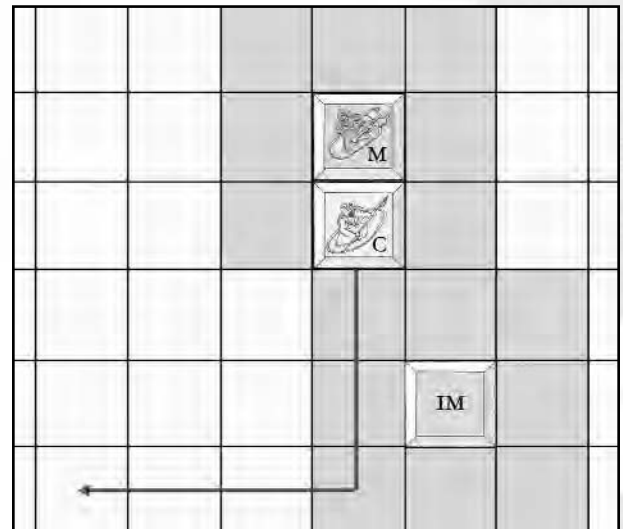


Diagram 7-19: Withdraw



REACH WEAPONS

Speaking of reach weapons, these weapons allow you to hit targets 2 or more squares away depending on the weapon and its size. While attacking with these weapons, you attack your opponents while they don't immediately threaten you. When they advance on you on the following round, you can simply take another 5-foot step back and attack again, effectively leading your opponent around the battlefield.

Attacking with Ranged Weapons

Using ranged weapons in melee has the same result as casting a spell in melee: you're going to take a hit. This should never, ever be a problem for you, because you can always take a five-foot step to adjust your movement outside of the threatened area. If you can't get outside of the threatened area, such as if you're backed up to a wall, or the monster has reach, then drop the bow as a free action and draw a melee weapon. You can always use an arrow as a dagger, albeit at a -4 penalty.

Special Actions

There are all sorts of things you can do to trigger attacks of opportunity. The key to sorting out which ones do and which ones don't is to know that actions taking your attention away from an opponent provoke the free attack. Lighting a torch, controlling an upset mount, loading a bolt, and picking something up off the floor are all things requiring your attention, even for the briefest of

CHANGING WEAPONS

Never sheath a weapon in combat. Always drop it. Sheathing a weapon is an AoO-provoking move action. Dropping an item action is a free action and does not provoke an AoO. Just make sure you notate where you dropped the item, so you don't forget it.

moments. It is in these moments the bad guy gets to attack.

Defensive Measures

There are times when everything seems to be flushing down the toilet. Perhaps the troll just tore your flesh with a rend attack and the cleric is too far away right now to slip you a few extra hit points. What are you supposed to do now? There are two options available to you, without having to withdraw.

Fighting Defensively

Choose to fight defensively as part of a standard attack or as part of a full-round attack. Essentially, you're trying to be careful and not leave the openings you normally leave in combat. By fighting defensively, you voluntarily reduce your attack bonus by 4 to increase your AC by 2. You can also use Combat Expertise with this action to increase your AC further, but this action necessitates an attack roll.

When using the fighting defensively option, you severely retard your ability to hit the opponent. The fewer times you hit your opponent, the more opportunities your opponent has to hit you. The following example shows a combat between our two rangers from Chapter 2. The human ranger fights defensively, while the gnoll fights normally against the ranger, not using Power Attack as he knows the ranger fights defensively. Both employ the full attack option. This comparison does not include the ranger's wolf companion.

Human ranger fighting defensively: Hp 22, AC 18, longsword +1 melee (1d8+2/19-20), shortsword +0 melee (1d6+1/19-20)

Human ranger fighting normally: Hp 22, AC 16, longsword +5 melee (1d8+2/19-20), shortsword +4 melee (1d6+1/19-20)

Gnoll ranger full attack: Hp 23, AC 15, battleaxe +6 melee (1d8+4)

Expected Hits Per Round (and Average Damage)

While the human is fighting defensively:

Human: longsword 0.35 hits (2.275) + shortsword 0.3 hits (1.35) = 3.625 average damage

Gnoll: 0.45 hits (3.825) = 3.825 average damage

If the human were fighting normally:

Human: longsword 0.55 hits (3.575) + shortsword 0.5 hits (2.25) = 5.825 average damage

Gnoll: 0.55 hits (4.675) = 4.675 average damage

The result of this comparison is that the human ranger, while increasing his AC, deals significantly less damage than he would normally inflict, while only reducing the gnoll's chances of hitting him by 10% (+2 AC) and reducing his average damage by less than a point per round. Carried out over several rounds of combat, the ranger fighting normally would slay the gnoll before he himself were felled (5.825 damage per round works out to killing the gnoll on the fourth round, while the gnoll wouldn't down the ranger till the fifth round), but the ranger fighting defensively would actually die one round *before* the gnoll! Of course, this is all statistical averages, and if you have faith in your lucky 20-sider, you might be willing to take more chances. But statistically speaking, you should reserve fighting defensively for final efforts, when there is no hope at all.

Total Defense

Only a standard action, total defense boosts your AC by +4 for 1 round, helping you avoid AoO's or other normal attacks. Because you're not attacking, you can't boost your AC further with Combat Expertise or fighting defensively, nor can you make any AoO while taking this action. This is an excellent choice for monks on the move using Tumble. Tumbling through bad guys to reach another position, along with Mobility, makes the monk virtually untouchable. Note you can't use total defense with the withdraw action (it is a full-round action). The only certain time to use total defense instead of withdraw is when the opponent you face has reach greater than 5 feet. Total defense improves your AC, helping you avoid the inevitable hit from the unavoidable AoO.

Special Attack Options

The PHB is chock full of special attacks to provide more options than the average fighter knows what to do with: everything from bull rushing to charging to shattering the bad guy's weapon. This section provides an overview of the special attack options presented in the PHB and offers tricks and tips to use them to your best advantage, while giving you the skinny on the archetypes best at each.

Aid Another

Step 1: Move adjacent to a PC.

Step 2: Make an attack roll or skill check against an AC 10 or DC 10, respectively.

Step 3: Apply +2 bonus to the adjacent PC's attack, AC, or skill check.

Aid another is a hard action to take, because it gives the glory to another character and most players' egos don't allow this sort of thing to happen. Suck it up. You want to win, right? There are all sorts of situations arising in a game where a particular character has the right skills to overcome some particular nasty. Sure, you may be able to do a little, but if you help your buddy, your buddy can do a lot. This is even truer when the ogre sunders your favorite *+1 longsword*. Feeling useless, you drop back to mope a bit, right? Wrong. You take it like a hero, and jump in and aid the other warriors who are still fighting the brute. By simply taking an aid another action, you can help your allies boost their AC against the ogre's devastating attacks, or buff their attack roll to hit the ogre's stupidly high AC. What follows are some tricks for particular combat options.

With Barbarian's Rage: When a barbarian rages, he loses his AC. Worse, if he charges the penalty drops to -4. Position yourself where you threaten an opponent the barbarian plans to charge and ready an action allowing you to aid another (AC) when the barbarian charges. This alleviates some of the penalties associated with charging, and lets your group deal the needed damage.

With Combat Expertise: Use aid another (attack) to help a character using Combat Expertise. Monsters are wont to attack the individuals hurting them; your aid action helps the character continue to smack the bad guy, while also keeping him from taking damage.

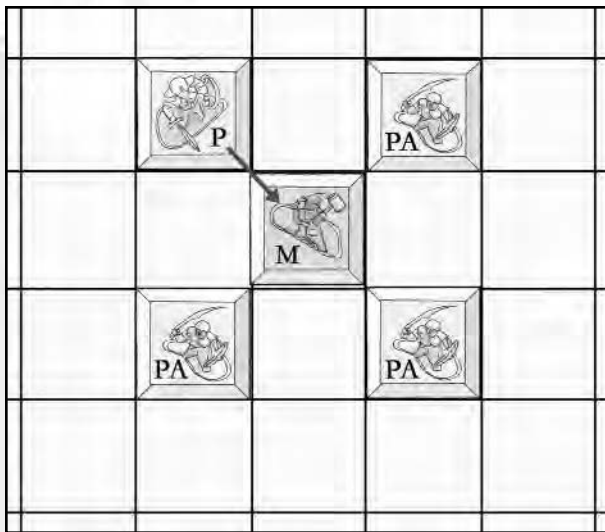
With Feints: There are two obvious ways to use aid another with a feint. First, make a DC 10 Bluff check and add +2 to the feinting character's Bluff check. Second, ready your action to aid in his attack roll when the opponent loses his Dexterity bonus to his AC. This is especially nasty when used with a rogue who has Improved Feint.

With Monk Special Attacks: At lower levels, monks take some penalties when using flurry of blows. Aid another allows you to eliminate the penalty to one of the attack rolls, or even improve them. When used in conjunction with Stunning Fist – even though this is a feat anyone can take, monks are the most likely to do so – you ensure the attack hits. For higher-level monks, help the monk make a Quivering Palm attack.

With Power Attack: The benefit comes into play when there are several of you. One guy giving up an attack so another gets a +2 bonus to hit isn't great, but as long as all of the allies are in position to make a melee attack, the

benefits quickly manifest, especially when fighting a single monster with damage reduction or high AC. If your party lacks the means to damage the opponent, and your fighter has Power Attack, get all the characters within range for a melee attack. There they can all aid the fighter with the Power Attack feat. In a party of 4 characters, they grant up to a +6 bonus and the extra damage dealt by the Power Attack should be enough to breach the monster's damage reduction with no problem. In Diagram 7-20, PA represents the three characters using aid another actions to help fighter P with his Power Attack against the monster, M. In addition to the +6 from the aid attacks, P also gains +2 for flanking, netting a total of +8 to hit.

Diagram 7-20: Aid Another with Power Attack



With Smite Attacks: When fighting alongside a paladin, especially a high-level one, it may be a good idea to help the paladin with his smite evil attack, or a cleric with the smite anything attack. Each aid allows the paladin to sacrifice more from his BAB, and ultimately deal an extraordinary amount of damage.

With other Special Attack Actions: Aid another is also useful when combined with many other special actions. For example, you could aid in disarms, sundering, grappling, tripping (attack), and skill checks made as part of movement like Climb, Tumble, Jump, and just about anything else falling under the criteria of attack, AC or skill check.

Archetypes: Any archetype does well with the aid another action. Skirmishers are best, because they fill in on the battlefield where most needed. Archers lack the positioning to take the action, while the heavy infantry is on the front ranks swinging his sword rather than helping other characters hit or defend.

Bull Rush

Step 1: Move into defender's space.

Step 2: Defender gets an AoO unless either they are flat-footed or you have the Improved Bull Rush feat.

Step 3: Both you and defender make a Strength check, modified by size or if you're charging.

Step 4: If you have the higher result, you push the defender back 5 feet for each 5 points you beat him, not moving more than your speed allows. If the defender has the higher result, you move 5 feet back to where you were.

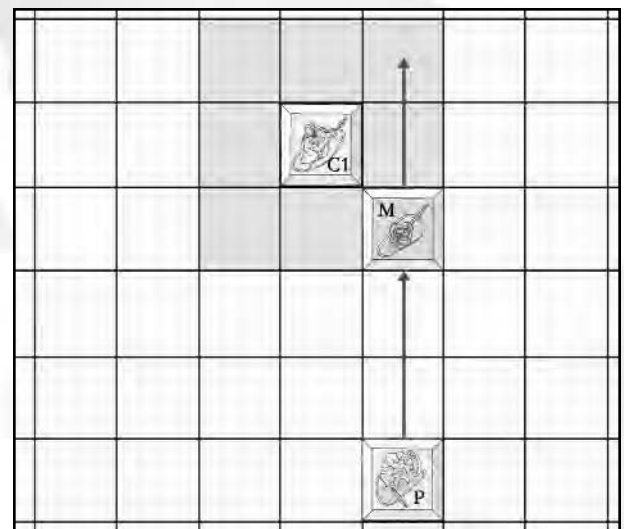
Recap: Bull Rush Modifiers

Each size larger than Medium	+4
Each size smaller than Medium	-4
Charging	+2
More than four legs	+4
Stability (dwarves)	+4

If you need to move an opponent on the battlefield, you have two options. First, you can try to overrun him (see below). A more successful choice, however, is the bull rush. Use bull rush attacks to knock a foe off a cliff, a table, the side of a heaving ship, or any other surface. You can also use this special attack to break up flanks or create a path for escape. Don't bother bull rushing quadrupeds, dwarves, or weirdo creatures like oozes, centipedes, worms, or things bigger than you.

To Prevent & Gain AoOs: Bull rush is a great tool to help your allies get the hell away from bad guys seriously outclassing them. A successful bull rush takes the character out of a threatened square and perhaps even allows the character an attack of opportunity too. In the example below, P is the bull rushing character, C1 is the character's ally, while M is the bad-guy monster. A successful bull rush can knock an opponent back more than one space, allowing the other character to take an AoO.

Diagram 7-21: Bull Rushing to Gain an AoO



As a Barbarian: When chewing on your shield in the heat of a rage, you've got an advantage of strength in bull rush attempts. On successful bull rushes, you can move the bad guys where you want them, controlling the battlefield rather than letting the battlefield control you. Plus, with your fast movement, you're sure to knock them back even further.

With Bull's Strength: If possible, before bull rushing, get your cleric to slap a *bull's strength* on you. The more you beat your opponent's opposed check, the further back you push them.

Against Flanking: If one of your friends faces a couple of nasty rogues, use a bull rush action to break up the flank. This gets you into position to help your friend, and keeps your friend standing to return the favor.

Against Spellcasters: Pesky wizard/cleric/spellcasting aberration on the battlefield? Bull rush 'em. A well-placed bull rush forces a Concentration check, screws up their spell placement, and puts you in the fortunate position of being able to smack the heck out of them when they cast another spell. It's best to charge while bulldozing a spellcaster.

Archetypes: Guerrillas and any other character with a good speed and Strength can be devastating on the battlefield moving opponents where they will. Heavy infantry are also solid when bull rushing as part of a charge. Cavalry, whose size equals the size of the creature they ride, gain an additional +4 bonus to the opposed Strength checks. Just as in the case of aid another, archers should remain out of melee attacks, leaving such maneuvers to other warriors.

Charge

Step 1: Select target to which you have a clear and unobstructed path.

Step 2: Move up to twice your speed to the closest square threatening him.

Step 3: Make a single melee attack adding +2 to the attack roll. For the remainder of the round, take a -2 penalty to AC.

A recent erratum prevents characters from using overrun as part of a charge, so forget that combo. Many folks use the charge action in every combat. While this kind of enthusiasm is laudable, don't fall into the charge trap. Charge is reckless, it exposes you to all sorts of risks, and now, more than ever, it's harder to pull off well, requiring a clear and unobstructed path to leap into the thick of things. On the other hand, nothing says warrior more than the bold barbarian blasting into the thickest chunk of orcs and knocking them down.

The Obvious Combos: If you want to be the charging reckless barbarian, stick to lighter armors to gain fast movement, then rage and watch the blood fly. This is super, super obvious, but some folks need big roadmaps

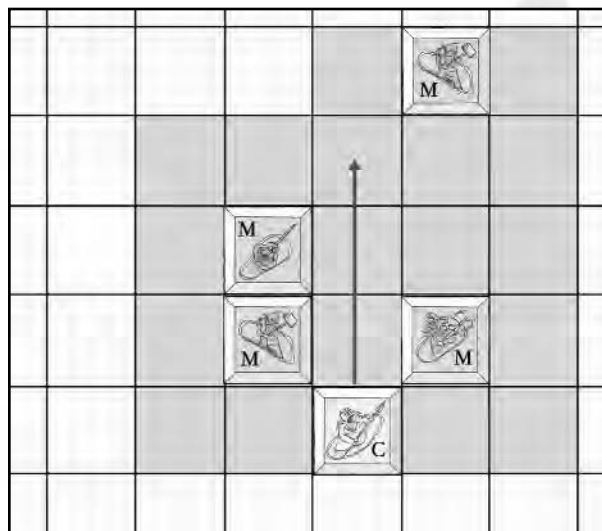
for success. Another one is to delay your action, but when you're no longer flatfooted, until a clear path presents itself. Not rocket science. Combining smite evil attacks with charges provides an extra +2 to hit, helping you smack the bad guy for sure. Using Power Attack with charges lets you gain two points without penalty. Combined with Cleave and Great Cleave, characters can drop tons of low powered bad guys with a +2 bonus to all attacks for the round.

A COMMON SCREW-UP

A charge is a special full-round action that gives you an attack at the end of your movement. You cannot combine it with fighting defensively or Combat Expertise.

The Unstoppable Charger: Characters with enough ranks in Tumble and the Mobility feat can charge unmo- lested through threatened squares to land a telling blow against a spellcaster or some other powerful and in-the- back opponent. Charging requires the squares be unob- structed (i.e., no walls, difficult terrain, friends/baddies). But it does not require the squares to be unthreatened, nor does it require you to attack the nearest opponent. You're free to select whatever target you would like, pro- vided the conditions are right. Monks are the best at this particular technique. Throw in some Stunning Fist action, and watch the enemy sorcerers and wizards fall down. Diagram 7-22 demonstrates how combining Tumble allows a character to attack the best target avail- able and get past the bad guys standing in his way. Note, the diagram example requires three Tumble checks against DC 15, 17, and 19 respectively.

Diagram 7-22: Tumbling while Charging



Woodsman Charger: Rangers of 7th-level or higher can move through any sort of undergrowth at their normal speed and without taking damage or *suffering any other impairments*. This means rangers can charge through

heavy undergrowth, while the bad guys are getting stuck and crawling through the mess. Oh, and druids? Get off your rears, because in outdoor fights, you can step up to the plate at 2nd-level. Add a little wildshape to the mix and you're nasty as hell.

With Lay on Hands: Against undead, paladins can use lay on hands as a melee touch attack. Charge the undead bad guy for the extra +2 to hit. You can't, however, add your smite to lay on hands attacks, as lay on hands is not a normal melee attack.

Archetypes: Charge attacks are excellent for warriors with lower BABs and high speeds, such as the monk and multiclass warriors. Heavy infantry are also good choices because it allows them to move across the battlefield without too much of a penalty to their high ACs, letting them drop foes early in the combat. Cavalry can be devastating in charge attacks, for with the lance, they can shell out staggering amounts of damage.

Disarm

Step 1: You provoke an AoO with a weapon in hand, unless you have Improved Disarm. If the defender deals damage, the disarm attempt fails.

Step 2: Both you and the defender make attack rolls. The one with the higher result wins.

Step 3: If you beat the defender, you disarm him and if you made the attempt unarmed, you seize the weapon. If the defender beats you, the disarm attempt fails and the defender may attempt to disarm you as a free action unless you have the Improved Disarm feat or a special weapon.

Recap: Disarm Modifiers

Wielding a two-handed weapon	+4
Wielding a light weapon	-4
Larger combatant	+4 per size difference
Target isn't melee weapon	-4
Defender uses a locked gauntlet	+10

In most fights, it's easier to just kill the opponent outright than it is to disarm them. In fact, against grunts like orcs and bugbears, you'd be better off just attacking to kill, and against bigger threats, like NPCs and fiend, the AoO is something you want to avoid. However, disarming is useful when fighting several foes, of whom you can't dispatch them all in just one or two hits. By disarming them, they have to pick up their weapons from the floor, provoking an AoO. With Combat Reflexes, you get to smack several of them for free.

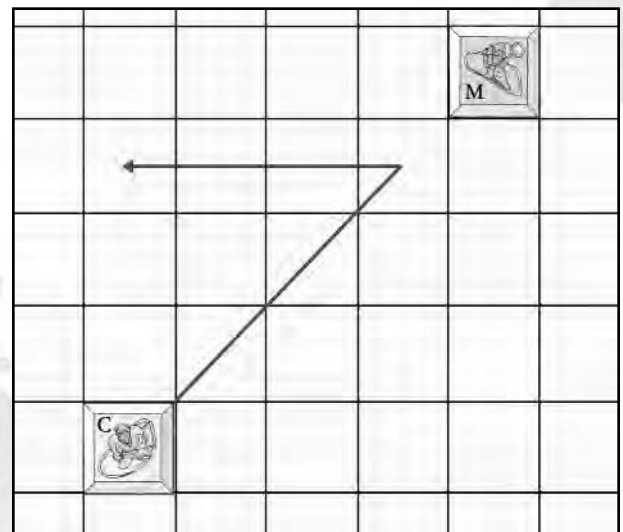
Item Thief: A better use of the disarm attack action is to grab items from an NPC. If you have the Improved Disarm feat, always go after spellcasters first. If you snatch the cleric and druid's divine focus, you don't have to worry about spells from them, unless they keep a few

spares. Grab the sorcerer and wizard's spell component pouches and you pretty much ruin their day. Is a wizard using a *wand of magic missiles* against you? Grab it. You're a fighter. You have a high BAB; use it to cripple the spellcasters before pasting them.

Grappling Grab: Combine a grab attack while grappling an opponent and you can pretty much take whatever you want.

Grab and Run: Want to take an item away and keep it away? Combine grab attacks with spring attacks. You can leap in, snatch the object and get the hell out, and no attack of opportunity. Sure, you've made an enemy for life, but with this technique, the enemy won't be around much longer anyway. The below example assumes a monk with a 50 speed.

Diagram 7-23: Spring Attack Grab



Iterative Attacks: Both a trip and a disarm count as a melee attack, so you can attempt them for as many times as you have iterative attacks. High-level characters can do some scary things. For example, a high level character can run up and grab a sword from an opponent. On the next attack, trip the same opponent and then beat the living crap out of him with his own sword.

Archetypes: Light infantry and guerrillas are good enough to move and disable as many opponents as possible. Skirmishers can prove to be good at disarming too, especially against troublesome archers and spellcasters.

Feint

Step 1: As a standard melee action (unless you have Improved Feint, which functions as a move action), make a Bluff check opposed by the opponent's Sense Motive check, plus his base attack bonus.

Step 2: If your Bluff check exceeds your opponent's Sense Motive check, that opponent loses his Dexterity modifier to his AC (if any).

Recap: Feint Modifiers

Against nonhumanoids	-4
Against creatures with animal Intelligence	-8

This is the rogue's favorite special attack. It's the perfect set up for a sneak attack. For other characters, feinting can be useful. If you have the Improved Feint feat, you can feint as move action, improving your chances to hit your target. Of course, this does nothing for you if your opponent already lacks a Dexterity bonus to his AC, or worse, has uncanny dodge.

Opponents losing their Dexterity adjustment to AC still threaten the squares in their reach, so you cannot use feint to avoid AoOs.

Archetypes: Of course, multiclassed rogue-warriors excel at using the feint ability. Most multiclassed rogues wind up being guerrillas or skirmishers, so these archetypes are the best.

Flanking

Find a buddy in your gaming group, preferably a rogue. You two work together. Between your heavy hitting and the rogue's sneak attacks, you make short work of anything subject to critical hits you come across.

Avoiding Flanks: The best way to avoid flanks is to stick with your buddy. This way, one of the two of you can knock out the offending flanker. Alternatively, look for a wall and stick to it. It's going to take a lot more movement for the bad guys to get a flank without an attack of opportunity than it would if you were out in the open.

Archetypes: Again, this combat technique is best suited for rogues or for helping rogues. All archetypes benefit from the +2 bonus to attack rolls when flanking.

Grapple

Step 1: Unless you have Improved Grapple, this special attack provokes an AoO.

Step 2: Make a melee touch attack to grab the opponent. If you miss, the grapple fails. If you hit, move to step 3.

Step 3: Make an opposed grapple check as a free action. If you lose, the grapple fails. You cannot achieve a hold

on a creature more than two size categories larger than you. If you win, you are grappling and deal damage as if you had hit with an unarmed strike.

Step 4: Next round, move into target's space to maintain grapple.

See the Combat chapter in the PHB for more details.

Grappling is complicated and can have some practical application. When in a group of grapplers, one character can pin the bad guy, while others carve him up. Grappling is also useful for preventing a spellcaster from being a threat in combat, but it's better to hack through the necromancer than it is to hug him. Most times, grappling comes into play when a monster with Improved Grab attacks you. This is bad news for you, and you should try to escape. Remember, you can always draw and use a light weapon while grappling, provided, of course, you make the grapple check. The best defense against a monster with Improved Grab is to avoid being hit. If you're held, your allies should distract the monster and draw his attacks away from you. Grappling monsters with Improved Grab have a -20 to their grapple checks when fighting opponents other than the ones they grapple.

Against Opponents with High Armor Classes: Make a grapple check against an opponent with a high AC, but with a low or normal touch AC. This allows you to deal damage you otherwise would not be able to deal for their high AC. By having to make a touch attack, you bypass all of their armor and natural armor.

Grapple with Armor Spikes: Make grapple attacks while wearing armor spikes to deal extra damage.

More Tricks: See Grapple in the Combat chapter in the PHB for a full list of grapple options.

Archetypes: The best grapplers are monks, so light infantry, guerrillas or skirmishers do well. Heavy infantry, while strong, lack the light weaponry necessary to carve up the grappler. Of course, armor spikes are guaranteed to poke some holes in their foes.

Overrun

Step 1: Resolve AoO. Overruns provoke AoOs.

Step 2: The opponent has the option to avoid the overrun (unless you have Improved Overrun or if mounted and with the Trample feat). If the defender instead opts to block, go to step 3.

Step 3: Make a Strength check opposed by the defender's Dexterity or Strength check. If you win, you knock the defender prone. If you lose, the defender may attempt to knock you down.

Step 4: If you win, you may continue movement as normal. If you fail, you move 5 feet back the way you came.

Overrun, according to the errata, cannot be used as part

of a charge and you cannot overrun through friendly squares. Despite these changes, overrun is still useful, even if you don't have Improved Overrun. With this attack action, you can break up flanks, knock down opponents, and get out of a nasty situation in combat. You can ready this action.

Overrun for Positioning: Use this special attack to get to highly coveted spots on the battlefield, such as higher ground, through a closing gate, or anywhere it's advantageous to be. You can use overrun with Tumble to let you avoid plowing down tougher foes to focus on the weaker combatants. Finally, use overruns to contain enemy spellcasters and monsters with spell-like abilities.

Archetypes: Cavalry are the best at overrun actions as they have the size and speed to be successful. Heavy infantry are also good at this technique, allowing them to get into the thickest parts of the fight. Light infantry with high speeds can make impressive overrun attempts, knocking down the enemy from across the battlefield.

FAVORABLE AND UNFAVORABLE CONDITIONS

Higher Ground: When possible, always attack from a position of higher ground. This gives you a free +1 bonus to melee attacks. If you employ ranged attacks, focus your attacks on those opponents so positioned. They are usually clear of cover and make prime targets.

Prone: In melee, don't be prone. Against ranged attacks, on the other hand, it's a good idea, because you get a +4 bonus to AC.

Kneeling and Sitting: While not exactly prone, your AC still increases by +2 against ranged attacks. Combined with cover, you are practically untouchable.

Sunder

Step 1: Sunder provokes an AoO unless you have the Improved Sunder feat.

Step 2: You and opponent make opposed attack rolls.

Step 3: If you beat the defender, you deal damage to his weapon. If you fail, you don't deal any damage.

Recap: Sunder Modifiers

Two-handed weapons	+4
Light weapons	-4
Per size difference	+4

Sunder allows you to break an opponent's weapon, disarming them. This is a defensive measure as it sacrifices an attack to prevent your opponent from striking you. There are some inherent problems with this tactic, though. First, if you broke the bad guy's +2 *longsword* during the fight, you just threw away 8000 gp. Second, sundering is risky with little guarantee of success, and it provokes an AoO unless you have Improved Sunder. In most circumstances, use the attack to kill the bad guy.

You can sunder shields, but not armor.

Attacking Objects: You can use sunder to smash objects held or worn by your opponents. Such objects include magic wands, potions, holy symbols or anything else the bad guy would use against you. Sure, you lose the magic item from treasure, but you and your allies should be able to run through just about any cleric you encounter.

Archetypes: Tanks, heavy infantry that is, are the best at sunder attacks, because they wield big mean weapons. Light infantry are good at this too; nothing spells broken wand like a ticked-off barbarian.

Trip

Step 1: Unarmed trip attacks provoke AoOs unless you have the Improved Trip feat.

Step 2: Make a melee touch attack.

Step 3: If you succeed, make a Strength check opposed by your opponent's Strength or Dexterity check. If you win, the defender falls prone. If you fail, the defender can try to trip you.

Recap: Trip Modifiers

Every size category larger than Medium	+4
Every size category smaller than Medium	-4
Stability (e.g., dwarves)	+4
More than two legs	+4

Trip is undervalued. It's a great technique to keep your enemies on the ground. When used in conjunction with Improved Trip, it gives you a free attack, and when they struggle to their feet you get an additional attack. Prone opponents are the best foes, because when they crawl, stand up or do anything to get away they provoke attacks of opportunity – and while they're prone, they have a -4 AC penalty against melee opponents. If you're a finesse fighter, you can't live without this special attack. By the way, as the equipment chapter mentions, always use a weapon to trip folks, and not your hands.

Pile-on: Use the Improved Trip feat with grapple/disarm to impose the -4 penalty to their AC then take away all of their goodies for free.

Against Mounted Opponents: Got a pesky rider causing all sorts of headaches? Get your friends to aid another and use Improved Trip to drag him from his horse and then club him while he's on the ground. It's ugly, but spectacular.

Archetypes: Monks, be they guerrillas, light infantry, or skirmishers, are the best trippers. They have the tools, the stats, and the techniques to drop people all day long. Surprisingly, heavy infantry do a nice job too, with their high Strength scores. Last, cavalry, counted as Large creatures, have an advantage when performing a trip. Give them a lance, and they can skewer the bad guy when he's down.

Combat Styles

There are three major weapon techniques in combat. The first is the one-hander. This technique allows the warrior to keep a hand free or to use a shield to beef his AC. The second is the two-hander. These brutes ditch the shield and swing the sword like a baseball bat, dealing lots of extra damage, but costing them AC by not having the shield. Finally, the last combo is the two-weapon fighter. Rangers are notorious for this technique, having made it famous. Two-weapon fighting gives you an extra attack, and with the extra attack, extra damage.

Which style is better? Well, let's find out. Tables 7-28 through 7-31 offer a comparison of all three techniques with or without the appropriate feats, so you can see the damage potential of each one. Remember, a skilled warrior changes his combat tactics between two-handed, one-handed, and two-weapon when the situation demands, rather than relying on one technique all the time.

The four tables compare the expected damage for a fighter with a Strength of 15, increasing to 16 at 4th level, 17 at 8th level, 18 at 12th level, 19 at 16th level and 20 at 20th level. The first table reflects the fighter using a single-handed longsword. The second details the fighter using the longsword in two hands. The third presents the fighter using a longsword with a shortsword without the Two-Weapon Fighting feat tree. The final table shows two-handed combat with the appropriate feats. Each table shows four armor classes and does not take into account critical hits. Except for the Two-Weapon Fighting tree in the last table, these tables do not account for feat selection.

At lower levels, use a shield to improve your AC. Using a weapon two-handed only deals slightly more damage, averaging no more than an extra point. But as you advance, switch to two-handed fighting against creatures with low ACs, because your iterative attacks allow you to deal significantly more damage in each round. The higher your Strength and the more attacks per round you have, the greater the benefit of two-handed fighting. At higher levels it makes a huge difference.

The charts reveal that two-weapon fighting is not as useful as one would suppose. It is marginally better than one-handed fighting in some circumstances, and marginally worse in others. It's never a clear-cut winner. At higher levels and with the right feats it's superior to swinging a weapon with two hands, but then again, you had to spend three feat slots to make it better! Like the one-handed technique, it fails to do appreciable damage when compared to the two-handed approach. Moreover, the loss of the shield bonus to AC for the extra possible hit is usually not worth the effort. Reserve two-weapon fighting for those with the feat tree, or at worst, when fighting many smaller foes with low ACs and low hit points, where spreading out damage over multiple hits is more important than punishing the same target over and over again.

TABLE 7-28: ONE-HANDED LONGSWORD

Attack Bonus (Damage/Hit)	Average Hits Per Round (and Average Damage) vs. Given AC			
	15	20	25	30
+3 (Dmg 6.5)	.45 (2.925)	.2 (1.3)	.05 (0.325)	.05 (0.325)
+4	.5 (3.25)	.25 (1.625)	.05 (0.325)	.05 (0.325)
+5	.55 (3.575)	.3 (1.95)	.05 (0.325)	.05 (0.325)
+6 (Dmg 7.5)	.6 (4.5)	.35 (2.625)	.1 (0.75)	.05 (0.375)
+8	.7 (5.25)	.45 (3.375)	.2 (1.5)	.05 (0.375)
+9/+4	1.25 (9.375)	.75 (5.625)	.3 (2.25)	.1 (0.75)
+10/+5	1.35 (10.125)	.85 (6.375)	.35 (2.625)	.1 (0.75)
+11/+6	1.45 (10.875)	.95 (7.125)	.45 (3.375)	.15 (1.125)
+12/+7	1.55 (11.625)	1.05 (7.875)	.6 (4.5)	.2 (1.5)
+13/+8	1.65 (12.375)	1.15 (8.625)	.65 (4.875)	.25 (1.875)
+14/+9/+4	2.2 (16.5)	1.5 (11.25)	.8 (6)	.35 (2.625)
+16/+11/+6 (Dmg 8.5)	2.4 (20.4)	1.8 (15.3)	1.05 (8.925)	.5 (4.25)
+17/+12/+7	2.5 (21.25)	1.95 (16.575)	1.25 (10.625)	.6 (5.1)
+18/+13/+8	2.6 (22.1)	2.1 (17.85)	1.35 (11.475)	.7 (5.95)
+19/+14/+9	2.65 (22.525)	2.2 (18.7)	1.5 (12.75)	.8 (6.8)
+20/+15/+10/+5	3.25 (27.625)	2.6 (22.1)	1.7 (14.45)	.95 (8.075)
+21/+16/+11/+6	3.35 (28.475)	2.75 (23.375)	1.9 (16.15)	1.1 (9.35)
+22/+17/+12/+7	3.45 (29.325)	2.9 (24.65)	2.15 (18.275)	1.25 (10.625)
+23/+18/+13/+8	3.55 (30.175)	3.05 (25.925)	2.3 (19.55)	1.4 (11.9)
+25/+20/+15/+10 (Dmg 9.5)	3.65 (34.675)	3.25 (30.875)	2.6 (24.7)	1.7 (16.15)

TABLE 7-29: TWO-HANDED LONGSWORD

Attack Bonus (Damage/Hit)	Average Hits Per Round (and Average Damage) vs. Given AC			
	15	20	25	30
+3 (Dmg 7.5)	.45 (3.375)	.2 (1.5)	.05 (0.375)	.05 (0.375)
+4	.5 (3.75)	.25 (1.875)	.05 (0.375)	.05 (0.375)
+5	.55 (4.125)	.3 (2.25)	.05 (0.375)	.05 (0.375)
+6 (Dmg 8.5)	.6 (5.1)	.35 (2.975)	.1 (0.85)	.05 (0.425)
+8	.7 (5.95)	.45 (3.825)	.2 (1.7)	.05 (0.425)
+9/+4	1.25 (10.625)	.75 (6.375)	.3 (2.55)	.1 (0.85)
+10/+5	1.35 (11.475)	.85 (7.225)	.35 (2.975)	.1 (0.85)
+11/+6	1.45 (12.325)	.95 (8.075)	.45 (3.825)	.15 (1.275)
+12/+7	1.55 (13.175)	1.05 (8.925)	.6 (5.1)	.2 (1.7)
+13/+8	1.65 (14.025)	1.15 (9.775)	.65 (5.525)	.25 (2.125)
+14/+9/+4	2.2 (18.7)	1.5 (12.75)	.8 (6.8)	.35 (2.975)
+16/+11/+6 (Dmg 10.5)	2.4 (25.2)	1.8 (18.9)	1.05 (11.025)	.5 (5.25)
+17/+12/+7	2.5 (26.25)	1.95 (20.475)	1.25 (13.125)	.6 (6.3)
+18/+13/+8	2.6 (27.3)	2.1 (22.05)	1.35 (14.175)	.7 (7.35)
+19/+14/+9	2.65 (27.825)	2.2 (23.1)	1.5 (15.75)	.8 (8.4)
+20/+15/+10/+5	3.25 (34.125)	2.6 (27.3)	1.7 (17.85)	.95 (9.975)
+21/+16/+11/+6	3.35 (35.175)	2.75 (28.875)	1.9 (19.95)	1.1 (11.55)
+22/+17/+12/+7	3.45 (36.225)	2.9 (30.45)	2.15 (22.575)	1.25 (13.125)
+23/+18/+13/+8	3.55 (37.275)	3.05 (32.025)	2.3 (24.15)	1.4 (14.7)
+25/+20/+15/+10 (Dmg 11.5)	3.65 (41.975)	3.25 (37.375)	2.6 (29.9)	1.7 (19.55)

TABLE 7-30: LONGSWORD AND SHORTSWORD

Attack Bonus at -4/-8 (Damage/Hit)	Average Hits Per Round (and Average Damage) vs. Given AC			
	15	20	25	30
-1/-5 (Dmg 6.5/4.5)	.25/.05 (1.85)	.05/.05 (0.55)	.05/.05 (0.55)	.05/.05 (0.55)
+0/-4	.3/.1 (2.4)	.05/.05 (0.55)	.05/.05 (0.55)	.05/.05 (0.55)
+1/-3	.35/.15 (2.95)	.1/.05 (0.875)	.05/.05 (0.55)	.05/.05 (0.55)
+2/-2 (Dmg 7.5/4.5)	.4/.2 (3.9)	.15/.05 (1.35)	.05/.05 (0.6)	.05/.05 (0.6)
+4/+0	.5/.3 (5.1)	.25/.05 (2.1)	.05/.05 (0.6)	.05/.05 (0.6)
+5/+0/+1	.75/.35 (7.2)	.35/.1 (2.725)	.1/.05 (0.975)	.1/.05 (0.975)
+6/+1/+2	.95/.4 (8.925)	.45/.15 (4.05)	.15/.05 (1.2)	.1/.05 (0.975)
+7/+2/+3	1.05/.45 (9.9)	.55/.2 (5.025)	.2/.05 (1.725)	.1/.05 (0.975)
+8/+3/+4	1.15/.5 (10.875)	.65/.25 (6)	.25/.05 (2.1)	.1/.05 (0.975)
+9/+4/+5	1.25/.55 (11.85)	.75/.3 (6.975)	.3/.05 (2.475)	.1/.05 (0.975)
+10/+5/+0/+6	1.55/.6 (14.325)	.9/.35 (8.325)	.4/.1 (3.45)	.15/.05 (1.35)
+12/+7/+2/+8 (Dmg 8.5/5.5)	1.95/.70 (20.425)	1.2/.45 (12.675)	.6/.2 (6.2)	.25/.05 (2.4)
+13/+8/+3/+9	2.1/.75 (21.975)	1.35/.5 (14.225)	.7/.25 (7.325)	.3/.05 (2.825)
+14/+9/+4/+10	2.2/.8 (23.1)	1.5/.55 (15.775)	.8/.3 (8.45)	.35/.05 (3.25)
+15/+10/+5/+11	2.3/.85 (24.225)	1.65/.6 (17.325)	.9/.35 (9.575)	.4/.1 (3.95)
+16/+11/+6/+1/+12	2.75/.9 (28.325)	1.9/.65 (19.725)	1.1/.4 (11.55)	.55/.15 (5.5)
+17/+12/+7/+2/+13	2.9/.95 (29.875)	2.1/.7 (21.7)	1.25/.45 (13.1)	.65/.2 (6.625)
+18/+13/+8/+3/+14	3.05/.95 (31.15)	2.3/.75 (23.675)	1.4/.5 (14.65)	.75/.25 (7.75)
+19/+14/+9/+4/+15	3.15/.95 (32)	2.45/.8 (25.225)	1.55/.55 (16.2)	.85/.3 (8.875)
+21/+16/+11/+6/+17 (Dmg 9.5/5.5)	3.35/.95 (37.05)	2.75/.9 (31.075)	1.9/.65 (21.625)	1.1/.4 (12.65)

TABLE 7-31: LONGSWORD AND SHORTSWORD WITH TWO-WEAPON FIGHTING FEAT TREE

This table reflects the full progression of feats in the Two-Weapon Fighting feat tree. A character likely must advance his Dexterity rather than Strength to meet the prerequisites for the feats higher in the tree. However, to match the other tables, we'll assume he has a high Dexterity to start with, so the damage improves just as in the other comparisons.

Attack Bonus (Damage/Hit)	Average Hits Per Round (and Average Damage) vs. Given AC			
	15	20	25	30
<i>Ist: Two-weapon Fighting Atk -2 & -2 (damage 6.5/4.5)</i>				
+1/+1	.3/.3 (3.3)	.1/.1 (1.1)	.05/.05 (0.55)	.05/.05 (0.55)
+2/+2	.4/.4 (4.4)	.15/.15 (1.65)	.05/.05 (0.55)	.05/.05 (0.55)
+3/+3	.45/.45 (4.95)	.2/.2 (2.2)	.05/.05 (0.55)	.05/.05 (0.55)
<i>4th: (damage 7.5/4.5)</i>				
+5/+5	.55/.55 (6.6)	.3/.3 (3.6)	.05/.05 (0.6)	.05/.05 (0.6)
+6/+6	.6/.6 (7.2)	.35/.35 (4.2)	.1/.1 (1.2)	.05/.05 (0.6)
<i>6th: Improved Two-weapon Fighting Atk -2 & -2/5</i>				
+7/+2/+7/+2	1.05/1.05 (13.425)	.55/.55 (6.6)	.2/.2 (2.4)	.1/.1 (1.2)
+8/+3/+8/+3	1.15/1.15 (13.8)	.65/.65 (7.8)	.25/.25 (3)	.1/.1 (1.2)
+9/+4/+9/+4	1.25/1.25 (15)	.75/.75 (9)	.3/.3 (3.6)	.1/.1 (1.2)
+10/+5/+10/+5	1.35/1.35 (16.2)	.85/.85 (10.95)	.35/.35 (4.2)	.1/.1 (1.2)
+11/+6/+11/+6	1.45/1.45 (17.4)	.95/.95 (11.4)	.45/.45 (5.4)	.15/.15 (1.8)
<i>11th: Greater Two-weapon Fighting Atk -2 & -2/-5/-10</i>				
+12/+7/+2/+12/+7/+2	1.95/1.95 (23.4)	1.2/1.2 (14.4)	.6/.6 (7.2)	.25/.25 (3)
<i>12th: (damage 8.5/5.5)</i>				
+14/+9/+4/+14/+9/+4	2.2/2.2 (30.8)	1.5/1.5 (21)	.8/.8 (11.2)	.35/.35 (4.9)
+15/+10/+5/+15/+10/+5	2.3/2.3 (32.2)	1.65/1.65 (23.1)	.9/.9 (12.6)	.4/.4 (5.6)
+16/+11/+6/+16/+11/+6	2.4/2.4 (33.6)	1.8/1.8 (25.2)	1.05/1.05 (14.7)	.5/.5 (7)
+17/+12/+7/+17/+12/+7	2.5/2.5 (35)	1.95/1.95 (27.3)	1.2/1.2 (16.8)	.6/.6 (8.4)
+18/+13/+8/+3/+18/+13/+8	3.05/2.55 (39.95)	2.25/2.1 (30.675)	1.4/.1.35 (19.325)	.75/.7 (10.225)
+19/+14/+9/+4/+19/+14/+9	3.15/2.65 (41.35)	2.45/2.2 (32.925)	1.55/1.50 (21.425)	.85/.8 (11.625)
+20/+15/+10/+5/+20/+15/+10	3.25/2.7 (42.475)	2.6/2.3 (34.75)	1.7/1.65 (23.525)	.95/.9 (13.025)
+21/+16/+11/+6/+21/+16/+11	3.35/2.75 (43.6)	2.75/2.4 (36.575)	1.9/1.8 (26.05)	1.1/1.05 (15.125)
<i>20th: (damage 9.5/5.5)</i>				
+23/+18/+13/+8/+23/+18/+13	3.5/2.8 (48.65)	3.05/2.6 (43.275)	2.3/2.1 (33.4)	1.4/1.35 (20.725)

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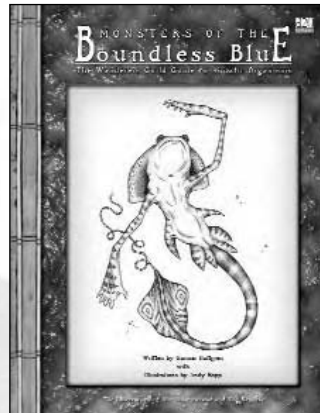
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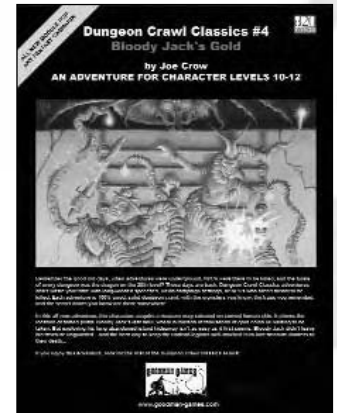
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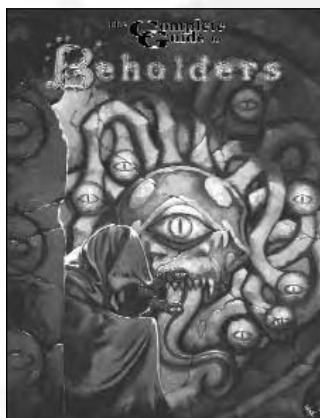
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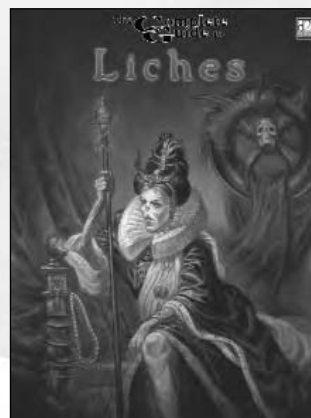
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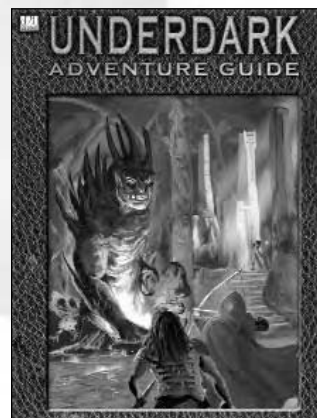
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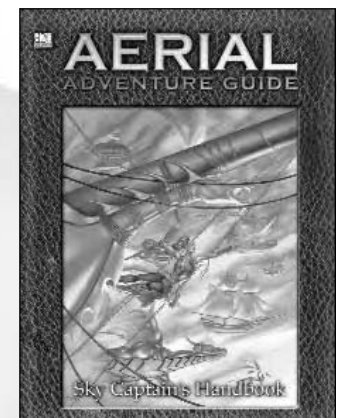
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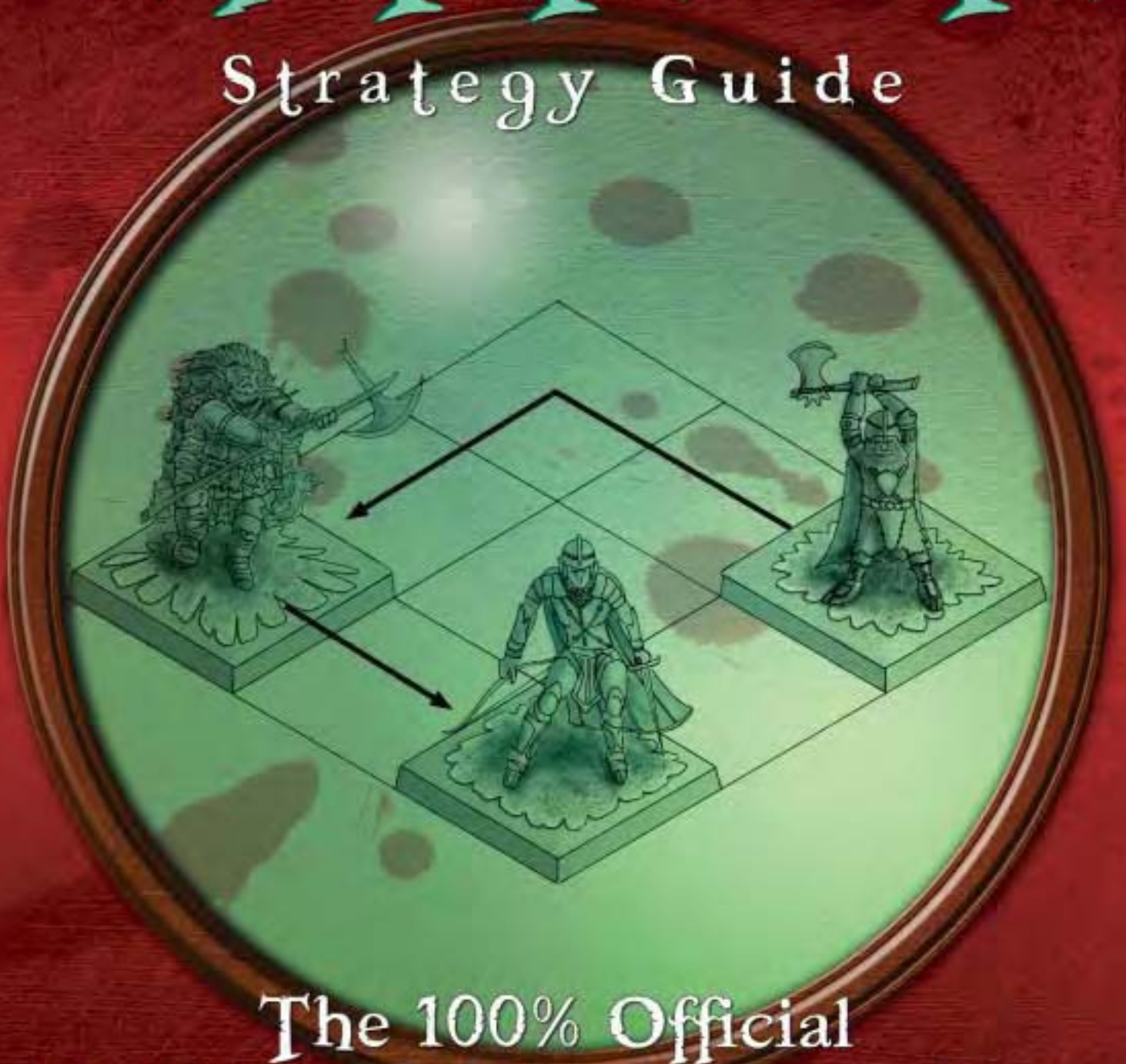
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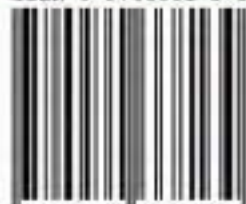
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The Power Gamer's 3.5

WARRIOR

Strategy Guide

The 100% Official Guide to Kicking Monster Butt
and Winning the Game!

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Introduction

Building the Perfect Warrior

Min/maxing gets a bad rap. Sure, there's little role-playing involved in stat-monsters, and not a lot of background to create an immersive gaming experience. But in every gamer lurks the secret munchkin, wanting – even craving – a bad-ass character able to survive nearly any threat, overcome any trap, and kick the living crap out of anyone or anything getting in the way. This is where the Power Gamer's 3.5 Strategy Guides come into play.

The Warrior Strategy Guide gives you all the strategy and advice you need to play a combat character, whether you sling arrows or swing a sword. While most of this book covers fighters, barbarians, monks, rangers and paladins, there is sure to be useful information in this guide for any other character. Rogues, clerics and even druids can become combat monsters with multiclassing or the right selection of skills and feats. Likewise, war wizards can benefit from the information by studying the strengths and weaknesses of their enemy. In short, there's something for everyone.

Where's the New Stuff?

The Power Gamer's Strategy Guide's primary purpose is to make sure you can use it. Instead of loading this book with questionable prestige classes, sketchy feats, and yet another way to use the Profession skill, we've torn apart the mechanics of the 3.5 game, looked at them, and slapped them back together. With just the 3.5 core mechanics, this book gives you everything you need to roll up the character of your dreams. Moreover, because everything is straight out of the three core books, no one can stop you from using it. Period. It's 100% official.

How Do I Use this Book?

You use this book the same way a football coach uses a playbook, the same way a video game champion uses his cheat codes, and the same way an auto mechanic uses his repair manual. This book gives you the strategies and techniques you need for winning 3.5 combats. If you're rolling up a new character, the chapters on ability scores, races, and classes will help you get started on the right foot. If you have an existing character, the chapters on skills and feats will help you plan his progression. No

matter where you are in your campaign, the chapter on equipment will always be useful. And then there's the gold mine: Chapter 7, Combat. This chapter is all about how to kick monster ass in the most efficient manner possible. Like we said, it's a playbook, cheat code, and repair manual all wrapped into one handy guide for winning every combat you ever step into.

Listen Up! They're Called Archetypes

Instead of spending all of our time on specific classes, we use archetypes. What's an archetype? An archetype is a prototype, a kind of model everything else is based on. In this book, an archetype represents a particular style of warrior: archer, cavalry or tank. With the right feat and class choices, you can build a warrior modeled after any one of the archetypes. On the other hand, it's not necessary to use one of these types – there's plenty of info in this book to keep it useful no matter how you handle it. Nonetheless, the archetypes are handy for organization and thematic choices, perhaps opening a door to a combo or feature you hadn't thought of before. Figure out what kind of warrior you want to play, and see if one of the archetypes matches. If so, you won't be disappointed.

HIDE THIS BOOK!

While everything in this guide is legit – it comes straight out of the core rulebooks – you don't want your DM to read it. Just think, all these useful tips and suggestions in the hands of the guy who runs the monsters! Shudder. Keep this one tucked away or you'll regret it.

Archer

The archer's the guy in the movies that makes the impossible shot. Specializing in ranged attacks, most archers employ some sort of bow, but this could include anyone who makes more ranged attacks than melee attacks. Archers are typically fighters or rangers.

Cavalry

From the steel-encased knight to the lightly armored horse barbarian, any character fighting from the back of a mount lumps into this category. Mounted characters don't just ride horses. Small characters can employ riding dogs, while higher-level characters can gain cohorts, like dragons, to use instead of the more common steeds. Cavalry often consists of paladins or fighters.

Guerrilla

The guerrilla is a specialized warrior whose role is to take out a specific threat. Such opponents could include wizards, goblinoids, or even demons. These guys are super-specialized, but good enough to adapt to problems when the situation demands. Guerrillas are often rangers or monks.

Infantry, Heavy

Heavy infantry characters excel at wading into the thick of combat. Sometimes called bricks or tanks, the heavy infantry archetype uses heavy armor and high-damage weaponry, has a low Dexterity, and lacks any semblance of grace. When you think fighter, you're probably thinking of a tank, but some paladins and clerics fall into this category as well.

Skirmisher

Every group has to have a generalist. The skirmisher specializes in nothing, opting to fill other roles as needed. Don't let their lack of focus fool you; these guys are good in enough things to be able to do some serious damage. Moreover, they have the ability to get in where they're needed, and get out when things get too nasty. Multiclass warriors typically wind up as skirmishers.

NO PERFECT WARRIORS

Just because an archetype defines what you're good at, it doesn't mean it's the only way you'll be fighting. Cavalry can lose their mounts, archers are in deep trouble in melee, and heavy infantry drown when submerged. Your DM will challenge you. But you know what? There is no perfect warrior. Don't think this book or the archetypes presented make invulnerable characters. That's not what this is about. It's about staying alive as long as you can and winning the game you're not supposed to win.

OK, So Where Do I Go From Here?

Now it's time to get started on the fun part: building the perfect warrior! It's helpful to have a copy of the PHB and your character sheet handy as you read through the rest of this book, since you'll be constantly thinking about how to get most juice out of both your character and your rules. Read carefully, think hard about your character, and be prepared to start winning lots of combats. And remember, there's nothing your DM can do about it. After all, every strategy we discuss comes straight from the PHB!

Infantry, Light

Light infantry characters are warriors who don't use much armor. Preferring mobility and speed to the slow pace of the tank, these characters are fast and effective at taking out the larger opponents. Despite their lack of protection, they still fight on the front lines. Light infantry consists most commonly of barbarians or monks.

Chapter One

Ability Scores

For many players, ability scores are their character's most important trait. Ability scores provide the blueprint for character creation, define the character's strengths and weaknesses, establish the framework for role-playing, and set the boundaries of the character's limitations. Of course, not all ability scores carry the same weight. Most warriors never have use for Charisma or even Intelligence, while Strength and Constitution are vital to almost all martial characters. This section overviews the abilities best suited to each archetype, and addresses the occasional exception in the monk, paladin, and ranger.

Abilities & What They Do

Strength

Here's one you should know already: Strength is your most important stat. It's vital for melee, special attacks like sunder and grapple, and breaking down doors. It functions as the key ability for most movement-related skills like Climb, Jump, and Swim. To access the best fighting feats, you need a 13 Strength.

Dexterity

Dexterity is nearly as good as Strength. It beefs up AC, Initiative, and Reflex saves, and for the mobile types, it serves as the key ability for Hide, Jump, Move Silently, and Tumble. Finesse characters, like the archer, light infantry, or guerrilla, need at least a 13 Dexterity.

Constitution

A solid Constitution is the best defense a warrior can have, even more so than Dexterity, because you keep gaining the bonus to your hit points every time you advance. Bonus hit points let you take damage and keep fighting. Despite its minimal impact on skills, a high Constitution improves your Fortitude save, beefing up your chances to resist negative energy levels, poison, and disease.

Intelligence

If there is a stat you can overlook, Intelligence should not be it. If you have two bad rolls, though, stick one of them here. Intelligence affects your skills. While important, skills don't define warriors like they do rogues. However, certain feats like Combat Expertise require a 13 or better Intelligence, so if an AC warrior is your path, you'd better suck it up and count on this attribute being among the better ones.

Wisdom

Enchantment spells wreak havoc on a party of adventurers. *Dominate person*, *suggestion*, and *even charm person* can pit you directly against your allies, bad news indeed for them. You want to avoid letting this happen. Wisdom improves your Willpower save, helping to resist those slimy spells. Put a decent stat in your Wisdom.

Charisma

Charisma sucks. About the only way it comes into play for warriors is for Intimidate checks and for feint maneuvers. Sure, rangers need it to cuddle with their critters, and paladins need it for smiting demons and boosting their saves, but for monks, fighters, and barbarians, there's just no reason to waste the roll. So, if you wind up with a 6, put it here.

Abilities and Archetypes

By now, you know why certain attributes are vital to warriors and why others aren't. More importantly, you need to know where to put them for the greatest effect. Each of the following sections recommends stat placement for the appropriate archetype using the assumption that you've rolled the following scores: 15, 14, 13, 12, 10, and 8. Use the archetypes as a model for placing the results of your die rolls.

Archer

Archers need Dexterity for accurate ranged attacks, to avoid ranged spells (they are likely to be in the back ranks), and to beef up their AC. Constitution is the next most important stat for obvious reasons (hit points), for with little to no armor, you need more staying power. Finally, Strength follows as it adds to damage from composite bows and thrown weapons. The rest falls in a logical order. Archers should place their initial stats as follows: Str 13, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8. Players with rangers as archers may want to adjust their stats slightly to help in spellcasting and the development of their animal companion: Str 14, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Cavalry

Strength is the key ability for mounted characters, for when using a lance on a charge, they multiply their Strength damage in addition to the dice rolled. In other words, Strength lets them do lots of damage. Constitution is the next best choice, with Dexterity being a close third as it's the key ability for Ride. Charisma comes in fourth, helping you to improve your mount through tricks (see Handle Animal in the PHB). Cavalry should place their die rolls as follows: Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12. Players with paladins as cavalry may want to place their stats differently to aid in spellcasting and their class abilities, perhaps as: Str 14, Dex 8, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Guerrilla

A guerrilla's stat placement should reflect the nature of the opponent. Against creatures who predominately use touch attacks, guerrillas should probably have a high Dexterity. Against creatures with a high AC, like constructs, a Strength score is critical. In general, guerrillas should place their stats in the following order, though see the ranger entry under archer (above) for another possibility: Str 14, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Infantry, Light

Dexterity and Constitution offer a higher AC and more hit points, which are vital components of this archetype. As damage potential relies on Strength, that's where the third good stat should go. Any extra high stat should always go into Wisdom, so as to resist those nasty spells. A recommended stat placement follows: Str 13, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8. If you're playing a monk, consider this variant: Str 12, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 8.

Infantry, Heavy

Heavy infantry need Strength and Constitution. Period. Anything else is an added benefit. Tanks follow this stat placement: Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Skirmishers

Skirmishers need higher stats to assist them in covering all the bases. These characters are just as likely to pick up a bow as they are to swing a greatsword. Given their varied techniques, its best to distribute your major stats thusly: Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Chapter Two

Races

With your archetype selected and stats placed, it's time to start thinking about what race to play. Some races clearly make better warriors, while others are suited to slinging spells or driving a knife between the bad guy's shoulder blades. This chapter takes a detailed look at what races are worth playing as warriors and the big benefits of each. Just because we say a race sucks as a fighter doesn't mean you shouldn't play them. Feel free to play a weirdo gnome paladin, or a half-elf bard. There are better strategic choices for your warrior, but then again, if you're looking for quirky oddball characters, you're probably not reading this book anyway.

Humans

Humans are the most popular race to play, and with good reason. Humans get extra skill points, a bonus feat at first level, and they are the best choice for multiclassing. But before we just give in and celebrate how cool humans are, we need to talk about what these benefits mean.

Skills

The bonus skill points don't mean much to fighters except to make up for low Intelligence. For other warrior classes, these skill points can help expand into other areas. Translating into 23 extra skill ranks by the time your character reaches 20th level, this racial feature offers something no other race provides. The ranger and the monk gain the biggest benefit from this racial feature, as neither character has to sacrifice a stat to beef up Intelligence to access the full range of skill choices.

Special Abilities

Before you get all sweaty about the bonus feat being the best feature of this race, consider what you sacrifice. This free feat is front-ended and does not give you the longer-lasting benefits of other races like dwarves and halflings. You're likely to use this free feat to start building a feat tree early, like Power Attack, Mounted Combat, or Point Blank Shot. If you're a fighter, though, the bonus feat is not as a big boon when you consider how many other feats you get. On the other hand, if you

play any other warrior class, the bonus feat gives you an extra resource.

Favored Class

Having no favored class allows you to fully min/max your character. Maybe you take 1 level of barbarian for the rage and fast movement, or pick up a few levels of fighter and a level or two of rogue, just to round things out. Of the other races, only half-elves have this capability, but their lack of useful warrior abilities makes them a less attractive choice. If you plan on multiclassing your character, pay special attention to this racial feature.

Best Archetypes

You can rest assured the human works best for any archetype or character class or multiclass combination, largely for the lack of ability score penalties and the enhanced benefits.

Dwarves

Dwarves have many racial abilities, more than any other race. They move at full speed in heavy armor. They still move at full speed when encumbered, and they can see in the dark, use exotic weaponry, and much more.

Skills

Though dwarves don't get the extra 23 skill ranks that humans gain, they have an impressive number of skill bonuses allowing them to surpass humans with equal ranks. With these bonuses, dwarves are always better at a particular thing than a human could ever hope to be. Still, some of the dwarven racial bonuses are not exactly the most useful for the combat monster dwarf. Not too many warriors spend their time crafting new items. Nor do warriors – at least those focused on combat – spend a lot of time determining the value of a metal urn. Stonecunning is useful, but better for dwarven rogues who have a knack for this sort of thing.

Special Abilities

Dwarves don't get bonus feats. Instead, they get racial abilities resembling feats. Against poison, they have a distinct advantage with their racial bonus, high Constitution, and great Fortitude saves. Spells and spell-like abilities have a tough time getting past the dwarf's natural resilience to such things. Giants can't hit them (+4 AC), and orcs and goblinoids fall before them like wheat to the scythe. They're stable. Don't forget about the two weapons they're familiar with, translating as two bonus feats for warriors, and darkvision, the equivalent of a permanent second level spell. If you add these abilities up, they far outweigh the benefits provided by a single bonus feat.

Favored Class

With fighter as a dwarf's favored class, they are free to pursue other classes, while using fighter levels to enhance their feat selection, hit dice, and base attack bonus.

Archetypes

Dwarves are best as heavy infantry. Look at the table below. It takes the standard ability scores for each archetype (as discussed in the previous chapter) and applies the dwarf's racial bonuses to them (+2 Constitution and -2 Charisma, in case you've forgotten). Notice how the dwarf retains its Strength, but has a higher Constitution. Coupled with their bonus to saves against spells and spell-like abilities, they are nearly bulletproof against magic. As cavalry and light infantry, dwarves are surprisingly not terrible. Using a mount helps with the character's awful speed. If they are a monk or barbarian, as light infantry, the class bonuses help to overcome their slow speed. Dwarves aren't too bad at archery and as skirmishers, but have no special advantage over any other class with these archetypes.

TABLE 2-1: DWARF STAT COMPARISON

Archetype	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
Archer	13	15	16	10	12	6
Cavalry	15	13	16	8	10	10
Guerrilla	14	15	15	12	10	6
Infantry, Light	13	15	16	12	10	6
Infantry, Heavy	15	12	16	10	13	6
Skirmisher	15	13	16	10	12	6

Elves

Elf racial abilities lend themselves to be useful with other classes like wizards and rogues. Nevertheless, of all the racial features suggesting another class choice, there is a benefit making elf warriors attractive. Elves have a +2 Dexterity, influencing ranged attacks, initiative, AC, and a ton of mobility skills. A bonus to such a score is a huge advantage. Of course, you can't forget low-light vision, effectively doubling your awareness in dungeons. You want to sink an arrow in a target before anyone else, and if you want to be sure you're going to hit, you'd better take a long look at this race.

Skills

Elves have a +6 total bonus broken up among three skills. Like dwarves, elves excel in these areas compared to humans. Listen is a class skill for barbarian, monk, and ranger, and Spot is one for monks and rangers. The bonuses to these skills have little to offer elven fighters, except at lower levels, where they are more likely to use them to avoid surprise.

Special Abilities

Elves don't get much in the way of useful feats. They get martial weapon proficiencies, something all warriors except monks already have. The immunity to sleep is a powerful benefit at low levels when Will saves for warriors are abysmal, but is less useful at higher levels. Coupled with the racial bonus to saves against enchantment spells and effects, your elf warrior has a bit more grit than initially expected.

Favored Class

One of the worst racial features for elven warriors is their favored class. In other party roles, a multiclass wizard could be an excellent option. As a warrior, however, unless you're working towards some prestige class or esoteric class combination, a warrior multiclassing into an arcane spell user is rarely an exemplary choice. In exchange for the ability to cast cantrips and a handful of 1st-level spells, you suffer an arcane spell failure check whenever you wear armor. You gain 2.5 hit points per level on average, and worst of all, wizards have the worst BAB (base attack bonus) in the game. These drawbacks potentially cripple a warrior, preventing elves from multiclassing effectively.

Archetypes

From the table on the facing page, it's clear the archer is the best choice for elves. They retain a Con bonus. They have a high Dex and a good Wisdom. Moreover, you can still deal some extra damage with the composite longbow. Elves also make great light infantry. They are not

bad as cavalry or guerrillas. As skirmishers, they get a solid Strength and Dexterity, allowing them to slip into the variety of rolls needed in the party.

Gnomes

Gnomes have a fair selection of interesting abilities, ranging from spell-like abilities, skill bonuses, attack modifiers against certain opponents, and a small size. On the other hand, with a low Strength, they carry less, wear lighter armor (medium or heavy drops their speed to 15 feet!), and are forced to use small weapons, winding up less effective in combat than almost any other race.

Skills

Gnomes receive +8 divided between three skills, one having zero value to warriors: Craft (alchemy). For warriors, this skill has absolutely no use. The bonuses to Listen (+2) and Hide (+4 due to size) aren't bad, but warriors should be engaging foes, not skulking about looking for the best opportunity to strike. This kind of tactic results in the monsters cutting the rest of the party into ribbons. If you're a multiclass rogue, these benefits are fine, but in short, not the best in the world for a front-line fighter.

Special Abilities

Proficiency with illusion magic confers a stackable Spell Focus (illusion). However, as warriors don't cast much in the way of illusion spells, this racial ability falls flat. Gnomes do get a +2 racial bonus to saves against illusions. Anything helping a warrior defend against magic is good. Their familiarity with the gnome hooked hammer (functioning as an Exotic Weapon Proficiency feat for warriors) and their bonus to attack kobolds and goblinoids (staple foes in this game) help to overcome the restrictions and other useless abilities granted by this race.

Favored Class

By multiclassing into the bard, you can make use of illusion spells, and even gain some better saves. Even though bards are the least desirable of the classes, a skilled gnome prankster can make an interesting, if not effective, warrior.

Archetypes

The favored class section hinted at it, but the best archetype for the gnome is a skirmisher. They retain a Strength and Dexterity modifier, have a solid Constitution and not too bad of a Wisdom. When used with the bard class, the gnome fills in where needed on the battlefield. Gnome cavalry do well, especially when using a riding dog. The dog gives the gnome speed and extra attacks, letting him close with his enemies quickly and efficiently. While not

awful as archers, this archetype should not be your first choice without exceptional ability scores. Gnomes are poor heavy infantry, being super-slow in heavy armor and lacking the punch needed to deal foe-dropping damage.

ELF SUBRACES

To make a kick-ass elf warrior, check with your DM to see if she allows elven subraces in her games. Of course, the only way you'd want to play an aquatic elf (+2 Dex, -2 Int!) is if you're in a water-based world; otherwise you're probably not going to have any fun. And drow, well, we'll talk about monsters later. Wild and wood elves, on the other hand, are awesome elven warriors. Wild elves get a +2 Dex and a -2 Intelligence. Sure, their favored class is sorcerer, but you could probably make it work. The best, by far is the wood elf. These guys are seriously cool. They have a +2 Strength, +2 Dexterity, -2 Constitution, -2 Intelligence, and a favored class of ranger – how can you go wrong with that?

TABLE 2-2: ELF STAT COMPARISON

Archetype	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
Archer	13	17	12	10	12	8
Cavalry	15	15	12	8	10	12
Guerrilla	14	17	11	12	10	8
Infantry, Light	13	17	12	12	10	8
Infantry, Heavy	15	14	12	10	13	8
Skirmisher	15	15	12	10	12	8

TABLE 2-3: GNOME STAT COMPARISON

Archetype	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
Archer	11	15	16	10	12	8
Cavalry	13	13	16	8	10	12
Guerrilla	12	15	15	12	10	8
Infantry, Light	11	15	16	12	10	8
Infantry, Heavy	13	12	16	10	13	8
Skirmisher	13	13	16	10	12	8

Half-elves

The smattering of skill bonuses in exchange for no bonus feat places the half-elf in the unfortunate position of being one of the worst races in the game. Despite this, half-elves are solid as multiclassed skill-oriented characters, putting them at their best in the specialized classes like ranger, paladin, and monk.

Skills

Half-elves get a total +7 bonus divided between 5 skills. Like the elf, Listen and Spot are real boons only for monks and rangers. Diplomacy is only useful to paladins and Gather Information is not useful for any warrior class whose function is to kill. Worse, half-elves lack the elf's knack for detecting secret doors.

Special Abilities

These poor guys don't get much here. Low-light vision is good, but half-elves are not the archers elves are, nor do they get the extra feat to shore up the differences. They have immunity to sleep and gain a racial bonus to saves against enchantment spells and effects, both of which are worthwhile, but not enough to justify selecting this race over the human.

Favored Class

Like the human, half-elves are best when abusing the multiclass rules. If you're committed to playing a half-elf, you'd better multiclass as much as possible. This is the only real appeal to this race as far as warriors go, and when humans get it too, it's hard to choose playing a half-elf over a human.

Archetypes

Half-elves are equally suited to any archetype, but probably the skirmisher stands out as their best choice. Through multiclassing, these characters can fill just about any role in the party. Just don't expect to be a heavy damage dealer.

Half Orcs

Half-orcs make great warriors. Their bonus to Strength is an advantage over other core races in the PHB. It lends itself to the character being more physical in regard to skills, allowing half-orcs to climb faster and jump further, all the while not being restrained by such irritating things as doors, locked chests, and any other obstacles. The Strength bonus boosts melee attacks and damage rolls, and if their Strength is high enough, they can be a true terror with Power Attack. In exchange, half-orcs sacrifice Intelligence and Charisma, the two least useful abilities for warriors in general.

Skills

Half-orcs don't get any bonuses to skills. In fact, the penalty to Intelligence cripples them in the skill department.

Special Abilities

Though half-orcs do not get any feats, they do get dark-vision. They can see in almost any combat condition, giving them an advantage over their human counterparts, especially as they are not stuck holding a torch or lantern, and are ready to fight at a moment's notice.

Favored Class

Half-orcs favor the barbarian class. That says it all. By blending in the bonus feats of the fighter class, you guarantee your half-orc will kick some serious butt on the battlefield.

Archetypes

Half-orcs are best at being the guerrilla archetype, especially when they use both the barbarian and fighter class. They do well as tanks and skirmishers, and as light infantry. They are not bad as archers, especially when using mighty composite longbows to deal a chunk of extra damage. As light infantry, they make surprisingly effective monks. Having a 6 Intelligence is crippling to a ranger, and half-orcs inclined to pursue this class should multiclass into barbarian and fighter to maximize their strengths and minimize their weaknesses.

Halflings

If you're thinking about playing a halfling warrior, first consider a few of their drawbacks. Halflings have a poor strength. They're slow (and even slower in heavier armor) and given their size, they're stuck using small weapons. With those drawbacks, halflings seem worse than gnomes. However, they have high Dexterity scores, bonuses to AC and attack rolls because of size, great

HOW MUCH ORC IS TOO MUCH?

Given the benefits of a high Strength, you might consider playing a full-blooded orc. Sure, they're stupid and lack any recognizable personalities, but so are most warriors, right? Orcs have no level adjustment, so you can play them right away. If you're stuck with a low Intelligence and Charisma, and your DM allows playing full-blooded orcs, you should consider it. After all, a PC's ability scores can't fall below 3 during character generation.

saves, and a number of other fantastic special abilities to overcome their few drawbacks.

Skills

Halflings get bonuses to a ton of skills, mostly physical. They receive bonuses to Climb and Jump, overriding their lower Strength. Their bonus to Move Silently, the size bonus to Hide, and the extra goodness for Listen all combine to make these characters awesome at assessing the battlefield and moving where they are most needed.

Special Abilities

As far as saves go, halflings are the best, especially against fear effects. They can also use thrown weapons with unmatched accuracy, though weakened by size and strength. Even with the size considerations, halflings can hold their own against humans, at least insofar as warriors go.

Favored Class

Multiclassing into rogue is rarely a bad thing. It opens the door to a great selection of skills, sneak attack, evasion, and a bunch of other combat options. However, by doing so, you lose the hit points of a fighter. This is dangerous considering armor's effect on a halfling's speed. If you can stand not being a frontline fighter, abuse the rogue class as much as possible.

Archetypes

Skip playing halfling heavy infantry; the armor not only slows the halfling down, but the whole party. Halflings make great cavalry; the mount helps overcome their slow speed. As archers, they are effective and accurate when using slings and thrown weapons. The best warrior archetype, however, is the guerrilla. The halfling's high Dexterity boosts their AC, and compliments two-weapon fighting and the archery paths nicely.

Other Races

For some reason, gamers keep going back to monsters to play as characters. Monsters look cool, they have cool abilities, and they fulfill a weird sense of verboten so many players want to explore. Better still, they're exotic and break the monotony of the standard fantasy fare.

Monstrous characters advance in their own racial levels, which grant specialized humanoid hit dice. Of all racial drawbacks, humanoid hit dice are the worst. They grant a cleric's BAB, low skill points, no class features, and in general, give nothing in return. Add to these worthless levels the level adjustment, and you've found the recipe for disaster. So, before you fall into the monster trap, always consider the trade offs for cool factor.

HALFLING SUBRACES

The MM lists two possible subraces of halflings you may consider. Tallfellows lose the bonuses to Climb, Jump, and Move Silently in exchange for the ability to detect secret doors as an elf and bonuses to Listen, Search, and Spot. Warriors, especially halflings, need to move around the battlefield. Avoid using a tallfellow for your halfling warrior. Deep halflings, on the other hand, trade their physical skill bonuses for darkvision, and some dwarf traits. Freeing your hands to wield more weapons is a proven benefit.

TABLE 2-4: HALF-ORC STAT COMPARISON

Archetype	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
Archer	15	15	14	8	12	6
Cavalry	17	13	14	6	10	10
Guerrilla	16	15	13	10	10	6
Infantry, Light	15	15	14	10	10	6
Infantry, Heavy	17	12	14	8	13	6
Skirmisher	17	13	14	8	12	6

TABLE 2-5: HALFLING STAT COMPARISON

Archetype	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
Archer	11	17	14	10	12	8
Cavalry	13	15	14	8	10	12
Guerrilla	12	17	13	12	10	8
Infantry, Light	11	17	14	12	10	8
Infantry, Heavy	13	14	14	10	13	8
Skirmisher	13	15	14	10	12	8

Nevertheless, some folk just don't listen. Just to make the point perfectly clear, have a look at the two characters below. Both are the equivalent of 4th level characters (ECL 4), and both started with the same base ability scores before modification for race.

Human Rgr 4 (ECL 4): HD 4d8+4; hp 22; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+3 Dex, +3 studded leather), touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +4; Grp +6; Atk melee +7 (1d8+2/19-20, longsword) or ranged +8 (1d8+1/x3, longbow); Full Atk melee +7 (1d8+2/19-20, longsword), melee +6 (1d6+1/19-20, shortsword), or ranged +6/+6 (1d8+1/x3, longbow); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA animal companion (wolf-tricks: attack), combat style (two-weapon fighting), favored enemy (gnoll) (+2); SQ wild empathy +6; AL LG; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 16, Con

12, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal +7, Hide +10, Listen +8 (+10 against gnolls), Move Silently +10, Spot +8 (+10 against gnolls), Survival +8 (+10 against gnolls); Endurance, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Track, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Spells (1; DC 11 + spell level): 1st-longstrider.

Gnoll Rgr 1 (ECL 4): HD 2d8+4 plus 1d8+2; hp 23; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+2 Dex, +3 studded leather), touch 12, flatfooted 13; Base Atk +2; Grp +6; Atk melee +6 (1d8+4/x3, battleaxe) or ranged +4 (1d8/x3, longbow); Full Atk melee +6 (1d8+4/x3, battleaxe) or ranged +4 (1d8/x3, longbow); Space/Reach 5 ft./ 5ft.; SA favored enemy (humans) +2; SQ wild empathy (+0); AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +1; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 6, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Listen +3 (+5 against humans), Spot +4 (+6 against humans), Survival +5 (+7 against humans); Cleave, Power Attack, Track.

Now look at tables 2-7 and 2-8. Looking at the numbers, the gnoll has an advantage in his attack modifier for melee attacks. He has an extra hit point and an impressive array of ability scores. Look closely at the human ranger. The human ranger has multiple attacks through Rapid Shot and through Two-Weapon Fighting (class ability). He gains the help of a wolf animal companion

trained to attack, meaning he has more opportunities to hit the target in a round of combat than gnoll. The more rolls you get, the better the chances are you're going to hit your foe and deal some damage.

Should you play a monster? In almost all cases, no. Monsters are threats to a party of adventurers. When conceived as player races, to maintain game balance, you have to put some restrictions on the monster to make it suitable for play, hence level adjustments. The big problem with the gnoll above is he's stuck with two levels of humanoid, offering nothing but hit points. If the player had stuck with a core race, he'd have gotten those hit points and a slew of cool abilities all by the time the party reached 4th level. Adding in the difficulty of the level adjustment, the monster-as-character never catches up to the other characters in versatility, usefulness, and raw combat potential, despite great stats and cool monster abilities that most humanoids lack. Don't get suckered into the monster option. It's just not worth it.

TABLE 2-7: HUMAN-GNOLL ANALYSIS

Category	Human	Gnoll
Hit Points	22	23
AC	16	15
Atk-melee	+7/+3 (6.5+4.5)*	+6 (8.5)
Atk-ranged	+8 (5.5)	+4 (4.5)
Full Atk-melee	+5/+4/+3 (6.5+4.5+4.5)*	+6 (8.5)
Full Atk-ranged	+6/+6 (5.5+5.5)	+4 (4.5)

*Includes wolf

TABLE 2-8: EXPECTED HITS (AND DAMAGE) DEALT OVER 4 ROUNDS

Target AC	10	15	20
Gnoll – Attack and full attack melee	3.4 hits (28.9)	2.4 hits (20.4)	1.4 hits (11.9)
Human* – Attack melee	6.4 hits (36)	4.4 hits (25)	2.4 hits (14)
Human* – Full attack melee	9 hits (46.9)	6 hits (31.4)	3.05 hits (15.9)
Gnoll – Attack and full attack ranged	3 hits (13.5)	2 hits (9)	1 hit (4.5)
Human – Attack ranged	3.8 hits (20.9)	2.8 hits (15.4)	1.8 hits (9.9)
Human – Full attack ranged	6.8 hits (37.4)	4.8 hits (26.4)	2.8 hits (15.4)

*Includes wolf

See page 16 for an explanation of how these numbers are calculated.

Chapter Three

Classes

Bar none, the most important component of your character is your class selection, and choosing a class best enhancing your intended archetype allows you to create a character capable not only of surviving, but also capable of kicking ass. This chapter takes a close look at the warrior classes, examining all the tricks and tweaks you can do to make your warrior the best he can be. Rangers and paladins muck things up a bit with their spellcasting capabilities, but their sections provide the skinny, in brief, on how these spells can make the difference for these characters. Throughout this chapter, everything balances against the fighter.

Fighter

One of the biggest mistakes in this game is when people hand off the fighter to the newbie who doesn't know the rules well. It's possible people are living in earlier editions of the game, where the fighter was nothing more than a simple tool, not so unlike the weapons he wields. However, in the current edition of the game, the fighter is just as important (and as complicated) as the wizard, cleric or any other class. The fighter uses a bunch of feats, has to worry about a slower speed due to armor, and worse, if the player screws up and the fighter dies, everyone else dies, too. Not much fun for anyone. So, if you have a newbie or some savant who doesn't know the rules, let them fool around with the wizard, or if you're cruel, a commoner.

Boons

Why is the fighter so good? Feats, lots and lots of feats. You get to choose what class features your fighter has. A good selection of feats gives you an extra edge in any conflict. No other character in the game has access to the sheer destructive capabilities of this class. The fighter has a great hit die, averaging 5.5 hit points per level before his Constitution modifier. He fights better than clerics, wizards, and rogues, being adept as a frontline combatant. He has a good Fortitude save, allowing him to resist poison and annoying spells. Furthermore, he can use just about any weapon he picks up, suit up in any armor, and take advantage of the awesome tower shield.

Banes

Even though the fighter has a number of advantages over other characters, he also falls short in a few areas. The fighter's skill selection, and the points allotted to them, is weak. His skills serve to help him move around on the battlefield; that's it. While this is good, he can add little to the party. He's not going to hear the bad guys around the corner. He's not going to know what the rune on the door means. He's not going to be the front man for the party. Finally, while feats are great, the fighter never gets anything else: no spells, no class abilities, nothing. For some, it's a willing sacrifice, but for most, the feat trees play themselves out too early, leaving the player yearning for something more.

Archetypes

All warrior archetypes do well by advancing in the fighter class.

Breaking the game

Feats: Feats get their own coverage a later chapter, so we're not going to waste space here saying the same things twice. However, a few things need mentioning. First, people who play fighters latch onto a feat tree at first level. The most common, of course, is the Power

THE CLASSES AND THE FIGHTER

All warrior classes start with the fighter. Period. Some classes reduce the hit dice (the monk and ranger). Another grants a higher die (the barbarian). Some classes knock off bonus feats in exchange for some cool abilities, or even knock off a few more feats for improved skill points, spells, or a bunch of other things. Regardless of how visible the fighter is in each of these other warrior classes, he's still there. All warrior classes are equal, right? Yeah, right. When it comes down to it, you have to ask yourself "Why shouldn't I play a fighter?" when creating your warrior. If you can come up with an answer, and there are several, then go ahead and try out another warrior class. Otherwise, stick with the fighter. It gives you all the tools you need to succeed.

Attack and Weapon Focus tree. While these are great choices – if they weren't, why would so many people take them? – if you select all the feats in both trees, they account for ten feats. Fighters, by the time they reach 20th level, have a total of 18 feats. So, what are you supposed to do with the other feats before you start digging in for epic play? Would you start a new feat tree at 12th level, starting with Point Blank Shot or Mounted Combat? If so, why? You've survived all those levels without needing a bow, and by the time you get to those levels, you may feel like you're just wasting feats. How many Weapon Focus feats do you need? This is called Early Fighter Burn-Out Syndrome (EFBOS).

EFBOS Prevention

Step 1–Eliminate Useless Feats: To avoid EFBOS, look at all 20 levels of your character. Over the course of 20 levels, a character gets 7 character feats. If the character is human, they get 8. The fighter class provides 11. So, a 20th level fighter should have 18 or 19 feats, depending on race. Each feat tree requires a set number of selections to derive all the benefits of the tree. Many trees require ability score requirements. Look at your attributes. If you can't take the feat immediately or you can say through ability score increases you cannot meet the required ability scores of the higher level feats to derive the full benefits of the feat tree, cross it off the list. For example, a fighter with a 13 Dex but with an 8 Intelligence should not even think about the Combat Expertise tree. He'd need to be 20th level without magic items to be able to take the first feat. The same is true for the fighter with the 8 Dex, who should eliminate Two-Weapon Fighting (he'll never meet the prerequisites), Dodge, Combat Expertise (no point if he can't attain the highest features), and probably dump Point Blank Shot.

Step 2–Select Trees: Once you eliminate the useless feats, look at those you can take. Of the ones left, count how many feats are available in each tree. For example, Mounted Combat has 5 feats and Power Attack has 6. If the number of feats is equal to or less than your maximum feats, you can move on to Step 3. The poor fighter with the 8 Dexterity has open to him the Mounted Combat, Power Attack, and Weapon Focus trees. The total number of feats from these trees equal 15. He has plenty of room, leaving 3 or 4 feats left unallocated. If you still have more feats than you know what to do with, focus on trees playing to your character's strengths, eliminating those of marginal to no benefit. In any event, you should restrict yourself to 3 or 4 feat trees.

Step 3–Planning: Looking at the feat trees open to you, you should determine at character creation the feats you plan to take and when, with a focus on versatility. Take your feats at the earliest levels you can get them. The greater the prerequisite, the better the feat. Then select from a good mixture of your feat trees to enhance your versatility and your usefulness. Don't be seduced by the virtues of Power Attack alone. It's a great feat, but you're going to wish you had Weapon Focus against the bastard

with the high AC. Of the feats in your tree, fill up your fighter bonus feats first in the planning stage to avoid slipping back into EFBOS.

Step 4–Fill in: At class levels where you don't have a selected feat, focus on feats enhancing your character like Run, Endurance, and Diehard, any of the save-enhancing feats (especially Iron Will), and so on. It won't hurt you to take them and they make you a more valuable member of the party when you can avoid the nasty stuff.

Exclusive Feats Analysis

The fighter gains access to three feats no one else can gain. They are Weapon Specialization, Greater Weapon Focus, and Greater Weapon Specialization. These feats give benefit to the key areas of your character: attacks and damage, useable with all of your attacks. The nature of these feats runs counter to the central idea behind the fighter class. Fighters are supposed to be versatile, unlike the ranger who fights with either two weapons or archery, or the barbarian who specializes in melee, or even the paladin who employs Mounted Combat to the greatest effectiveness. Placing four feats into one weapon could be dangerous when that weapon is vulnerable to attacks, such as a sunder or failed saving throw on your part. Further, using these feats require you to use the same kind of weapon throughout your character's career. What if you can't find a magic kukri? If you opt to use these feats for your fighter, make certain you choose a common weapon first, and then always carry spares. While they may not be as nifty cool as your +3 *axiomatic flaming warhammer*, a +1 version of the same weapon lets you keep on swinging.

The following table shows how the fighter-exclusive feats can assist a character. The table shows expected hits and average damage in each round of combat, against a given AC. It assumes use of a longsword (average damage 4.5), but does not include a Strength modifier nor does it take into account critical hits. The WF, WS, GWF, and GWS entries show the statistics of a fighter who has taken these feats, compared to a fighter without them.

What's apparent is Weapon Focus by itself offers little to fighters. It gives only a very slight advantage to average damage. Even with Weapon Specialization, it's hard to devote two feats for such a marginal gain at the lower levels. However, as your fighter gains multiple attacks each round, along with the benefits of Greater Weapon Focus and Greater Weapon Specialization, you double the amount of damage you can do before Strength and magical modifiers. If you plan to go the Weapon Focus path, be prepared to go the distance and take all four feats in order to secure any serious advantage.

For example, a level 3 fighter with Weapon Focus (longsword) would hit an AC 15 target 50% of the time, causing an average of 2.25 points of damage on each combat round. If he didn't have Weapon Focus, he would

hit only slightly less often (45%) and cause almost the same damage on average (2.025).

But now look at the 20th level fighter. With none of these feats against an AC 15 target, he causes an average of 14.625 damage each round. With just Weapon Focus, his average damage increases by barely one point, to 15.075. Adding Weapon Specialization causes a 44% jump in damage, to an average of 21.775. All those extra attacks each round really make even slight bonus damage more worthwhile. Adding Greater Weapon Focus causes only a nominal increase, but combining it with Great Weapon Specialization more than doubles average damage per round – an average of 29 points per round versus only 14 without the feats! That’s a good reason to spend four feat slots, if you ask me.

TABLE 3-1: THE FIGHTER AND FIGHTER-EXCLUSIVE FEATS

Level	Feats	Attack Bonus (Damage Bonus)	Expected Hits (and Average Damage) per Round vs. Target AC			
			10	15	20	25
1	None	+1	.6 (2.7)	.35 (1.575)	.1 (.45)	.05 (.225)
	WF	+2	.65 (2.925)	.4 (1.8)	.15 (.675)	.05 (.225)
2	None	+2	.65 (2.925)	.4 (1.8)	.15 (.675)	.05 (.225)
	WF	+3	.7 (3.15)	.45 (2.025)	.2 (.9)	.05 (.225)
3	None	+3	.7 (3.15)	.45 (2.025)	.2 (.9)	.05 (.225)
	WF	+4	.75 (3.375)	.5 (2.25)	.25 (1.125)	.05 (.225)
4	None	+4	.75 (3.375)	.5 (2.25)	.25 (1.125)	.05 (.225)
	WF	+5	.8 (3.6)	.55 (2.475)	.3 (1.35)	.05 (.225)
	WF, WS	+5 (+2)	.8 (5.2)	.55 (3.575)	.3 (1.95)	.05 (.325)
5	None	+5	.8 (3.6)	.55 (2.475)	.3 (1.35)	.05 (.225)
	WF	+6	.85 (3.825)	.6 (2.7)	.35 (1.575)	.1 (.45)
	WF, WS	+6 (+2)	.85 (5.525)	.6 (3.9)	.35 (2.275)	.1 (.65)
6	None	+6/+1	1.45 (6.525)	.95 (4.05)	.45 (2.025)	.15 (.675)
	WF	+7/+2	1.55 (6.975)	1.05 (4.725)	.55 (2.475)	.2 (.9)
	WF, WS	+7/+2 (+2)	1.55 (10.075)	1.05 (6.825)	.55 (3.575)	.2 (1.3)
7	None	+7/+2	1.55 (6.975)	1.05 (4.725)	.55 (2.475)	.2 (.9)
	WF	+8/+3	1.65 (7.425)	1.15 (5.175)	.65 (2.925)	.25 (1.125)
	WF, WS	+8/+3 (+2)	1.65 (10.725)	1.15 (7.475)	.65 (4.225)	.25 (1.625)
8	None	+8/+3	1.65 (7.425)	1.15 (5.175)	.65 (2.925)	.25 (1.125)
	WF	+9/+4	1.7 (7.65)	1.25 (5.625)	.75 (3.375)	.3 (1.35)
	WF, WS	+9/+4 (+2)	1.7 (11.05)	1.25 (8.125)	.75 (4.875)	.3 (1.95)
	WF, GWF, WS	+10/+5 (+2)	1.75 (11.375)	1.35 (8.775)	.85 (5.525)	.35 (2.275)
9	None	+9/+4	1.7 (7.65)	1.25 (5.625)	.75 (3.375)	.3 (1.35)
	WF	+10/+5	1.75 (7.875)	1.35 (6.075)	.85 (3.825)	.35 (1.575)
	WF, WS	+10/+5 (+2)	1.75 (11.375)	1.35 (8.775)	.85 (5.525)	.35 (2.275)
	WF, GWF, WS	+11/+6 (+2)	1.8 (11.7)	1.45 (9.425)	.95 (6.175)	.45 (2.925)
10	None	+10/+5	1.75 (7.875)	1.35 (6.075)	.85 (3.825)	.35 (1.575)
	WF	+11/+6	1.8 (8.1)	1.45 (6.525)	.95 (4.05)	.45 (2.025)
	WF, WS	+11/+6 (+2)	1.8 (11.7)	1.45 (9.425)	.95 (6.175)	.45 (2.925)
	WF, GWF, WS	+12/+7 (+2)	1.85 (12.025)	1.55 (10.075)	1.05 (6.825)	.55 (3.575)
11	None	+11/+6/+1	2.4 (10.8)	1.8 (8.1)	1.05 (4.725)	.5 (2.25)
	WF	+12/+7/+2	2.5 (11.25)	1.95 (8.775)	1.2 (5.4)	.6 (2.7)
	WF, WS	+12/+7/+2 (+2)	2.5 (16.25)	1.95 (12.675)	1.2 (7.8)	.6 (3.9)
	WF, GWF, WS	+13/+8/+3 (+2)	2.6 (16.9)	2.1 (13.65)	1.35 (8.775)	.7 (4.55)
12	None	+12/+7/+2	2.5 (11.25)	1.95 (8.775)	1.2 (5.4)	.6 (2.7)
	WF	+13/+8/+3	2.6 (11.7)	2.1 (9.45)	1.35 (6.075)	.7 (3.15)
	WF, WS	+13/+8/+3 (+2)	2.6 (16.9)	2.1 (13.65)	1.35 (8.775)	.7 (4.55)
	WF, GWF, WS	+14/+9/+4 (+2)	2.65 (17.225)	2.2 (14.3)	1.5 (9.75)	.8 (5.2)
13	All	+14/+9/+4 (+4)	2.65 (22.525)	2.2 (18.7)	1.5 (12.75)	.8 (6.8)
	None	+13/+8/+3	2.6 (11.7)	2.1 (9.45)	1.35 (6.075)	.7 (3.15)
	WF	+14/+9/+4	2.65 (11.925)	2.2 (9.9)	1.5 (6.75)	.8 (3.6)
	WF, WS	+14/+9/+4 (+2)	2.65 (17.225)	2.2 (14.3)	1.5 (9.75)	.8 (5.2)
	WF, GWF, WS	+15/+10/+5 (+2)	2.7 (17.55)	2.3 (14.95)	1.65 (10.725)	.9 (5.85)
14	All	+15/+10/+5 (+4)	2.7 (22.95)	2.3 (19.55)	1.65 (14.025)	.9 (7.65)
	None	+14/+9/+4	2.65 (11.925)	2.2 (9.9)	1.5 (6.75)	.8 (3.6)
	WF	+15/+10/+5	2.7 (12.15)	2.3 (10.35)	1.65 (7.425)	.9 (4.05)
	WF, WS	+15/+10/+5 (+2)	2.7 (17.55)	2.3 (14.95)	1.65 (10.725)	.9 (5.85)
	WF, GWF, WS	+16/+11/+6 (+2)	2.75 (17.875)	2.4 (15.6)	1.8 (11.7)	1.05 (6.825)
15	All	+16/+11/+6 (+4)	2.75 (23.375)	2.4 (20.4)	1.8 (15.3)	1.05 (8.925)
	None	+15/+10/+5	2.7 (12.15)	2.3 (10.35)	1.65 (6.75)	.9 (4.05)
	WF	+16/+11/+6	2.75 (12.375)	2.4 (10.8)	1.8 (8.1)	1.05 (4.725)
	WF, WS	+16/+11/+6 (+2)	2.75 (17.875)	2.4 (15.6)	1.8 (11.7)	1.05 (6.825)
	WF, GWF, WS	+17/+12/+7 (+2)	2.8 (18.2)	2.5 (16.25)	1.95 (12.675)	1.2 (7.8)
16	All	+17/+12/+7 (+4)	2.8 (23.8)	2.5 (21.25)	1.95 (16.575)	1.2 (10.2)
	None	+16/+11/+6/+1	3.35 (15.075)	2.75 (12.375)	1.9 (8.55)	1.1 (4.95)
	WF	+17/+12/+7/+2	3.45 (15.525)	2.9 (13.05)	2.1 (9.45)	1.25 (5.625)
	WF, WS	+17/+12/+7/+2 (+2)	3.45 (22.425)	2.9 (18.85)	2.1 (13.65)	1.25 (8.125)
	WF, GWF, WS	+18/+13/+8/+3 (+2)	3.55 (23.075)	3.05 (19.825)	2.3 (14.95)	1.4 (9.1)
17	All	+18/+13/+8/+3 (+4)	3.55 (30.175)	3.05 (25.925)	2.3 (19.55)	1.4 (11.9)
	None	+17/+12/+7/+2	3.45 (15.525)	2.9 (13.05)	2.1 (9.45)	1.25 (5.625)
	WF	+18/+13/+8/+3	3.55 (15.975)	3.05 (13.725)	2.3 (10.35)	1.4 (6.3)
	WF, WS	+18/+13/+8/+3 (+2)	3.55 (23.075)	3.05 (19.825)	2.3 (14.95)	1.4 (9.1)
	WF, GWF, WS	+19/+14/+9/+4 (+2)	3.6 (23.4)	3.15 (20.475)	2.45 (15.925)	1.5 (9.75)
18	All	+19/+14/+9/+4 (+4)	3.6 (30.6)	3.15 (26.775)	2.45 (20.825)	1.5 (12.75)
	None	+18/+13/+8/+3	3.55 (15.975)	3.05 (13.725)	2.3 (10.35)	1.4 (6.3)
	WF	+19/+14/+9/+4	3.6 (16.2)	3.15 (14.175)	2.45 (11.025)	1.5 (6.75)
	WF, WS	+19/+14/+9/+4 (+2)	3.6 (23.4)	3.15 (20.475)	2.45 (15.925)	1.5 (9.75)
	WF, GWF, WS	+20/+15/+10/+5 (+2)	3.65 (23.725)	3.25 (21.125)	2.6 (16.9)	1.7 (11.05)
19	All	+20/+15/+10/+5 (+4)	3.65 (31.025)	3.25 (27.625)	2.6 (22.1)	1.7 (14.45)
	None	+19/+14/+9/+4	3.6 (16.2)	3.15 (14.175)	2.45 (11.025)	1.5 (6.75)
	WF	+20/+15/+10/+5	3.65 (16.425)	3.25 (14.625)	2.6 (11.7)	1.7 (7.65)
	WF, WS	+20/+15/+10/+5 (+2)	3.65 (23.725)	3.25 (21.125)	2.6 (16.9)	1.7 (11.05)
	WF, GWF, WS	+21/+16/+11/+6 (+2)	3.7 (24.05)	3.35 (21.775)	2.75 (17.875)	1.9 (12.35)
20	All	+21/+16/+11/+6 (+4)	3.7 (31.45)	3.35 (28.475)	2.75 (23.375)	1.9 (16.15)
	None	+20/+15/+10/+5	3.65 (16.425)	3.25 (14.625)	2.6 (11.7)	1.7 (7.65)
	WF	+21/+16/+11/+6	3.7 (16.65)	3.35 (15.075)	2.75 (12.375)	1.9 (8.55)
	WF, WS	+21/+16/+11/+6 (+2)	3.7 (24.05)	3.35 (21.775)	2.75 (17.875)	1.9 (12.35)
	WF, GWF, WS	+22/+17/+12/+7 (+2)	3.75 (24.375)	3.45 (22.425)	2.9 (18.85)	2.1 (13.65)
	All	+22/+17/+12/+7 (+4)	3.75 (31.875)	3.45 (29.325)	2.9 (24.65)	2.1 (17.85)

Barbarian

The amazing assortment of feats the fighter gets and the raw power of the ranger often overshadow the barbarian class. Despite its poor recognition, the barbarian is the easiest of the warriors to play, as its abilities are simple, flexible and straightforward. The barbarian is a cool alternative to the fighter class, considering its great class features.

Boons

The barbarian can take a lot of punishment with his d12 hit die, the best of all the warriors. Through 20 levels, a barbarian gains 20 more hit points than the fighter and paladin and 40 hit points over the ranger and monk. His ability to rage provides more hit points, better attacks, and greater Will saves. As the barbarian advances, he can

shrug off even more damage through damage reduction.

The barbarian is a living tempest of destruction, capable of dealing vast amounts of damage. He has a great selection of skills and good skill points, a great alternative to the brute fighter for creating a dynamic character. Finally, the barbarian's proficiency with simple and martial weapons, light and medium armors, and some shields allows him to switch tactics and weaponry based on the combat circumstances.

Banes

The barbarian has some serious drawbacks when compared to fighters. He has a limited selection of feats; he can pursue only one or two feat trees with any effect. Furthermore, his maneuverability relies on not wearing heavy armor. Hence, he has a lower AC, especially while raging, meaning he is more likely to take damage than another class choice. Last, though rage is his biggest

NUMBER CRUNCHING

There are many numerical tables in this book, full of statistics showing the expected number hits per round, with an average damage and all that. Here's how you do it and what it means.

1. Subtract attack bonus from AC. For example, AC 10 minus BAB +1 equals 9. This is the number needed to hit the AC.
2. One less than this number tells you the highest number you can roll and still miss. In this case, the number is 8. This is the miss value.
3. Divide the miss value by 20. The result is the miss percentage. In the above example, 8 divided by 20 equals 0.4 or 40%.
4. Subtract the result of the miss percentage from 1 or 100%. The result is your hit percentage. So, the hit percentage is 0.6 or 60%. This tells us you will hit 60% of the time with a BAB +1 against an AC 10, or you will have 0.6 hits per round on average. To find out the average hits over four rounds, simply multiply the hits per round by four. Thus, this character would hit 2.4 times over four rounds. Note: you always miss on a 1 and always hit on a twenty. The maximum number of hits per round is 0.95 and the minimum number of hits is 0.05. These charts do not account for critical hits, because some DMs may not use them or may modify them according to their own house rules.
5. For multiple attacks, figure each attack and BAB separately and add the results. For example, if the warrior has a BAB +6/+1 and he fights against an AC 10 opponent, he should have the following hits per round.
10 minus 6 equals 4. 4 minus 1 equals 3 (miss value). 3 divided by 20 is 0.15 (miss chance). 1 minus 0.15 is 0.85 (hit chance).
10 minus 1 equals 9. 9 minus 1 equals 8 (miss value). 8 divided by 20 is 0.4 (miss chance). 1 minus 0.4 is 0.6 (hit chance).
0.85 plus 0.6 equals 1.45, which is the expected number of hits per round on average.
6. Multiply the hits per round by the average damage result, with modifiers. Average damage is as follows.

d2:	1.5	d4:	2.5	d6:	3.5
d8:	4.5	d10:	5.5	d12:	6.5

So, if the warrior with the BAB +6/+1 wields a longsword, has no Strength modifier for damage, and fights an opponent with an AC 10, he should deal 6.525 points of damage per round. (1.45 [expected number of hits per round] times 4.5 [average damage].)

This is the secret behind the math. Confusing, huh? Don't worry too much. The tables are there to back up what we're talking about, giving you a comparison between the different classes or techniques. You can customize these tables to your own character by simply using the attack bonus row that incorporates your own BAB and Strength/Dexterity modifier. You can also change the expected damage based on the weapon you wield. It's all here.

Take a close look at these charts when building your character. An extensive analysis helps to maximize your character's potential.

asset, it is also his greatest danger. Why? Hit points gained by the rage are not lost first as temporary hit points, meaning when your rage ends, your hit point total falls by the same amount it increased. If a barbarian was down to just a few hit points at the end of the rage, his hit points could fall below 0, even lower than -10, resulting in a bad case of death.

Archetypes

Of the archetypes, several are suitable with the barbarian class. Cavalry is not a bad choice; the barbarian has access to Handle Animal and Ride. As guerrillas, they are great at getting in and out of tough spots to wipe out their particular foe, but when raging, their defenses are rather low. As light infantry, they are skilled, being mobile, fast, and destructive.

On the other hand, the barbarian lacks the necessary versatility to be an effective skirmisher. Moreover, though they have higher Dexterity scores, the archer archetype offers little to the barbarian, as this class's strengths rest on melee potential. The barbarian's armor restrictions prevent him from pursuing the heavy infantry archetype with success.

Breaking the Game

There are a couple of things to remember when playing a barbarian character. You have a crummy AC, and you're going to get hit a lot. While a great hit die and your ability to rage soak up a fair amount of this damage, if you're not careful you'll fall down. What follows are some tips on making sure your barbarian maximizes his class features to create the best barbarian you can.

Rage: Here's the big one. When you rage, don't mark your new hit point total anywhere on your character sheet. If your DM is finicky, write it on a post-it note stuck to the sheet, and when he's not looking, peel it off. You don't want to die, and seeing the adjusted hit point total deludes many players into thinking they have more than they have, resulting in dropping or outright dying when the rage ends.

Whenever your increased hit point total falls to between 0 to 6 hit points, run to a cleric and beg for healing, raging or not. Failing that, drink a potion – you can do this

TABLE 3-2: COMPARATIVE ATTACKS FOR BARBARIAN RAGE

Level	Attack Bonus Rage Attack (Dmg Mod)	Expected Hits (and Average Damage) Per Round vs. Target AC			
		10	15	20	25
1	+1	.6 (2.7)	.35 (1.575)	.1 (.45)	.05 (.225)
	+3 (+2)	.7 (4.55)	.45 (2.925)	.2 (1.3)	.05 (.325)
2	+2	.65 (2.925)	.4 (1.8)	.15 (.675)	.05 (.225)
	+4 (+2)	.75 (4.875)	.5 (3.25)	.25 (5.85)	.05 (.325)
3	+3	.7 (3.15)	.45 (2.025)	.2 (.9)	.05 (.225)
	+5 (+2)	.8 (5.2)	.55 (3.575)	.3 (1.95)	.05 (.325)
4	+4	.75 (3.375)	.5 (2.25)	.25 (1.125)	.05 (.225)
	+6 (+2)	.85 (5.525)	.6 (3.9)	.35 (2.275)	.1 (.65)
5	+5	.8 (3.6)	.55 (2.475)	.3 (1.35)	.05 (.225)
	+7 (+2)	.9 (5.85)	.65 (4.225)	.4 (2.6)	.15 (.975)
6	+6/+1	1.45 (6.525)	.95 (4.05)	.45 (2.025)	.15 (.675)
	+8/+3 (+2)	1.65 (10.725)	1.15 (7.475)	.65 (4.225)	.25 (1.625)
7	+7/+2	1.55 (6.975)	1.05 (4.725)	.55 (2.475)	.2 (.9)
	+9/+4 (+2)	1.7 (11.05)	1.25 (8.125)	.75 (4.875)	.3 (1.95)
8	+8/+3	1.65 (7.425)	1.15 (5.175)	.65 (2.925)	.25 (1.125)
	+10/+5 (+2)	1.75 (11.375)	1.35 (8.775)	.85 (5.525)	.35 (2.275)
9	+9/+4	1.7 (7.65)	1.25 (5.625)	.75 (3.375)	.3 (1.35)
	+11/+6 (+2)	1.8 (11.7)	1.45 (9.425)	.95 (6.175)	.4 (1.7)
10	+10/+5	1.75 (7.875)	1.35 (6.075)	.85 (3.825)	.35 (1.575)
	+12/+7 (+2)	1.85 (12.025)	1.55 (10.075)	1.05 (6.825)	.55 (3.575)
11	+11/+6/+1	2.4 (10.8)	1.8 (8.1)	1.05 (4.725)	.5 (2.25)
	+14/+9/+4 (+3)	2.65 (19.875)	2.2 (16.5)	1.5 (11.25)	.8 (6)
12	+12/+7/+2	2.5 (11.25)	1.95 (8.775)	1.2 (5.4)	.6 (2.7)
	+15/+10/+5 (+3)	2.7 (20.25)	2.3 (17.25)	1.65 (12.375)	.9 (6.75)
13	+13/+8/+3	2.6 (11.7)	2.1 (9.45)	1.35 (6.075)	.7 (3.15)
	+16/+11/+6 (+3)	2.75 (20.625)	2.4 (18)	1.8 (13.5)	1.05 (7.875)
14	+14/+9/+4	2.65 (11.925)	2.2 (9.9)	1.5 (6.75)	.8 (3.6)
	+17/+12/+7 (+3)	2.8 (21)	2.5 (18.75)	1.95 (14.625)	1.2 (9)
15	+15/+10/+5	2.7 (12.15)	2.3 (10.35)	1.65 (6.75)	.9 (4.05)
	+18/+13/+8 (+3)	2.85 (21.375)	2.6 (19.5)	2.1 (15.75)	1.35 (10.125)
16	+16/+11/+6/+1	3.35 (15.075)	2.75 (12.375)	1.9 (8.55)	1.1 (4.95)
	+19/+14/+9/+4 (+3)	3.6 (27)	3.15 (23.625)	2.45 (18.375)	1.5 (11.25)
17	+17/+12/+7/+2	3.45 (15.525)	2.9 (13.05)	2.1 (9.45)	1.25 (5.625)
	+20/+15/+10/+5 (+3)	3.65 (27.375)	3.25 (24.375)	2.6 (19.5)	1.7 (12.75)
18	+18/+13/+8/+3	3.55 (15.975)	3.05 (13.725)	2.3 (10.35)	1.4 (6.3)
	+21/+16/+11/+6 (+3)	3.7 (27.75)	3.35 (25.125)	2.75 (20.625)	1.9 (14.25)
19	+19/+14/+9/+4	3.6 (16.2)	3.15 (14.175)	2.45 (11.025)	1.5 (6.75)
	+22/+17/+12/+7 (+3)	3.75 (28.125)	3.45 (25.875)	2.9 (21.75)	2.1 (15.75)
20	+20/+15/+10/+5	3.65 (16.425)	3.25 (14.625)	2.6 (11.7)	1.7 (7.65)
	+24/+19/+14/+9 (+4)	3.8 (32.3)	3.6 (30.6)	3.15 (26.775)	2.45 (20.852)

while raging because it does not require a command word or a spell trigger to function. When the combat is over, your temporary hit points vanish. If you've followed this advice, you should never fall victim to those vanishing extra hit points.

Despite all the drawbacks, a barbarian's rage can be a powerful ally in combat. Table 3-2 assumes the barbarian uses a battleaxe (scoring an average damage of 4.5) without a Strength modifier. The table compares to the same barbarian raging. From the table, we can see there is no solid reason not to rage. At lower levels, the key benefit is not the additional number of times more the character is expected to hit; rather, it is the damage dealt. On average, your barbarian is going to deal twice the damage while raging. In fact, there is never a huge advantage to attack rolls when raging, but there is a clear benefit to damage.

Now compare the barbarian to the fighter, as shown on Table 3-1. At 4th level, a raging barbarian against an opponent with an AC 20 can expect to hit 1.4 times over four rounds and deal about 9.1 points of damage. (This is calculated by multiplying the expected hits and average damage on Table 3-2 by four, for four rounds.) The fighter of the same level and capabilities with Weapon Focus and Weapon Specialization should hit 1.2 times over four rounds and deal 7.8 points of damage. The disparity

between these two totals grows wider at higher levels. At 12th level, the same barbarian hits 6.6 times and deals 49.5 points of damage. The fighter at the same level with all the feats in the Weapon Focus tree hits 6 times and deals 51 points of damage. Granted, the fighter deals slightly more damage, but the barbarian maintains about the same damage without spending the four feats to get there. Looking at the 20th-level characters against the same AC, the barbarian hits 12.6 times and deals 107.1 points of damage. The fighter, on the other hand, hits 11.6 times and deals 98.6 points of damage. What does this tell us? If you consider the barbarian's class features and additional skill points, and its raw combat potential, the fighter, who "runs out" of feats to take, pales in comparison.

Monk

The monk is a weird one. While it's the sole class in this group with an average BAB, it has tons of special abilities. The monk is the hardest to play because monks rely on all of the special attack techniques in the Combat chapter in the PHB. Players have to be familiar with the rules that all of their special abilities require.

Boons

Monks are all about getting away from the bad guys and avoiding the hits before they fall. They have awesome saves, along with bonus feats, evasion, improved evasion, AC bonus and Wisdom bonus to AC, and so many other things it makes the head spin. Monks are virtually untouchable unless played foolishly. Their unarmed attacks are effective against damage reduction with remarkable success as they advance, emphasizing their awesome martial qualities.

Banes

Monks have substandard hit points for warriors. At first level, they'd be lucky to take two swings from a longsword and walk away. In addition, monks have a terrible selection of weapon proficiencies, none having a critical threat range beyond 20 or a multiplier greater than x2. As their weaponry lacks the punch of more traditional weapons, monks have to hit more in a round to deal the same damage as a fighter, placing them in harm's way more than not. Their base attack bonus is the same as a cleric's and unless they use flurry of blows they are less likely to hit the better-protected opponents.

Archetypes

Of the archetypes, the guerrilla and light infantry are the best choices for these classes. The monk can move around the battlefield, using terrain to her advantage, all the while wiping out the major opponents behind enemy lines. Their versatile nature makes the skirmisher a favorable choice as well. On the other hand, they lack any appreciable skill with horses. They're stuck with crossbows, so without dumping a feat into Rapid Reload, they function as average archers. Don't even think about making your monk heavy infantry.

Breaking the Game

Monks have many class features, making it sometimes hard to keep them all straight. However, over half of the abilities are defensive in nature, like Slow Fall, Still Mind, Purity of Body and so on. All of the defensive features help the monk to avoid attacks, a central idea behind this class.

TABLE 3-3: NO FLURRY/FLURRY ATTACK COMPARISON

Level	Base Attack Bonus Flurry Attack Bonus (Dmg)	Expected Hits (and Average Damage) Per Round Vs. Target AC			
		10	15	20	25
1	+0	.55 (1.925)	.3 (1.05)	.05 (0.175)	.05 (0.175)
	-2/-2 (1d6)	.9 (3.15)	.4 (1.4)	.1 (.35)	.1 (.35)
2	+1	.6 (2.1)	.35 (1.225)	.2 (.7)	.05 (0.175)
	-1/-1 (1d6)	1 (3.5)	.5 (1.75)	.1 (.35)	.1 (.35)
3	+2	.65 (2.275)	.4 (1.4)	.15 (0.525)	.05 (0.175)
	+0/+0 (1d6)	1.1 (3.85)	.6 (2.1)	.1 (.35)	.1 (.35)
4	+3	.7 (3.15)	.45 (2.025)	.2 (.9)	.05 (0.225)
	+1/+1 (1d8)	1.2 (5.4)	.7 (3.15)	.2 (.9)	.1 (.45)
5	+3	.7 (3.15)	.45 (2.025)	.2 (.9)	.05 (0.225)
	+2/+2 (1d8)	1.3 (5.85)	.8 (3.6)	.3 (1.35)	.1 (.45)
6	+4	.75 (3.375)	.5 (2.25)	.25 (1.125)	.05 (0.225)
	+3/+3 (1d8)	1.4 (6.3)	.9 (4.05)	.4 (1.8)	.1 (.45)
7	+5	.8 (3.6)	.55 (2.475)	.3 (1.35)	.05 (0.225)
	+4/+4 (1d8)	1.5 (6.75)	1 (4.5)	.5 (2.25)	.1 (.45)
8	+6/+1	1.45 (7.975)	.9 (4.95)	.55 (3.025)	.15 (0.825)
	+5/+5/+0 (1d10)	2.15 (11.825)	1.4 (7.7)	.65 (3.575)	.15 (0.825)
9	+6/+1	1.45 (7.975)	.9 (4.95)	.55 (3.025)	.15 (0.825)
	+6/+6/+1 (1d10)	2.3 (12.65)	1.5 (8.25)	.9 (4.95)	.25 (1.375)
10	+7/+2	1.55 (8.525)	1.05 (5.775)	.55 (3.025)	.2 (1.1)
	+7/+7/+2 (1d10)	2.45 (13.475)	1.7 (9.35)	.95 (5.225)	.35 (1.925)
11	+8/+3	1.65 (9.075)	1.15 (6.325)	.85 (4.675)	.25 (1.375)
	+8/+8/+8/+3 (1d10)	3.55 (19.525)	2.55 (14.025)	2.15 (11.825)	.65 (3.575)
12	+9/+4	1.7 (11.9)	1.25 (8.75)	.75 (5.25)	.3 (2.1)
	+9/+9/+9/+4 (2d6)	3.6 (25.2)	2.75 (19.25)	1.75 (12.25)	.8 (5.6)
13	+9/+4	1.7 (11.9)	1.25 (8.75)	.75 (5.25)	.3 (2.1)
	+9/+9/+9/+4 (2d6)	3.6 (25.2)	2.75 (19.25)	1.75 (12.25)	.8 (5.6)
14	+10/+5	1.75 (12.25)	1.35 (9.45)	.85 (5.95)	.35 (2.45)
	+10/+10/+10/+5 (2d6)	3.65 (25.55)	2.95 (20.65)	1.95 (13.65)	.95 (6.65)
15	+11/+6/+1	2.4 (16.8)	1.75 (12.25)	1.15 (8.05)	.5 (3.5)
	+11/+11/+11/+6/+1 (2d6)	4.3 (30.1)	3.45 (24.15)	2.4 (16.8)	1.2 (8.4)
16	+12/+7/+2	2.5 (22.5)	1.95 (17.55)	1.2 (10.8)	.6 (5.4)
	+12/+12/+12/+7/+2 (2d8)	4.4 (39.6)	3.75 (33.75)	2.5 (22.5)	1.4 (12.6)
17	+12/+7/+2	2.5 (22.5)	1.95 (17.55)	1.2 (10.8)	.6 (5.4)
	+12/+12/+12/+7/+2 (2d8)	4.4 (39.6)	3.75 (33.75)	2.5 (22.5)	1.4 (12.6)
18	+13/+8/+3	2.6 (23.4)	2.1 (18.9)	1.55 (13.95)	.7 (6.3)
	+13/+13/+13/+8/+3 (2d8)	4.5 (40.5)	4 (36)	2.95 (26.55)	1.6 (14.4)
19	+14/+9/+4	2.65 (23.85)	2.2 (19.8)	1.6 (14.4)	.8 (7.2)
	+14/+14/+14/+9/+4 (2d8)	4.55 (40.95)	4.1 (36.9)	3.1 (27.9)	1.8 (16.2)
20	+15/+10/+5	2.7 (29.7)	2.3 (25.3)	1.65 (18.15)	.9 (8.1)
	+15/+15/+15/+10/+5 (2d10)	4.6 (50.6)	4.2 (46.2)	3.25 (35.75)	2 (22)

Bonus Feats: At various levels, the monk gains a bonus feat. The bonus feats end after 6th level, so it's important to choose the right one. If your monk is the warrior in the party, you have to be offensive minded. Choose feats like Stunning Fist, Combat Reflexes, and Improved Trip. For a defensive strategy, where the monk is a second warrior, build Improved Grapple, Deflect Arrows, and Improved Disarm. These feats give you the tools to avoid attacks and render opponents impotent. Don't worry about feats you elect not to take, because you can pick them up later with your standard feats.

Flurry of Blows: Flurry of blows is the strongest feature of the monk class. Some folks believe the penalties for flurry of blows at earlier levels prevent you from hitting monsters with high ACs. That's a load of crap. The penalties apply a 10% lower likelihood of hitting a target per attack. Most monsters have AC tied to CR. Therefore, if you're first level, you should not see much more than an AC 14 or 15, meaning if you elect not to use flurry of blows, over four rounds you should hit 1.2 times dealing 4.2 damage, if of course you don't have a Strength modifier as Table 3-3 assumes. If you had used flurry of blows, you would hit 1.6 times for 5.6 points of damage. Weird, huh? You're less likely to hit per roll, but you receive two rolls to hit, thereby improving your chances with more opportunities to strike.

What's sick is when you compare the monk to the fighter. Now, most people assume the fighter is the big guy on the block, with all of those feats and weapons, but this table proves that one false by a long shot. Take the 12th-level fighter with all four feats. Over four rounds, and against a monster with an AC 25, he should hit 3.2 times dealing 27.2 points of damage. The monk, of the same level, same stats and against the same foe, should hit 3.2 times dealing 22.4 points of damage, and without all four of those feats, too. In fact, the monk surpasses the fighter at higher levels, hitting as often and inflicting more damage.

As you advance, the need for manufactured weapons starts to fade. Monks by 4th level are able to deal damage equal to any manufactured weapon. Some players spend their hard-earned gold on buying enchanted weapons for their monk characters. A much wiser investment is by putting your coin towards items boosting your stats and AC, which boosts your fighting abilities far more than a +2 *quarterstaff* could ever do.

Abundant Step: This ability has several combat uses. You could use it to get away from a nasty opponent, to beat a hasty retreat to avoid a spell, or to escape with the holy symbol that you snatched from the cleric on the previous round. Avoid using this ability to cover distances you could cover through your normal speed. At 12th-level, a Medium-sized monk should be able to cover 140 feet as a double move action, farther than he can see in a dungeon. Save this ability for when you need it.

Quivering Palm: Reserve quivering palm against powerful foes having low Fortitude saves, such as wizards,

sorcerers, and creatures like aberrations. You can use this ability once per week, so make certain of your target before using it. Also, don't be dramatic about it – nail the target with the effects of the palm as soon as it is advantageous. Your job is to kill bad guys, not screw around and let the bad guys cast more spells or get in more attacks.

Paladin

The paladin fights just as well as a fighter; he has spells, a loyal steed, and a ton of immunities; and he functions as a great supporting member of any party. There is just one small problem with all of this, though. He's primarily a supporting party member. He's not going to be the best choice for the only warrior in your party, as he places a greater burden on the rogues and clerics to pick up his slack.

Boons

Paladins shine the most when fighting evil. Their ability to smite evil allows them to deal an impressive amount of damage with those attacks. Considering most of what you should be fighting is evil in the first place, use smite evil as much as possible. Paladins can stand longer than other fighters can because they can heal themselves and their allies. Paladins never have to worry about disease or undead. If it's evil, the paladin can sense it, destroy it, or at least drive it away. If the party is short a cleric, the paladin is the next best thing to have.

Banes

For all their spell-like and supernatural abilities, paladins lack any sense of raw combat potential. Paladins need to have high Charisma scores, so many paladins sacrifice Dexterity for Charisma, forcing them to wear heavier armor. Heavy armor slows their speed, makes them clumsy, and is not as efficient as the lighter armors rangers and barbarians enjoy. Paladins also have specific abilities, useable against evil or undead opponents. Last, while removing disease is a useful ability at low levels, it ceases to be interesting at 18th level when the cleric of equal level can remove disease the same amount of times as the paladin, but per day instead of per week. The biggest problem with these characters is that the spells they can cast, along with smite evil, allow them to compete with other characters, but only for short durations, retarding usefulness in a protracted combat.

Archetypes

Two archetypes lend themselves to paladins. They are cavalry and heavy infantry. Paladins rarely have the Dexterity to pull off being a decent archer (also note that smiting requires a melee attack), and lack the speed to be good guerrillas or light infantry. Don't use them as skirmishers; they are far too specialized.

Breaking the Game

If you have your heart set on being a paladin, you've got your work cut out for you.

Smite Evil: Don't waste your smite evil attack; it's the only powerful offensive ability you have. If you're not certain about an opponent's alignment, take a 5-foot step and detect evil. This may seem like a wasted action, but it ensures you never use this ability against ineligible targets. Some players like to stack Power Attack with smite evil. Unless you're certain you can hit the bad guy, this is the best way to waste your smite evil attempt.

Spells: One way to make your paladin shine is with smart use of your spells. The problem with divine spells is they require a lot of time to set up. The other problem is paladins don't have a lot of spells to choose from. Here's a tour through some of the most popular spells paladins use.

Bless Weapon: Paladins fight evil, so this spell is good to have handy for several reasons. First, it aligns the weapon so it bypasses damage reduction/good. It can strike incorporeal creatures, and can strike evil creatures with damage reduction/magic. Furthermore, it confirms all critical hits against evil opponents, though it does not help with keen or vorpal weapons.

Divine Favor: This spell is not as cool as it appears. *Divine favor* lasts for 1 minute regardless of level. If you're going to use this spell, make sure you save it until the first round of combat. Now recall that the paladin's caster level equals one-half his paladin levels. Note the bonuses a paladin gains by casting this spell based on her actual level:

Paladin Level	Bonus
4-6	+1
7-12	+2
13-18	+3
19+	+4

Protection from Evil: As one of the most well-used spells in the game, any discussion of this spell has great benefits. The +2 deflection bonus can keep the paladin alive, and the extra save bonuses buttress his already solid saving throws. Finally, because this spell prevents possession, it's ideal to use when fighting undead. The spell's duration is measured in minutes, so cast it first, before other spells.

Buff Spells: *Bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, and *eagle's splendor* (what we call "buff spells") are all spells you should cast whenever possible. Providing a flat +4 bonus to any of these stats can save your paladin from a premature demise. In fact, if you have a feat and XP to burn, pick up Brew Potion and manufacture these spells as potions. Using these spells helps to level the playing field between you and other warriors, providing you with an extra advantage you need.

Prayer: If things look ugly for your party, a well-placed *prayer* can save the day. It gives all of your allies a bonus to hit, weapon damage, saves, and skill checks, while penalizing your foes. But don't rely too heavily on this spell, because by the time you're in the middle of combat, you're not going to be in a position to start tossing spells around.

Dispel Evil: Used defensively, *dispel evil* is a high-level paladin's dream come true. However, it has a short duration, so it's best used for short-term situations. Don't count on using this spell to send an evil extraplanar creature home; they are just about guaranteed to save against its effects when you cast it.

Holy Sword: Paladins of 14th-level or higher can make use of this spell. A 14th-level paladin at standard wealth levels should have 140,000 gp. A *holy avenger* has a market price of 120,630 gp. While your paladin probably does not have this weapon yet, he should be doing everything in his power to get one. *Holy sword* is a good way to fill in until you get your hands on a *holy avenger*. But compared to a *holy avenger*, this spell sucks. You need to get the real thing as soon as you can. Go on quests, kiss your temple's rear-end, beg your god for a favor, do whatever you have to do! Don't rely on this spell as a poor guy's avenger, because it lasts only 1 round per level!

Final Notes on The Paladin's Spells

If you plan on casting spells before you enter combat, *always* cast the spells with durations in minutes. Cast spells with durations in rounds while in combat, based on the situation as it unfolds. In a standard combat, avoid casting multiple spells; you're going to need them in other fights. Don't try to be the cleric. Let the cleric do his job and you do yours, which is to kill as many bad guys as you can.

Ranger

What was once the worst class in the game is now the best out of all the warriors. Rangers get spells, two good saves, bonus feats, and animal companions, all while retaining their speed and kicking the crap out of anything they meet. Forget 3.0, the new ranger is here, and he's a terror. If you want to be the best archer on the block or the two-weapon monster, this is the class for you.

Boons

Rangers fight as well as fighters, and better when they use two weapons. They get a feat tree free, allowing them to spend their normal feats in other areas. The addition of the animal companion gives them an extra attack per round as well as the ability to improve the animal through training. Two good saving throws and a slew of

skill points and favored enemies make this class hard to turn down.

Banes

Rangers lack proficiency in medium armor, so they need a high Dexterity to boost their AC. Furthermore, they need high stats to do well overall, with all six stats being important. Rangers have a monk's hit points, meaning they average 20 hit points less than a fighter by 20th level.

Archetypes

Rangers are good for just about any archetype except heavy infantry. They are excellent archers, devastating light infantry and guerrillas, and even perform well as cavalry. The ranger class is one of the best of all the warriors and you should consider it as your choice for any adventuring party.

Breaking the Game

It can't be stressed enough: rangers are tough. All of their abilities make them deadly combatants in any circumstances. There are a few points requiring highlighting to ensure your ranger can excel where others merely get by.

Favored Enemies: This ability looks great, but sucks if you make a bad choice at earlier levels. There is no reason a ranger should ever take dragon as his favored enemy at first level; the only CR 1 dragon in the game is a pseudodragon. While humanoids are tough, because they gain class levels, you should never let their scale dictate your choice of favored enemy because a humanoid with class levels, at higher levels, is going to be a rare thing, an important villain or something along those lines. Remember, the objective for your warrior is to hit often and hard. Overspecialization into one monster type tells the DM not to use the monster. You want to pick monsters your DM is likely to use and use frequently throughout your character's career. Creatures comprised of broad groupings are wise choices, such as Outsider (evil), Undead, Monstrous Humanoid, and Aberration. If you must choose a humanoid, stick with the basics, like Humanoid (goblinoid). Above all, stay away from weird stuff like Outsider (any other subtype besides evil), Elementals, or Plants. You're not going to encounter these creatures much, and a spellcaster can neutralize the threat easier than you can.

When selecting your favored enemy, choose it based on CR range. Table 3-4 shows a list of monster types and their standard CR ranges. Giants are an acceptable pick anywhere from 3rd to 17th level (or at 5th, 10th, or 15th level). They function as good in-between monsters, and you are prone to face a few giants in your career. You are not likely to be fighting giants other than an ogre or two before 5th level, so don't waste this class ability before then. Likewise, animals cease being much of a threat

individually after 9th level, so you shouldn't select animal as a favored enemy beyond 10th level, unless your evil ranger plans on taking a romp through a zoo.

Combat Styles: This class feature defines the ranger. It gives him bonus feats without having to meet the prerequisites, allows multiple attacks in a round, and lets the ranger deal tons of damage each round. Both styles – two-weapon combat and archery – are great and with the right tools, making the ranger exceptional. One thing to consider, though, is that to gain the benefits of a magic weapon with Rapid Shot, you need one magic weapon; the bow confers the magic onto its ammunition. With Two-Weapon Fighting, however, you need two magic weapons to be just as effective. Also, arrows have a constant damage range, but the two-weapon ranger must use a light weapon in his off hand to minimize the penalties for fighting with two weapons. The result is the two-weapon ranger deals less damage in a round than with the archer with a bow. Given how rangers can use their bows in close combat by taking a 5-foot step back, either option is viable. However, as the ranger advances with the two-weapon combat style he gains more attacks per round in melee, balancing the two paths.

The best way to exploit the combat styles is to select one and build the other through your standard array of feats. For example, if you choose the archery style, take Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting and the rest with your normal seven feats. This way, you play to your character's strengths.

See pages 94-95 for a statistical analysis of two-weapon fighting.

Spells: Spells are far less important to rangers than to paladins. If your ranger lost all of his spells, he would remain a viable warrior. Think of ranger spells as a second helping of usefulness. When selecting your spell arsenal, focus on things enhancing your strengths. Such spells include *longstrider*, *jump*, *resist energy*, and *magic fang*, all excellent choices. Better still, you get access to buff spells like *bear's endurance*

Table 3-4: CRs

Type	CR Range
Aberration	2-17
Animal	1/10-9
Construct	1/2-16
Dragon	1-26
Elemental	1-11
Fey	1-7
Giant	3-17
Humanoid (all)	1/4+
Magical Beast	1/2-20
Monstrous Humanoid	1-11
Ooze	3-11
Outsider (Air)	3-8
Outsider (Chaotic)	2-21
Outsider (Earth)	3-8
Outsider (Evil)	1-20
Outsider (Fire)	2-10
Outsider (Good)	2-23
Outsider (Lawful)	1/2-20
Outsider (Native)	1/2+
Outsider (Water)	2-9
Plant	1-8
Undead	1/3-18
Vermin	1/8-12

and *owl's wisdom*, great spells to keep you on your feet and to make what few offensive spells you do have nasty. There are no bad ranger spells; each helps you in many important ways. Consider your character's strengths, and use the spells to shore up your weaknesses.

Multiclassing Warriors

There are two major schools of thought on character classes. The first holds the character class helps define the character. A paladin acts as he does by dint of his class selection. Likewise, a ranger is woodsy, a barbarian angry, and a monk philosophical, all because of the nature of the classes. Multiclassed characters are slow to get the better class features, in some cases prevented from ever getting them. Therefore, excessive multiclassing, or even multiclassing at all, creates a kind of schizophrenia for characters, blurring their focus and thereby their usefulness to a party.

The other school of thought says each class is like an a la carte menu. Take a little from the fighter, a taste of the barbarian, perhaps a little ranger and rogue, and then pursue the paladin class for kicks. The more you multiclass, the more options at hand, the more versatile your character, and the better odds for your survival.

Both views are right and wrong. Sticking with one character class helps define your function and parameters in the group. You are also stuck, not as versatile, and in some cases ineffective against certain foes. Multiclassed characters can adapt to their environments, and retain some usefulness regardless of the opponent, but are never as good as a character advancing in just one class.

WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY OF MONSTER ASS KICKING

Dead Level (ded lev'uhl) Any level attained not conferring a feat, ability increase, or class feature, essentially sucking.

Gravy Level (gray'vee lev'uhl) The class levels featuring a feat and increases to all three saves, that is 6th, 12th, and 18th level. The juiciest class level is 12th, where the character gains in all three saving throws, gains a feat, and gains an ability score increase.

Skilled Multiclassing (skil'd muhl-tee clas-eng) Maximizing gravy levels while minimizing dead levels.

Killer Multiclassed Archetypes

The beauty of archetypes is you don't have to multiclass to build them. You could create an archer with just the fighter class, or a light infantry character with the monk. However, you may want to tinker with your class choices to specialize. You may also want to monkey around with blending archetypes such as a mounted archer character, or a guerrilla who is good

at filling many roles like a skirmisher. Sometimes you can get this level of diversification by changing the base class, or widening your focus on feats. Then again, you may want to pick up a few levels in another class, to complement the thematic idea behind your character.

This section details what elements you should focus on when multiclassing a character to

TABLE 3-5: THE FIGHTER

Level	Class Levels	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Avg. Hp	Gains
1	Ftr 1	+1	+2	+0	+0	10	Feat, fighter bonus feat
2	Ftr 2	+2	+3	+0	+0	15	Fighter bonus feat
3	Ftr 3	+3	+3	+1	+1	21	Feat
4	Ftr 4	+4	+4	+1	+1	26	Fighter bonus feat, ability increase
5	Ftr 5	+5	+4	+1	+1	32	–
6	Ftr 6	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	37	Feat, fighter bonus feat
7	Ftr 7	+7/+2	+5	+2	+2	43	–
8	Ftr 8	+8/+3	+6	+2	+2	48	Fighter bonus feat, ability increase
9	Ftr 9	+9/+4	+6	+3	+3	54	Feat
10	Ftr 10	+10/+5	+7	+3	+3	59	Fighter bonus feat
11	Ftr 11	+11/+6/+1	+7	+3	+3	65	–
12	Ftr 12	+12/+7/+2	+8	+4	+4	70	Feat, fighter bonus feat, ability increase
13	Ftr 13	+13/+8/+3	+8	+4	+4	76	–
14	Ftr 14	+14/+9/+4	+9	+4	+4	81	Fighter bonus feat
15	Ftr 15	+15/+10/+5	+9	+5	+5	87	Feat
16	Ftr 16	+16/+11/+6/+1	+10	+5	+5	92	Fighter bonus feat, ability increase
17	Ftr 17	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+5	98	–
18	Ftr 18	+18/+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+6	103	Feat, fighter bonus feat
19	Ftr 19	+19/+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+6	109	–
20	Ftr 20	+20/+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+6	114	Fighter bonus feat, ability increase

work with an archetype. In addition, there is an example progression for multiclassed characters under each heading. All of these combos assume the character is human to maximize the effects of multiclassing. We're here to show you the best combos, right? So, if you're playing a dwarf, and you want to multiclass as one of the example multiclass- es, you're going to have to tweak it a bit. Table 3-5 shows the fighter, for comparison. Notice that the fighter has six dead levels.

Multiclassed Archer

The archer is the easiest of the archetypes to make. The ranger class gives you all the tools you need to be a power- ful presence on the battlefield. Furthermore, the fighter class, by itself, gives you all the feats you could need to be the consummate archer and more. With the right ingredients, you can make an archer capable of kicking the crap out of the humdrum fighter any day. Start with the ranger, add a taste of fighter, and a pinch of rogue, and your archer cheesecake is ready to eat.

What you get: With the fighter bonus feats, you can gain Dodge and Mobility early, letting you set up for Shot on the Run. Your Fortitude and Reflex saves get a big boost. You only have one dead level, 17th. But by this level, noth- ing is likely to mess with you. The rogue levels add an additional dimension to the character class, giving you improved evasion, sneak attack for when you're hidden, and the ability to avoid booby traps designed to knock out the rear ranks of the party. Where you miss some of the freebie feats a fighter normally gets, you pick up so many additional abilities your character gains an edge in his versatility, letting him handle just about any situation.

What you lose: You give up a smidgen in the BAB department, your Will save progression is rancid, and you have almost 20 total hit points less than the fighter.

Important Stuff: Make sure you build your archer progression quickly, but not overlapping the combat styles given by the ranger class. So, build up the Shot on the Run tree first and fill in where you're missing in the Point Blank Shot tree. With this combo, you're going to have a decent Wisdom, for the spells of course, but you may want to invest in Iron Will to make up for your abysmal Will save. As for your animal companion, go with a large snake – readymade poison! Oh, and you're going to have to play a human or a half-elf to pull this off.

Stat Placement: Str 14, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 8; Dex 16 (4th), Wis 14 (8th), Dex 17 (12th), Dex 18 (16th), Dex 19 (20th).

TABLE 3-6: MULTICLASSED ARCHER

Level	Class Levels	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Avg. Hp	Gains
1	Rgr 1	+1	+2	+2	+0	8	Favored enemy, feat, Track, wild empathy
2	Rgr 2	+2	+3	+3	+0	12	Combat style
3	Rgr 2/Ftr 1	+3	+5	+3	+0	18	Feat, bonus fighter feat
4	Rgr 2/Ftr 2	+4	+6	+3	+0	23	Fighter bonus feat, ability increase
5	Rgr 3/Ftr 2	+5	+6	+3	+1	28	Endurance
6	Rgr 3/Ftr 2/Rog 1	+5	+6	+5	+1	32	Feat, sneak attack +1d6
7	Rgr 3/Ftr 2/Rog 2	+6/+1	+6	+6	+1	35	Evasion
8	Rgr 4/Ftr 2/Rog 2	+7/+2	+7	+7	+1	40	Animal companion, 1st-level spells, ability increase
9	Rgr 4/Ftr 2/Rog 3	+8/+3	+8	+7	+2	43	Feat, sneak attack +2d6, trap sense +1
10	Rgr 5/Ftr 2/Rog 3	+9/+4	+8	+7	+2	48	Favored enemy
11	Rgr 6/Ftr 2/Rog 3	+10/+5	+9	+8	+3	54	Improved combat style
12	Rgr 7/Ftr 2/Rog 3	+11/+6/+1	+9	+8	+3	59	Feat, woodland stride, ability increase
13	Rgr 8/Ftr 2/Rog 3	+12/+7/+2	+10	+9	+3	63	Swift tracker, 2nd-level spells
14	Rgr 9/Ftr 2/Rog 3	+13/+8/+3	+10	+9	+4	68	Improved evasion
15	Rgr 10/Ftr 2/Rog 3	+14/+9/+4	+11	+10	+4	72	Favored enemy, feat
16	Rgr 11/Ftr 2/Rog 3	+15/+10/+5	+11	+10	+4	77	Combat style master, 3rd-level spells, ability increase
17	Rgr 12/Ftr 2/Rog 3	+16/+11/+6/+1	+12	+11	+5	81	–
18	Rgr 13/Ftr 2/Rog 3	+17/+12/+7/+2	+12	+11	+5	86	Camouflage, feat
19	Rgr 14/Ftr 2/Rog 3	+18/+13/+8/+3	+13	+12	+5	90	4th-level spells
20	Rgr 15/Ftr 2/Rog 3	+19/+14/+9/+4	+13	+12	+6	95	Favored enemy, ability increase

Multiclassed Cavalry

Many view the cavalry archetype as a tank on a horse, the purview of the paladin, and ineffectual. However, as this book will show, mounted characters have some good advantages: increased speed, height advantage, and more. In the case of the paladin, the character gains the *pokemount*. This steed improves as the paladin advances. Want to take it a step further? Drop the paladin, but keep your alignment lawful good, and follow your code of conduct and all that good stuff. Pick up some levels as fighter, then ranger, and watch the speeding ginsu machine tear his way through the battlefield.

What you get: First, no dead levels; you get something every level. Your BAB stays where it needs to be: high. You have a decent Reflex save and your Will save never suffers too bad. Now, you've kept your alignment all sparkling clean to keep your paladin abilities, meaning you can still heal yourself (though not well), cast spells, turn undead and a bunch of other things, including the massive Charisma boost to your saves. The fighter levels wind up giving you four extra feats, while the ranger gives you the combat styles to win. With your special steed, you can zip anywhere you need on the battlefield, and once there, chop up your foes, smiting too, before moving onto the next bunch of baddies.

What you lose: You suck at turning undead. You never get evasion. You're about 8 hit points behind fighters. Your Will save improves in spurts, so you're liable to have long stretches of crummy resistance to mind-affecting spells and effects. Again, you'll need to be a human or half-elf to do this one too.

Important Stuff: Start building your Mounted Combat tree immediately. Use the fighter feats to build Weapon Focus and Specialization as soon as you get there. When you get to ranger, you have two choices: go the two-weapon fighting route, or become a mounted archer, which is also a viable choice. This is an effective combo, but is weakened in dungeon crawls, so having back-up tactics is necessary. You need a lot of good stats to do this combo well. If you only have three good stats, go another route. Keep a lawful good alignment and stick with the code of conduct; don't lose your paladin abilities. If you're faced with losing your paladin status, you'd better go for blackguard or be prepared for retirement.

Stat Placement: Str 14, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 15; Cha 16 (4th), Dex 14 (8th), Dex 15 (12th), Str 15 (16th), Dex 16 (20th).

TABLE 3-7: MULTICLASSED CAVALRY

Level	Class Levels	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Avg. Hp	Gains
1	Pal 1	+1	+2	+0	+0	10	Aura of good, detect evil, feat, smite evil 1/day
2	Pal 2	+2	+3	+0	+0	15	Divine grace, lay on hands
3	Pal 3	+3	+3	+1	+1	21	Aura of courage, divine health, feat
4	Pal 4	+4	+4	+1	+1	26	Turn undead, 1st-level spells, ability increase
5	Pal 5	+5	+4	+1	+1	32	Smite evil 2/day, special mount
6	Pal 6	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	37	Feat, remove disease 1/week
7	Ex-Pal 6/Ftr 1	+7/+2	+7	+2	+2	43	Fighter bonus feat
8	Ex-Pal 6/Ftr 2	+8/+3	+8	+2	+2	48	Feat, ability increase
9	Ex-Pal 6/Ftr 2/Rgr 1	+9/+4	+10	+4	+2	53	Favored enemy, feat, Track, wild empathy
10	Ex-Pal 6/Ftr 2/Rgr 2	+10/+5	+11	+5	+2	57	Combat style
11	Ex-Pal 6/Ftr 2/Rgr 3	+11/+6/+1	+11	+5	+3	62	Endurance
12	Ex-Pal 6/Ftr 3/Rgr 3	+12/+7/+2	+11	+6	+4	67	Feat, ability increase
13	Ex-Pal 6/Ftr 4/Rgr 3	+13/+8/+3	+12	+6	+4	73	Fighter bonus feat
14	Ex-Pal 6/Ftr 4/Rgr 4	+14/+9/+4	+13	+7	+4	77	Animal companion, 1st-level ranger spells
15	Ex-Pal 6/Ftr 4/Rgr 5	+15/+10/+5	+13	+7	+4	82	Favored enemy, feat
16	Ex-Pal 6/Ftr 5/Rgr 5	+16/+11/+6/+1	+13	+7	+4	87	Ability increase
17	Ex-Pal 6/Ftr 6/Rgr 5	+17/+12/+7/+2	+14	+8	+5	93	Fighter bonus feat
18	Ex-Pal 6/Ftr 6/Rgr 6	+18/+13/+8/+3	+15	+9	+6	97	Feat, improved combat style
19	Ex-Pal 6/Ftr 6/Rgr 7	+19/+14/+9/+4	+15	+9	+6	102	Woodland stride
20	Ex-Pal 6/Ftr 6/Rgr 8	+20/+15/+10/+5	+16	+10	+6	106	Swift tracker, 2nd-level ranger spells, ability score increase

Multiclassed Guerrilla

When designing a guerrilla, design the character with a particular opponent in mind, such as goblins, wizards, demons, or whatever. The ranger epitomizes the guerrilla, because the class uses favored enemies to deal additional damage, and skill bonuses against those foes. Adding classes to the guerrilla archetype is a good tactic. Additional classes help to focus on defeating a particular foe. The below example blends the monk, barbarian and ranger to create the quintessential, sneak-behind-enemy-lines, wreak havoc, get-the-hell-out-of-Dodge kind of guerrilla we all love and hate. Note that unlike the paladin, monks retain their abilities even if their alignment changes.

What you get: With a strong monk foundation, this guerrilla provides a ton of mobility and defensive abilities, while also getting all the flurry of blows attacks one could ever want. With great saves and cool class features this multiclassed character can withstand just about anything he would face. One thing monks lack is ranged attacks. The ranger levels allow the character to develop ranged combat skills for higher level play. On the other hand, how about a monk that kicks ass with a quarterstaff? Double weapon, ranger combat techniques, mega-strength, high AC... deadly. Finally, the barbarian levels are the coup de grace, so to speak. The rage-inflated Strength and Constitution more than make up for the lost abilities monks gain at higher levels. Oh, and there aren't any dead levels here either.

What you lose: By 20th level, this multiclassed character should average about 11 hit points less than a regular fighter. The favored enemy ability does not carry the extra effect it has in straight-classed rangers, and many of the monk's abilities rely on no armor to function. In addition, flurry of blows is only useful if you're using monk weapons. So, when you pick up your barbarian levels, it's best to stick with the basics and stay with the low-damage-yielding monk weaponry.

Important Stuff: This is another combo requiring a human or a half-elf. In this case, you want to play a human for

TABLE 3-8: MULTICLASSED GUERRILLA

Level	Class Levels	Attack	Flurry	Fort	Ref	Will	Avg. Hp	Gains
1	Mnk 1	+0	-2/-2	+2	+2	+2	8	Bonus feat, flurry of blows, unarmed strike (1d6), feat
2	Mnk 2	+1	-1/-1	+3	+3	+3	12	Bonus feat, evasion
3	Mnk 3	+2	+0/+0	+3	+3	+3	17	Feat, still mind, Spd +10
4	Mnk 4	+3	+1/+1	+4	+4	+4	21	Ki strike (magic), slow fall (20 ft.), ability increase, unarmed strike (1d8)
5	Mnk 5	+3	+2/+2	+4	+4	+4	26	Purity of Body, AC +1
6	Mnk 6	+4	+3/+3	+5	+5	+5	30	Bonus feat, slow fall (30 ft.), Spd +20 ft.
7	Mnk 7	+5	+4/+4	+5	+5	+5	35	Wholeness of Body
8	Mnk 8	+6/+1	+5/+5/+0	+6	+6	+6	39	Slow fall (40 ft.), unarmed strike (1d10), ability increase
9	Mnk 9	+6/+1	+6/+6/+1	+6	+6	+6	44	Feat, improved evasion, Spd +30 ft.
10	Mnk 10	+7/+2	+7/+7/+2	+7	+7	+7	48	Ki strike (lawful), slow fall (50 ft.), AC +2
11	Mnk 11	+8/+3	+8/+8/+8/+3	+7	+7	+7	53	Diamond body, greater flurry
12	Ex-Mnk 11/Bbn 1	+9/+4	+9/+9/+9/+4	+9	+7	+7	59	Fast movement, feat, rage 1/day, ability increase
13	Ex-Mnk 11/Bbn 2	+10/+5	+10/+10/+10/+5	+10	+7	+7	66	Uncanny dodge
14	Ex-Mnk 11/Bbn 2/Rgr 1	+11/+6/+1	+11/+11/+11/+6/+1	+12	+9	+7	70	Favored enemy, Track, wild empathy
15	Ex-Mnk 11/Bbn 2/Rgr 2	+12/+7/+2	+12/+12/+12/+7/+2	+13	+10	+7	75	Combat style, feat
16	Ex-Mnk 11/Bbn 3/Rgr 2	+13/+8/+3	+13/+13/+13/+8/+3	+13	+11	+8	81	Trap sense +1, ability increase
17	Ex-Mnk 11/Bbn 3/Rgr 3	+14/+9/+4	+14/+14/+14/+9/+4	+13	+11	+9	86	Endurance
18	Ex-Mnk 11/Bbn 4/Rgr 3	+15/+10/+5	+15/+15/+15/+10/+5	+14	+11	+9	92	Feat, rage 2/day
19	Ex-Mnk 11/Bbn 4/Rgr 4	+16/+11/+6/+1	+16/+16/+16/+11/+6/+1	+15	+12	+9	97	Animal companion, 1st-level spells
20	Ex-Mnk 11/Bbn 5/Rgr 4	+17/+12/+7/+2	+17/+17/+17/+12/+7/+2	+15	+12	+9	103	Improved uncanny dodge

the extra feat. Your feat selection should follow a monk's normal selection (see above) and include fewer of the ranger/barbarian feats. This guerrilla should operate safely, waiting for the right opportunity to strike. Also, start acting a bit chaotic around 11th-level to justify your alignment change at 12th-level.

Stat Placement: Str 12, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 8; Wis 16 (4th), Dex 15 (8th), Dex 16 (12th), Dex 17 (16th), Dex 18 (20th).

Multiclassed Heavy Infantry

Heavy infantry is the domain of the fighter, a warrior encased in steel who stands on the frontlines, hacking through the front ranks of any who threaten them. While these characters are great fun to play, without the proper support, they can find themselves in the unfortunate predicament of having no hit points and no way to get away. This combo addresses the problem by tossing in a few levels of cleric and paladin to complement the fighting abilities of the fighter without compromising the role of the character.

What you gain: Aside from domains, granted powers, turning undead, 3rd-level spells, and paladin abilities through 8th-level, you get to keep on fighting. Your Will save is better than most fighters, a good thing when facing enchantment spells. In addition, you gain three fighter bonus feats, giving you an extra feat tree. With the cleric spells and paladin abilities, you can keep fighting long after other front-line characters go down. And, no dead levels.

What you lose: You lose many feats with this multiclass combo. It's not so bad, because heavy infantry's primary role is to deal damage. By 20th level, you're behind the fighter in hit points by 5. Your Reflex save stinks, so you'll have to watch out for traps. You're BAB is 2 points behind the fighter, but with all the buff spells and support mechanisms, it's a small trade-off.

Important Stuff: You need many good stats to pull this combo off: Strength, Constitution, Wisdom, and Charisma. Also, you'd better plan on playing a human, preferred, or a half-elf to do this, as paladin is not a favored class for any of the core races. This combo pretty much relegates your cleric levels as means to support your fighting abilities, so you're not going to be able to do much against the bad guys with spells considering your lower-than-normal Wisdom. These characters are melee warriors. Don't waste any time or effort on ranged attacks. Let your special mount carry you to the bad guys when you need to get somewhere quick.

Stat Placement: Str 15, Dex 8, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14; Str 16 (4th), Wis 13 (8th), Con 14 (12th), Str 17 (16th), Str 18 (20th).

TABLE 3-9: MULTICLASSED HEAVY INFANTRY

Level	Class Levels	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Avg. Hp	Gains
1	Ftr 1	+1	+2	+0	+0	10	Feat, fighter bonus feat
2	Ftr 2	+2	+3	+0	+0	15	Fighter bonus feat
3	Ftr 2/Clr 1	+2	+5	+0	+2	20	Feat, 1st-level spells, turn undead
4	Ftr 2/Clr 2	+3	+6	+0	+3	24	Ability increase
5	Ftr 2/Clr 3	+4	+6	+1	+3	29	2nd-level spells
6	Ftr 3/Clr 3	+5	+6	+2	+4	34	Feat
7	Ftr 4/Clr 3	+6/+1	+7	+2	+4	40	Fighter bonus feat
8	Ftr 4/Clr 4	+7/+2	+8	+2	+5	44	Ability increase
9	Ftr 4/Clr 5	+7/+2	+8	+2	+5	50	Feat, 3rd-level spells
10	Ftr 4/Clr 5/Pal 1	+8/+3	+10	+2	+5	55	Aura of good, detect evil, smite evil 1/day
11	Ftr 4/Clr 5/Pal 2	+9/+4	+11	+2	+5	61	Divine grace, lay on hands
12	Ftr 4/Clr 5/Pal 3	+10/+5	+11	+3	+6	66	Aura of courage, divine health, feat, ability increase
13	Ftr 4/Clr 5/Pal 4	+11/+6/+1	+12	+3	+6	72	1st-level spells, turn undead
14	Ftr 4/Clr 5/Pal 5	+12/+7/+2	+12	+3	+6	77	Smite evil 2/day, special mount
15	Ftr 4/Clr 5/Pal 6	+13/+8/+3	+13	+4	+7	83	Feat, remove disease 1/week
16	Ftr 4/Clr 5/Pal 7	+14/+9/+4	+13	+4	+7	88	Ability increase
17	Ftr 4/Clr 5/Pal 8	+15/+10/+5	+14	+4	+7	94	2nd-level spells
18	Ftr 4/Clr 5/Pal 9	+16/+11/+6/+1	+14	+5	+8	99	Feat, remove disease 2/week
19	Ftr 4/Clr 5/Pal 10	+17/+12/+7/+2	+15	+5	+8	105	Smite evil 3/day
20	Ftr 4/Clr 5/Pal 11	+18/+13/+8/+3	+15	+5	+8	109	3rd-level spells, ability increase

Multiclassed Light Infantry

Light infantry characters need mobility, the ability to get in and out of ugly fights, and maneuverability to gain flanks. Monks and barbarians make the best light infantry characters, but sometimes you just have a craving to be a little more destructive. Start with the barbarian (12 hit points of course and decent skill points), then add the ranger, fighter, rogue, and you're a death-dealing horror, capable of wading through just about any fight, dodging most spells, and with the hit points to back up your threats.

What you gain: With this combination, you don't have any dead levels. You're fast, thanks to the barbarian levels, and you can inflate Strength and Constitution by raging, while still being quick and good enough to avoid many of the hits. You have a great Fortitude and Reflex save but 10 hit points less than the fighter by 20th level. Even though you don't have the feats of a regular fighter, you get enough other class features to replicate feats, or which are so awesome in their own right you'll hardly miss the feats. Plus, you gain the ranger's combat style at 3rd level. Throw in some spells, and you're ready for anything.

What you lose: Your Will save is awful; stack on a feat like Iron Will to make up for the deficiency. You have to wait until 19th level to pick-up Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, you'll never get combat mastery, and you're limited to one rage per day until 17th level. This combo exemplifies how the higher-level abilities can become unattainable.

Important Stuff: Use your rage sparingly, because you're usually only going to have it for one combat. Spend your feats on things enabling you to boost your AC, like Combat Expertise, Dodge, and Mobility. In combat, take positions giving you flanks. Above all else, use your speed and mobility to your advantage, fighting the fights you can win, and getting away from those you can't.

Stat Placement: Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8; Str 16 (4th), Wis 11 (8th), Con 14 (12th), Dex 15 (16th), Dex 16 (20th).

MULTICLASSING AND ROGUES

Ask any player, and they're sure to tell you that the first level in a multiclassed character should always be rogue. Yep, they're right... most of the time. A first level rogue gets 32 skill points before stat modifiers or racial modifiers, and with sneak attack, they're pretty nasty. However, when you're making a warrior, isn't it your job to kill things, to stay up fighting when all else fails? Yep. With 6 hit points, and a cleric's BAB, a first level rogue as a party's sole warrior doesn't do anyone any good. If you want the skills, go with ranger or barbarian. You'll be glad you did when you don't have to roll up a new character.

TABLE 3-10: MULTICLASSED LIGHT INFANTRY

Level	Class Levels	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Avg Hp	Gains
1	Bbn 1	+1	+2	+0	+0	12	Fast movement, feat, rage 1/day
2	Bbn 1/Rgr 1	+2	+4	+2	+0	16	Favored enemy, Track, wild empathy
3	Bbn 1/Rgr 2	+3	+5	+3	+0	21	Combat style, feat
4	Bbn 1/Rgr 2/Ftr 1	+4	+7	+3	+0	26	Bonus fighter feat, ability increase
5	Bbn 1/Rgr 2/Ftr 1/Rog 1	+4	+7	+5	+0	30	Sneak attack +1d6
6	Bbn 1/Rgr 2/Ftr 1/Rog 2	+5	+7	+6	+0	33	Evasion, feat
7	Bbn 2/Rgr 2/Ftr 1/Rog 2	+6/+1	+8	+6	+0	40	Uncanny dodge
8	Bbn 2/Rgr 2/Ftr 2/Rog 2	+7/+2	+9	+6	+0	45	Fighter bonus feat, ability increase
9	Bbn 2/Rgr 2/Ftr 2/Rog 3	+8/+3	+10	+6	+1	49	Feat, sneak attack +2d6, trap sense +1
10	Bbn 2/Rgr 3/Ftr 2/Rog 3	+9/+4	+10	+6	+2	53	Endurance
11	Bbn 2/Rgr 3/Ftr 2/Rog 4	+10/+5	+10	+7	+2	57	Improved uncanny dodge
12	Bbn 2/Rgr 3/Ftr 3/Rog 4	+11/+6/+1	+10	+8	+3	62	Feat, ability increase
13	Bbn 2/Rgr 4/Ftr 3/Rog 4	+12/+7/+2	+11	+9	+3	67	Animal companion, 1st-level spells
14	Bbn 2/Rgr 5/Ftr 3/Rog 4	+13/+8/+3	+11	+9	+3	71	Improved combat style
15	Bbn 3/Rgr 5/Ftr 3/Rog 4	+14/+9/+4	+11	+10	+4	78	Feat, Trap sense +1
16	Bbn 3/Rgr 5/Ftr 4/Rog 4	+15/+10/+5	+12	+10	+4	83	Fighter bonus feat, ability increase
17	Bbn 4/Rgr 5/Ftr 4/Rog 4	+16/+11/+6/+1	+13	+10	+4	90	Rage 2/day
18	Bbn 4/Rgr 5/Ftr 4/Rog 5	+16/+11/+6/+1	+13	+10	+4	93	Feat, sneak attack +3d6
19	Bbn 4/Rgr 6/Ftr 4/Rog 5	+17/+12/+7/+2	+14	+11	+5	98	Improved combat style
20	Bbn 5/Rgr 6/Ftr 4/Rog 5	+18/+13/+8/+3	+14	+11	+5	104	Improved uncanny dodge, ability increase

Multiclassed Skirmisher

The skirmisher is the warrior who needs to be good at just about everything, to fill in where needed and pick up the slack when a better warrior falls. Most skirmishers are multiclassed characters, combining elements of warrior classes with rogue, wizard, or cleric. In the example below, we build the true bard, a throwback to an earlier edition, to capture the feeling of the true skirmisher.

What you get: Everything. You get hit points, great saves all across the board, divine and arcane spells, animal companions, the ability to rage... the list goes on. The barbarian forms the backbone of this combo, providing the best hit points, and the inflatable stats. Druid comes next to give the skirmisher more control over the battlefield, with access to such spells as *entangle*, the ability to swap spells for *nature's ally* and, most importantly, the ability to heal. The bard, while an undesirable class option for most warriors, complements the combo, boosting the Reflex and the Will saves, while also opening up the character to using different kinds of magic items to improve his versatility. Fighter is added for pure cheese, while the ranger enhances the druid abilities, while also advancing the character's BAB.

What you lose: Focus. You'll never cast spells with the same potency of other characters. Though you have some combat potential, you don't get your first iterative attack until 8th-level. Though the bard provides some extra abilities, few of its spells are useful. The schizophrenic results of this class temper what gains you pick up.

Important Stuff: First, any race can pull this one off, as there aren't any level gaps, so play whatever you want. Insofar as spells go, don't waste time with cute stuff. Select spells giving you an advantage in combat, namely buff spells. Seeing as you share spells with your animal companion, whatever you buff yourself with, so too does your companion buff. Finally, play like a skirmisher should. Don't be the first to enter combat. Use your abilities to help where most needed: defending the wizard, filling in gaps in the front ranks, using the aid another action when useless. The joys of this combo are you can pretty much do anything in a combat round.

Stat Placement: Str 15, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 12; Str 16 (4th), Con 11 (8th), Con 12 (12th), Str 17 (16th), Str 18 (20th).

TABLE 3-11: MULTICLASSED SKIRMISHER

Level	Class Levels	Attack	Fort	Ref	Will	Avg Hp	Gains
1	Bbn 1	+1	+2	+0	+0	12	Fast movement, feat, rage 1/day
2	Bbn 1/Drd 1	+1	+4	+0	+2	16	Animal companion, nature sense, wild empathy, 1st-level spells
3	Bbn 2/Drd 1	+2	+5	+0	+2	23	Feat, uncanny dodge
4	Bbn 2/Drd 1/Brd 1	+2	+5	+2	+4	26	Bardic music, bardic knowledge, countersong, fascinate, inspire courage, 0-level spells, ability increase
5	Bbn 2/Drd 2/Brd 1	+3	+6	+2	+5	31	Woodland stride
6	Bbn 3/Drd 2/Brd 1	+4	+6	+3	+6	37	Feat, trap sense +1
7	Bbn 3/Drd 2/Brd 2	+5	+6	+4	+7	41	1st-level spells
8	Bbn 3/Drd 3/Brd 2	+6/+1	+6	+5	+7	45	Trackless step, 2nd-level spells, ability increase
9	Bbn 4/Drd 3/Brd 2	+7/+2	+7	+5	+7	52	Feat, rage 2/day
10	Bbn 4/Drd 3/Brd 2/Ftr 1	+8/+3	+9	+5	+7	57	Fighter bonus feat
11	Bbn 4/Drd 3/Brd 2/Ftr 2	+9/+4	+10	+5	+7	63	Fighter bonus feat
12	Bbn 4/Drd 3/Brd 3/Ftr 2	+10/+5	+11	+5	+7	66	Feat, inspire competence, ability increase
13	Bbn 4/Drd 3/Brd 3/Ftr 2/Rgr 1	+11/+6/+1	+13	+7	+7	71	Favored enemy, Track, wild empathy
14	Bbn 4/Drd 3/Brd 3/Ftr 2/Rgr 2	+12/+7/+2	+14	+8	+7	75	Combat style
15	Bbn 4/Drd 4/Brd 3/Ftr 2/Rgr 2	+13/+8/+3	+15	+8	+8	80	Feat, resist nature's lure
16	Bbn 5/Drd 4/Brd 3/Ftr 2/Rgr 2	+14/+9/+4	+15	+8	+8	86	Improved uncanny dodge, ability increase
17	Bbn 5/Drd 4/Brd 3/Ftr 2/Rgr 3	+15/+10/+5	+15	+8	+9	91	Endurance
18	Bbn 5/Drd 4/Brd 3/Ftr 2/Rgr 4	+16/+11/+6/+1	+16	+9	+9	95	Animal companion, feat
19	Bbn 5/Drd 5/Brd 3/Ftr 2/Rgr 4	+16/+11/+6/+1	+16	+9	+9	100	Wild shape, 3rd-level spells
20	Bbn 6/Drd 5/Brd 3/Ftr 2/Rgr 4	+17/+12/+6/+2	+17	+10	+10	106	Trap sense +2, ability increase

Chapter Four

Skills

“Skills? Who needs skills?” Given the warrior’s heavy focus on combat, the use of skills does not rate high on their wish list. Combined with the low skill points and limited selection of most warrior classes, players may even be tempted to disregard skills as useless fluff for their characters. Skills certainly won’t help the warrior swing her sword or loose her arrows. But with proper planning, the shrewd application of skills both before and during combat can have a dramatic effect on the battle’s outcome.

Even more than with feats, the overall usefulness of any given skill depends greatly upon the campaign setting and the environment within which the characters are adventuring. You may find the usefulness of your skills fluctuating significantly from session to session. For this reason, this chapter does not focus on assigning arbitrary values of usefulness to each skill. Instead, skills are grouped by their overall function relative to their typical application by warriors (i.e., how well they help you kill stuff).

Combat Mobility

Often underrated, the mobility of a warrior is vital to her success in battle. Distance and movement are integral elements of the 3.5 combat system. Five feet can mean the difference between a standard attack and a full attack, and something as simple as a Tumble check can mean the difference between multiple attacks of opportunity and none whatsoever. The mobility skills should be examined carefully. They’re most important to the light infantry and guerilla archetypes. Though heavy infantry and cavalry warriors could find the mobility-oriented skills useful, chances are that they will be rendered ineffective by heavy armor or a preference for fighting while mounted.

However, more than anything, it should be noted that the most frequent and important applications of the mobility skills involve running away from enemies like a massive coward. As long as you accept this and later return to destroy the thinned-out, wheezing, prone ranks of your foes, you will prosper.

Balance

The practical usefulness of Balance is questionable in all but the most unique of campaign settings. Its application is limited to environments with “difficult” surfaces or surfaces less than twelve inches wide. Before spending a single skill point on Balance, think seriously about how often your DM has thrown your party into such places.

With that cautionary preface out of the way, it should be said that ranks in Balance can be a sound investment for monk characters, as they are the only warrior class with class skill access to Balance. Combined with a monk’s potential for tactical mayhem using the Jump skill, an enterprising player can make the most of an environment to either traverse terrain through alternate routes (the rafters of a barn, chains across a chasm, and so on) or simply to use an escape route that is perilous for other characters to follow.

For non-monk characters of the light infantry or guerilla archetypes, the cost of Balance may be excessive considering its narrow application (no pun intended). Again, this analysis is left to the player for her specific character and campaign.

To properly use the Balance skill to a warrior’s advantage, the player has to make every effort to control where a battle takes place. Open, level terrain renders the skill completely worthless. If a battle starts in such an environment and odds are against the Balance-invested warrior, it may be to her advantage to draw opponents towards a more restricted location. Suitable environments might include a ruined castle courtyard, a frozen lake, a muddy creek spanned by fallen trees, or even a dusty stone floor made slick with water.

Characters who run from melee opponents will force their opponents to choose new tactics or pursue. Running demands a Balance check on hazardous surfaces, and even if the check is successful, the character’s movement rate is halved. If the check is failed, opponents will be halted or, better yet, fall flat on their collective faces. The high-Balance character may either completely shake her opponents or face them at uneven intervals as they individually cross the hazardous terrain at mixed rates.

Climb

All standard warrior classes but paladins have access to Climb as a class skill, and in many campaigns, characters will frequently have opportunities to climb surfaces during combat. DMs playing clever archers, spellcasters and other long-distance foes may place those enemies on elevated surfaces like cliffs, ledges, and roofs. If a melee warrior cannot reach those targets, she is effectively out of the battle. Conversely, a warrior of the archer archetype may wish to position herself in such a location prior to an ambush. Without the use of magic items or the assistance of another character, such warriors must rely on the use of the Climb skill.

However, it has to be said that while characters often find many opportunities to climb, there are a wide variety of spells and magic items that make ranks in the Climb skill a questionable investment (see sidebar).

DON'T BE A CHUMP. USE POTIONS, NOT POINTS!

A simple perusal of the PHB spell section and the DMG magic item section reveals several dozen ways to cheaply enhance many skills. Several skills are overrepresented and most are underrepresented. Between *potions of invisibility*, *cloaks of elvenkind*, and armor with the *shadow* property, it's a wonder that anyone ever makes any Spot checks in a well-stocked campaign. Notice anything that grants a bonus to Spot? No? That's because there's a grand total of one.

As always, availability of magic for your character depends on party composition and how rich in magic the campaign is. But if, for example, a *potion of spider climb* in your campaign costs anywhere near the price listed in the DMG, potions may be a better investment than skill ranks. *Spider climb* not only gives a climb speed of 20 ft. (Climb normally allows only 1/4 movement rate), but the subject doesn't even need to make checks while climbing on horizontal or vertical surfaces! At a duration of 10 min./level, it is almost guaranteed to last until the end of any battle. Though it could be argued that a warrior wastes a standard action just drinking a potion (and more if she had to retrieve it), she will make up the lost time in accelerated movement if the distance of the climb is twenty feet or greater. Plus, with a duration of 30 minutes or more, you can just drink a potion every half-hour or so – how many times have you wandered through a dungeon and not met an opponent within half an hour?

A warrior spending trivial amounts of skill points in a skill can still make important checks with the right equipment. It doesn't matter if your warrior makes a Hide check by one point or thirty; if you make it, you make it. For that reason, put your points in skills that are difficult to enhance with relatively common magic. Warriors typically do not get a lot of skill points per level, making them precious, especially when compared to the trivial cost of most basic magic items. Stock up on potions of *spider climb*, *jump*, and *invisibility*; save your skill points for Listen, Tumble, and Ride.

Jump

Except for paladins, who can only jump when their god says so, all of the standard warrior classes can advance Jump as a class skill. In many campaigns, the potential for using Jump will be fair at best, but it's still better than Balance. As with many of the other combat mobility skills, light infantry, guerilla, and some archer characters will probably get the most out of this skill in any applicable environment. Heavy infantry characters will fall to their richly-deserved deaths and cavalry characters may find it redundant when they're sitting on an animal that's likely to be five times better at jumping than they will ever be.

Assuming you want to buy into it, the tricky thing about Jump isn't finding things to jump over; it's finding enough room to make the required 20-foot running start. Though it's possible to make standing long jumps at double the DC, there usually aren't practical situations where this is a safe bet to make. Unlike Balance, where most failed checks result in either moving slowly or falling down for a round, a failed Jump check in many circumstances will result in leaving the fight as quickly as your DM can find 20d6. If your typical adventure locations have names like "The Endless Chasms of Sorrow" or "The Hellish Canyons of At Least Two Hundred Foot Drops," it would be wise to accept that you should avoid jumping unless you're quite sure you can make the check.

However, for the character with a high Jump bonus, this can also be a great advantage. DMs will realize the danger of Jumping in some circumstances, too. Though Sir Stoneshoes might not hesitate to attempt a Balance check on a slick floor, he may balk at trying to jump over a 20-foot ravine just so he can follow your crazy monk.

It's arguable that warriors could infrequently use Jump to clear small creatures, but you'd probably be better off investing in Tumble for such occasions, since Tumble technically allows you roll right on through enemy creatures even when they're adjacent to each other. For monks, this is an exceptionally good idea. Monks get both Tumble and Jump as class skills and they both grant synergy bonuses to each other after five ranks. Combined with the Acrobatic feat, it's unlikely that anyone other than another monk would be able to follow you as you hop around the battlefield.

Swim

It is very rare that a player *expects* her character to be swimming on any given adventure, unless the setting obviously lends itself to such activities. Often, players suddenly find their characters in water or at the edge of a cliff with a horde of creatures close behind. Making a Swim check is just as often involuntary as voluntary, and it can be just as dangerous as jumping over a chasm. In fact, due to the lethality of drowning rules in the DMG, it is usually more deadly to a fighter than a long fall.

Because the checks are often involuntary, this is the only combat mobility skill where the fighters in the heaviest armor can benefit from having maximum ranks. If your heavy infantry or cavalry characters get thrown into the drink, that nice suit of full plate armor has double the armor check penalty that it does for other movement skills. Without high Strength and maximum ranks in Swim, a warrior could die very quickly. With no other modifiers, the -12 from full plate makes the check statistically impossible.

Does this really matter to you? To answer this, you must analyze your DM's style of setting up encounters. Does she note that Bob's paladin wears all metal armor and has all metal weapons, then drop rust monsters right next to him? Does she note that Suzy's wizard memorizes only fire spells, then sends a group of salamanders straight for her? Basically, if your DM loves to sucker-punch the PCs and your warrior wears heavy armor, it is in your best interest to buy ranks of Swim for insurance.

If you are playing one of the lightly armored warrior archetypes, a few ranks in Swim can help if you ever want to get to an inaccessible position. This is especially useful for archers. If our heavily armored foe Sir Stoneshoes hesitates to jump over a chasm, there is no way he is diving into the water to see if he can swim out to your archer.

Tumble

By this point in time, it may seem that the combat mobility skills are only useful for warriors if you are playing cowardly ninnies. Tumble almost makes up for that. However, more than any of the combat mobility skills, the usefulness of Tumble is negated by high encumbrance. In fact, you cannot use Tumble at all if your movement rate has been reduced due to encumbrance or armor. Therefore, it is only useful for archers, light infantry, guerillas, and some skirmishers, period.

There are two functions that make Tumble especially useful for warriors. The first is its ability to allow the warrior to completely avoid attacks of opportunity while moving through threatened spaces. As if that were not enough, high Tumble checks can actually allow the warrior to move through areas occupied by opponents.

The player should decide if she wants to have a "casual" tumbler or a "dedicated" tumbler. A casual tumbler only worries about avoiding attacks of opportunity when moving through threatened areas. A dedicated tumbler tries to make those hellish DC 25 checks for tumbling through an area occupied by an enemy. The casual tumbler's check to avoid attacks of opportunity really isn't that difficult to make, and even if the character fails, she can still move; she just has to deal with the attack of opportunity. A +5 bonus to Tumble means you can avoid attacks of opportunity 50% of the time, statistically speaking. With a good Dexterity, you can get a +5 bonus at first level. And a +10 bonus, achievable a few levels later, means

you avoid attacks of opportunity 75% of the time. With a solid AC or the Mobility feat, the character will rarely suffer for a failed check.

In contrast, moving through occupied squares is a lot harder and can have dire consequences. Not only is the character's movement halted, but she takes an attack of opportunity for her efforts. You need a +15 on Tumble simply to hit a 50% chance of success. If you want to make use this aspect of Tumble, you need to max out your ranks, ramp up your Dexterity, and add as much Dexterity-enhancing magic as fast as you can.

Guerillas will find this skill invaluable if they take maximum ranks at every level, get the synergy bonus from Jump, and take the Acrobatic feat. Because they often go after targets like wizards and archers, they will frequently need to find a way around or through the meat shields that guard them. Short of magic, there is nothing that does this more effectively in combat than Tumble. Even if the meat shields decide to pursue the tumbling warrior, their ranks will likely be broken. This allows allies to move through the space the meat shields were blocking and take control of the terrain.

Combat Staging

Perhaps even more important than mobility is getting the jump on the competition before combat begins. When you start the battle, you choose the terrain, allied positions, and time of attack. It also gives the warrior's support crew time to load her up with beneficial spells and potions. In an otherwise evenly matched battle, the elements of surprise and preparation will almost always turn the tide in the aggressor's favor.

The skills of combat staging are traditionally the skills of the scouting rogue: Hide, Listen, Move Silently, and Spot. Though two classes, monk and ranger, have access to all four of these skills as class skills, they can still be useful to warriors of other classes provided they are of the appropriate archetype.

Hide and Move Silently

For practical purposes, Hide should be grouped with Move Silently. It is a stealth skill, and when one check is made, the other is usually made simultaneously. If a monk or ranger warrior wishes to invest in Hide, the player should always try to match Hide ranks with Move Silently ranks. However, there are a few choice ways to manipulate this skill setup in a way that does not drain other characters' entire available skill point pool every level.

The first rule to follow is simple: if the warrior does not have Hide and Move Silently as class skills, only put points in Move Silently. If you attempt to put points in both, you will wind up spending all of your points to get a mediocre skill that will often fail against opposed Spot

and Listen checks. If the warrior puts maximum points in just Move Silently, she can travel in the wake of a “legitimate” scout character like the party rogue. The rogue scouts, waits until no one is watching, and lets the warrior know when the coast is clear. If there is no line of sight to the warrior, no Spot check can be made to detect the character. If someone could spot the warrior, well, that is what *potions of invisibility* are for. Unless your character has to sneak by a hydra in full daylight, the +20 bonus to the warrior’s Hide check should suffice.

The character will never match a monk or ranger, much less a rogue, for sheer ranks, but using the skill in the manner listed above will allow the warrior to successfully reach monitored locations either for her benefit or for the benefit of the scout.

As might be obvious, the heavy infantry and cavalry archetypes will find these skills close to useless. Not only are heavy infantry and cavalry characters unlikely to be monks or rangers, but they tend to carry around large plates of shiny metal on their bodies. Horses are also notoriously poor scouts, having given up subtlety for the ability to kick a grown man through a barn door. Hide and Move Silently are of the greatest use for guerillas and skirmishers. Choosing their position allows them

to choose their target. Since guerillas are dedicated to taking out specific types of enemies and skirmishers often play “cleanup,” these skills can be their key to maximum efficiency early in a battle. Archers with good combat mobility skills like Climb and Jump may also find these skills valuable, as stealth can allow them the cover they need to reach their destination prior to combat.

Listen and Spot

Not surprisingly, Listen and Spot go together as well as Hide and Move Silently. The skills are both used to detect enemies before they spot you or, worse, before they are about to catch you flat-footed. Though on the surface, it may seem that both are of roughly equal value, it is normally Listen that is of greater value for the defender. First, any creature with a friendly spellcasting companion or a cheap potion can turn invisible. But there is only one common spell that helps with quiet movement: *silence*. Unfortunately for would-be assassins and guards, *silence* extends outwards from them. This not only potentially hurts them, but it also tips off noisy warriors when all sound ceases. The only case in which a player should be concerned about this is when a rogue is attempting to attack from range between thirty and fifteen feet of the target. Though this is a notable exception, it is just that: an exception.

Remember these maxims:

- Number of spells in the PHB that directly increase Move Silently: zero
- Number of skill points scouts or defensive warriors should put into Listen: as many as you can

Listen allows the warrior to detect enemies on top of wall, behind a door, and even under cover of darkness. All a warrior needs to worry about is tipping off enemies while scouting or being surprised and flat-footed during an ambush. Whether the goal is reconnaissance or simple defense, it is always better to have a high chance of making one check to detect an enemy than having two low chances to detect an enemy.

Archers or guerillas may also find Spot to be as useful as Listen, since it can allow them to locate remote targets in the middle of a large battle or in wide-open spaces. For the ranger archer and the monk guerilla, both of whom have access to Listen and Spot as class skills, equal investment in both can prove to be very useful.

Survival

Forget all about foraging for food and water. Forget about bonuses to Fortitude saves against severe weather. Skip everything listed in the Survival task table except tracking. This is the only application of Survival that has any significant merit for the dedicated warrior. Tracking is very useful for combat staging as it can tip the party

HOW TO SPEND YOUR POINTS, OR WHY

GENERALISTS SUCK AT HIGH LEVELS

In general, 3.5 favors the specialist. The game uses an unweighted progression for skills, attack bonuses, saving throws, and most other important things. As character bonuses and DCs increase, your character’s bonus becomes far more relevant than the d20 roll to which it is added. Once the character’s bonus to a die roll exceeds half the die’s average value, you have passed that point. In other words, once you hit +10 in a skill, the influence of the random die roll starts to diminish rapidly. At low levels, the die roll makes or breaks a character’s actions; at high levels, it is often a mere formality.

While it is fine to spend broadly at low levels, especially for skirmishers, after fifth or sixth level, players should start focusing their warriors’ points on a fixed number of skills. The skills chosen should be advanced with maximum points every level. If you would have to alternate spending on a skill every other level, consider cutting it from your list of “must-have” skills. It is better to consistently make checks for one skill than to frequently fail checks for two skills.

Also, if a character has enough ranks and bonuses to consistently make skill checks against the only static DCs you care about, do not spend any more points in the skill. For example, if you want to use Spellcraft to identify spells as they are cast, there is no reason to spend any more points on the skill once the warrior’s total bonus is +14. +14 gives you a 55% chance of identifying a 9th level spell, and an even higher chance of identifying lower-level spells (95% versus 1st level spells!), so unless you want absolute certainty of each spell effect, you’re entering the realm of diminishing marginal returns. Of course, for skill checks where the DC is an opposed skill check, continual spending may be necessary, since what’s important is having more skill ranks than the other guy.

off to the size and composition of a group of potential enemies. In many cases, tracking can be an effective form of “pre-reconnaissance reconnaissance.” You don’t need to risk sneaking into the caves full of ettins to know they’re in there. Tracking can also allow a fast-moving archer, cavalry, or light infantry warrior to locate and run down a fleeing opponent who chooses to duck out of the battle when no one is looking.

For rangers, taking ranks in this skill is almost a no-brainer. They get the Track feat for free, and it can be useful on a regular basis. For other warriors, it’s very questionable. Barbarians are the only other characters for whom it would not be a total waste. Even then, spending a feat on Track when it could be spent on Power Attack... that’s a cardinal sin in the Church of Power Gaming.

Combat Tactics

Bluff, Concentration, Escape Artist, Heal, Intimidate, Ride, Sense Motive, and Spellcraft certainly do not seem to share much in common. With a mixed bag of potential applications, the combat tactics skills are often best used by a particular warrior archetype to achieve an advantage in combat. These skills will never take the place of a lucky critical hit, but they can certainly maximize a warrior’s chances of success in battle. More than for any of the other skills listed, if a warrior archetype is not listed in conjunction with a combat tactics skill, assume that it is a poor investment for that type of character.

Bluff

Normally the domain of weakling rogues and bards who would rather talk their way out of a fight than get their hair messed up, Bluff can also be useful for light and heavy infantry warriors fighting highly agile opponents. At low levels, a quick-footed rogue or a nimble bard with a few protective spells active can be frustratingly difficult to hit. Most of those low-level characters will not invest their early skill points in Sense Motive. This makes them ripe for a feint via the Bluff skill. The feint negates their Dexterity bonus to armor class for your warrior’s next single attack which can mean the difference between a spectacular miss and a solid hit.

It must be said, for several reasons, that this skill is not a good long-term investment for any warrior except a multi-classed rogue looking for some cheap sneak attacks. First, the player must accept that no standard warrior class has access to Bluff as a class skill. The characters most likely to be frustratingly agile are also the characters most likely to have Sense Motive, which opposes Bluff. Feint checks also allow the defender to add their base attack bonus to the roll. In the long run, enemy characters, even spending casually on Sense Motive, will have defending bonuses that far outstrip your warrior’s Bluff bonus. Also, the feint takes up your warrior’s standard action and, even if it is successful, only applies to the first attack on the next round. For

characters with iterative attacks, the bluff is a waste of a full attack action and ultimately does not help with iterative attacks after the first.

The optimal cut-off time for a warrior investing in Bluff is fourth or fifth level. After that point, the warrior will fail most feints against targets that matter and will have the necessary attack bonus to strike most targets with their primary attack. However, the clever skill-focused warrior can stop spending when they have five ranks in the skill, since it grants a whopping total of +8 in synergy bonuses to four different skills.

Concentration

Immediately, this skill seems out of place for warriors. It’s a skill for spellcasters. But if you play a paladin or a ranger, it is vital for the successful use of spells at higher levels. Neither class has a huge arsenal of magic at its disposal, but a timely *bless weapon* or *longstrider* can be quite potent. Unlike wizards, sorcerers, bards, and even the occasional cleric or druid, paladins and rangers are expected to be in the thick of combat often. If your paladin or ranger is an infantry warrior or guerilla, Concentration is a must to avoid spell disruption. Archers and cavalry characters will normally be able to keep a safe enough distance that they can cast spells without fear of reprisal.

Escape Artist

This skill can be useful for any warrior attacked by a grappling monster or stuck in a web or similar effect. It is most useful for low-strength warriors, especially monks who tend to have higher Dexterity than Strength and lower base attack bonuses overall. Though monks are the best at starting grapple attacks because they have Improved Unarmed Strike, they are, statistically speaking, at a disadvantage when trying to escape from them through a standard grapple check. The three principle elements of a grapple check are base attack bonus, Strength modifier, and a special size modifier. More often than not, when going up against a heavy infantryman or any other melee warrior type, the monk will be at a disadvantage for at least two of these statistics if she needs to escape. If the opponent doing the grappling is monstrous, chances are that it will be both stronger and larger than the warrior being attacked. In such cases, a monk with a high Dexterity has a much better chance by relying on Escape Artist than on a standard check.

Though overall this skill has a very narrow application, it may be useful for guerrillas and archers, who tend to fight alone and on foot, often separated from their fellow party members. An opponent who grapples your warrior with three of your comrades standing adjacent to the brawl is easily dispatched. An opponent who grapples the archer at the back of the room or the guerilla making a bee-line for the enemy wizard has a much better chance to make your warrior’s soon-to-be-short life hell.

Handle Animal

Useful primarily for rangers with a steady cash flow, Handle Animal is a poor man's (or woman's) route to cheap combat and tracking labor. Summon monster... what? Leadership feat... huh? Why spend valuable spell and feat slots when guard dogs are 25 gp each? Guard dogs have only two hit dice, but they have a high base movement rate, the easily-abused Scent ability (which you should feel free to abuse), impressive bonuses to track, and, most annoying of all, gain free trip attacks on every bite attack without reprisal. To automatically command them for trained tasks, all you need is a +9 to Handle Animal, or +11 if they are wounded.

A ranger with four trained guard dogs is almost guaranteed to make all but the most difficult tracking checks, detect invisible opponents, and run down fleeing opponents with ease. From a min/max perspective, this is awesome. From a role-playing perspective, rangers probably shouldn't use guard dogs as fodder. Be sure to keep a freshly peeled onion under the table when dogs #17-20 die so the DM is confident that you are deeply affected by the loss. Then wait at least five minutes before purchasing dogs #21-24.

Your DM may charge high prices for pre-trained dogs or other animals. In such cases, you may find it useful to spend more skill points on Handle Animal and train the

creatures yourself. High checks will also allow your character to tame and train wild creatures like wolves, which are even more useful than standard dogs.

Non-ranger cavalry characters will also find this skill useful, if expensive and difficult, for the purpose of training mounts to perform specific tasks. Usually, however, this is not necessary for cavalry warriors to be effective. Still, the synergy bonus to Ride from five ranks in Handle Animal can come in useful.

Heal

Heal is a skill used by warriors to preserve the lives of their more frail comrades until a party healer can arrive and provide proper aid. Beneficial more for the mobile warrior types near the front line, Heal will often be underused by remote archers, occupied guerrillas, and heavy infantry with low movement rates.

The key to successful first aid use of the Heal skill is timeliness. A warrior who is unable to break free of her current engagements and administer aid at exactly the right time is useless. A cavalry warrior has the speed of movement to be timely at leisure, as does a light infantry character right next to the heart of the action. Skirmishers, who specifically play to the current needs of the group, will also find frequent use of the Heal skill to be invaluable.

In terms of character classes, this skill will be best used with rangers and paladins. Both classes have access to Heal as a class skill, and both classes gain additional class benefits for having a high Wisdom. Even at low levels, paladins often fall into the role of second string healer, so the Heal skill makes a good tertiary backup until the cleric or druid shows up.

The required check for a first aid check is static, sitting at a 15 DC. To guarantee success, get the basic check up to +12 and carry around a healing kit at all times. However, for casual healers or characters with Heal as a cross-class skill, you may wish to only get the Heal bonus into the +7 to +9 range. As long as your warrior reaches the dying character with at least an additional round to spare, your chances of making the check in two rounds are extremely high.

Note that in particularly brutal campaigns, the DM may make the path to a fallen comrade difficult to traverse. In these cases, mounted cavalry warriors will often have the best means to get the job done: overruns and bull rushes performed by a large steed with hooves the size of an enemy's head are generally very effective.

Intimidate

Besides being the only speech skill available as a class skill to barbarians and fighters, Intimidate has a very specific use in battle: demoralizing opponents. On the surface, this looks like it may be more useful than the feint

DON'T PLAY THE ROGUE'S GAME, TOUGH GUY. YOU'LL LOSE. BADLY.

You're playing a warrior. Always remember that. Even a warrior with a high Intelligence and decent class skills still only gets, at most, six skill points per level. Most get two or four. That's pretty pathetic compared to a rogue. Skills are the domain of rogues and bards. Though there are exceptions to this general rule, do not accept a rogue's invitation to a challenge of skills. In most cases, you will fail. Warriors will do best with skills when they are making checks against static DCs. The player knows what to expect, knows her character's bonuses, and can often make the check with confidence in the outcome.

Think about rogue and bard players in your party. They have more points than they know what to do with, make most checks by a huge margin, and typically are given most skill-enhancing magic items when loot is found. How often do they say, "Man, I wish I had some more skills to spend all these points on?" How often do they say, "The DC's fifteen? Oh, I made it by... twenty-two, I guess." How often do they say, "Well, with my twelve ranks, plus six Dexterity bonus, plus five competence bonus from my cloak, plus two racial bonus for being a halfling, plus two synergy bonus..." Do you really want to go up against that?

If your character is particularly well-suited for the use of a particular skill, by all means, ignore the caution given above. A warrior must choose her battles carefully, but do not hesitate to seize the opportunity if you are confident of your chances. But in general, focus on your strength (killing stuff), not on skills.

option offered by the Bluff skill. After all, the opponent's roll to defend has nothing to do with an opposed skill check and the penalties apply to the target's rolls, not just your attacks against the target. Unfortunately, it suffers the same long-term drawbacks as the feint: the use of a standard action wastes iterative attacks at higher levels. Also, those who are mostly likely to be cowed by the warrior's intimidation will typically be less important for neutralization purposes. Demoralizing a second level rogue for one round is not very important if a raging barbarian is power attacking you round after round. Still, it can be useful in the right situations.

Though it requires a bit of forethought, demoralization can be very effective when used in conjunction with special attacks like disarm or trip. Make a standard move towards the opponent and then demoralize her as your standard action. On the next round, make a disarm or trip attack. Not only will the target be at a disadvantage to hit your warrior, but she will be at a penalty to all opposed attack rolls and ability score checks required for the resolution of your special attacks. Another perk of demoralization is that any adjacent allies can take advantage of the opponent's shaken state. Even if your warrior does not have Improved Trip or Improved Disarm, one of your allies can still get the job done.

Overall, this skill is best taken by barbarians and fighters of the light infantry, heavy infantry, and cavalry archetypes. Archers who rarely enter combat, guerillas who fight opponents with low attack bonuses, and characters without Intimidate as a class skill will find it underused for the cost.

Ride

Without spoiling the great mystery, it must immediately be stated that the Ride skill is of paramount importance to the cavalry archetype. Though possession of a powerful mount, heavy armor, and numerous mounted combat feats is very useful, the Ride skill is necessary for cavalry characters to be effective. There is no special trick to using the Ride skill successfully as long as the campaign setting permits its frequent use.

For the dedicated cavalry character, Ride allows free cover, access to a mount's terrific Jump skill, superior mount movement, and free action mounts and dismounts. Archer characters, especially rangers, may also find Ride helpful as it allows them to quickly reposition themselves on an open battlefield. This is useful for running down fleeing opponents or moving away from incoming attackers. A mounted archer, even on a heavy warhorse with plate barding, will still be capable of evading all but the quickest and most dedicated pursuers.

Sense Motive

To combat-oriented warriors, this skill is useful for one thing: protecting against feints, usually from rogues. Rogues, being crafty types, may take the Improved Feint

feat, which allows them to feint as a move action. This is very bad for warriors, since it can open them up to repeated sneak attacks every round. Warriors other than monks and paladins will have trouble keeping pace with a rogue's Bluff skill because of the cross-class skill cost, but in the long run, the warrior classes' superior base attack bonus will balance out the Bluff-heavy rogue. For that reason, Sense Motive is a worthwhile investment for any melee-oriented character archetype fighting on foot. Archer and cavalry characters will find the skill underused.

Spellcraft

On the surface, this skill would seem almost worthless for warriors, especially since no standard warrior classes have access to it as a class skill. However, for the archer, guerilla, and skirmisher, it can be invaluable. In combat, the typical use of Spellcraft is for counterspelling enemy magic. Identification of the spell is a key component of counterspelling, and it can also be a key component of choosing which casters will be annihilated by a warrior's attacks. It will find the best use with archers who have readied actions covering a field with multiple enemy casters. As a free action, your warrior can try to recognize any spell being cast and determine if intercession is needed. Failure has no negative consequence. For characters with limited attacks of opportunity in melee combat with casters, it can help determine if an attack of opportunity should be used against a specific caster, or if the warrior should wait for another character to provoke a more important attack.

For guerillas dedicated to taking out spellcasters, this skill has another free advantage: identifying spells that are already in place. When running up to a fragile wizard ripe for melee attacks, the last thing a guerilla wants to do is find out the hard way that the old geezer is protected by a *fire shield*. As with identifying spells during casting, identifying spells in place is an unlimited-use free action with no penalty for failure.

How High Should You Go?

As alluded to previously, it's not always wise to keep ramping up skill ranks indefinitely. Beyond a certain point, you get diminishing marginal returns. What's the real difference between a 90% chance of success and 95%, especially when there's no cost to failure? Not much. Unless you truly have nothing better to spend your skill points on, you're better off learning a new skill at that point. Table 4-1 on the following page summarizes at what point the typical warrior should stop advancing in a skill, and the following paragraphs explain why.

Balance: At this point, the character's ranks and bonuses will usually make it more than 75% likely that he'll cross any narrow or difficult surface while running or charging, even with one of the worst surface modifiers. Unless you regularly cross severely obstructed, slippery,

sloped surfaces less than two inches wide, you should be fine.

Bluff: Warriors will not be able to successfully feint against most opponents after about 7th or 8th level. The five ranks in Bluff will give a +2 synergy bonus to four other skills, though.

Climb: Ten ranks of Climb will suffice for all “normal” climbing situations. For exceptional situations, use one of the myriad magic items that boost Climb to insane levels.

Concentration: Once a ranger or paladin reaches fifteen ranks in Concentration, they will be able to cast defensively with a very high success rate. Since their highest level spell is 4, their highest DC for casting defensively is 19. Even with only slight bonuses, they will almost always make their checks.

Escape Artist: A monk with Escape Artist is likely to be able to escape most grapples by the time she hits fifteen

ranks. And at that level, it will be pretty rare that an enemy chooses to grapple instead of using more powerful attacks.

Handle Animal: At fifteen ranks, even slight bonuses to Handle Animal will allow the character to do whatever she wants to do with animals. Most characters can even get away with ten or twelve ranks.

Heal: At ten ranks, the character will have at least a 75% chance of successfully administering first aid. Add bonuses on top of ranks, and it’s almost assured. Since characters usually get first aid long before –9 hit points, multiple chances make it extremely unlikely that the Heal check won’t succeed in time.

Hide: The first breakpoint is when most “casual” buyers should stop. If the warrior isn’t the primary scout for the party, she should accompany the primary scout and only move when the coast is clear. The second breakpoint is for warriors like rangers and monks who may, in fact, be doing the majority of the party’s scouting.

Intimidate: Up until about this point, it is acceptable to try to demoralize an opponent instead of making a full attack. After this point, it simply is not; you’re wasting two or more attacks a round for every Intimidate check you make. Once the secondary attack gains a bit of a bonus, lay off the Intimidate unless it’s a special occasion.

Jump: At five ranks, the casual buyer with slight bonuses can be reasonably confident of clearing a 10 foot wide obstacle. The five ranks also give a +2 synergy bonus to Tumble. Character classes biased towards jumping, like monks and barbarians, can feel free to buy the skill to the very limit. They will be able to make increasingly absurd jumps that their opponents could not dream of clearing.

Listen: The casual or “secondary” scout can use five ranks in Listen just to remain competitive with low-level rogues and sneaky monsters of all kinds. If the character is the primary scout and has Listen as a class skill, feel free to take it all the way to the maximum allowed.

Move Silently: As described in the skill analyses, Move Silently will generally be more important to a “tag-along” scout than Hide. Accordingly, warriors should buy up to about ten ranks and stop there unless there is a pressing need to push it. Dedicated scouts, as usual, should always max out this skill.

Ride: Unless the character is a serious cavalry warrior, only one rank of Ride is required. That’s all that’s necessary for taking Mounted Combat and, more importantly, the feats beyond it. Anyone who wants to make use of Mounted Combat will need to spend more on the Ride skill, but the exact amount depends on the level of commitment to fighting from horseback. Cavalry characters, on the other hand, should always max out this skill and use it to full effect.

Sense Motive: If feints from rogues are really a big

TABLE 4-1 WHEN TO STOP IMPROVING SKILLS

Skill	Ranks:				
	0	5	10	15	20+
Balance	*	*	Stop	–	–
Bluff	*	Stop	–	–	–
Climb	*	*	Stop	–	–
Concentration	*	*	*	Stop	–
Escape Artist	*	*	*	Stop	–
Handle Animal	*	*	*	Stop	–
Heal	*	*	Stop	–	–
Hide	*	Stop	*	*	Stop
Intimidate	*	*	Stop	–	–
Jump	*	Stop	*	*	Stop
Listen	*	Stop	*	*	Stop
Move Silently	*	Stop	*	*	Stop
Ride	Stop	*	*	*	Stop
Sense Motive	*	*	*	*	Stop
Spot	*	Stop	*	*	Stop
Spellcraft	*	*	*	Stop	–
Survival	*	*	*	*	Stop
Swim	*	*	Stop	*	Stop
Tumble	*	*	Stop	*	Stop

* Keep adding skill points.

problem, characters with Sense Motive as a class skill will need to continually advance the skill. If the rogues aren't feinting you that often, or if the warrior's class doesn't have good access to the skill, don't bother with it.

Spot: As with many of the combat staging skills, Spot doesn't need to be advanced much for the secondary scout or guard. For primary scouts and guards, it should be kept at maximum ranks.

Spellcraft: For guerillas, fifteen ranks marks the spot where spell identification starts to become really easy. Even a 9th level spell will have a 50% chance of being identified. With even slight bonuses, guerillas should have no problem.

Survival: A ranger will want to continually keep this skill at maximum ranks as the DCs for tracking can be high. Besides, few things are more satisfying than telling the DM that you made the check to track the moonlit week-old grig trail over snow-covered stone.

Swim: Archers, guerillas, and light infantry can comfortably stop at about ten ranks in Swim. This will allow them to make their checks more often than not, even if the water is fairly choppy. Cavalry, heavy infantry, and some skirmishers in heavy armor will need to max this skill out or find reliable magic to prevent their deaths when they fall into water in their armor.

Tumble: Tumble effectively has two breakpoints which are important for the character. The first is ten ranks, which makes it very likely for them to be able to tumble past opponents without provoking an attack of opportunity. If the character wants to reliably tumble through a blocked area, she is going to need close to twenty ranks or significant bonuses.

Synergy Recap

It's been said before but it's worth saying again: if you're going to take a skill, take at least 5 ranks, because more often than not that will give you a synergy bonus. The Skills chapter in the PHB has the super-handly table 4-5 for identifying which skills give synergies to which other skills. Read it carefully and keep it in mind as you allocate your skills. For the typical low-skill-points warrior, skill synergies are not a common occurrence, but simply being aware of the possibilities might change the way you build your character.

Chapter Five

Feats

Deciding your feat selection is one of the most important parts of character generation. Where a spellslinger has arcane magic, a thief has skills, and holies have granted powers or class features, warriors often have a smaller and weaker assortment of class features. Those warriors overlapping with wizards or druids find their spell capacity is sorely limited and learn quickly not to depend on them. This is where feats come in.

Several things affect a feat's usefulness, such as the campaign world, contextual usefulness, or even a long list of mediocre prerequisites. Worse, you start working for a prestige class only to discover that the class doesn't function as you thought, and now you're stuck with Endurance and Alertness – ugh! Screwing up your feat selection has far greater consequences than any other department in your character. See, a bad spell can be replaced. A handful of poorly thought-out skill point placements is no big deal. But typical characters get seven feats. Period. And unless you're human, or sacrifice other potential cool abilities for levels in fighter, you're pretty much stuck with just a few feats.

So how do you avoid taking the wrong feats? This chapter will give a comprehensive overview to help you plan your warrior's feats throughout his career. We're not going to level a bunch of forests by droning on about the worthless ones, except for maybe a few words here and there about fool's gold. Instead, we'll spend our time talking about the best feats in the game, focusing on the core feats in a given feat tree.

Fool's Gold

Lots of feats look cooler than they actually are. In fact, many are common feats that seem enticing on paper, but in play, they suck. Here's a list of the prime offenders. They're rarely a good choice for warriors

Skill Buff Feats (SBFs)

Any feat that adds a +3 bonus to one skill or +2 bonus to X and Y checks are SBFs. Such feats include Acrobatic, Agile, Deceitful, and the rest. These are common through the d20 system. In fact, for warriors they are like viruses, deluding the player into thinking that a Hide check of +27 is just that much better than +25, like Spot +3 will make that much difference over Spot +1. Maybe these skills are acceptable for other classes, or for role-playing (like that matters), but for characters built to maximize killing potential, count these as wasted feats.

Armor Feats

Another stinker is the Armor Proficiency feats. It seems these were included for completeness, mechanics, and for options, but in fact they have next to no impact on game play. Some warrior classes have a limited selection of armor, true. However, if you want to beef up your armor selection, just take a level in fighter. Then you get all the weapons and armor one could possibly ever want, while gaining a bonus feat to boot.

Metamagic and Item Creation Feats

In almost every case, there are better feats for warriors to invest in than sacking a feat for a quirky metamagic feat,

WHAT'S A FEAT TREE?

Feat trees are the obvious combos in the feats chapter of the PHB. They usually start with a basic feat, then progress into a list of other feats with the basic feat as a prerequisite. For example, Power Attack is the root of its own feat tree. Its branches are Cleave, Improved Sunder, Great Cleave, and so on. The PHB has several species of feat trees and they are as follows:

Armor Proficiency	Combat Expertise
Dodge	Endurance
Improved Unarmed Strike	Mounted Combat
Point Blank Shot	Power Attack
Shield Proficiency	Spell Focus
Spell Penetration	Two-Weapon Fighting
Weapon Focus	

or the experience-point draining item creation variety. However, the paladin would do well to invest in Brew Potion. Lacking the martial punch of the other combat characters, the paladin can fulfill other needed roles in the party through simply manufacturing potions and oils. Just think – an entire party with *blessed* weapons! And with *potions of cure light wounds* for everyone.

Miscellaneous Suckness

Several other feats defy classification. They may look good on paper, but have very limited usefulness.

Endurance: It doesn't matter how you dress this up, this feat still reeks, even as a prerequisite to Diehard. What is sad is that Endurance covers all the rules most DMs gloss over, such as sleeping in armor, extended swimming, extended running, and so on. When compared to Cleave or Spring Attack, there is really no reason to dump one of your seven feats here. However, if you're playing a fighter, and you have a spare feat at around 12th level, like so many do, go ahead, Diehard could be worth it.

Improved Initiative: This is an example of how a feat looks great, but actually sucks. Giving its greatest benefit to the rogue and spellcasting classes, Improved Initiative offers no tactical advantage to warriors whatsoever. Melee warriors often benefit from going after their opponents. Most opponents start separated by more than five feet on the battlefield. This means that if they wish to engage in melee, they need to close the distance. Moving more than five feet means they only get a single attack – whereas if they only step five feet, they can take the full attack action and swing, swing, swing! Given two combatants separated by any significant distance, the first combatant to make an attack almost always winds up making a single attack, followed by the opposition's full attack. The higher the levels of the warriors, the worse the loss – if both characters have three attacks, the first attacker loses two attacks simply to get in the first blow! Since warriors rarely drop significant opponents in a single attack, this actually makes the slower warrior more likely to win the battle.

Improved Overrun: The problem with Improved Overrun is that it actually takes away a potential advantage for your warrior. If we determine that the purpose of an overrun is to move past someone, and that the purpose of a bull rush is to push someone back, Improved Overrun makes it *more difficult* for your character to succeed at an overrun because it disallows the target from stepping out of the way. If all targets are forced to block, your warrior always has to roll a check. Granted, you have a +4 bonus to that check, but having to make a check at all is worse than a forfeit by the defender. The other thing to remember is that overruns do not provoke attacks of opportunity like a bull rush. Ultimately, Improved Bull Rush will help you make bull rushes far more than Improved Overrun helps overruns. If you just want to knock someone over, that's what the trip action is for.

Improved Sunder: Sunder seems like a great tactic, better when used by heavy hitters such as cavalry, heavy infantry, and the occasional beefy skirmisher. The way the rules are set up, hitting and destroying a piece of equipment is easy. The only annoying part is the attack of opportunity the special attack provokes. This takes care of that problem easily. Considering that the only feat prerequisite is Power Attack, itself a useful feat for heavy hitters (not to mention one which potentially augments the results of a successful sunder attempt), Improved Sunder is a good value, right?

This is all true. However, any time you destroy a piece of equipment on the battlefield, you destroy a part of your treasure. Say the big scary ogre fights with a +2 *greatclub* and is making mince meat out of your frontline. Do you sunder? Hell no. Disarm, trip, or anything else achieves a similar result, putting the opponent at a disadvantage, while keeping that tasty 2,000+ gp intact. Say you're fighting a bunch of orcs. Do you sunder their weapons or do you hack them apart? I think the answer is obvious. The only time to use sunder is when your opponent is using an item of no value to you, such as an evil weapon, artifact, poison and so on. Otherwise, sheathe this feat.

Toughness: Toughness is almost unequivocally one of the worst feats for any character. It is even less useful for a warrior. At low levels, the bonus hit points can be marginally useful, occasionally saving a character from going down, but as the levels increase, so do the amounts of damage dealt to your character. High level characters, especially fighters, often don't enter the dying state at all. Instead, they will frequently go from positive hit points to well below -10. As challenges rise, the warrior will feel the significance of that three-point buffer less and less. When a 14th level fighter with 30 hit points left gets roasted by a red dragon's 72-point fire attack, which will be more useful: +3 hit points, or +2 to Reflex saves?

All-Star Feats

What follows is analysis of the feats you ought to take. If it's not mentioned here or as a fool's gold feat, it's probably safe to take, but it's not going to help all that much either. Here, you're going to see all the analysis one could ever want, with tables comparing Power Attack and damage dealt to standard attacks, the effects of Combat Expertise, and great combos for the others. As feats are the bread and butter for most warriors, you'd better pay close attention. Oh, and in case I forget, the feats here are organized by tree, with the bad limbs pruned. Don't look for Weapon Focus in this chapter, as that feat tree gets some discussion under the fighter class in the Classes chapter, and Two-Weapon Fighting is under combat styles in the Combat chapter.

TABLE 5-1 IS SUPER IMPORTANT

Dog-ear this page. All of the following tables compare to the 5-1 to show the most basic chances for a warrior to hit an opponent based on BAB and AC, using a constant damage value.

TABLE 5-1: STANDARD ATTACK PROGRESSION FOR UNMODIFIED WARRIOR BAB WITH UNMODIFIED LONGSWORD

BAB	Average Damage	Typical Chance of Hitting and Damage Per Round Versus Given AC							
		15	Damage	20	Damage	25	Damage	30	Damage
+1	4.5	0.35	1.575	0.1	0.45	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+2	4.5	0.4	1.8	0.15	0.675	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+3	4.5	0.45	2.025	0.2	0.9	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+4	4.5	0.5	2.25	0.25	1.125	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+5	4.5	0.55	2.475	0.3	1.35	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+6/+1	4.5	0.95	4.275	0.45	2.025	0.15	0.675	0.1	0.45
+7/+2	4.5	0.9	4.05	0.55	2.475	0.2	0.9	0.1	0.45
+8/+3	4.5	1	4.5	0.65	2.925	0.25	1.125	0.1	0.45
+9/+4	4.5	1.1	4.95	0.75	3.375	0.3	1.35	0.1	0.45
+10/+5	4.5	1.2	5.4	0.85	3.825	0.35	1.575	0.1	0.45
+11/+6/+1	4.5	1.8	8.1	1.05	4.725	0.5	2.25	0.2	0.9
+12/+7/+2	4.5	1.95	8.775	1.2	5.4	0.6	2.7	0.25	1.125
+13/+8/+3	4.5	2.1	9.45	1.35	6.075	0.7	3.15	0.3	1.35
+14/+9/+4	4.5	2.25	10.125	1.5	6.75	0.8	3.6	0.35	1.575
+15/+10/+5	4.5	2.3	10.35	1.65	7.425	0.9	4.05	0.4	1.8
+16/+11/+6/+1	4.5	2.75	12.375	1.9	8.55	1.1	4.95	0.55	2.475
+17/+12/+7/+2	4.5	2.9	13.05	2.1	9.45	1.25	5.625	0.65	2.925
+18/+13/+8/+3	4.5	3.05	13.725	2.3	10.35	1.4	6.3	0.75	3.375
+19/+14/+9/+4	4.5	3.2	14.4	2.5	11.25	1.55	6.975	0.85	3.825
+20/+15/+10/+5	4.5	3.25	14.625	2.6	11.7	1.7	7.65	0.95	4.275

How to read Table 5-1: This table isn't nearly as complicated as it looks. Let's look at the fifth line. This tells you the stats for a warrior with a BAB of +5. He's using a longsword (that's the point of the example), which does 1d8 damage on a hit. The average result for a 1d8 is 4.5, so that's the "Average Damage" column. The mess of numbers that follows is pretty straightforward. Based on the basic math for calculating hit percentages (which is explained on page 16), a fighter with a BAB of +5 has a 55% chance (or 0.55 on the table above) of hitting an AC 15 opponent. So he basically has a 55% chance of doing damage each round. Thus, we multiply the average damage (4.5) by the chance of doing damage each round (in this case 0.55) to get the typical damage per round against that AC (in this case, 2.475 points). If the +5 warrior fought an AC 15 opponent for 10 rounds, he would do, on average, 24.75 points of damage (2.475 x 10).

Right now this table might not seem too amazing, but wait till you see the comparisons that follow. Then you'll see why it's important...

Combat Expertise Tree

Number of Feats in Tree: 5

Additional Trees Required?: Yes, Dodge

Entry: Int 13

Exit: Dex 13

Archetypes: The guerilla is the most apt to take this tree, but usually can only attain the prerequisites by 4th level, if using the stat array in Chapter 1.

Combat Expertise

Many players see Combat Expertise as an awesome and easy way to boost their AC without much in the way of drawbacks, and in a party of just one character, this is true. However, by dropping your attacks to boost your AC, you reduce your chances to hit in a round, allowing the monsters more opportunities to hit you and more importantly, your allies. If your allies fall dead, you're pretty much dead meat too. The best time to use Combat Expertise is against heavy hitters with a low AC. This lets you minimize your chances of being hit, while still giving you a good chance of hitting your foe as well. Check out the comparison below. At 1st level, the warrior's AC increases by +1, +2 at 2nd, +3 at 3rd, +4 at 4th and +5 at 5th and above. His attack bonus ("Adjusted BAB" in the table) decreases by the same amount. The result is that the warrior hits about half as much as a standard warrior and does about half as much damage at the higher levels.

TREE ENTRIES EXPLAINED

Number of Feats in Tree: This is the total number of feats in the tree, including the bad ones.

Additional Trees Required?: Lists what other trees are necessary to take the whole tree, if any.

Entry: The prerequisite stat to take the first feat in the tree

Exit: The prerequisite stat to take the last feat in the tree.

Archetypes: Based on required stats, and referring to Chapter 1: Ability Scores, this lists which archetypes are likely to make use of the tree.

TABLE 5-2: MAX'D COMBAT EXPERTISE

Adjusted BAB (Expertise Mod)	Average Damage	Typical Chance of Hitting and Damage Per Round Versus Given AC							
		15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50
+0 (-1)	4.5	0.3	1.35	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+0 (-2)	4.5	0.3	1.35	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+0 (-3)	4.5	0.3	1.35	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+0 (-4)	4.5	0.3	1.35	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+0 (-5)	4.5	0.3	1.35	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+1/-4 (-5)	4.5	0.45	2.025	0.15	0.675	0.1	0.45	0.1	0.45
+2/-3 (-5)	4.5	0.4	1.8	0.2	0.9	0.1	0.45	0.1	0.45
+3/-2 (-5)	4.5	0.5	2.25	0.25	1.125	0.1	0.45	0.1	0.45
+4/-1 (-5)	4.5	0.6	2.7	0.3	1.35	0.1	0.45	0.1	0.45
+5/+0 (-5)	4.5	0.7	3.15	0.35	1.575	0.1	0.45	0.1	0.45
+6/+1/-4 (-5)	4.5	1.05	4.725	0.5	2.25	0.2	0.9	0.15	0.675
+7/+2/-3 (-5)	4.5	1.2	5.4	0.6	2.7	0.25	1.125	0.15	0.675
+8/+3/-2 (-5)	4.5	1.35	6.075	0.7	3.15	0.3	1.35	0.15	0.675
+9/+4/-1 (-5)	4.5	1.5	6.75	0.8	3.6	0.35	1.575	0.15	0.675
+10/+5/+0 (-5)	4.5	1.65	7.425	0.9	4.05	0.4	1.8	0.15	0.675
+11/+6/+1/-4 (-5)	4.5	1.9	8.55	1.1	4.95	0.55	2.475	0.25	1.125
+12/+7/+2/-3 (-5)	4.5	2.1	9.45	1.25	5.625	0.65	2.925	0.3	1.35
+13/+8/+3/-2 (-5)	4.5	2.3	10.35	1.4	6.3	0.75	3.375	0.35	1.575
+14/+9/+4/-1 (-5)	4.5	2.45	11.025	1.55	6.975	0.85	3.825	0.4	1.8
+15/+10/+5/+0 (-5)	4.5	2.6	11.7	1.7	7.65	0.95	4.275	0.45	2.025

Improved Trip

This feat is extraordinarily powerful for the right characters. Improved Trip, like Cleave, is a “reward for winning” feat. Not only does it make the mechanics of pulling off a trip maneuver more favorable for the warrior, but he also receives a bonus attack whenever he succeeds. On top of those sizeable benefits, there’s the implicit attack of opportunity the warrior will get when the poor sap tries to regain her feet. Combined with an adjacent ally, this sets the opponent up for a brutal series of attacks, with the advantage of targeting a prone opponent. You can make this just that much nastier by using it while mounted. The character gains an addition +1 for higher ground, and with a charge and a lance, let’s just say it’s over for that bad guy.

Touch attacks are a breeze against most foes, removing the opponent’s natural, armor, and shield bonus to his AC. The table below assumes the character makes the trip on the first attempt and shows the effectiveness of the second (normal) attack against the tripped sucker’s penalized AC. (Remember the –4 AC penalty for being prone in melee?) Compare this table to Table 5-1 for an accurate mechanical comparison.

The advantage of Improved Trip is obvious. You make an initial attack at a lower AC (because it’s a touch attack), then if you make the Strength check (which you get a bonus to thanks to the feat), you get a normal attack at a lower AC, plus attacks of opportunity when the guy tries to stand up. And if he doesn’t try to stand, he’s got a –4 AC and attack penalty until he does. If you think you can win that opposed Strength check, you can’t go wrong with this feat.

TABLE 5-3: THE ADVANTAGE OF IMPROVED TRIP: 2ND (NORMAL) ATTACK AGAINST TRIPPED OPPONENT

BAB	Average Damage	Typical Damage Per Round Versus Given AC at -4 Penalty							
		11 (15)	Damage	16 (20)	Damage	21 (25)	Damage	26 (30)	Damage
+1	4.5	0.55	2.475	0.3	1.35	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+2	4.5	0.6	2.7	0.35	1.575	0.1	0.45	0.05	0.225
+3	4.5	0.65	2.925	0.4	1.8	0.15	0.675	0.05	0.225
+4	4.5	0.7	3.15	0.45	2.025	0.2	0.9	0.05	0.225
+5	4.5	0.75	3.375	0.5	2.25	0.25	1.125	0.05	0.225
+6/+1	4.5	1.35	6.075	0.85	3.825	0.35	1.575	0.1	0.45
+7/+2	4.5	1.45	6.525	0.95	4.275	0.45	2.025	0.15	0.675
+8/+3	4.5	1.55	6.975	1.05	4.725	0.55	2.475	0.2	0.9
+9/+4	4.5	1.65	7.425	1.15	5.175	0.65	2.925	0.25	1.125
+10/+5	4.5	1.7	7.65	1.25	5.625	0.75	3.375	0.3	1.35
+11/+6/+1	4.5	2.3	10.35	1.65	7.425	0.9	4.05	0.4	1.8
+12/+7/+2	4.5	2.4	10.8	1.8	8.1	1.05	4.725	0.5	2.25
+13/+8/+3	4.5	2.5	11.25	1.95	8.775	1.2	5.4	0.6	2.7
+14/+9/+4	4.5	2.6	11.7	2.1	9.45	1.35	6.075	0.7	3.15
+15/+10/+5	4.5	2.65	11.925	2.2	9.9	1.5	6.75	0.8	3.6
+16/+11/+6/+1	4.5	3.25	14.625	2.6	11.7	1.7	7.65	0.95	4.275
+17/+12/+7/+2	4.5	3.35	15.075	2.75	12.375	1.9	8.55	1.1	4.95
+18/+13/+8/+3	4.5	3.45	15.525	2.9	13.05	2.1	9.45	1.25	5.625
+19/+14/+9/+4	4.5	3.55	15.975	3.05	13.725	2.3	10.35	1.4	6.3
+20/+15/+10/+5	4.5	3.6	16.2	3.15	14.175	2.45	11.025	1.55	6.975

Whirlwind Attack

The big difference between Great Cleave and Whirlwind Attack is where and when you take the extra attacks. Both feats allow you to make attacks at multiple opponents, but Great Cleave requires you to drop a target, whereas Whirlwind attack allows you to take a number of attacks at all foes you threaten. While it's often best to devote your full attention to one foe at a time, dropping it before focusing on another, there is an advantage to Whirlwind Attack that Cleave just cannot give you.

When making a cleave attack, your extra free attack uses the attack modifier of the last attack made. Whirlwind Attack lets you attack all of your opponents at once with your highest attack bonus. The route to choose depends on the types of foes and your positioning in combat. If you're surrounded by a bunch of little guys, whose hit points on average are equal to or less than your maximum damage, use this feat. On the other hand, if your foes are bigger and nastier, stick with the Great Cleave option, dropping one at a time.

To demonstrate the differences, we'll run two scenarios comparing the two feats. Our hero is a 6th level human fighter surrounded by 8 bad guys with 11 hp each. Our fighter has Str 16, Dex 14, and the following feats: 1st-level: Combat Expertise, Dodge, Mobility; 2nd-level: Power Attack; 3rd-level: Cleave; 4th-level: Spring Attack; 6th-level: Great Cleave, Whirlwind Attack. His melee attack is a *+1 greatsword* at +10/+5 melee (2d6+5/19-20), dealing 12 points of damage on average per hit. The bad guys are CR 1 gnolls (EL 6) with AC 15 and 11 hit points each. In this comparison, the gnolls surround the fighter. In the first example, the fighter uses Whirlwind Attack. In the second example, the fighter uses Great Cleave. See what happens.

Note: There's one important thing to remember with this feat: By making a Whirlwind Attack, you forfeit any extra attacks ordinarily gained by Cleave or *haste*.

Whirlwind Attack Option: The fighter makes eight separate attacks against each of the opponents. With any given attack, he should hit 80% of the time, so for eight rolls, he should hit 6.4 times, killing at least six of the gnolls.

Great Cleave Option: The fighter makes a full attack, with the same chances of hitting and killing his target as in the above example. Statistically speaking, he should hit 80% of the time with his first attack (the one at a +10 bonus). If things go well, he'll hit with 80% of his first five attacks; and if things go really well, he'll hit with the first four attack rolls, meaning he drops a gnoll with his normal attack then kills three more with a cleave. But after missing that fifth roll (which, statistically, he will), he has to start using his second attack (the one with a +5 bonus), which only has a 55% chance to hit. He has only slightly more than a 50/50 chance of getting a cleave on this next attack. Over the course of three swings at the

remaining three gnolls, he'll hit 1.65 times, likely killing a fifth gnoll, but not a sixth.

In short, against the gnolls, this fighter did far better with Whirlwind, able to drop at least one more opponent. The same chances are basically there for the Great Cleave option, and for lucky characters, they very well could kill off all the bad guys with great rolls. Nevertheless, statistically, the Whirlwind Attack character hits and kills more foes than the Great Cleave character.

Dodge Tree

Number of Feats in Tree: 3

Additional Trees Required?: No

Entry: Dex 13

Exit: Dex 13

Archetypes: Archers, guerillas and skirmishers all do well with this feat tree, being able to spend feats on this tree at 1st level.

Dodge

Dodge has limited applications for characters fighting in the heart of the conflict. Ultimately, Dodge is less useful than Combat Expertise, though Dodge does not require the character to sacrifice anything for her dodge bonus. The good news, however, is that dodge bonuses stack and this feat can be used in conjunction with Combat Expertise.

The lure of Dodge comes from the fact that it is a prerequisite for both Mobility and Spring Attack. Before moving down that path, be sure to analyze both of those feats for their genuine usefulness for your character. If you don't plan to purchase either of those feats further down the road, it is hard to recommend Dodge.

Table 5-4 (following page) shows how many hits you should take per round, based on your AC and your opponent's attack modifier. To calculate how many hits you'll take over multiple rounds, simply multiply the fraction by the number of rounds of combat. For example, Rex the Barbarian has AC 18. The monster has a melee attack bonus of +4. Looking at the table, that means the monster will hit 0.35 times per round on average. Over five rounds of combat, Rex should take 1.75 hits or, rounding off, 2 hits. If Rex has the Dodge feat, his AC climbs to 19. Over five rounds, Rex would instead take 1.5 hits, rounding off, probably only 1 hit. But the statistical difference is slight – generally only a 5% reduction in the chance of taking a hit each round. You have to go through twenty monster attacks before this feat has statistically really helped you.

Mobility

Ideal for archers and skirmishers, useful for heavy and light infantry, Mobility has only one, mildly useful, prerequisite: Dodge. Archers and skirmishers find they often need Mobility to get away from melee opponents, and the infantry characters will often have to deal with covering large threatened areas to reach a target. Cavalry characters are better off using their Ride skill to take cover when they are attacked while moving into and through threatened spaces. Guerillas typically will not face extraordinarily dangerous melee opponents, though they may find Mobility useful if they are regularly harassed on their way to more important targets.

When using this feat, it is important to specify the most dangerous adjacent melee opponent as your Dodge target for the round. This effectively changes your dodge bonus to armor class to +5 when that opponent takes her attack of opportunity against you.

To see the effects of Mobility, simply refer to Table 5-4 and adjust your AC up by 4 for attacks of opportunity, or 5 for AoOs made by your Dodge target.

Spring Attack

Spring Attack is less of a warrior feat and more of a combat rogue feat, but it does have occasional uses for guerillas, skirmishers, and some light infantry characters. The drawback to Spring Attack is that it sacrifices a full attack action for a move and a standard attack. Though this may be fine for low-level characters, the feat becomes less useful at higher levels, where iterative attacks are important. On the other hand, if you know you have to move through the enemy's front ranks, you can use Spring Attack to move, engage, and then move past the defender to get to the real target. This allows you to make an attack, and keep moving towards your goal.

In perfect circumstances, a heavy infantry character

TABLE 5-4: CHANCES OF A HIT BASED ON YOUR AC AND ENEMY'S ATTACK MODIFIER

Enemy Attack	Your AC															
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
+0	0.55	0.5	0.45	0.4	0.35	0.3	0.25	0.2	0.15	0.1	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
+1	0.6	0.55	0.5	0.45	0.4	0.35	0.3	0.25	0.2	0.15	0.1	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
+2	0.65	0.6	0.55	0.5	0.45	0.4	0.35	0.3	0.25	0.2	0.15	0.1	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
+3	0.7	0.65	0.6	0.55	0.5	0.45	0.4	0.35	0.3	0.25	0.2	0.15	0.1	0.05	0.05	0.05
+4	0.75	0.7	0.65	0.6	0.55	0.5	0.45	0.4	0.35	0.3	0.25	0.2	0.15	0.1	0.05	0.05
+5	0.8	0.75	0.7	0.65	0.6	0.55	0.5	0.45	0.4	0.35	0.3	0.25	0.2	0.15	0.1	0.05
+6	0.85	0.8	0.75	0.7	0.65	0.6	0.55	0.5	0.45	0.4	0.35	0.3	0.25	0.2	0.15	0.1
+7	0.9	0.85	0.8	0.75	0.7	0.65	0.6	0.55	0.5	0.45	0.4	0.35	0.3	0.25	0.2	0.15
+8	0.95	0.9	0.85	0.8	0.75	0.7	0.65	0.6	0.55	0.5	0.45	0.4	0.35	0.3	0.25	0.2
+9	0.95	0.95	0.9	0.85	0.8	0.75	0.7	0.65	0.6	0.55	0.5	0.45	0.4	0.35	0.3	0.25
+10	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.9	0.85	0.8	0.75	0.7	0.65	0.6	0.55	0.5	0.45	0.4	0.35	0.3
+11	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.9	0.85	0.8	0.75	0.7	0.65	0.6	0.55	0.5	0.45	0.4	0.35
+12	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.9	0.85	0.8	0.75	0.7	0.65	0.6	0.55	0.5	0.45	0.4
+13	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.9	0.85	0.8	0.75	0.7	0.65	0.6	0.55	0.5	0.45
+14	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.9	0.85	0.8	0.75	0.7	0.65	0.6	0.55	0.5
+15	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.9	0.85	0.8	0.75	0.7	0.65	0.6	0.55
+16	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.9	0.85	0.8	0.75	0.7	0.65	0.6
+17	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.9	0.85	0.8	0.75	0.7	0.65
+18	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.9	0.85	0.8	0.75	0.7
+19	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.9	0.85	0.8	0.75
+20	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.9	0.85	0.8

would be able to tackle the hard-hitting opponents by herself, but sometimes that isn't possible. Also, the light infantry character may be the only true warrior in the party. In those circumstances, Spring Attack may be useful. Skirmishers and guerillas, who often have to move into, through, and out of threatened areas, also find the feat useful, but still not consistently.

If a player finds the need to be in multiple places at once on the battlefield, constantly harassing a number of opponents, try to think of the Spring Attack's movement like a knight's chess piece. Bounce off the initial target then hop next to another enemy to threaten them. If the warrior needs to move out of that threatened space on the next turn, the player can assign her character's Dodge bonus to the threatening character, leaving the Mobility bonus to help deflect the majority of the potential hazards. However, movement from Spring Attack never provokes AoOs from the defender. If used in this way, the player will have to think ahead of the turn, much like the cavalry players employing Ride-By Attack. Given room to move, the warrior can also cause dread and apprehension in a number of weaker opponents, employing the same tactics as used in the classic chess maneuver known as the knight's fork (see sidebar).

Improved Unarmed Strike Tree

Number of Feats in Tree: 5

Additional Trees Required?: No

Entry: None

Exit: Dex 15, Wis 13

Archetypes: In a perfect world, an archer should never be in a situation where he would use these feats. However, he meets the prerequisites, and Improved Unarmed Strike is useful when the bad guys close on his position, letting the archer drop his bow as a free action and lash out with an unarmed full attack that doesn't provoke an AoO. Light infantry, especially monks who get many of these feats free, do well with this tree, as do skirmishers, though they have to divert some of the ability score improvements to Wisdom to exit the tree.

Improved Unarmed Strike

This feat only ever comes into play if your character is disarmed. Otherwise, you probably won't see much use out of it unless you're a monk. The good news is that you're never, ever disarmed. Having your hands free helps with grab attacks, and is great for grappling, letting you deal lethal damage instead of nonlethal and more. However, unless you have the monk's ever-increasing damage die for these attacks, a weapon is your best bet for fighting.

The Rest of the Tree

The other feats in this tree are self-explanatory. No one complains when they can automatically deflect a ranged weapon, or catch the weapon and hurl it back from whence it came. Improved Grapple is cool as a defensive measure to stave off being swallowed whole and the like. Moreover, even Stunning Fist isn't too bad. The big problem, though, is that if you're attracted to these feats, just go after the monk class and don't waste your time here as one of the other archetype characters. Dabbling in one or two here is okay, but this should not be the first feat tree selected for any non-monk warrior.

THE KNIGHT'S GUERILLA'S FORK

In chess, there is a common maneuver employed with the knight piece called the "knight's fork." Knights are peculiar in chess because they can jump over pieces on their moves. They must always move in an "L" shape: two spaces forward, one space over. Because of this, knights are impossible to contain using other pieces as barriers. They can only be contained strategically. It is dangerous to let an enemy knight hop around in a section of the board densely populated with your pieces. If the knight gets into a sweet spot, it can effectively threaten one, two, or even three pieces without fear of immediate capture or reprisal. This is the danger of the fork: it forces the defender to make difficult decisions. Lose your bishop or lose your rook? No player wants to decide, because either choice results in a painful loss.

Highly mobile guerillas (especially monks) and some light infantry characters can also force the enemy to make difficult decisions. If the guerilla makes effective use of their movement rate in conjunction with the Tumble skill and the Mobility and Spring Attack feats, they can put themselves in positions where they have the option of attacking different opponents from round to round. Normally, the "whittle down" method of attacking opponents is not preferred to simply beating one opponent to death round after round, but showing yourself to be a potent threat to multiple targets at once can quickly put the enemy on the defensive. Instead of assuming that you won't attack or assuming that they'll get in a solid attack of opportunity, enemies will start to ready actions, move to engage, or try to move to a safe distance. You are forcing them to react to what you might do instead of what you will do. When you accomplish that, you are not only wasting their time, but dictating their actions. The warrior who dictates the actions of her opponents gains a significant measure of control over the battle at hand.

Mounted Combat Tree

Number of Feats in Tree: 5

Additional Trees Required?: No

Entry: None

Exit: None

Archetypes: Cavalry, of course, should put every available feat into this tree.

Mounted Combat

A must for any cavalry character, Mounted Combat is both useful and the foundation for all other cavalry-oriented feats. With the exception of archers, it is rare that any other warrior archetype is more annoying than cavalry. Given that after a few levels a cavalry warrior is more difficult to kill than her mount, the mount will eventually be the object of enemy ire. Mounted Combat and a high Ride skill can help keep the cavalry warrior's trusty steed safe from any harm requiring an attack roll.

Mounted Archery

Not only is this feat great for cavalry, it also enhances the usefulness of the archer, for what's worse than a highly mobile archer on the battlefield? Combine this with Shot on the Run, yikes! Few creatures can match pace with a running warhorse, much less actually close to melee. A -4 penalty is still hefty, but when compared to the -8 default penalty, it isn't bad at all. And remember: it's the mount that's taking the move action. A warrior shooting from a moving mount can take full round actions.

To see just how cool this feat is, compare firing from the back of the mount normally to firing from the back of the mount with Mounted Archery, as shown on Table 5-5 (facing page). The tables assume the archer uses a long-bow. As you can see, it makes a difference, adding up to a full point of damage per round on average. The difference is even more dramatic when the mount is running.

Ride-By Attack

Perhaps the most annoying of all cavalry-related feats, Ride-By Attack gives the clever player almost free reign (no pun intended) to harass opponents otherwise occupied on the battlefield. The question for cavalry players should not be, "Should I take Ride-By Attack?" but rather, "How do I effectively use Ride-By Attack?"

The key to successful use of Ride-By Attack lies in moving in the right direction to the right distance. Think of your cavalry warrior's position as you would think of the cue ball in a game of pool. It's not enough to simply hit a ball and knock it off of the table; you need to position your warrior for the next round of attacks. Remember,

Ride-By Attack can only be used in conjunction with a charge. You need a minimum of 10 feet for the charge, but have a maximum of twice your mount's movement. When choosing your target for the round at hand, think about where the enemies may be next round and what spaces you can move to at the end of this round. Ideally, at the end of every Ride-By Attack, you should be in a position that will potentially allow you to do a Ride-By Attack on two enemies. This makes it almost impossible for the enemies to predict whom you are going to attack. As a result, if they choose to ready actions against you, at least one of them will waste their turn.

Another optimal choice for employing Ride-By Attack is attacking on the flanked side of an opponent. Ideally, the cavalry character should make her charges perpendicular to the standard advances of enemies and allies. Once two enemies meet in melee, they will often retain that facing. This gives the cavalry warrior repeated opportunities to ride perpendicular to the enemy's facing and strike from the space opposite their ally. Combined with the bonus from charge, this gives the warrior a respectable +4 attack bonus.

Point Blank Shot Tree

Number of Feats in Tree: 7

Additional Trees Required?: Yes, Dodge

Entry: None

Exit: Dex 19

Archetypes: Archers naturally advance in this feat, but many guerillas benefit from the added options the archery tree represents. Skirmishers and light infantry come next, seeing as they rely on high Dexterity for protection and versatility. Heavy infantry and most cavalry do not derive much benefit from these feats.

Point Blank Shot

This one's a no-brainer. Though Point Blank Shot's benefits only apply within 30 feet, much of your adventuring takes place in areas no larger than this. Further, it is the prerequisite for every other archery-related feat in the PHB. Because the bonus applies to both attack and damage rolls, and can be used with any ranged or thrown weapons, it is far better than the weapon-specific Weapon Focus feat (+1 to attack at any range). Compare Table 5-6 (on page 48) to Table 5-1 to see the benefits of Point Blank Shot in action. Both the attack bonus and average damage are higher at every step of the way.

Rapid Shot and Manyshot

Rapid Shot is a valuable feat for archers and sometimes for skirmishers. Though the character takes a -2 penalty to all attacks, this is really no worse than a monk's flurry of blows ability. The potential for an extra arrow's

TABLE 5-5: MOUNTED ARCHERY COMPARISONS

Double Move with No Feat (-4 penalty)

Attack Bonus	Average Damage	Typical Damage Per Round Versus Given AC							
		15	Damage	20	Damage	25	Damage	30	Damage
-3	4.5	0.15	0.675	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
-2	4.5	0.2	0.9	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
-1	4.5	0.25	1.125	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+0	4.5	0.3	1.35	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+1	4.5	0.35	1.575	0.1	0.45	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+2/-3	4.5	0.55	2.475	0.2	0.9	0.1	0.45	0.1	0.45
+3/-2	4.5	0.5	2.25	0.25	1.125	0.1	0.45	0.1	0.45
+4/-1	4.5	0.6	2.7	0.25	1.125	0.1	0.45	0.1	0.45
+5/0	4.5	0.7	3.15	0.35	1.575	0.1	0.45	0.1	0.45
+6/+1	4.5	0.8	3.6	0.45	2.025	0.15	0.675	0.1	0.45
+7/+2/-3	4.5	1.2	5.4	0.6	2.7	0.25	1.125	0.15	0.675
+8/+3/-2	4.5	1.35	6.075	0.7	3.15	0.3	1.35	0.15	0.675
+9/+4/-1	4.5	1.5	6.75	0.8	3.6	0.35	1.575	0.15	0.675
+10/+5/+0	4.5	1.65	7.425	0.9	4.05	0.4	1.8	0.15	0.675
+11/+6/+1	4.5	1.9	8.55	1.05	4.725	0.5	2.25	0.2	0.9
+12/+7/+2/-3	4.5	2.1	9.45	1.25	5.625	0.65	2.925	0.3	1.35
+13/+8/+3/-2	4.5	2.3	10.35	1.4	6.3	0.75	3.375	0.35	1.575
+14/+9/+4/-1	4.5	2.45	11.025	1.55	6.975	0.85	3.825	0.4	1.8
+15/+10/+5/+0	4.5	2.6	11.7	1.7	7.65	0.95	4.275	0.45	2.025
+16/+11/+6/+1	4.5	2.75	12.375	2	9	1.1	4.95	0.55	2.475

Double Move with Mounted Archery Feat (-2 Penalty)

Attack Bonus	Average Damage	Typical Damage Per Round Versus Given AC							
		15	Damage	20	Damage	25	Damage	30	Damage
-1	4.5	0.25	1.125	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+0	4.5	0.3	1.35	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+1	4.5	0.35	1.575	0.1	0.45	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+2	4.5	0.4	1.8	0.15	0.675	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+3	4.5	0.45	2.025	0.2	0.9	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225
+4/-1	4.5	0.75	3.375	0.3	1.35	0.1	0.45	0.1	0.45
+5/+0	4.5	0.7	3.15	0.35	1.575	0.1	0.45	0.1	0.45
+6/+1	4.5	0.8	3.6	0.45	2.025	0.15	0.675	0.1	0.45
+7/+2	4.5	0.9	4.05	0.45	2.025	0.2	0.9	0.1	0.45
+8/+3	4.5	1	4.5	0.65	2.925	0.25	1.125	0.1	0.45
+9/+4/-1	4.5	1.5	6.75	0.8	3.6	0.35	1.575	0.15	0.675
+10/+5/+0	4.5	1.65	7.425	0.9	4.05	0.4	1.8	0.15	0.675
+11/+6/+1	4.5	1.8	8.1	1.05	4.725	0.5	2.25	0.15	0.675
+12/+7/+2	4.5	1.95	8.775	1.2	5.4	0.6	2.7	0.15	0.675
+13/+8/+3	4.5	2.1	9.45	1.35	6.075	0.7	3.15	0.3	1.35
+14/+9/+4/-1	4.5	2.45	11.025	1.55	6.975	0.85	3.825	0.4	1.8
+15/+10/+5/+0	4.5	2.6	11.7	1.7	7.65	0.95	4.275	0.45	2.025
+16/+11/+6/+1	4.5	2.75	12.375	1.9	8.55	1.1	4.95	0.5	2.25
+17/+12/+7/+2	4.5	2.9	13.05	2.1	9.45	1.25	5.625	0.55	2.475
+18/+13/+8/+3	4.5	3.05	13.725	2.3	10.35	1.4	6.3	0.75	3.375

damage is high for the dedicated archer, and the archer always has the option of not utilizing the feat against well-armored opponents. Though it may seem that Rapid Shot is eventually rendered obsolete by Manyshot, Rapid Shot will always be able to provide an additional attack and a higher average attack bonus. For example, a 16th level fighter using Rapid Shot can attack at +14/+14/+9/+4/-1 and not move or she can attack with Manyshot at +8/+8/+8/+8 and still retain a move. Use Rapid Shot when you want to take a full round action and use Manyshot when you can only get off a standard attack.

Manyshot is a perfect fit for many archers. But before you jump all over this feat, you should be aware of its inherent costs and limitations. First, it has two feat prerequisites in addition to its Dexterity requirements. Both are useful feats, but neither of them is Precise Shot. You'll need Precise Shot for your archer to make good use of this feat. Because the maximum range at which Manyshot can be effective is 30 feet, it's quite likely that any targets the archer uses Manyshot against are probably closing to melee, if not already in it.

The major benefit of Manyshot is not its multiple attacks, but the fact that its multiple attacks are performed as a standard action. One attack roll, up to four arrows, and the attacker can still take a move action! However, as can

be seen on Table 5-7, Rapid Shot is the superior fighting technique.

Power Attack Tree

Number of Feats in Tree: 6

Additional Trees Required?: No

Entry: Str 13

Exit: None

Archetypes: Cavalry, guerrillas, heavy infantry, and skirmishers all benefit from selecting this feat tree. Of the four, however, only the heavy infantry should focus on Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, and Improved Sunder, as they are the archetype most likely to use these feats.

Power Attack

When players think of the typical power-attacking warrior, they imagine a knight in full plate armor using a greatsword to slice through some poor sap. In practice, heavy infantry are just behind archers in having the fewest opportunities to use the feat. Heavy infantry and, to a lesser extent, light infantry, are the characters most

TABLE 5-6: POINT BLANK SHOT

Adjusted BAB	Average Damage	Typical Damage Per Round Versus Given AC							
		15	Damage	20	Damage	25	Damage	30	Damage
+2	5.5	0.4	2.2	0.15	0.825	0.05	0.275	0.05	0.275
+3	5.5	0.45	2.475	0.2	1.1	0.05	0.275	0.05	0.275
+4	5.5	0.5	2.75	0.25	1.375	0.05	0.275	0.05	0.275
+5	5.5	0.55	3.025	0.3	1.65	0.05	0.275	0.05	0.275
+6	5.5	0.6	3.3	0.35	1.925	0.1	0.55	0.05	0.275
+7/+2	5.5	1.05	5.775	0.55	3.025	0.2	1.1	0.1	0.55
+8/+3	5.5	1	5.5	0.65	3.575	0.25	1.375	0.1	0.55
+9/+4	5.5	1.1	6.05	0.75	4.125	0.3	1.65	0.1	0.55
+10/+5	5.5	1.2	6.6	0.85	4.675	0.35	1.925	0.1	0.55
+11/+6	5.5	1.3	7.15	0.95	5.225	0.45	2.475	0.15	0.825
+12/+7/+2	5.5	1.95	10.725	1.2	6.6	0.6	3.3	0.25	1.375
+13/+8/+3	5.5	2.1	11.55	1.35	7.425	0.7	3.85	0.3	1.65
+14/+9/+4	5.5	2.2	12.1	1.5	8.25	0.8	4.4	0.35	1.925
+15/+10/+5	5.5	2.3	12.65	1.65	9.075	0.9	4.95	0.4	2.2
+16/+11/+6	5.5	2.4	13.2	1.8	9.9	1.05	5.775	0.5	2.75
+17/+12/+7/+2	5.5	2.9	15.95	2.1	11.55	1.25	6.875	0.65	3.575
+18/+13/+8/+3	5.5	3.05	16.775	2.3	12.65	1.4	7.7	0.75	4.125
+19/+14/+9/+4	5.5	3.15	17.325	2.45	13.475	1.55	8.525	0.85	4.675
+20/+15/+10/+5	5.5	3.25	17.875	2.6	14.3	1.7	9.35	0.95	5.225
+21/+16/+11/+6	5.5	3.35	18.425	2.75	15.125	1.9	10.45	1.1	6.05

**TABLE 5-7: RAPID SHOT AND MANYSHOT COMPARISON
(INCLUDING MODIFIERS FROM POINT BLANK SHOT)**

Rapid Shot

Adjusted BAB	Average Damage	Typical Damage Per Round Versus Given AC							
		15	Damage	20	Damage	25	Damage	30	Damage
+0/+0	5.5	0.6	3.3	0.1	0.55	0.1	0.55	0.1	0.55
+1/+1	5.5	0.7	3.85	0.2	1.1	0.1	0.55	0.1	0.55
+2/+2	5.5	0.8	4.4	0.3	1.65	0.1	0.55	0.1	0.55
+3/+3	5.5	0.9	4.95	0.4	2.2	0.1	0.55	0.1	0.55
+4/+4	5.5	1	5.5	0.5	2.75	0.1	0.55	0.1	0.55
+5/+5/+0	5.5	1.4	7.7	0.65	3.575	0.15	0.825	0.15	0.825
+6/+6/+1	5.5	1.55	8.525	0.8	4.4	0.25	1.375	0.15	0.825
+7/+7/+2	5.5	1.7	9.35	0.95	5.225	0.35	1.925	0.15	0.825
+8/+8/+3	5.5	1.85	10.175	1.1	6.05	0.45	2.475	0.15	0.825
+9/+9/+4	5.5	2	11	1.25	6.875	0.55	3.025	0.15	0.825
+10/+10/+5/+0	5.5	2.45	13.475	1.45	7.975	0.7	3.85	0.2	1.1
+11/+11/+6/+1	5.5	2.65	14.575	1.65	9.075	0.85	4.675	0.3	1.65
+12/+12/+7/+2	5.5	2.85	15.675	1.85	10.175	1	5.5	0.4	2.2
+13/+13/+8/+3	5.5	3.05	16.775	2.05	11.275	1.15	6.325	0.5	2.75
+14/+14/+9/+4	5.5	3.15	17.325	2.25	12.375	1.3	7.15	0.6	3.3
+15/+15/+10/+5/+0	5.5	3.55	19.525	2.5	13.75	1.5	8.25	0.75	4.125
+16/+16/+11/+6/+1	5.5	3.7	20.35	2.75	15.125	1.7	9.35	0.9	4.95
+17/+17/+13/+7/+2	5.5	3.9	21.45	3.05	16.775	1.95	10.725	1.1	6.05
+18/+18/+14/+8/+3	5.5	4	22	3.3	18.15	2.15	11.825	1.25	6.875
+19/+19/+15/+9/+4	5.5	4.1	22.55	3.45	18.975	2.35	12.925	1.4	7.7

Manyshot

Adjusted BAB	Average Damage	Typical Damage Per Round Versus Given AC							
		15	Damage	20	Damage	25	Damage	30	Damage
+2	5.5	0.4	2.2	0.15	0.825	0.05	0.275	0.05	0.275
+3	5.5	0.45	2.475	0.2	1.1	0.05	0.275	0.05	0.275
+4	5.5	0.5	2.75	0.25	1.375	0.05	0.275	0.05	0.275
+5	5.5	0.55	3.025	0.3	1.65	0.05	0.275	0.05	0.275
+6	5.5	0.6	3.3	0.35	1.925	0.1	0.55	0.05	0.275
+3/+3	5.5	0.9	0	0.4	2.2	0.1	0.55	0.1	0.55
+4/+4	5.5	1	5.5	0.5	2.75	0.1	0.55	0.1	0.55
+5/+5	5.5	1.1	6.05	0.6	3.3	0.1	0.55	0.1	0.55
+6/+6	5.5	1.2	6.6	0.7	3.85	0.2	1.1	0.1	0.55
+7/+7	5.5	1.3	7.15	0.8	4.4	0.3	1.65	0.1	0.55
+6/+6/+6	5.5	1.8	9.9	1.05	5.775	0.3	1.65	0.15	0.825
+7/+7/+7	5.5	1.95	10.725	1.2	6.6	0.45	2.475	0.15	0.825
+8/+8/+8	5.5	2.1	11.55	1.35	7.425	0.6	3.3	0.15	0.825
+9/+9/+9	5.5	2.25	12.375	1.5	8.25	0.75	4.125	0.15	0.825
+10/+10/+10	5.5	2.4	13.2	1.65	9.075	0.9	4.95	0.15	0.825
+9/+9/+9/+9	5.5	3	16.5	2	11	1	5.5	0.2	1.1
+10/+10/+10/+10	5.5	3.2	17.6	2.2	12.1	1.2	6.6	0.2	1.1
+11/+11/+11/+11	5.5	3.4	18.7	2.4	13.2	1.4	7.7	0.4	2.2
+12/+12/+12/+12	5.5	3.6	19.8	2.6	14.3	1.6	8.8	0.6	3.3
+13/+13/+13/+13	5.5	3.8	20.9	2.8	15.4	1.8	9.9	0.8	4.4

likely to be engaged by opposition heavy infantry and light infantry characters. Typically, the armor classes of those enemies will be too high for the warrior to sacrifice any significant attack bonus for damage. When you consider the inherent penalties of iterative attacks, dropping five points of attack bonus when going up against a blue dragon doesn't seem like a good plan.

Skirmishers and guerillas, on the other hand, often find themselves attacking characters with low armor classes. Whether they're wheezing old sorcerers trying to hide in the corner or a swarm of annoying kobold runts, Power Attack can help make quick work of their easily-struck hides. Cavalry characters may also find use in Power Attack if they have the space and range to choose poorly armored targets on a battlefield. Power Attack combined with a timely Ride-By Attack can take the wind out of anyone's sails.

Unfortunately, though heavy infantry may not find much use for Power Attack at higher levels, it is the prerequisite for a large number of traditional heavy infantry feats.

Players will have to decide if the long-term depreciation of the feat is an acceptable price for the feats her character needs.

The real question when using Power Attack is, "How much attack bonus should I trade off?" It depends on your base attack bonus and the enemy's AC. Don't worry, we've done the math for you! Tables 5-8 and 5-9 show how to max out Power Attack. First, Table 5-8 gives a numerical analysis of using Power Attack to varying degrees against enemies of different ACs. The table assumes the warrior wields the weapon in two hands to get the better damage. Strength modifiers to hit and damage are not included.

From Table 5-8, you can see the relationship between damage and chances of hitting. Look at the first section, which examines a 5th level fighter with a BAB of +5. Against an opponent of AC 15, he normally averages 2.475 points of damage each round. If he power attacks for +1, his chance of hitting drops from 0.55 to 0.5, but his base damage rises to 6.5, resulting in average damage

TABLE 5-8: AVERAGE DAMAGE FROM POWER ATTACK

		Average Damage Per Round Versus Given AC								
BAB	Base Damage	AC 15	Average Damage	AC 20	Average Damage	AC 25	Average Damage	AC 30	Average Damage	
Ftr 5 +5	4.5	0.55	2.475	0.3	1.35	0.05	0.225	0.05	0.225	
<i>BAB Adjusted with Power Attack:</i>										
+4 (-1 to attack)	6.5	0.5	3.25	0.25	1.625	0.05	0.325	0.05	0.325	
+3 (-2 to attack)	8.5	0.45	3.825	0.2	1.7	0.05	0.425	0.05	0.425	
+2 (-3 to attack)	10.5	0.4	4.2	0.15	1.575	0.05	0.525	0.05	0.525	
+1 (-4 to attack)	12.5	0.35	4.375	0.1	1.25	0.05	0.625	0.05	0.625	
+0 (-5 to attack)	14.5	0.3	4.35	0.05	0.725	0.05	0.725	0.05	0.725	
Ftr 10 +10/+5	4.5	1.35	6.075	0.85	3.825	0.35	1.575	0.1	0.45	
<i>BAB Adjusted with Power Attack:</i>										
+9/+4 (-1 to attack)	6.5	1.25	8.125	0.75	4.875	0.3	1.95	0.1	0.65	
+8/+3 (-2 to attack)	8.5	1.15	9.775	0.65	5.525	0.25	2.125	0.1	0.85	
+7/+2 (-3 to attack)	10.5	1.05	11.025	0.55	5.775	0.2	2.1	0.1	1.05	
+6/+1 (-4 to attack)	12.5	0.95	11.875	0.45	5.625	0.15	1.875	0.1	1.25	
+5/+0 (-5 to attack)	14.5	0.85	12.325	0.35	5.075	0.1	1.45	0.1	1.45	
Ftr 15 +15/+10/+5	4.5	2.3	10.35	1.65	7.425	0.9	4.05	0.4	1.8	
<i>BAB Adjusted with Power Attack:</i>										
+14/+9/+4 (-1 to attack)	6.5	2.2	14.3	1.5	9.75	0.8	5.2	0.35	2.275	
+13/+8/+3 (-2 to attack)	8.5	2.1	17.85	1.35	11.475	0.7	5.95	0.3	2.55	
+12/+7/+2 (-3 to attack)	10.5	1.95	20.475	1.2	12.6	0.6	6.3	0.25	2.625	
+11/+6/+1 (-4 to attack)	12.5	1.8	22.5	1.05	13.125	0.5	6.25	0.2	2.5	
+10/+5/+0 (-5 to attack)	14.5	1.65	23.925	0.9	13.05	0.4	5.8	0.15	2.175	
Ftr 20 +20/+15/+10/+5	4.5	3.25	14.625	2.6	11.7	1.4	6.3	0.95	4.275	
<i>BAB Adjusted with Power Attack:</i>										
+19/+14/+9/+4 (-1 to attack)	6.5	3.15	20.475	2.45	15.925	1.3	8.45	0.85	5.525	
+18/+13/+8/+3 (-2 to attack)	8.5	3.05	25.925	2.3	19.55	1.2	10.2	0.75	6.375	
+17/+12/+7/+2 (-3 to attack)	10.5	2.95	30.975	2.15	22.575	1.1	11.55	0.65	6.825	
+16/+11/+6/+1 (-4 to attack)	12.5	2.85	35.625	2	25	1	12.5	0.55	6.875	
+15/+10/+5/+0 (-5 to attack)	14.5	2.75	39.875	1.85	26.825	0.9	13.05	0.45	6.525	

TABLE 5-9: SUGGESTED POWER ATTACKS

One Handed: Take the indicated penalty to attack against the given AC to maximize average damage

AC	BAB																			
	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8	+9	+10	+11	+12	+13	+14	+15	+16	+17	+18	+19	+20
10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	12	13	13
11	1	2	3	4	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	12	13
12	1	2	3	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	12
13	1	2	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12
14	1	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11
15	1	2	3	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11
16	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10
17	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10
18	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9
19	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9
20	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8
21	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8
22	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7
23	1	2	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7
24	1	2	3	4	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6
25	1	2	3	4	5	6	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6
26	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5
27	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5
28	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4
29	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4
30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3

Two Handed: Take the indicated penalty to attack against the given AC to maximize average damage

AC	BAB																			
	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6	+7	+8	+9	+10	+11	+12	+13	+14	+15	+16	+17	+18	+19	+20
10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	12	13	13	14	14
11	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	12	13	13	14
12	1	2	3	4	5	5	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	12	13	13
13	1	2	3	4	5	5	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	12	13
14	1	2	3	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12	12
15	1	2	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11	12
16	1	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11	11
17	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	11
18	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10
19	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9	10
20	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9	9
21	1	0	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8	9
22	1	2	3	0	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8
23	1	2	3	4	5	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8
24	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7
25	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6	7
26	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	1	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6	6
27	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5	6
28	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	2	2	3	3	4	4	5	5
29	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	2	2	3	3	4	5	5
30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	2	2	3	3	4

of 3.25 per round. In this example, the optimal combination of attack bonus and base damage is taking a -4 to attack, resulting in a net attack bonus of +1. That gives him a lower chance of hitting (only 0.35) but because his base damage rises to a whopping 12.5, he'll do an average of 4.375 damage each round - 75% higher than an unpowered attack! The result for taking -5 causes even more damage, but the lower chance of hitting results in a slightly lower average damage.

The really interesting part of Table 5-8 is the impact of Power Attack against foes with high ACs. If you're fighting an enemy who you can only hit with a natural 20, then why not go full Power Attack? It won't affect your chances of hitting! Look again at the 5th level fighter. His best option for Power Attacking foes of AC 25 and AC 30 is to go the full +5, since it has no impact on his chances of hitting but causes substantially more damage if he actually hits.

Table 5-8 isn't meant to be a complete analysis of every possible Power Attack. Instead, it shows you a slice of data at several different points. Table 5-9 takes this information and compiles it into a complete reference table for use in your games.

Table 5-9 is everything you'll ever need to Power Attack with confidence. By cross-referencing your BAB with your opponent's AC, Table 5-9 shows you the number you should subtract from your attack roll to get the statistically maximum average damage. For example, a warrior with BAB +10 fighting one-handed against a monster of AC 14 should swap 6 points of attack for damage. (Note that there are two tables, for one-handed and two-handed attacks; make sure you're looking at the right one.) This recommended Power Attack figure is based on the same chance-of-hitting-and-base-damage analysis you see in Table 5-8, but adapted to every possible combination of AC and BAB. You don't get the "guts" of the calculations, but you don't need them; all you really need to know is that you if you use the number on the table, you'll be in line to do the statistically maximum amount of damage that you can possibly do. These tables consider single attacks for one-handed weapons and two-handed weapons. Strength and other enhancements to damage are not included, but since they are uniform across all possible Power Attack options, they don't affect the calculations. You should include bonuses to attack when you look up your BAB - for example, if your BAB is +4 and you have a +1 weapon and a 16 Strength (+3 bonus), use the column for a +8 BAB (+4 +1 +3 = +8).

Dog-ear the page with Table 5-9. Trust me, if you have Power Attack you will use this table - a lot.

Cleave and Great Cleave

Who doesn't love a free attack? This feat is most worthwhile for heavy infantry, light infantry, and skirmishers. Archers won't make use of it, cavalry often take up too much space to threaten multiple opponents, and guerillas usually pursue single targets. Think of Cleave as a reward for winning. The more often you down opponents in the thick of melee, the more often you will be rewarded. Unlike Combat Reflexes, this feat does not require the enemy to *let you* use it. The skirmisher may wind up making the greatest use of the Cleave feat if they work "cleanup," picking off groups of low level punks while a heavy infantry warrior takes on the tough guys. If you play a "head for the boss" type of character, this feat may be underused. For best tactical advantage, use it against the weakest of all threatened opponents first. The quicker they go down, the quicker you can use your free attack against the toughest hombra in the mix.

Great Cleave and Power Attack with a two-handed weapon allow you to mop up the floor with all but the biggest and toughest monsters in the game. For example, assume your 8th-level barbarian (BAB +8) is raging and now has a 21 Strength (+5 bonus). He wields a two-handed greatsword dealing 2d6+7 points of damage. Now, this barbarian faces off against a bunch of ogres, each with AC 16 and 29 hit points. Using Table 5-9, the barbarian should Power Attack for 8, reducing his attack modifier to +5. (See Table 5-9 to understand this calculation: BAB +8 plus +5 for Strength = adjusted BAB of +13, cross-referenced against AC 16 on the two-handed part of Table 5-9.) If he hits, he deals thirty points of damage on average (the normal 2d6+7 (average 14) plus an extra 16 for Power Attack), enough to drop a single ogre with each hit. Furthermore, he has a 50% chance to hit each ogre, good odds. (See Table 5-4: attack bonus of +5 against AC 16 means he hits 50% of the time.) More than likely, he'll cut through the ogres with little effort, and with a 50% shot with every Cleave attack, he'll probably do it on just a standard attack.

In short, Power Attack + Cleave + Great Cleave should be the basis for every high-Strength, Weapon-Focused warrior in the game.

Other Feats

Improved Critical

Another solid feat for the weapon specialists, Improved Critical is best used with weapons that already have a high threat range. However, do not let the lure of frequent critical hits blind you to the fact that often a feat like Weapon Specialization on a higher-damage, lower-threat weapon will produce more damage over time than Improved Critical on a lower-damage, higher-threat weapon.

Table 5-10 shows the percentage chance of achieving a critical hit, based on the indicated threat range, your BAB, and the opponent's AC. I know this sounds complicated, but it's not. First, here's how to read it. Let's say you're using a rapier, which has a threat range of 18-20 (crit x2) and does 1d6 damage. If you take Improved Critical, you'll improve your threat range to 15-20, or a 30% chance of inflicting a critical threat. Now let's say you're using that rapier while you have BAB +1 and

your opponent has AC 12. Looking at the section of Table 5-10 for weapons whose threat range goes from 18-20 to 15-20, you can cross-reference BAB +1 and AC 12 to see that you have a 15% chance of actually scoring a critical hit with this weapon. You'll get the critical threat 30% of the time, but the table shows you how often this will translate into a real critical hit, based on your chance of hitting with the second attack.

TABLE 5-10: IMPROVED CRITICAL: PERCENTAGE CHANCE OF SCORING A CRITICAL HIT, GIVEN YOUR BAB AND AN OPPONENT'S AC (CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGE)

Threat Range 18-20 (which becomes 15-20 with Improved Critical, or a critical threat 30% of the time)

BAB	Enemy AC																				
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
+1	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%	6%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+2	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%	6%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+3	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%	6%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+4	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%	6%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+5	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%	6%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+6	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%	6%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+7	27%	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%	6%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+8	29%	27%	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%	6%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%
+9	29%	29%	27%	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%	6%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%
+10	29%	29%	29%	27%	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%	6%	4%	2%	1%	0%
+11	29%	29%	29%	29%	27%	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%	6%	4%	2%	1%
+12	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	27%	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%	6%	4%	2%
+13	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	27%	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%	6%	4%
+14	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	27%	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%	6%
+15	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	27%	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%	9%
+16	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	27%	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%	11%
+17	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	27%	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%	12%
+18	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	27%	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%	14%
+19	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	27%	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%	15%
+20	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	29%	27%	26%	24%	23%	21%	20%	18%	17%

Threat Range 19-20 (which becomes 17-20 with Improved Critical, or a critical threat 20% of the time)

BAB	Enemy AC																				
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
+1	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+2	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+3	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+4	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+5	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+6	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+7	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+8	19%	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%
+9	19%	19%	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	2%	1%	0%	0%
+10	19%	19%	19%	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	2%	1%	0%
+11	19%	19%	19%	19%	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	2%	1%
+12	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%	2%
+13	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%	4%
+14	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%	5%
+15	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%	6%
+16	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%
+17	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%
+18	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%
+19	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%	10%
+20	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	19%	18%	17%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%	11%

So how do you evaluate this? Well, start with the weapon for which you took Improved Critical, then figure out how much more damage you'll be doing on average. Let's say it's a rapier. Looking at the section of Table 5-10 for threat range 18-20 (which becomes 15-20 with Improved Critical), you can see the greatest chance of achieving a critical is 29%. If you always fought against low-AC foes, you could make a critical hit a whopping

29% of the time. Thus, in a best-case scenario, your maximum possible extra damage from Improved Critical is an extra 1d6 (the rapier's damage is 1d6 and its crit is x2) 29% of the time. Since 1d6 damage has an average result of 3.5, that means your maximum average damage is 3.5 + (3.5 x 0.29), or 4.515 – essentially the same as using a weapon that does damage 1d8 (average 4.5) without Improved Critical.

TABLE 5-10, CONTINUED

Threat Range 20 (which becomes 19-20 with Improved Critical, or a critical threat 10% of the time)

BAB	Enemy AC																				
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
+1	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+2	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+3	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+4	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+5	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+6	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+7	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+8	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%
+9	10%	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	0%	0%
+10	10%	10%	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%	0%
+11	10%	10%	10%	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%
+12	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%
+13	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	2%
+14	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%
+15	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%
+16	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	4%
+17	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%	4%
+18	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%
+19	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%
+20	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	9%	9%	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%

Threat Range 20 only (not affected by Improved Critical; a critical threat 5% of the time)

BAB	Enemy AC																				
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
+1	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+2	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+3	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+4	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+5	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+6	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+7	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
+8	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%
+9	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%
+10	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%
+11	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%
+12	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%
+13	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%
+14	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%
+15	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%
+16	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%
+17	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%
+18	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%
+19	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%
+20	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%

Now let's compare two weapons. Let's say your other option (in addition to that rapier) is a warhammer, which has a threat range of 20 and a x3 crit on 1d8 damage (average 4.5). Looking at the section of Table 5-10 for threat range 20 (increased to 19-20 with the feat), we can see that your maximum chance of critting is 10%. On the other hand, you do an extra 2d8 damage because it's a x3 weapon. Assuming you spend all your time fighting foes with a 10% of critting (the best-case scenario), Improved Critical increases your maximum average damage to $4.5 + ((4.5 + 4.5) \times .010)$, or 5.4 damage. Surprisingly, Improved Critical with a warhammer has a bigger impact than with a rapier.

The thing to remember with this feat is that it's not necessarily about which weapon you should take the feat with; it's also about whether this feat can give you more oomph than another feat. Improved Critical with a warhammer increases your max average damage from 4.5 to 5.4, or 0.9 points. Can another feat increase your average damage by more than 0.9? If so, that other feat is probably the better option. If you do opt for Improved Critical, think in terms of combining it with Weapon

Specialization and other such feats where all that extra damage stacked together can really make a difference, instead of just taking it by itself.

For more information on the impact of critical hits on weapon selection, see Chapter 6: Equipment.

Leadership

For many characters, this is a so-so feat. A character's effective Leadership score is affected by her Charisma, which is a low-priority statistic for most warriors. For paladins, however, a high Charisma is highly desirable. Leadership just piggy-backs onto those benefits. This feat is best taken above eighth level, when the cohort will be high enough level to really do some good and not need constant babysitting. This also practically ensures that your warrior will gain several 1st level assistants that can come in handy, if used carefully. If you need more convincing, consider this: for the cost of one feat, you get an extra ally, two levels lower than your warrior. Your level minus two in hit points, feats, and skills. It's a steal.

Suggested Feat Trees

Buying individually valuable feats is enough to make a potent warrior, but if the ultimate warrior is what you had in mind, you'll need to think ahead when buying feats. Here are some suggested feat trees organized by warrior archetype and class combinations. By using these examples and creating your own variants, you should be able to build a warrior to be reckoned with.

Archers

Fighter Archer

The fighter archer build is constructed to take quick advantage of the fighter's massive amount of bonus feats. The pattern here is to take all of the most important archery and bow specialization feats as quickly as possible. By the time the character hits 12th level, all of the most important feats will be accounted for. Feats from 14th to 20th level are purchased to help round out the character defensively in case she is engaged in melee. Iron Will at 9th gives the fighter a little added insurance against typical anti-archer magic like *hold person* or *dominate person*. Otherwise, this build produces an all-out ranged offense monster.

Ranger Archer

Due to the ranger archer's lower hit points and reliance on staying in light armor for the benefits of the archery combat style, Dodge and Mobility appear earlier in this build than in the fighter archer tree. Rangers are more likely to have a higher Wisdom score to bolster their low Will save, but the ranger archer still picks up Iron Will at 15th level to close that widening gap towards high levels.

TABLE 5-11: FIGHTER ARCHER FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Point Blank Shot
1st (bonus)	Rapid Shot
2nd (bonus)	Precise Shot
3rd	Weapon Focus (longbow)
4th (bonus)	Weapon Specialization (longbow)
6th	Manyshot
6th (bonus)	Far Shot
8th (bonus)	Greater Weapon Focus (longbow)
9th	Iron Will
10th (bonus)	Improved Critical (longbow)
12th	Improved Precise Shot
12th (bonus)	Greater Weapon Specialization (longbow)
14th (bonus)	Dodge
15th	Mobility
16th (bonus)	Shot on the Run
18th	Quick Draw
18th (bonus)	Weapon Focus (longsword)
20th	Weapon Specialization (longsword)

Cavalry

Fighter Cavalry

As with many of the other fighter trees, the fighter cavalry feat tree shown here takes advantage of the fighter's high number of bonus feats to build a highly specialized, devastating melee combatant. Players may be tempted to focus on the lance as their early weapon of choice, but

lances have dire limitations when not mounted; leave the lance feats for later levels. As with the fighter archer build, the fighter cavalry character comes into full bloom at about 12th level.

Paladin Cavalry

Compared to the fighter cavalry build, the paladin cavalry may seem downright boring. With only the standard feats given every three character levels, players must be very careful about what they buy. This character build emphasizes melee aspects only, starting first with cavalry-enhancing feats then moving to general melee combat feats at higher levels. As paladins are generally more capable of protecting their magnificent mounts in combat, archery and defensive crossover feats are excluded entirely. Because cavalry warriors can be very vulnerable when forced to fight on foot, the paladin cavalry build takes Leadership at 9th level. The cohort earned with the feat will probably be about 7th level, and could serve in a variety of supporting roles. A mounted cleric of the paladin's faith would be particularly helpful. For characters more likely to spend significant time fighting on foot, players may wish to switch Spirited Charge with Power Attack and Leadership with Cleave.

Ranger Cavalry

The ranger cavalry build is significantly different from the other two cavalry feat trees. This progression utilizes the ranger's optional archery feats to make a formidable cavalry archer. Some players may wish to substitute melee-oriented feats for Weapon Focus (longbow), Far Shot, and Improved Critical (longbow). This may produce a more well-balanced character at high levels.

Guerilla

Fighter Guerilla

The fighter guerilla has far more feats than her monk counterpart, but she does not have the naturally strong Will and Reflex saves. Both builds start out similarly, but the fighter takes Weapon Focus and Weapon Specialization followed up with the very useful Iron Will feat. Given a variety of supernatural or magic-using opponents, the Blind-Fight feat will undoubtedly come into play on a regular basis.

In the mid-levels, the guerilla gets serious damage potential with Greater Weapon Focus and Greater Weapon Specialization. Because Reflex saves are important but not vital, the Lightning Reflexes feat is put off until 12th level. In the mid-teens, the fighter takes a number of feats to reinforce special attacks. This is all rounded off with the entire Weapon Focus tree in the flail, a weapon that is particularly useful when making said special attacks.

TABLE 5-12: RANGER ARCHER FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Point Blank Shot
2nd (style)	Rapid Shot
3rd	Precise Shot
6th	Dodge
6th (style)	Manyslot
9th	Mobility
11th (style)	Improved Precise Shot
12th	Far Shot
15th	Iron Will
18th	Improved Critical (longbow)

TABLE 5-13: FIGHTER CAVALRY FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Mounted Combat
1st (bonus)	Ride-By Attack
2nd (bonus)	Spirited Charge
3rd	Weapon Focus (greatsword)
4th (bonus)	Weapon Specialization (greatsword)
6th	Skill Focus (Ride)
6th (bonus)	Trample
8th (bonus)	Greater Weapon Focus (greatsword)
9th	Power Attack
10th (bonus)	Improved Sunder
12th	Improved Critical (greatsword)
12th (bonus)	Greater Weapon Specialization (greatsword)
14th (bonus)	Quick Draw
15th	Cleave
16th (bonus)	Weapon Focus (lance)
18th	Weapon Specialization (lance)
18th (bonus)	Mounted Archery
20th	Weapon Focus (longbow)

TABLE 5-14: PALADIN CAVALRY FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Mounted Combat
3rd	Ride-by Attack
6th	Spirited Charge
9th	Leadership
12th	Power Attack
15th	Cleave
18th	Trample

Monk Guerilla

Unlike the other two guerilla builds, the monk guerilla doesn't bother with Iron Will or Lightning Reflexes. Her saving throws are uniformly good and once Diamond Soul kicks in, most mid-level casters will have a difficult time affecting her. This guerilla goes the route of more traditional feats that improve combat effectiveness. Dodge and Mobility are still useful for getting by those pesky meat-shields on the way to more important business, but at 6th level, the monk buys Power Attack. Lacking the weapon flexibility that their fighter and ranger cousins possess, the monk can use Power Attack to turn up the heat as the need arises. After Blind-Fight, the monk buys Stunning Fist even though she skipped over it at 1st level. There's no penalty for buying it late, and the monk will be able to slap down at least a dozen Stunning Fists every day from the time of purchase. The high-level Weapon Focus and Improved Critical feats are there to add a bit of oomph that the monk seriously needs at higher levels.

As for the monk's bonus feats, they are purchased specifically for her role as a guerilla. Though Stunning Fist could arguably be as useful as Improved Grapple, a grapple is particularly troublesome for enemy spellcasters, even clerics. Choosing between Combat Reflexes and Deflect Arrows is like choosing to be stung by wasps or to be thrown down a flight of stairs. Neither is particularly desirable, but Combat Reflexes may come in handy if the monk is threatening multiple casters.

Ranger Guerilla

Melee rangers are encouraged to go down the slightly sub-optimal route of two-weapon fighting, so this ranger guerilla build has a bit of predestination built in. Dodge, Mobility, and Combat Expertise come early for this build because the lightly armored, d8 hit die ranger needs a little extra insurance. At 12th level, Two-Weapon Defense gets thrown in for added protection. Iron Will gets skipped since rangers will tend to have higher Wisdom scores, but Lightning Reflexes comes in at the stratospheric 18th level just in case. It can be difficult to pick the mid- and high-level feats since the ranger is picking around bonus combat style feats. This build takes Blind-Fight for use against concealed and invisible opponents and Spring Attack for an added buffer against particularly dangerous opponents.

Heavy Infantry

Fighter Heavy Infantry

Building a proper fighter heavy Infantry tree can be difficult because it's tempting to overload on every feat associated with Power Attack. This example build takes advantage of the fighter's many proficiencies not for insane specialization, but for a surprising amount of diversity. The fighter sacrifices the shield arm for the

awesome power and flexibility of a spiked chain put to good use: reach without the hassles, solid damage, and the opportunity for trips galore. At the higher levels, instead of buying the remainder of the Power Attack tree, this fighter diversifies by buying another entire set of the Weapon Focus tree, but takes spear for a melee and

TABLE 5-15: RANGER CAVALRY FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Mounted Combat
2nd (style)	Rapid Shot
3rd	Mounted Archery
6th	Point Blank Shot
6th (style)	Manyslot
9th	Precise Shot
11th (style)	Improved Precise Shot
12th	Weapon Focus (longbow)
15th	Far Shot
18th	Improved Critical (longbow)

TABLE 5-16: FIGHTER GUERILLA FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Dodge
1st (bonus)	Mobility
2nd (bonus)	Combat Expertise
3rd	Weapon Focus (longsword)
4th (bonus)	Weapon Specialization (longsword)
6th	Iron Will
6th (bonus)	Blind-Fight
8th (bonus)	Greater Weapon Focus (longsword)
9th	Greater Weapon Specialization (longsword)
10th (bonus)	Spring Attack
12th	Lightning Reflexes
12th (bonus)	Improved Trip
14th (bonus)	Improved Critical (longsword)
15th	Improved Disarm
16th (bonus)	Weapon Focus (flail)
18th	Weapon Specialization (flail)
18th (bonus)	Greater Weapon Focus (flail)
20th	Greater Weapon Specialization (flail)

TABLE 5-17: MONK GUERILLA FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Dodge
1st (bonus)	Improved Grapple
2nd (bonus)	Combat Reflexes
3rd	Mobility
6th	Power Attack
6th (bonus)	Improved Trip
9th	Blind-Fight
12th	Stunning Fist
15th	Weapon Focus (unarmed)
18th	Improved Critical (unarmed)

thrown weapon combination that prevents her from being too mired in melee.

Paladin Heavy Infantry

This paladin heavy infantry build sacrifices two feats for the sake of bolstering the class abilities of the paladin, namely the paladin mount and the spellcasting ability. While this book is about warriors, it is important to

remember than both paladins and rangers have small but significant spellcasting ability. For the paladin heavy infantry character, any spells they use will often be cast within an enemy's threatened space. And though this character will not be as effective on horse as a paladin cavalry warrior, the mounted paladin can still use her steed to great effect; protecting it with the paladin's Ride skill is a wise investment.

By the time the paladin buys Leadership at 9th level, the cohort she gains should be about 7th level. For the paladin heavy infantry warrior, the best cohort may be a fighter who can dish out serious damage alongside her patron.

Light Infantry

Barbarian Light Infantry

Barbarians can make devastating light infantry characters. The combination of their increased speed, brutal damage potential, and ability to suck up massive punishment is unmatched. This build focuses immediately on raw damage potential. Power Attack is immediately followed by Cleave and Great Cleave. These simply reinforce the barbarian's already awesome melee abilities. At the very high levels, the barbarian can use her Improved Bull Rush to slap lesser creatures out of the way wherever she goes. While using greater rage, it would take a truly massive creature to prevent the barbarian from getting her way.

Despite all this offensive potential, the barbarian starts to feel the need for more defense as the mid-levels come to a close. Barbarians can take a lot of abuse, but it's better to avoid a few hits than to assume she can absorb everything thrown at her. Dodge and Combat Expertise are purchased in sequence to give the barbarian defensive flexibility. Mobility comes in at 18th level. The challenges around that time are often so suddenly fatal that the barbarian would be wise to make a momentary retreat when things get too hot.

Monk Light Infantry

The monk has neither the feat potential of the fighter nor the d12 hit die of the barbarian. She has many special abilities and a good unarmored AC potential, but that only goes so far. The monk starts out with an offensive trio of feats: Power Attack, Stunning Fist, and Combat Reflexes. As the challenges rise, she deviates from the barbarian's progression by taking Dodge and Mobility for added defense. She takes Combat Expertise at 12th level for the defensive flexibility, but the rest of the upper level feats are all offensive. By 15th level, her various bonuses to AC should be significant, so Improved Disarm and Improved Critical are taken for more combat flexibility and more damage potential, respectively.

TABLE 5-18: RANGER GUERRILLA FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Dodge
2nd (style)	Two-Weapon Fighting
3rd	Mobility
6th	Combat Expertise
6th (style)	Improved Two-Weapon Fighting
9th	Blind-Fight
11th (style)	Greater Two-Weapon Fighting
12th	Two-Weapon Defense
15th	Spring Attack
18th	Lightning Reflexes

TABLE 5-19: FIGHTER HEAVY INFANTRY FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Power Attack
1st (bonus)	Cleave
2nd (bonus)	Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain)
3rd	Weapon Focus (spiked chain)
4th (bonus)	Weapon Specialization (spiked chain)
6th	Combat Expertise
6th (bonus)	Improved Trip
8th (bonus)	Greater Weapon Focus (spiked chain)
9th	Great Cleave
10th (bonus)	Blind-Fight
12th	Iron Will
12th (bonus)	Greater Weapon Specialization (spiked chain)
14th (bonus)	Combat Reflexes
15th	Dodge
16th (bonus)	Weapon Focus (spear)
18th	Weapon Specialization (spear)
18th (bonus)	Greater Weapon Focus (spear)
20th	Greater Weapon Specialization (spear)

TABLE 5-20: PALADIN HEAVY INFANTRY FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Power Attack
3rd	Cleave
6th	Mounted Combat
9th	Leadership
12th	Combat Casting
15th	Weapon Focus (longsword)
18th	Improved Critical (longsword)

Ranger Light Infantry

As with many melee ranger builds, the light infantry character is encouraged to take the two-weapon fighting style that is offered to rangers. Though this fighting style is sub-optimal when compared to the use of two-handed weapons, the ranger quickly makes up for the offensive difference by buying Power Attack. With the automatic bonus feat Greater Two-Weapon Fighting at 11th level, the ranger will start to have a hard time landing her third off-hand attack. Proactively, she buys Weapon Focus (shortsword) to gain a small but significant bonus when she's making that tertiary off-hand attack at -10. Even at a slight damage disadvantage, she'll still be dropping opponents on a regular basis, so the Cleave feat at 15th level should get a healthy amount of use.

The rest of the ranger's build is devoted to defense. She takes Two-Weapon Defense before Dodge since its bonus applies to all opponents instead of just one. Still, Dodge is useful on its own merits and as a gateway to Mobility, so both are purchased later in her career. Spring Attack, though arguably an offensive feat, is used by the ranger light infantry warrior in a defensive capacity. She can't charge the same powerful foes that the heavy infantry fighter beats to death, but Spring Attack can help her take pot shots until a new target gains priority or the target's fate is sealed.

Skirmisher

Fighter Skirmisher

Though some may think of a fighter skirmisher as a "waste" of the fighter's potential for massive specialization, the fact is that because fighters get so many feats, it's very easy for them to have excellent capabilities in both melee and ranged combat. Since this character will be a multi-role warrior, the first feats she takes are focused on getting out of threatened spaces and quickly switching weapons. After that, taking advantage of the fighter's specialization capability will help sustain her in melee combat.

The mid-levels are a mish-mash of ranged feats, melee feats, and a couple of miscellaneous feats. Point Blank Shot and Precise Shot are taken first. Primarily, the skirmisher will be pulling archery duty at close range, usually at targets that are engaging her allies. Both feats help in those circumstances. Once that's out of the way, she takes Power Attack for the increased offensive capability required for someone who isn't a two-handed melee weapons specialist. This is followed by two miscellaneous feats: Iron Will helps protect against the inevitable mind-affecting spells and Blind-Fight allows the skirmisher to deal with concealment in case the rest of the party is incapable of doing so. Rapid Shot and Cleave round out the most consistently useful feats available from the Point Blank Shot and Power Attack feat trees. The high-level feats are reserved for building Weapon

Focus trees for both longsword and longbow. Despite what seems to be a lack of singular focus, this fighter skirmisher is actually as well equipped to deal with both melee and ranged combat as many non-fighter infantry or archer characters.

Ranger Skirmisher

Quick Draw is the key to this build's success. With it, the ranger can not only draw two weapons simultaneously, but she can also make multiple thrown weapon attacks in a single round. Though she could use two heavier melee weapons or a longbow when she expects one form of combat to dominate an encounter, her two typical weapons are longsword and throwing axe. Yes, you read that right: a throwing axe. Remember: the goal of the

TABLE 5-21: BARBARIAN LIGHT INFANTRY FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Power Attack
3rd	Cleave
6th	Great Cleave
9th	Dodge
12th	Combat Expertise
15th	Improved Bull Rush
18th	Mobility

TABLE 5-22: MONK LIGHT INFANTRY FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Power Attack
1st (bonus)	Stunning Fist
2nd (bonus)	Combat Reflexes
3rd	Dodge
6th	Mobility
6th (bonus)	Improved Trip
9th	Cleave
12th	Combat Expertise
15th	Improved Disarm
18th	Improved Critical (unarmed)

TABLE 5-23: RANGER LIGHT INFANTRY FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Power Attack
2nd (style)	Two-Weapon Fighting
3rd	Two-Weapon Defense
6th	Dodge
6th (style)	Improved Two-Weapon Fighting
9th	Weapon Focus (shortsword)
11th (style)	Greater Two-Weapon Fighting
12th	Mobility
15th	Cleave
18th	Spring Attack

skirmisher is not to be devastating at one form of combat, but to remain flexible at all times. The throwing axe in the off-hand is a light weapon (reduces penalties) and has a range increment of 10 feet.

When combined with Point Blank Shot and Far Shot, the throwing axe becomes fairly respectable. At 11th level, the Greater Two-Weapon Fighting feat allows the ranger skirmisher to do some pretty bizarre things with her weapon combos. Consider a full attack action that consists of three melee attacks with longsword followed by a 5 foot step and three ranged throwing axe attacks within 20 feet (increased range increment thanks to Far Shot)! If you don't mind the idea of your skirmisher

looking like a wandering axe salesman, she could sheath the longsword and make a whopping six attacks within 20 feet at +10/+5/+0, +10/+5/+0! Impractical? Possibly. Totally awesome? Definitely. It's certainly flexible, and that's what the skirmisher is all about.

At higher levels, the ranger buys Power Attack and Cleave for increased melee capabilities as the challenges rise. The purchase of Improved Critical can certainly help whether the axes are used for ranged or melee combat. The sheer number of attacks the ranger gets by that point in time practically guarantees regular critical hits on every adventure.

TABLE 5-24: FIGHTER SKIRMISHER FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Dodge
1st (bonus)	Mobility
2nd (bonus)	Quick Draw
3rd	Weapon Focus (longsword)
4th (bonus)	Weapon Specialization (longsword)
6th	Point Blank Shot
6th (bonus)	Precise Shot
8th (bonus)	Power Attack
9th	Iron Will
10th (bonus)	Blind-Fight
12th	Rapid Shot
12th (bonus)	Cleave
14th (bonus)	Weapon Focus (longbow)
15th	Weapon Specialization (longbow)
16th (bonus)	Greater Weapon Focus (longsword)
18th	Greater Weapon Specialization (longsword)
18th (bonus)	Greater Weapon Focus (longbow)
20th	Greater Weapon Specialization (longbow)

TABLE 5-25: RANGER SKIRMISHER FEATS

Level	Feat
1st	Quick Draw
2nd (style)	Two-Weapon Fighting
3rd	Point Blank Shot
6th	Precise Shot
6th (style)	Improved Two-Weapon Fighting
9th	Far Shot
11th (style)	Greater Two-Weapon Fighting
12th	Power Attack
15th	Cleave
18th	Improved Critical (throwing axe)

Chapter Six

Equipment

Next to experience points, loot is the basis for building your character. The more loot, the more you can buy. The more you buy, the better equipped you are. And the better equipped you are, the better your chances for survival. All the great feat choices, good skill point distributions, and great stat rolls mean nothing if the guy you're facing has a +5 *vorpal greatsword of wounding* or a +4 *unholy flaming composite [+4] longbow* with Rapid Shot. Of course, in the hands of a commoner, these weapons are worthless, but in the hands of a reasonably competent warrior, equipment, more often than not, makes or breaks the fight.

This chapter's focus is on weapons and armor, with extra attention on weapons, because they're cool. We're not gonna chat about magic items, the virtues of smokesticks, or why you should use a silk rope over hemp rope, because if you're that hung up on general PHB equipment, well, you should probably switch classes and go for rogue. Just keep your mind on the damage dealer and the damage stopper, and you'll be fine.

Weapons

First off, if you're a historical type looking for reality in this game, you've chosen the wrong system. The weapons in the d20 system have only a tenuous link to any reality, and instead serve to simulate combat in as smooth a manner as possible. All weapons have characteristics, just like spells, skills or feats. To decide which weapon is best for you, consider the various components of each weapon.

Weapon Components

Proficiency

Each weapon requires some modicum of proficiency to use properly. Most warriors – all but monks – are proficient with all simple and martial weapons. Clerics are proficient with all simple weapons, while everybody else has specific lists of weapons they can use.

Simple: Even a commoner could use these real basic

weapons. Simple weapons include unarmed strikes, clubs, sickles, and quarterstaves.

Martial: These are the better weapons that are made for war, as implied by the proficiency name. These weapons are all the traditional things you'd find on the battlefield, such as longswords, warhammers, and longbows.

Exotic: This proficiency group covers just about everything else. Exotic weapons need not be from weird locales. Instead, they just have unusual or special rules associated with them, higher than normal damage, race-specific origins, or are just plain weird. Examples include the bastard sword, dwarven waraxe, shuriken, and the infamous two-bladed sword (see, forget about reality!).

Categories

Each weapon falls into one or more of the following categories.

Unarmed: This includes attacks made while wearing gauntlets.

Light: These weapons are small and don't take a lot of room to use. Weapons in this category include the dagger, kama, and short sword. When you're grappled, swallowed whole, or engulfed, you can use a light weapon to cut your way free. These are the best weapons to use in your off-hand if you fight with two weapons.

One-Handed: The category says it all. These weapons include longswords, the morningstar, and the whip.

Two-Handed: This category includes greatswords, most double weapons (quarterstaff to the dwarven urgosh), and longspears. You get one-and-a-half times your Strength modifier with attacks made with one-handed weapons wielded in two hands, or with two-handed weapons. When you use Power Attack with a two-handed weapon, you trade attack for damage points on a 1-for-2 basis.

Ranged: Includes both thrown and projectile weapons, such as the javelin and the longbow.

Size: A weapon's size reflects the intended size of the

weapon's wielder. For example, a longsword, as written, is the same thing as a Medium longsword (1d8 points of damage). However, there is a difference between a Small longsword (1d6 points of damage, a longsword intended for a Small wielder such as a halfling), and a Large longsword (2d6 points of damage, a longsword constructed for a Large wielder, like an ogre). The weapon's size changes the weapon's damage value. The default damage values of a weapon are listed under the Dmg (M) column, while those for Small are under the Dmg (S) column. For other sized weapons, look at Table 7-4: Tiny and Large Weapon Damage in the PHB.

Cost: The weapon's cost. This typically is unimportant beyond 2nd or 3rd level, since by that point you should have enough cash to buy just about anything you want in the PHB.

Damage: A weapon's damage is always in whole die increments. Gone are the days of a weapon dealing 1d6+1 damage. Damage values are based on the weapon's category.

Light:	1d3 to 1d6
One-handed:	1d3 to 1d10
Two-handed:	1d6 to 2d6
Ranged:	1d4 to 1d10

Critical: All weapons have a listed critical threat range. A weapon threatens a critical when the number indicated comes up on the die and hits with the added modifiers. So, a longsword threatens on a 19-20. If you rolled a 19, and hit the target with modifiers, you can roll a second 1d20. If you hit with the second roll, you get a critical hit. For more info, see the section preceding the weapons in the PHB.

Range Increment: A weapon, if a projectile or thrown weapon, has some distance listed here. Thrown weapons have double value, since a character can make a full attack action, then use Rapid Shot to throw the weapon in their hand, then pull another to replace it with Quick Draw. In most fights, the battlefield rarely extends beyond one range increment.

Type: There are three types of weapons: Slashing, Piercing, and Bludgeoning. Most of the time, a weapon's type has little game effect, though some monsters (such as the skeleton and zombie) have damage reduction against a particular type of weapon.

A Martial Weapon's Value

First, skip simple weapons. You're a warrior, after all. (And if you're a monk, stick with unarmed attacks; they'll serve you better.) Exotic weapons are probably not going to be what you want to focus on either. Why? When was the last time your treasure haul included a *+1 orc double axe*, or a *+3 siangham*? How about a *+3/+2 dire flail*? Probably never, and it probably won't ever. See, DMs have to add that crap to their adventures. If they're randomizing treasure, they first have to roll a

magic weapon and then face a 70% chance that the weapon included is a common weapon. Finally, anything we're talking about below can also apply to exotics, simples, and even weapons of different sizes with just a little extrapolation.

First off, a weapon's value rests entirely on how the damage dealt magnifies through a critical hit. Remember the Feats chapter in this book? Remember all those percentages? They apply here too, but worse. What follows is an extensive look at the potential damage based on weapon and crit range. Look them over, and you'll see which weapons are best.

A weapon with a crit range of 20 indicates you will have a 5% chance to get a critical threat. A range of 19-20 gives you a 10% chance, while a range of 18-20 gives you a 15% chance. Compare the heavy pick with the short sword. The heavy pick has a x4 multiplier, but only threatens on a 20. On the other hand, the short sword has a x2 multiplier, but threatens on a 19-20. If you manage to score a critical hit with the heavy pick, you get 4d6 damage, an average of 14 points of damage before modifiers. The short sword only deals 7 points of damage, but you achieve a critical twice as often. Balanced? Consider this: It takes 20 rolls to guarantee a natural 20 (statistically speaking), while it only takes 10 rolls to guarantee a 19-20. Every additional round you spend in combat is another round you might take damage.

The tables below compare weapons based on their damage and critical range. The calculations include the chances of getting a critical, and the added damage on average. The tables demonstrate how the average damage changes based on expected hits on a standard attack and the critical multiplier against ACs ranging from 10 to 20. From these tables, you can compare expected damage between weapons of different damage dice, such as when determining if a light pick or a short sword is the better off-hand weapon, or which weapon is better for two-handed attacks.

"Average damage" is the average damage resulting from the dice rolled for the weapon's damage. "Average critical damage" is the average damage you'll do when you roll a crit (influenced by the weapon's crit multiplier), while the "adjusted critical damage" is the average additional critical damage multiplied by the chance of actually getting a critical (5%, 10%, or 15%, as discussed above). In other words, adjusted critical damage is balanced for how often that crit damage is actually going to occur. If you add average damage plus adjusted critical damage, you get the true average amount of damage the weapon will do, including percentage chances of criticals and the extra damage those crits will do above and beyond the normal damage.

"True average damage" is the average damage from a normal, non-critical hit, plus the average extra damage from a critical hit adjusted for the chance of actually getting the critical hit. In other words, if you attacked 100 times and got a critical exactly as many times as you

should (10 times or 10% for a 19-20 weapon, 15 times or 15% for a 18-20 weapon, etc.), and every other attack landed with average damage rolls, the true average damage is the total damage over those 100 attacks divided by 100. It's the only true measure of a weapon's damage potential over the course of many battles.

(For you math wonks out there, note that the true average damage number never appears on the table of average damage based on AC and BAB. This is because there is always a 5% chance of any attack failing (on a roll of natural 1). To get from true average damage to the numbers on the tables, multiply each component of damage by the chance of actually hitting.)

Weapon Analysis

1d4/x2: light hammer

Cost: 1 gp

Average Damage: 2.5

Average Critical Damage: 5

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.125

True Average Damage: 2.625

While clearly one of the worst weapons in the martial proficiencies, insofar as damage goes, you shouldn't discount this weapon altogether, considering the fact that it has a range increment. Like the hand axe, it can be thrown, but farther. In fact, it has the best thrown range increment in the game. And, at one-eighth the cost of a throwing axe, you can afford to throw these weapons away.

For cheap fun, use light hammers in conjunction with Two-Weapon Fighting, Quick Draw, Point Blank Shot, and Rapid Shot. Armed with any one-handed weapon and a light hammer, make a full attack action, but apply a -2 penalty to your melee attack rolls. At the end of your full attack, take a five-foot step away from your opponent if he is still alive. With Rapid Shot, throw the light hammer at the target, or any other target within 30 ft, gaining a +1 bonus to the ranged attack and damage. Finally, with Quick Draw, replace the thrown weapon and repeat as necessary.

1d4/18-20: kukri

(also the Small scimitar)

Cost: 8 gp

Average Damage: 2.5

Average Critical Damage: 5

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.375

True Average Damage: 2.875

The kukri sure seems like a good bargain. With a 15%

base chance to critically threaten your target with each swing... well, you'll be hitting criticals frequently, especially if you get a magical kukri with enchantment bonuses or the *keen* quality. At that point you'll crit with nearly every swing. The kukri is not bad, really, but it lacks the versatility of the light hammer, dagger, or throwing axe, as it is a melee weapon only. And, with only a x2 multiplier, you're still dealing just 2d4 points of damage on a successful critical hit, just like a dagger.

The kukri is best when paired with the scimitar in Two-Weapon Fighting. First, get the kukri enchanted and with the *keen* quality. Next, take Improved Critical (scimitar). Now, both your scimitar and your kukri have threat ranges of 15-20. With two swings, you have a 40% chance of nailing a critical hit each round.

TABLE 6-1: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1D4/X2 WEAPON
(EXAMPLE: LIGHT HAMMER)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	1.575	1.444	1.313	1.181	1.05	0.919	0.788	0.656	0.525	0.394	0.263
+2	1.706	1.575	1.444	1.313	1.181	1.05	0.919	0.788	0.656	0.525	0.394
+3	1.838	1.706	1.575	1.444	1.313	1.181	1.05	0.919	0.788	0.656	0.525
+4	1.969	1.838	1.706	1.575	1.444	1.313	1.181	1.05	0.919	0.788	0.656
+5	2.1	1.969	1.838	1.706	1.575	1.444	1.313	1.181	1.05	0.919	0.788
+6	2.231	2.1	1.969	1.838	1.706	1.575	1.444	1.313	1.181	1.05	0.919
+7	2.363	2.231	2.1	1.969	1.838	1.706	1.575	1.444	1.313	1.181	1.05
+8	2.494	2.363	2.231	2.1	1.969	1.838	1.706	1.575	1.444	1.313	1.181
+9	2.494	2.494	2.363	2.231	2.1	1.969	1.838	1.706	1.575	1.444	1.313
+10	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.363	2.231	2.1	1.969	1.838	1.706	1.575	1.444
+11	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.363	2.231	2.1	1.969	1.838	1.706	1.575
+12	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.363	2.231	2.1	1.969	1.838	1.706
+13	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.363	2.231	2.1	1.969	1.838
+14	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.363	2.231	2.1	1.969
+15	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.363	2.231	2.1
+16	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.363	2.231
+17	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.363
+18	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494
+19	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494
+20	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494	2.494

TABLE 6-2: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1D4/18-20 WEAPON
(EXAMPLE: KUKRI)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294	1.15	1.006	0.823	0.719	0.575	0.431	0.275
+2	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294	1.15	1.006	0.823	0.719	0.575	0.431
+3	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294	1.15	1.006	0.823	0.719	0.575
+4	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294	1.15	1.006	0.823	0.719
+5	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294	1.15	1.006	0.823
+6	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294	1.15	1.006
+7	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294	1.15
+8	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294
+9	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438
+10	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581
+11	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725
+12	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869
+13	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013
+14	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156
+15	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3
+16	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444
+17	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588
+18	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731
+19	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731
+20	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731

TABLE 6-3: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1D4/x4 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: LIGHT PICK)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294	1.15	1.006	0.863	0.719	0.575	0.431	0.288
+2	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294	1.15	1.006	0.863	0.719	0.575	0.431
+3	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294	1.15	1.006	0.863	0.719	0.575
+4	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294	1.15	1.006	0.863	0.719
+5	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294	1.15	1.006	0.863
+6	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294	1.15	1.006
+7	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294	1.15
+8	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438	1.294
+9	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581	1.438
+10	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725	1.581
+11	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869	1.725
+12	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013	1.869
+13	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156	2.013
+14	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3	2.156
+15	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444	2.3
+16	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588	2.444
+17	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.588
+18	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731
+19	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731
+20	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731	2.731

TABLE 6-4: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1D6/x2 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: THROWING AXE)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	2.205	2.021	1.838	1.654	1.47	1.286	1.103	0.919	0.735	0.551	0.368
+2	2.389	2.205	2.021	1.838	1.654	1.47	1.286	1.103	0.919	0.735	0.551
+3	2.573	2.389	2.205	2.021	1.838	1.654	1.47	1.286	1.103	0.919	0.735
+4	2.756	2.573	2.389	2.205	2.021	1.838	1.654	1.47	1.286	1.103	0.919
+5	2.94	2.756	2.573	2.389	2.205	2.021	1.838	1.654	1.47	1.286	1.103
+6	3.124	2.94	2.756	2.573	2.389	2.205	2.021	1.838	1.654	1.47	1.286
+7	3.308	3.124	2.94	2.756	2.573	2.389	2.205	2.021	1.838	1.654	1.47
+8	3.491	3.308	3.124	2.94	2.756	2.573	2.389	2.205	2.021	1.838	1.654
+9	3.491	3.491	3.308	3.124	2.94	2.756	2.573	2.389	2.205	2.021	1.838
+10	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.308	3.124	2.94	2.756	2.573	2.389	2.205	2.021
+11	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.308	3.124	2.94	2.756	2.573	2.389	2.205
+12	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.308	3.124	2.94	2.756	2.573	2.389
+13	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.308	3.124	2.94	2.756	2.573
+14	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.308	3.124	2.94	2.756
+15	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.308	3.124	2.94
+16	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.308	3.124
+17	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.308
+18	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491
+19	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491
+20	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491	3.491

TABLE 6-5: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1D6/18-20 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: SCIMITAR)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811	1.61	1.409	1.208	1.006	0.805	0.604	0.385
+2	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811	1.61	1.409	1.208	1.006	0.805	0.604
+3	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811	1.61	1.409	1.208	1.006	0.805
+4	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811	1.61	1.409	1.208	1.006
+5	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811	1.61	1.409	1.208
+6	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811	1.61	1.409
+7	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811	1.61
+8	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811
+9	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013
+10	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214
+11	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415
+12	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616
+13	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818
+14	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019
+15	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22
+16	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421
+17	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623
+18	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824
+19	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824
+20	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824

1d4/x4: light pick
(also a Small heavy pick)

Cost: 4 gp

Average Damage: 2.5

Average Critical Damage: 10

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.375

True Average Damage: 2.875

This is the big off-hand weapon, best for the reckless high rollers. Sure, you only have a 5% chance of getting a critical threat, but you're probably going to get the confirmation when you do make that big roll. The key benefit, as evidenced on Table 6-3, is the damage potential. It's also cheaper than the kukri. However, despite this weapon's virtues, it carries some flaws. Like the kukri, it's not made to be thrown. The short sword consistently deals more damage. Finally, piercing weapons are often less successful in damaging opponents than slashing or bludgeoning, since many monsters have resistances to piercing weapons.

Want to beef this weapon up a bit? Add a "fill in energy type here" burst weapon. For the price of a +2 bonus, your light pick deals an extra 3d10 points of energy damage on a critical hit. Mix with Power Attack, and it's all over.

1d6/x2: throwing axe

Cost: 8 gp

Average Damage: 3.5

Average Critical Damage: 7

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.175

True Average Damage: 3.675

This one's real simple. Itty-bitty axe, deals itty-bitty damage. For 8 gp, you could buy 4 daggers with the same range increment. Really, the big benefit here is the added damage per hit. You're not going to crit all that often, and for the price, it's probably better to look at cheaper and expendable thrown weaponry.

Whenever using thrown weaponry, you must invest in the Quick Draw feat. It allows you to use your normal rate of attacks with thrown weaponry, provided of course you have enough of them on hand. One more thing: many warriors make the mistake of dumping 35 or 50 gp into a crossbow. The only people who should ever, ever use a crossbow are the 95-pound weaklings, with a Strength of 9 or less. A crossbow requires reload time. To avoid or minimize the reload time, you have to buy a super-specialized feat (Rapid Reload, that is). On the other hand, 50 gold pieces gets you 50 light hammers or, for the more reasonable, 6 throwing axes. And with thrown weapons, you get a Strength bonus to damage.

1d6/18-20: scimitar

Cost: 15 gp

Average Damage: 3.5

Average Critical Damage: 7

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.525

True Average Damage: 4.025

Of the two high-critical-threatening one-handed weapons, scimitars are consistently superior to rapiers. Scimitars are slashing, which means they are eligible for the *keen edge* spell and magic enhancement. The rapier is piercing, which means you'd have to spend a feat to increase this effectiveness of this weapon. If you're a warrior, there is bound to be more effective weaponry out there; take a look at the game's most popular weapon: the longsword. On the other hand, you can use Weapon Finesse with a rapier, something you can't use with a scimitar.

In short, if you have a high Dexterity, a mediocre Strength, and Weapon Finesse, a rapier and a kukri are the weapons for you. On the other hand, if you want to start ripping through the bad guys, invest in a +X *keen scimitar*, and you won't be sorry.

1d6/19-20: short sword
(also a Small longsword)

Cost: 10 gp

Average Damage: 3.5

Average Critical Damage: 7

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.35

True Average Damage: 3.85

The short sword is undoubtedly the game's most popular off-hand weapon. What can match the high critical threat range at such a great price? Compared to the kukri, the short sword deals more damage on average, despite its 5% less likelihood of scoring a critical threat. It even weighs less than most of the martial light weapons. Is there a reason not to use this weapon as an off-hand? Probably not; thousands of gamers can't be wrong, right?

Seriously, as off-hand weapons go, this one is fine. However, you can't throw it. It's also the most expensive of the light martial weapons, and worse, it's piercing. In this department, the kukri is a better investment, despite the lower damage on average. Plus, the kukri does slashing damage, which lets you put some *keen* action into it. In fact, a *keen*-edged kukri has almost the same damage potential as the short sword.

TABLE 6-6: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1D6/19-20 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: SHORT SWORD)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733	1.54	1.348	1.155	0.963	0.77	0.578	0.35
+2	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733	1.54	1.348	1.155	0.963	0.77	0.525
+3	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733	1.54	1.348	1.155	0.963	0.7
+4	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733	1.54	1.348	1.155	0.875
+5	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733	1.54	1.348	1.05
+6	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733	1.54	1.225
+7	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733	1.4
+8	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.575
+9	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.75
+10	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31	1.925
+11	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.1
+12	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.275
+13	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.45
+14	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.625
+15	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273	2.8
+16	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465	2.975
+17	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.15
+18	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.325
+19	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.325
+20	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.325

TABLE 6-7: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1D6/X3 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: HANDAXE)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733	1.54	1.348	1.155	0.963	0.77	0.578	0.385
+2	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733	1.54	1.348	1.155	0.963	0.77	0.578
+3	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733	1.54	1.348	1.155	0.963	0.77
+4	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733	1.54	1.348	1.155	0.963
+5	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733	1.54	1.348	1.155
+6	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733	1.54	1.348
+7	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733	1.54
+8	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925	1.733
+9	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118	1.925
+10	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31	2.118
+11	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503	2.31
+12	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695	2.503
+13	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888	2.695
+14	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08	2.888
+15	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273	3.08
+16	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465	3.273
+17	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.465
+18	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658
+19	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658
+20	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658	3.658

TABLE 6-8: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1D6/X4 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: HEAVY PICK)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811	1.61	1.409	1.208	1.006	0.805	0.604	0.403
+2	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811	1.61	1.409	1.208	1.006	0.805	0.604
+3	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811	1.61	1.409	1.208	1.006	0.805
+4	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811	1.61	1.409	1.208	1.006
+5	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811	1.61	1.409	1.208
+6	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811	1.61	1.409
+7	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811	1.61
+8	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013	1.811
+9	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214	2.013
+10	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415	2.214
+11	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616	2.415
+12	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818	2.616
+13	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019	2.818
+14	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22	3.019
+15	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421	3.22
+16	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623	3.421
+17	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.623
+18	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824
+19	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824
+20	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824	3.824

TABLE 6-9: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1D8/x2 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: FLAIL)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	2.835	2.599	2.363	2.126	1.89	1.654	1.418	1.181	0.945	0.709	0.473
+2	3.071	2.835	2.599	2.363	2.126	1.89	1.654	1.418	1.181	0.945	0.709
+3	3.308	3.071	2.835	2.599	2.363	2.126	1.89	1.654	1.418	1.181	0.945
+4	3.544	3.308	3.071	2.835	2.599	2.363	2.126	1.89	1.654	1.418	1.181
+5	3.78	3.544	3.308	3.071	2.835	2.599	2.363	2.126	1.89	1.654	1.418
+6	4.016	3.78	3.544	3.308	3.071	2.835	2.599	2.363	2.126	1.89	1.654
+7	4.253	4.016	3.78	3.544	3.308	3.071	2.835	2.599	2.363	2.126	1.89
+8	4.489	4.253	4.016	3.78	3.544	3.308	3.071	2.835	2.599	2.363	2.126
+9	4.489	4.489	4.253	4.016	3.78	3.544	3.308	3.071	2.835	2.599	2.363
+10	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.253	4.016	3.78	3.544	3.308	3.071	2.835	2.599
+11	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.253	4.016	3.78	3.544	3.308	3.071	2.835
+12	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.253	4.016	3.78	3.544	3.308	3.071
+13	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.253	4.016	3.78	3.544	3.308
+14	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.253	4.016	3.78	3.544
+15	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.253	4.016	3.78
+16	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.253	4.016
+17	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.253
+18	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489
+19	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489
+20	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489	4.489

TABLE 6-10: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1D8/19-20 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: LONGSWORD)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228	1.98	1.733	1.485	1.238	0.99	0.743	0.45
+2	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228	1.98	1.733	1.485	1.238	0.99	0.675
+3	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228	1.98	1.733	1.485	1.238	0.9
+4	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228	1.98	1.733	1.485	1.125
+5	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228	1.98	1.733	1.35
+6	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228	1.98	1.575
+7	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228	1.8
+8	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.025
+9	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.25
+10	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.475
+11	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.7
+12	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465	2.925
+13	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.15
+14	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.375
+15	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.6
+16	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	3.825
+17	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.05
+18	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.275
+19	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.275
+20	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.275

TABLE 6-11: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1D8/x3 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: BATTLEAXE)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228	1.98	1.733	1.485	1.238	0.99	0.743	0.495
+2	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228	1.98	1.733	1.485	1.238	0.99	0.743
+3	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228	1.98	1.733	1.485	1.238	0.99
+4	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228	1.98	1.733	1.485	1.238
+5	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228	1.98	1.733	1.485
+6	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228	1.98	1.733
+7	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228	1.98
+8	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475	2.228
+9	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723	2.475
+10	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97	2.723
+11	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218	2.97
+12	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465	3.218
+13	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713	3.465
+14	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96	3.713
+15	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208	3.96
+16	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455	4.208
+17	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.455
+18	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703
+19	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703
+20	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703	4.703

1d6/x3: handaxe

(also a Small battleaxe)

Cost: 6 gp

Average Damage: 3.5

Average Critical Damage: 10.5

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.35

True Average Damage: 3.85

The handaxe is an interesting and oft-overlooked alternative to the short sword. It has the same damage potential as the short sword, it's cheaper, and it's slashing. Again, where you have to stack a feat on the short sword to improve its critical threat, the hand axe improves with a simple magical oil or enchantment.

1d6/x4: heavy pick

Cost: 8 gp

Average Damage: 3.5

Average Critical Damage: 14

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.525

True Average Damage: 4.025

This bruiser is a great weapon for reckless characters who believe they have a better chance at nailing the natural 20 than other characters. While this is an acceptable weapon, better than the hand axe and on par with the short sword, it can't be used as effectively as an off-hand weapon without taking some extra penalties to the attack roll. As a primary weapon, though you may occasionally get lucky with a swing, you're probably not going to pull off a miracle every game session.

1d8/x2: flail

Cost: 8 gp

Average Damage: 4.5

Average Critical Damage: 9

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.225

True Average Damage: 4.725

On the surface, this looks like one of the crummiest weapons in the game. Alas, many players fall into this trap by not reading the weapon description. Flails, either regular or their bigger brother, the heavy flail, grant their wielder a +2 bonus on opposed attack rolls made to disarm an enemy and to avoid being disarmed on a failed attempt. Better still, this so-called yuck weapon also lets you trip bad guys. If you were thinking about multiclassing a fighter/monk and want to play with the Improved Trip feat a bit, this weapon is an 8 gp gem in the rough, having a reasonable damage value, especially compared to the beloved pick.

1d8/19-20: longsword

Cost: 15 gp

Average Damage: 4.5

Average Critical Damage: 9

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.45

True Average Damage: 4.95

Yeah, yeah. It's a great weapon. Not much in the perks or originality department, but +1 *longswords* are more common than half-elves these days. It's a staple weapon. You're going to use it, and there's nothing anyone can say about it.

1d8/x3: battleaxe

Cost: 10 gp

Average Damage: 4.5

Average Critical Damage: 13.5

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.45

True Average Damage: 4.95

Same average damage potential as the longsword, you say? Five gold cheaper? Better top-end damage potential? Slashing, too? Yep, you're still going with the longsword, aren't you?

2d4/18-20: falchion

Cost: 75 gp

Average Damage: 5

Average Critical Damage: 10

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.75

True Average Damage: 5.75

This is a really strange weapon. It costs 25 gp more than a greatsword, still requires two hands to use, and deals less damage. Granted, it does give you an extra 5% chance for a critical threat, and does slightly more adjusted critical damage, but who are we kidding? Oh yeah, it's also 4 pounds lighter. This is somewhat cool with the right magical enhancements, but if you ask any warrior, they'll hand you a greatsword instead.

TABLE 6-12: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 2D4/18-20 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: FALCHION)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588	2.3	2.013	1.725	1.438	1.15	0.863	0.55
+2	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588	2.3	2.013	1.725	1.438	1.15	0.863
+3	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588	2.3	2.013	1.725	1.438	1.15
+4	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588	2.3	2.013	1.725	1.438
+5	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588	2.3	2.013	1.725
+6	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588	2.3	2.013
+7	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588	2.3
+8	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588
+9	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875
+10	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163
+11	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45
+12	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738
+13	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025
+14	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313
+15	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6
+16	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888
+17	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175
+18	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463
+19	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463
+20	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463

TABLE 6-13: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 2D4/X3 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: GUISARME)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	3.3	3.025	2.75	2.475	2.2	1.925	1.65	1.375	1.1	0.825	0.55
+2	3.575	3.3	3.025	2.75	2.475	2.2	1.925	1.65	1.375	1.1	0.825
+3	3.85	3.575	3.3	3.025	2.75	2.475	2.2	1.925	1.65	1.375	1.1
+4	4.125	3.85	3.575	3.3	3.025	2.75	2.475	2.2	1.925	1.65	1.375
+5	4.4	4.125	3.85	3.575	3.3	3.025	2.75	2.475	2.2	1.925	1.65
+6	4.675	4.4	4.125	3.85	3.575	3.3	3.025	2.75	2.475	2.2	1.925
+7	4.95	4.675	4.4	4.125	3.85	3.575	3.3	3.025	2.75	2.475	2.2
+8	5.225	4.95	4.675	4.4	4.125	3.85	3.575	3.3	3.025	2.75	2.475
+9	5.225	5.225	4.95	4.675	4.4	4.125	3.85	3.575	3.3	3.025	2.75
+10	5.225	5.225	5.225	4.95	4.675	4.4	4.125	3.85	3.575	3.3	3.025
+11	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	4.95	4.675	4.4	4.125	3.85	3.575	3.3
+12	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	4.95	4.675	4.4	4.125	3.85	3.575
+13	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	4.95	4.675	4.4	4.125	3.85
+14	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	4.95	4.675	4.4	4.125
+15	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	4.95	4.675	4.4
+16	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	4.95	4.675
+17	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	4.95
+18	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225
+19	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225
+20	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225	5.225

TABLE 6-14: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 2D4/X4 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: SCYTHE)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588	2.3	2.013	1.725	1.438	1.15	0.863	0.575
+2	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588	2.3	2.013	1.725	1.438	1.15	0.863
+3	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588	2.3	2.013	1.725	1.438	1.15
+4	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588	2.3	2.013	1.725	1.438
+5	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588	2.3	2.013	1.725
+6	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588	2.3	2.013
+7	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588	2.3
+8	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875	2.588
+9	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163	2.875
+10	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45	3.163
+11	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738	3.45
+12	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025	3.738
+13	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313	4.025
+14	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6	4.313
+15	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888	4.6
+16	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175	4.888
+17	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.175
+18	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463
+19	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463
+20	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463	5.463

2d4/x3: guisarme

Cost: 9 gp

Average Damage: 5

Average Critical Damage: 15

Adjusted Damage: 0.5

True Average Damage: 5.5

Pole-arms are underrated. Lots of damage potential, great critical hits and reach. Every multiclassed fighter/cleric should wield a pole arm. You want a weapon you can trip with? This is it.

2d4/x4: scythe

Cost: 18 gp

Average Damage: 5

Average Critical Damage: 20

Adjusted Damage: 0.75

True Average Damage: 5.75

At a certain level, the scythe is somewhat cool. High damage potential, not too expensive, and rather effective. On the other hand, who are you kidding? What, your character's going to stroll into a random town clutching a scythe? This weapon sets off some alarms. However, it can be used for making trip attacks. When it comes right down to it, if you're going to use a two-handed weapon, a greatsword consistently outperforms, trip or no trip.

This weapon gets real sick with the *energy burst* magic weapon property. Real sick. You'll do so much damage on a critical hit, you'll think the world was ending.

1d10/x2: greatclub

Cost: 5 gp

Average Damage: 5.5

Average Critical Damage: 11

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.275

True Average Damage: 5.775

There's just one reason to use this weapon: it's cheap. Take out a loan from the cleric and buy a heavy flail instead.

TABLE 6-15: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1D10/x2 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: GREATCLUB)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	3.465	3.176	2.888	2.599	2.31	2.021	1.733	1.444	1.155	0.866	0.578
+2	3.754	3.465	3.176	2.888	2.599	2.31	2.021	1.733	1.444	1.155	0.866
+3	4.043	3.754	3.465	3.176	2.888	2.599	2.31	2.021	1.733	1.444	1.155
+4	4.331	4.043	3.754	3.465	3.176	2.888	2.599	2.31	2.021	1.733	1.444
+5	4.62	4.331	4.043	3.754	3.465	3.176	2.888	2.599	2.31	2.021	1.733
+6	4.909	4.62	4.331	4.043	3.754	3.465	3.176	2.888	2.599	2.31	2.021
+7	5.198	4.909	4.62	4.331	4.043	3.754	3.465	3.176	2.888	2.599	2.31
+8	5.486	5.198	4.909	4.62	4.331	4.043	3.754	3.465	3.176	2.888	2.599
+9	5.486	5.486	5.198	4.909	4.62	4.331	4.043	3.754	3.465	3.176	2.888
+10	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.198	4.909	4.62	4.331	4.043	3.754	3.465	3.176
+11	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.198	4.909	4.62	4.331	4.043	3.754	3.465
+12	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.198	4.909	4.62	4.331	4.043	3.754
+13	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.198	4.909	4.62	4.331	4.043
+14	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.198	4.909	4.62	4.331
+15	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.198	4.909	4.62
+16	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.198	4.909
+17	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.198
+18	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486
+19	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486
+20	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486	5.486

TABLE 6-16: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1D10/19-20 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: FLAIL)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723	2.42	2.118	1.815	1.513	1.21	0.908	0.55
+2	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723	2.42	2.118	1.815	1.513	1.21	0.825
+3	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723	2.42	2.118	1.815	1.513	1.1
+4	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723	2.42	2.118	1.815	1.375
+5	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723	2.42	2.118	1.65
+6	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723	2.42	1.925
+7	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723	2.2
+8	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.475
+9	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328	2.75
+10	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.025
+11	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.3
+12	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.575
+13	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538	3.85
+14	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.125
+15	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.4
+16	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445	4.675
+17	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	4.95
+18	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.225
+19	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.225
+20	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.225

TABLE 6-17: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1D10/x3 WEAPON

(EXAMPLE: HALBERD)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723	2.42	2.118	1.815	1.513	1.21	0.908	0.605
+2	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723	2.42	2.118	1.815	1.513	1.21	0.908
+3	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723	2.42	2.118	1.815	1.513	1.21
+4	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723	2.42	2.118	1.815	1.513
+5	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723	2.42	2.118	1.815
+6	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723	2.42	2.118
+7	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723	2.42
+8	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025	2.723
+9	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328	3.025
+10	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63	3.328
+11	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933	3.63
+12	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235	3.933
+13	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538	4.235
+14	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84	4.538
+15	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143	4.84
+16	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445	5.143
+17	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.445
+18	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748
+19	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748
+20	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748	5.748

1d10/19-20: heavy flail

2d6/19-20: greatsword

Cost: 15 gp

Cost: 50 gp

Average Damage: 5.5

Average Damage: 7

Average Critical Damage: 11

Average Critical Damage: 14

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.55

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.7

True Average Damage: 6.05

True Average Damage: 7.7

See the entry for flail on why you should always keep a flail handy.

Of all the two-handed weapons, this one consistently deals the most damage. Compared to the greataxe, the greatsword can rack up the hits just as nicely, and it hits critically twice as often. This is the badass of all weapons.

1d10/x3: halberd

Cost: 10 gp

Average Damage: 5.5

Average Critical Damage: 16.5

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.55

True Average Damage: 6.05

Wow, this weapon is cool. First, it has a great damage range. It's only 10 gp. You can trip folks with it. It deals either piercing or slashing damage. Finally, it's not a reach weapon, so you're always threatening the 5 feet around you, for those AoOs you'd like to take.

1d12/x3: greataxe

Cost: 20 gp

Average Damage: 6.5

Average Critical Damage: 19.5

Adjusted Critical Damage: 0.65

True Average Damage: 7.15

Damage. This weapon is about raw damage potential. It can deal the most critical damage of any weapon in the game, though some others still deal more damage on average. Really, this item is all about prestige. Seeing a player dusting off his d12 for damage just says something about him.

If you've ignored our warnings about playing monsters as characters, that's fine. Just make sure your character is a Large creature and wields a Large version of this weapon. That's 3d6 points of damage, 9d6 on a critical hit. Add in Power Attack, and the fight's over.

TABLE 6-18: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 1D12/X3 WEAPON
(EXAMPLE: GREATAXE)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	4.29	3.933	3.575	3.218	2.86	2.503	2.145	1.788	1.43	1.073	0.715
+2	4.648	4.29	3.933	3.575	3.218	2.86	2.503	2.145	1.788	1.43	1.073
+3	5.005	4.648	4.29	3.933	3.575	3.218	2.86	2.503	2.145	1.788	1.43
+4	5.363	5.005	4.648	4.29	3.933	3.575	3.218	2.86	2.503	2.145	1.788
+5	5.72	5.363	5.005	4.648	4.29	3.933	3.575	3.218	2.86	2.503	2.145
+6	6.078	5.72	5.363	5.005	4.648	4.29	3.933	3.575	3.218	2.86	2.503
+7	6.435	6.078	5.72	5.363	5.005	4.648	4.29	3.933	3.575	3.218	2.86
+8	6.793	6.435	6.078	5.72	5.363	5.005	4.648	4.29	3.933	3.575	3.218
+9	6.793	6.793	6.435	6.078	5.72	5.363	5.005	4.648	4.29	3.933	3.575
+10	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.435	6.078	5.72	5.363	5.005	4.648	4.29	3.933
+11	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.435	6.078	5.72	5.363	5.005	4.648	4.29
+12	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.435	6.078	5.72	5.363	5.005	4.648
+13	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.435	6.078	5.72	5.363	5.005
+14	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.435	6.078	5.72	5.363
+15	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.435	6.078	5.72
+16	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.435	6.078
+17	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.435
+18	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793
+19	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793
+20	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793	6.793

TABLE 6-19: AVERAGE DAMAGE FOR 2D6/19-20 WEAPON
(EXAMPLE: GREATSWORD)

BAB	AC										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
+1	4.62	4.235	3.85	3.465	3.08	2.695	2.31	1.925	1.54	1.155	0.77
+2	5.005	4.62	4.235	3.85	3.465	3.08	2.695	2.31	1.925	1.54	1.155
+3	5.39	5.005	4.62	4.235	3.85	3.465	3.08	2.695	2.31	1.925	1.54
+4	5.775	5.39	5.005	4.62	4.235	3.85	3.465	3.08	2.695	2.31	1.925
+5	6.16	5.775	5.39	5.005	4.62	4.235	3.85	3.465	3.08	2.695	2.31
+6	6.545	6.16	5.775	5.39	5.005	4.62	4.235	3.85	3.465	3.08	2.695
+7	6.93	6.545	6.16	5.775	5.39	5.005	4.62	4.235	3.85	3.465	3.08
+8	7.315	6.93	6.545	6.16	5.775	5.39	5.005	4.62	4.235	3.85	3.465
+9	7.315	7.315	6.93	6.545	6.16	5.775	5.39	5.005	4.62	4.235	3.85
+10	7.315	7.315	7.315	6.93	6.545	6.16	5.775	5.39	5.005	4.62	4.235
+11	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	6.93	6.545	6.16	5.775	5.39	5.005	4.62
+12	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	6.93	6.545	6.16	5.775	5.39	5.005
+13	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	6.93	6.545	6.16	5.775	5.39
+14	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	6.93	6.545	6.16	5.775
+15	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	6.93	6.545	6.16
+16	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	6.93	6.545
+17	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	6.93
+18	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315
+19	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315
+20	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315	7.315

Summing It All Up

This chapter introduces a number of new ways to evaluate weapons. Here's a summary of weapons with the new stuff included, as well as anything special you should know about them. The table ranks the weapons by true average damage – it's the real stat you should be looking at, after all. All the stats in this table are for Medium size weapons of the given type. The table only includes the weapons listed above in the examples. For other weapons, simply find the entry for the same damage and crit modifier.

Weapon	Dmg	Crit	True Avg. Damage	Range Increment	Type	Notes
<i>Light Melee Weapons</i>						
Hammer, light	1d4	x2	2.625	20 ft.	B	
Kukri	1d4	18-20	2.875	–	S	
Pick, light	1d4	x4	2.875	–	P	
Axe, throwing	1d6	x2	3.675	10 ft.	S	
Sword, short	1d6	19-20	3.85	–	P	
Handaxe	1d6	x3	3.85	–	S	
<i>One-Handed Melee Weapons</i>						
Scimitar	1d6	18-20	4.025	–	S	
Pick, heavy	1d6	x4	4.025	–	P	
Flail	1d8	x2	4.725	–	B	+2 disarm, can trip
Longsword	1d8	19-20	4.95	–	S	
Battleaxe	1d8	x3	4.95	–	S	
<i>Two-Handed Melee Weapons</i>						
Guisarme	2d4	x3	5.5	–	S	Reach, can trip
Falchion	2d4	18-20	5.75	–	S	
Scythe	2d4	x4	5.75	–	P or S	
Greatclub	1d10	x2	5.775	–	B	
Flail, heavy	1d10	19-20	6.05	–	B	+2 disarm, can trip
Halberd	1d10	x3	6.05	–	P or S	Double damage against charge, can trip
Greataxe	1d12	x3	7.15	–	S	
Greatsword	2d6	19-20	7.7	–	S	

Armor

In previous editions of this game, armor was vital to the survival of any warrior. However, with all the options available to players through feats like Combat Expertise and Dodge, or classes like the monk, armor's usefulness begins to ebb. What follows is a brief analysis of the three categories of armor, and some things to think about when selecting armor.

Armor Categories

There are three main categories of armor: light, medium, and heavy.

Light Armor: These armors provide armor bonuses ranging from +1 to +4, allow characters with Dexterity scores of 18 or higher to retain their Dexterity bonus, have minimal armor check penalties, and do not reduce speed. Swimmers, light infantry, some guerillas, and archers should stick with this armor.

Medium Armor: These armors provide armor bonuses ranging from +3 to +5, allow characters with Dexterity scores of 14-18 to retain their Dexterity bonus, have moderate armor check penalties, and reduce speed. Some guerillas and skirmishers should wear this armor.

Heavy Armor: These armors provide armor bonuses ranging from +6 to +8, for the most part don't allow characters with high Dexterity scores to retain their Dexterity bonus, have severe armor check penalties, and reduce speed. Heavy infantry and cavalry should wear this armor.

Selecting Armor

Armor selection is important, especially at the lower levels. Depending on the archetype, the need for armor diminishes as your character advances. Light infantry and archers have less use for armor than do cavalry and heavy infantry. Moreover, the heavier types of armor severely retard many of the character's Strength- and Dexterity-based abilities, such as Climb, Jump, Move Silently, and Tumble. Last, armor can dramatically reduce your character's speed, unless you're a dwarf, so your character's reliance on movement is also a critical consideration.

Many players are tempted to dismiss armor altogether, once they realize the effects of the armor check penalty and speed reductions. Before you fall into this trap, consider the cost of magic items to replicate armor's bonus to AC. For example, a suit of full plate with all of its disadvantages costs a steep 1,500 gp. *Bracers of armor +8*, however, cost 64,000 gp. The solution? A happy medium of magic enhancement and armor always does the trick.

Table 6-20 (following page) is an analysis of all the armors in the PHB, modified by Dexterity modifiers and shield bonuses. Looking at this table, you should have a good idea of where your character should be for the money spent. If you're playing a two-handed weapon warrior, then focus on the no-shield row. If a -2 armor check penalty is too steep for your agile character, consider the light shield rows. If you're a tank, check out the heavy shield row, or the tower shield if you're proficient. Note that all shields are priced at their minimum value. You can always buy at least two wooden shields for the price of a steel shield.

TABLE 6-20: AC BY ARMOR, DEXTERITY, AND SHIELD

Armor	Dexterity Modifier								Shield?	Cost (gp)
	-1	+0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	+6		
Padded	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	None	5
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Light	8
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	Heavy	12
	14	15	16	16	16	16	16	16	Tower	35
Leather	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	None	10
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	Light	13
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	Heavy	17
	15	16	17	18	18	18	18	18	Tower	40
Studded Leather	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	18	None	25
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	19	Light	28
	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	20	Heavy	32
	16	17	18	19	19	19	19	19	Tower	55
Chain Shirt	13	14	15	16	17	18	18	18	None	100
	14	15	16	17	18	19	19	19	Light	103
	15	16	17	18	19	20	20	20	Heavy	107
	17	18	19	20	20	20	20	20	Tower	130
Hide	12	13	14	15	16	17	17	17	None	15
	13	14	15	16	17	18	18	18	Light	18
	14	15	16	17	18	19	19	19	Heavy	22
	16	17	18	19	19	19	19	19	Tower	45
Scale Mail	13	14	15	16	17	17	17	17	None	50
	14	15	16	17	18	18	18	18	Light	53
	15	16	17	18	19	19	19	19	Heavy	57
	17	18	19	20	20	20	20	20	Tower	80
Chainmail	14	15	16	17	17	17	17	17	None	150
	15	16	17	18	18	18	18	18	Light	153
	16	17	18	19	19	19	19	19	Heavy	157
	18	19	20	21	21	21	21	21	Tower	180
Breastplate	14	15	16	17	18	18	18	18	None	200
	15	16	17	18	19	19	19	19	Light	203
	16	17	18	19	20	20	20	20	Heavy	207
	18	19	20	21	21	21	21	21	Tower	230
Splint mail	15	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	None	200
	16	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	Light	203
	17	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	Heavy	207
	19	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	Tower	230
Banded mail	15	16	17	17	17	17	17	17	None	250
	16	17	18	18	18	18	18	18	Light	253
	17	18	19	19	19	19	19	19	Heavy	257
	19	20	21	21	21	21	21	21	Tower	280
Half-plate	16	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	None	600
	17	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	Light	603
	18	19	19	19	19	19	19	19	Heavy	607
	20	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	Tower	630
Full plate	17	18	19	19	19	19	19	19	None	1500
	18	19	20	20	20	20	20	20	Light	1503
	19	20	21	21	21	21	21	21	Heavy	1507
	21	22	23	23	23	23	23	23	Tower	1530

Chapter Seven

Combat

Or, How To Impress Your DM and Win The Game

By now, you know everything you need to know to make your warrior great. You've analyzed ability score placement, racial choice, class choice, skills, and feats, all to help you build the uberwarrior. You're feeling confident about your character, ready to poke a hot stick in the eye of a cyclops, beard the dragon, maybe even go on a genocidal rampage through an orc tribe. However, before you traipse off and get yourself in trouble, wait a bit longer. This is the most important chapter in the book, for what good is your min/maxed fighter when you're going to fight the same way you always have? This chapter is not going to waste time covering material explicitly spelled out in the PHB. Instead, it gives you the tools to succeed. Sit tight a little longer, and get ready to learn how to survive nearly every combat.

Risk Assessment

Melee combat kills characters more than traps, spells, or other hazards. A failed Reflex save made to avoid a pit trap has spelled the end for many a character, but combat places characters in direct danger. Not knowing the monster's capabilities, not taking advantage of the battlefield's features, or simple bad positioning can all mean the end of an adventuring party. To avoid these situations, consider the three foundations of risk assessment.

1. Qualify the Battlefield
2. Qualify the Opponents
3. Establish an Action Plan

By qualifying the battlefield, you identify traps, poor terrain, cover and other important environmental concerns. Qualifying the opponents reveals who's who, who's in charge, the combatants you need to deal with first, and any pertinent details about your enemy. From steps 1 and 2, develop an action plan, a course of action maximizing the advantages and minimizing the disadvantages to give you a quick win. It may not be possible to do everything in the flash of a sudden fight, but the more information you ascertain, the better prepared you are for fighting your foes.

Qualify the Battlefield

Never overlook the battlefield's features. Difficult terrain stops charges, cover improves AC and Reflex saves, hidden traps complicate an otherwise straightforward combat, and other entrances can hide more opponents. This section discusses ways to analyze the basic indoor conflict, such as those fought in a dungeon, temple, or in any of a myriad of locales common in this game.

Tunnel Fighting

Tunnel fights occur in passageways. There, opponents can strike at you from where the corridor travels, either ahead or behind you. The more adjoining tunnels, the more points the enemy can engage. The tunnel reduces your movement choices and attack options. Some special attack options are difficult to achieve. Flanking is impractical with the restricted movement spaces. Your allies block charge attempts. Even simple 5-foot steps can be hard with the cramped environment. Control is vital. To take control, you have to be prepared. And preparation is best achieved by marching order.

LIGHTING

Light does not affect characters with darkvision. Light has adverse effects on monsters predominately dwelling underground, such as derro, drow, and duergar. As these are common monsters, make certain you carry some light source. Of those available in the PHB, the sunrod is the best. For 2 gp each you get six hours of light. It only takes a couple of these to equip you through most dungeon crawls. An *everburning torch* lasts forever, but it costs 55 times as much (a cost justified only after many, many dungeon crawls) and it doesn't illuminate as well – an *everburning torch* has a bright light radius of 20 ft. and a shadowy radius of 40 ft., while a sunrod has a 30 ft. bright and 60 ft. shadowy radius.

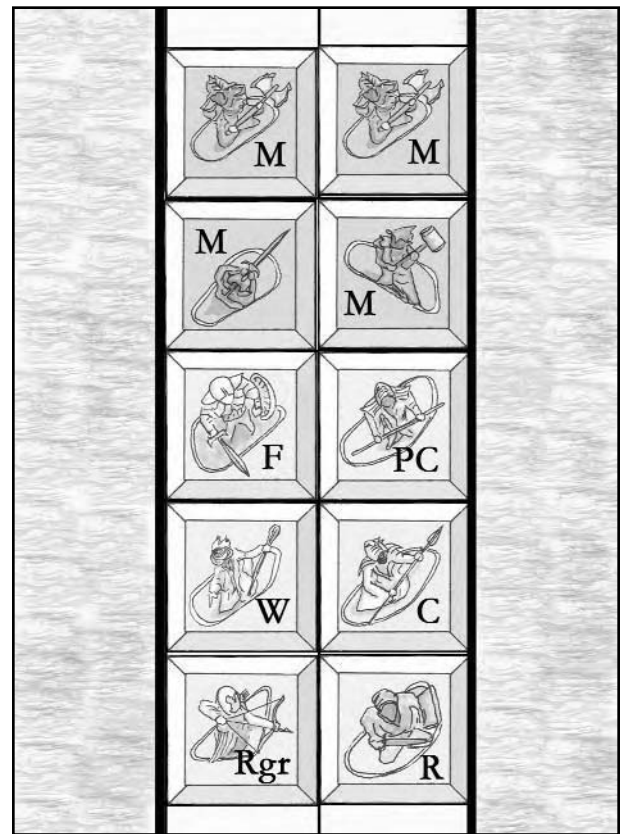
Marching Order Basics

Protect the weaker members of the party. Wizards, sorcerers, bards, and other support characters should always go to the middle. In addition, non-spellcasters should

employ reach weapons to threaten enemies ahead. The slowest and best-protected melee warrior should always stand in the front, while the fastest and most versatile member of the party should stand in the rear. Parties with more than 4 characters, or those with cohorts, should follow the same model, by simply adding more to the appropriate locations.

Each position has a certain responsibility while marching in this order. The responsibilities for each follow. In the example shown in Diagram 7-1, the fighter (F) and the multiclassed warrior (PC) take the front ranks and engage the monsters (M). The wizard (W) and the cleric (C) hold the mid-ranks, where the wizard casts support spells, and the cleric heals the frontline fighters or uses a long spear (simple weapon with reach) to attack the monsters threatening the fighter or multiclass warrior. The ranger (Rgr) and the rogue (R) hold the rear guard, employing ranged attacks against the second rank of monsters.

Diagram 7-1: Marching Order



FOUR FOOD GROUPS OF PARTY COMPOSITION

It's no coincidence there are four major character groupings: Combat, Arcane, Divine, and Roguery. Party balance relies on a character presence from each of the groups. Each group fulfills a particular function. The Combat characters fight, Arcane deal direct damage and have utility magic, Divine heal and reinforce the party, while Roguery builds on all three groups and can defeat specific threats such as traps or a monster's special attacks.

A balanced four-character party should have a fighter, cleric, wizard, and rogue. By balanced, we mean the basic elements are present and no two characters have redundant abilities. If a four-character party had two fighters, a rogue and a wizard, it would lack the cleric or druid's healing and reinforcement qualities, thereby crippling the adventurers and making their escapades harder than they need to be.

Based on party size, a balanced party needs the following elements:

4 players: Fighter, Cleric, Wizard, Rogue

5 players: Fighter, Cleric, Wizard, Rogue, warrior type

6 players: Fighter, Cleric, Wizard, Rogue, Bard, warrior type

7 players: Fighter, Cleric, Wizard, Rogue, Bard, warrior type, multiclassed character

8 players: Fighter, Cleric, Wizard, Rogue, Bard, warrior type, 2 multiclassed characters

The above is a suggestion, not a rule, but you should always have a representative of the basic four. You could substitute, but each time you do, you weaken your party. For example, a paladin is a specialized fighter, weakening the overall offensive capabilities, but adds to the reinforcement/healing department. Likewise, the sorcerer gains spell levels slower than the wizard does, functioning less as a utility character and more of an offensive character. While these character classes serve parties well, they blur the lines of the four food groups, taking something from one area while building on another.

Frontline: Characters in the front ranks face the greatest risk. They open doors, trigger traps the rogues miss, open chests, and all around function as the first line of defense. These characters protect the party from immediate danger, giving the rest of the group time enough to assess the situation and react appropriately.

Mid-ranks: Not surprisingly, this is where the least combat-effective characters wind up. It's here where the wizards and sorcerers should stay, where the bard can help the front or rear guard and where the seriously wounded go. Characters in this position hold the light source. Mid-rank characters, if possible, also wield reach weaponry to fight the foes beyond the frontline. Likewise, all spell support comes from this position.

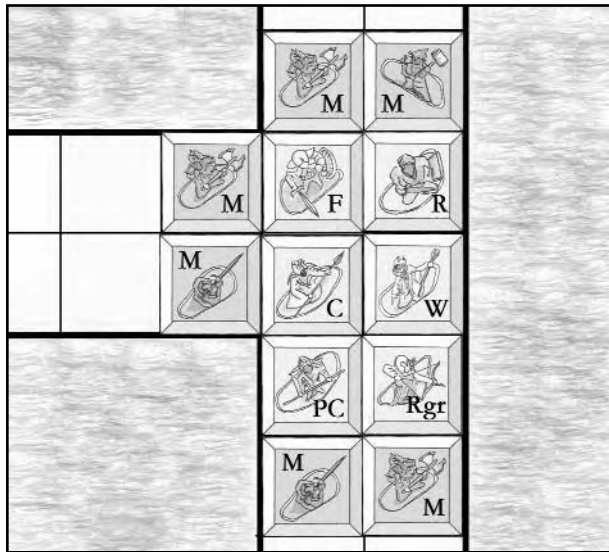
Rearguard: The most mobile warrior in the group holds the rearguard. Of the positions in the marching order, rearguard is the most important. These characters can move about, helping where most needed, by protecting against ambush attacks from behind, or sending volleys of arrows over the heads of their allies.

Marching Order in Intersections

The more adjoining corridors, the more complicated the situation, and the more like a room the environment becomes. While the basic premise remains the same, the circumstances change the PCs' optimal placement. In the situation below, the fighter holds his position, blocking four opponents from reaching the wizard, while also blocking flanks. The rogue occupies the multiclass war-

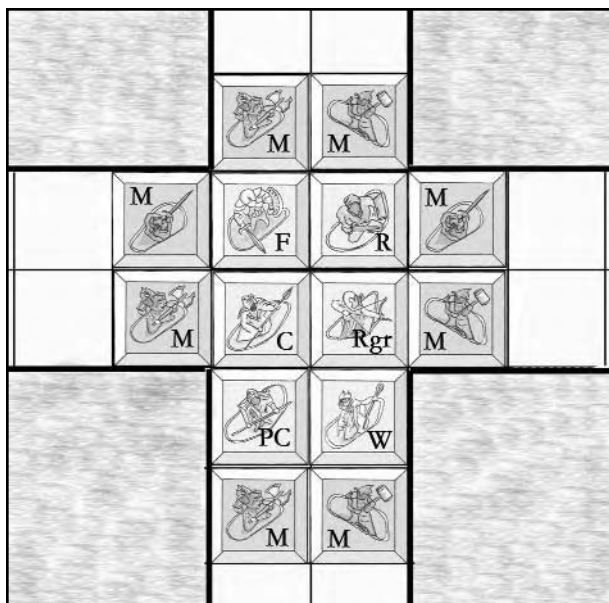
rior's position, reducing the foes the rogue must face to allow support when he dispatches the foe, and to steal flanks if possible. The multiclass warrior blocks the monsters from reaching the spellcaster, while the ranger positions himself to dispatch one foe and rain arrows on the others. The cleric is at risk, but, between his and the fighter's efforts, he can dispatch his enemy quickly and use support spells to aid his allies, using a reach weapon to strike the bad guys.

Diagram 7-2: Marching Order, 3-Way Intersection



A fourth tunnel increases the threat, for the fighter types must cover more opponents. At the mouth of each corridor is a warrior presence; the fighter faces the north and west, while the ranger holds the eastern tunnel, minimizing the threat to the wizard. The multiclass warrior serves the same purpose, working alongside the cleric to keep the monsters at bay. The wizard faces two opponents, but with help from the multiclass warrior, he should survive to bear his arcane magic against the enemy.

Diagram 7-3: Marching Order, 4-Way Intersection



Room Fighting

Where tunnel fighting is straightforward, room dynamics are complicated. A rigid party position is never the solution. Enemy spellcasters use area of effect spells to catch groups of PCs. Instead of the standard tunnel-fighting tactics, use the features of the room to your advantage, while protecting weaker characters. Before you do this, though, consider the battlefield.

Exits

Look for exits out of the room first. Exits are entrances for more monsters. An exit is a door, portal, corridor, stairway, or anything else allowing escape or entrance into the room. Protecting exits is vital for two reasons. First, you control escape. Second, you prevent new combatants from entering the fray.

After identifying the exits, secure them. Spells like *arcane lock* block the door and let you get back to helping the warriors fight. Rogues can jam locks with a DC 10 Disable Device check. Clerics can cast *silence* on the doors to prevent sounds of combat from luring monsters and other threats to the battle. Wounded characters should fall back to block a suspicious door, to listen for approaching enemies, or to hammer spikes preventing the door from opening.

Secret doors pose a dire threat to an unprepared party in the thick of a combat. To keep secret doors from being a problem, have an elf run the perimeter of the room. Her innate ability to detect secret doors merely by passing them lets you identify these suspicious exits without devoting a full-round action to searching.

If the room features several entrances, and the inhabitants are not yet aware of you, fall back and study the area in secret rather than tackling the room all at once. Too many ways in and out of a room present a real possibility of an ambush.

THE ULTIMATE DOORJAMB

For 5000 gp, an *immovable rod* blocks doors from opening or closing, stops traps from resetting, keeps collapsing ceilings from squishing characters, and so on. Invest. You won't be sorry.

Architecture

A room's architecture tells of its function, and its function says a lot about its inhabitants. For example, a table, a couple of chairs, and a cot in a small chamber probably denotes the room serves as a guard post or checkpoint. Bunk beds or a more lavish bed in the same room may suggest a living area or barracks. Guard posts mean you're facing guards, with more nearby.

Knowing a room's architecture may allow a combat advantage. For example, if a shrine has several columns, line spells and ranged attacks are less useful. A dais provides higher ground, while reflecting pools provide cover if you dare enter them, or at the least, reflect what may be hiding behind the columns. Look for cover; it's a free way to improve AC and retard the monster's ability to hit you with spells. These miscellaneous features may seem like window dressing, but with a little thought, you can turn this scenery to an advantage.

Columns, walls, massive trees, doors, and so on are all impassable. These obstructions determine the boundaries of the battlefield, offer cover, and break up line of sight helping to avoid spells. Other features may inform you of hidden threats such as constructs, monsters, or traps. Be suspicious of statues, pedestals, pools, and pillars. These structures often hide hidden and dangerous features. Animated objects are also something to watch for, common in temples or sanctuaries. The wizard can identify these potential hazards with *detect magic* and a sweep of the room. Better yet, instead of blowing the spell, drop 375 gp and buy a *wand of detect magic*. Any character with ranks in Use Magic Device or with the spell on their spell list can use it.

COVER

Nearly all rooms provide some sort of cover. Always seek cover when using ranged attacks. Cover boosts AC by +4 and grants a bonus to Reflex saves. Walls, columns, trees, and anything else blocking a line between your space and your opponent's space all serve this end.

When fighting against creatures with cover, remember that you may have cover against their attacks as well. When approaching their position, stick with objects that block line of sight rather than charging across the battlefield and exposing yourself to their attacks.

SOFT COVER

Any time a creature blocks line of sight to you, you have soft cover. You can derive soft cover from enemies you engage in melee combat and allies standing near you. Dangerous and skilled warriors draw much of the fire from the enemies, especially when they cut through the enemy in rapid succession. Always position yourself where another body separates you from the opposing archer. Note that, with the recent errata, characters can derive soft cover against ranged attacks only.

CONCEALMENT

Fog, foliage, natural darkness, and magical effects such as *darkness*, *invisibility*, and *obscuring mist* all create concealment. Where concealment comes into play, your attackers have the same chance of missing that you do. If you can't get around the miss chance and your opponent is having the same troubles, keep the combat in the area of concealment, thus leveling the playing field.

Perils

Rooms may feature dangerous characteristics beyond the standard trap/monster fare. Dripping green slime, a rainbow of molds, darkness, or unusual magical effects such as wild magic, impeded magic, or even enhanced magic all affect the nature of conflict. Many times, it's impossible to anticipate or identify features until you stumble over them, but the common hazards are easy to find if you know what to look for.

There are three major identifiers of a peril. First is monster behavior. Do they avoid certain places in the room? Do they try to lure you back to some other area, tunnel, or trap? Second is a monster's type. What kind of monsters do you face? Does the luring monster have cold resistance? If so, it's possible it draws you to an area with brown mold. Third are spells and spell-like abilities. Do creatures normally having spell-like abilities refrain from using them? Do enemy wizards avoid or favor certain areas in the room? All of these are indicators of something fishy about the room's effect on magic.

Sand Traps

Anything slowing your movement falls into the catchall category, sand trap. Sand traps include rubble, debris, ice, or an uneven floor. Light permitting, always look for those sections before jumping into combat, as sand traps prevent charging, slow your movement, and, in the case of ice, cause you to lose your balance. Identify sand traps the same way you look for other perils, by examining monster behavior, placement, and room dynamics. In natural caverns, expect treacherous footing. In worked areas, the floor is normally level, but where the floor is predominately hazardous, seek cover and let them come to you, while peppering them with ranged attacks.

Unusual Features

Rooms always have some sort of extra feature. Such things could include pedestals, curtains, sarcophagi, chimneys, tables, beds, shelves, and anything else not falling into the above categories. Astute players ask for a description of the room before starting combat to both visualize the scenario and identify important features. If a room's description prominently features an altar to a dark god, you can bet your magic sword it's important. Sometimes these objects have magical properties; other times they are simply mundane. Regardless, having a sense of what's in the room helps you maximize the environment to let you succeed, by exploiting the room's contents.

Qualify the Opponents:

Monster Archetypes

Monsters have archetypes just like warriors. Knowing the monster's archetype tells you how to fight it. Below are the several archetypes and their sub-groupings. In each section is an example of what a party should do in the first round of combat against a sample monster. Example parties are assumed to have four characters of each of the basic classes – fighter, wizard, cleric, and rogue. These are good examples of what you should do whenever fighting a monster of the particular archetype.

Critters

These creatures are the creepy-crawlies of a dungeon. They include monstrous centipedes, spiders, wolves, and other low-powered creatures. They have simple motives, namely to make a meal of you and your allies. Critters include the following creature types: Animals, most Magical Beasts, Oozes, Plants and Vermin. Animals are creatures with existing or former real world counterparts, such as dinosaurs, wolves, and horses. Magical beasts are fantastic animals like the pegasus, worgs, and winter wolves, many with special abilities. Oozes are giant single-celled organisms similar to amoebas or paramecium, except much bigger and dangerous. Plants are monsters with some modicum of movement and sentience. Vermin are insects, usually the big ones.

Parlay: Not usually. Critters are motivated by instinctual needs such as fear, protect, and hunger.

Critter Tactics: Multiple critters attack en masse. Single critters attack the nearest combatant. You shouldn't have to worry about the non-warriors being the targets, as these creatures don't differentiate between meats. On the other hand, they attack the nearest target, and if just so happens to be the wizard, well, he's out of luck.

Archers: When fighting a bunch of critters, focus your attacks on the rear numbers, letting the other warriors handle the frontlines. This reduces the number of creatures to fill in the gaps, while keeping a warrior back to protect other characters.

Cavalry: Avoid staying in one place where the monsters can swarm you. Use Ride-By Attack to erode their numbers until they flee, then ride them down.

Guerrillas: Use multiple attacks whenever possible, such as Rapid Shot or Two-Weapon Fighting. You want maximum damage potential to reduce the numbers.

Light Infantry: Fight defensively with Combat Expertise to reduce the number of attacks against you. On the other hand, if your AC is high, use your speed and agility to move through their ranks, taking flanks whenever able.

Heavy Infantry: Charge into combat and direct your attacks against one foe at a time. Use Power Attack and Cleave to maximize your damage.

Skirmishers: Hold your position until you're needed. If a batch of critters breaks past the heavy infantry, move up to assist. Otherwise, aid your allies with ranged attacks.

TABLE 7-4: CRITTERS

Type	HD	Good Saves	Special Notes
Animal	d8	Fort and Ref	Low-light vision, always neutral
Magical Beast	d10	Fort and Ref	Darkvision and low-light vision
Ooze	d10	None	Mindless, blind, immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, critical hits, flanking
Plants	d8	Fort	Low-light vision, immune to mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, polymorph and stunning, immune to critical hits
Vermin	d8	Fort	Mindless, darkvision

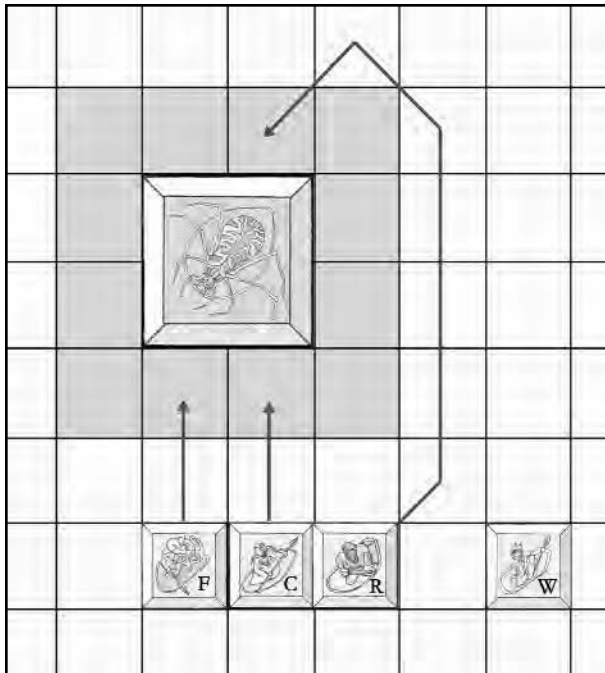
Example: Monstrous Spiders (CR 1/4 to 11)

Monstrous spiders are easy threats for most parties. However, these creatures have potent abilities. They come in a variety of sizes, and the bigger they are, the more toxic their venom. There are two kinds of spiders: hunters and web spinners. Hunters stalk you. Web spinners snare you with their webs.

Preparation: A spider's best weapons are poison and webs. To beat the poison, drink antitoxin before engaging them. *Cloaks of resistance* and *potions of bear's endurance* also help to fight off the effects of their venom. Against webs, boost your Strength.

TIPS VS. MONSTROUS SPIDERS

- Spread out
- Boost your Fortitude saves
- Use ranged attacks
- Fight defensively to avoid bite attacks
- Use fire to destroy webs



First Round Tactics

Opponent: Large Monstrous Hunting Spider (CR 2)

Party: Ftr 2, Wiz 2, Clr 2, Rog 2

Round 1:

Fighter: Move (do not charge) and attack

Wizard: Load crossbow, cast *true strike*, 5 ft. step back

Cleric: Cast *shield of faith* on rogue, move to threaten

Rogue: Double move to circle behind the spider, using Tumble if necessary

Spider: Attacks fighter or cleric

TABLE 7-6: FIENDS

Type	HD	Good Saves	Special Notes
Dragon	d12	All	Darkvision and low-light vision, immune to magic sleep and paralysis
Elemental	d8	Varies	Darkvision, immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, critical hits and flanking; these creatures do not sleep, eat, or breathe
Outsider	d8	All	Darkvision, extraplanar outsiders do not need to eat or sleep

The fiend category includes Elementals, Dragons and Outsiders. Elementals are creatures composed of one or more of the four classic elements – air, earth, fire or water. Summoned like fiends, they are less willing to negotiate and many are of low Intelligence. Evil outsiders, on the other hand, can eclipse many dragons in sheer power and malevolence. With their spell-like abilities and the possibility of summoning assistance, fiends are a threat only the most prepared or lucky heroes can hope to overcome. You should know what a dragon is.

Parlay: Sometimes, but don't trust anything fiends tell you, as they are all universally motivated by mortal destruction, either physically or spiritually. Elementals don't normally parlay.

Fiend Tactics: Fiends typically employ a mixture of special attacks such as spell-like abilities to soften their foes before finishing them off with melee attacks. Against particularly well-armed opponents, they retreat and *summon* an ally (for outsiders), usually another of their kind or something a bit nastier. Fiends, regardless of type, are more than capable of wiping out a party. Confront them with caution.

Archers: Use ranged attacks to interrupt the fiend's spell-like abilities, forcing a Concentration check every time it tries something. While your attacks may not deal a lot of damage, you're sure to tick them off and make them do something irrational.

Cavalry: Use mounted charges or Ride-By Attacks to maximize the damage and mobility. Avoid staying in one place too long. Don't do anything provoking attacks of opportunity, such as overruns or bull rushes, unless you're positive you'll succeed.

Guerrillas: Paladins make the best fiend hunters. To further reinforce your combat potential, make sure you boost low saves with save buff feats like Lightning Reflexes or Iron Will, or get your friends to cast spells or make potions that likewise give a bonus (like *cat's grace* or *owl's wisdom*).

Light Infantry: Keep moving. The more you move, the less likely the fiend can strike you with multiple attacks. Position yourself to help rogues gain flanks, distract and otherwise control the fiend's movement. Watch out for its spell-like abilities. If you don't have levels in monk, you're more susceptible to its mind-affecting effects.

Heavy Infantry: Charge and don't give it time to enhance its own defenses. Once you've drawn its attention from the rest of the party, your allies should be able to make short work of this threat.

Skirmishers: Though you lack the focus of other warriors, you have a variety of tools at your disposal. If multiclassed as a rogue, nail the fiend with sneak attacks. If you have spells, use them to enhance your own fighting

potential by building your stats, AC, and saving throws. Finally, be a supporting character and defend other characters by boosting their own abilities with spells or simply using the aid another action.

Example: Bearded Devils (CR 5)

Bearded devils, while lacking the spell-like abilities of other fiends, are brutal opponents with a number of special attacks. Damage they inflict continues each additional round. They get a beard attack with two successful claw attacks, and can slip into a battle frenzy similar to a barbarian's rage. Worse, if the creature catches you, it may infect you with devil chills with its disease-ridden beard. At a CR 5, these creatures have a slight AC advantage, solid hit points and a number of other defenses. To bypass their damage reduction you need silver or good weapons. Don't bother with fire, poison, acid or cold, as their resistances and immunities block most of these attacks.

Preparation: Having the right tool for the job goes a long way when fighting these devils, and the cheapest tools to use against these monsters are *silversheen* and *oil of bless weapon*. The first temporarily changes the metal of the weapon to silver: an adamantite weapon becomes silver for 1 hour, for example. At 250 gp, you had better be certain you're fighting a lot of monsters requiring silver to bypass DR. *Oil of bless weapon*, while cheaper at only 100 gp, has a duration of 1 minute per caster level, or for the list price, 2 minutes. A cheaper solution is to invest in silver arrows. A quiver of 20 costs 20 gp.

First Round Tactics

Opponent: Bearded Devil (CR 5)

Party: Ftr 5, Clr 5, Wiz 5, Rog 5

Round 1

Fighter: Charges

Cleric: Casts *prayer*, faces new devil

Rogue: Move and ranged attack

Wizard: Moves and casts *bull's strength* on fighter

Devil: Summons another bearded devil

Devil 2: Battle frenzy full attack on cleric (assuming the first devil made his Concentration check for the summoning)

TIPS VS. BEARDED DEVILS

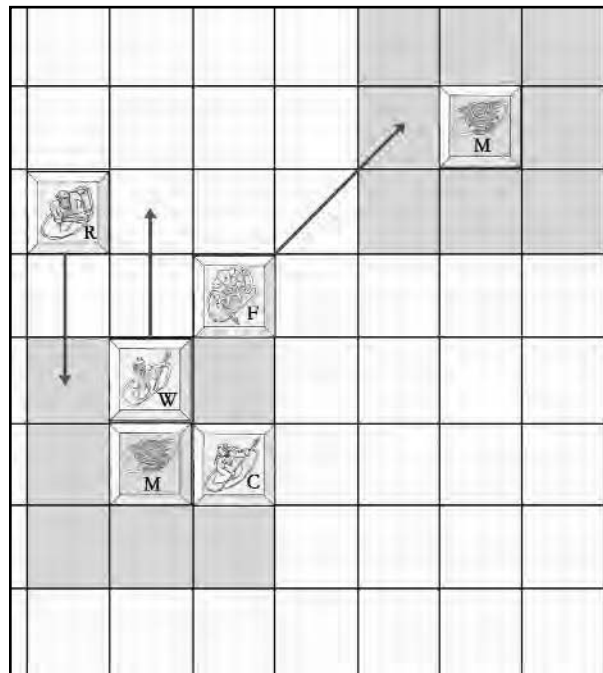
Avoid letting the devil take full attacks

Interrupt summon devil ability

Fight defensively

Spread out

Diagram 7-7: Round 1 vs. Fiend



Terrors

Where critters are creatures of lower intelligence, terrors are smarter and deadlier. Example terrors include gibbering mouther, aboleths, and winter wolves. Terrors are Aberrations, Constructs, evil Fey and Magical Beasts. Aberrations are a catchall classification for unusual creatures with odd anatomies and mindsets not fitting in anywhere else. Constructs are the exception to the lower intelligence bit, because many lack Intelligence scores altogether. Worse, they gain bonus hit points based on size, and many have hardness scores too. Fey are the fairies, creatures with low hit points but powerful magical abilities. Magical Beasts we covered above, but those qualifying as terrors are the smarter breeds like aranea and sphinxes.

Parlay: Unlikely. These creatures want to kill you just as badly as critters, but they're smarter about it. Evil fey are likely to abuse and maim you, while aberrations, if not hungry, exploit you. Smart magical beasts are true terrors, for they have the hit points and the special abilities to give parties a really hard time.

Terror Tactics: Terrors normally don't have minions,

being forces of destruction rather than leaders. Exceptions do exist. Aboleths spawn skum and other aberrations make thralls out of humanoid races, but for the most part these creatures are normally solitary or grouped with their own kind. Terrors with special abilities target spellcasters first, for they are the ones most likely to do them harm, or keep the other characters fighting.

TABLE 7-8: TERRORS

Type	HD	Good Saves	Special Notes
Aberrations	d8	Will	Darkvision
Construct	d10	None	Low-light vision, darkvision, immune to mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects and necromancy effects; also immune to critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage or drain and just about anything affecting a living creature
Fey	d6	Ref and Will	Low-light vision
Magical Beasts	(see Table 7-4: Critters for details)		

Archers: Stick with the spellcasters and target the terrors from afar. Keep out of range of the terror’s special abilities. Against solitary opponents, the terrors will use your allies for soft cover, so you may have to move around a lot to get a clear shot.

Cavalry: Focus on Ride-By Attacks, because terrors have plenty of weapons to take your steed out from under you. Keep moving to reduce their attacks per round, so they have to follow you. Even if they ready an action to attack when you approach, they can only ready a standard action. And, by constantly moving, you’re harder to target with their spell-like abilities especially if you’re out of range.

Guerrillas: Play against a terror’s weaknesses by using poison, as most have poor Fortitude saves (but remember that poison doesn’t affect constructs). Build up defenses against their special attacks through effective selection of

TIPS VS. THE CHUULS

- Build up your saves
- Attack quickly and often
- Keep heavy hitters away from the rest of the party
- Choose your own battlefield by luring it out of its territory
- Let spellcasters do their jobs

magic items. Such things would again be *cloaks of resistance*, stat boosts and the like. Finally, *bane* weapons are never a bad idea. Purchase 20 +1 *bane arrows*, but make sure you have a good mix of types.

Light Infantry: Work with rogues to maximize their effectiveness when fighting terrors. These monsters rely on their special attacks, many affecting the mind, calling for Will saves. Make certain you have the proper defense against these kinds of attacks, lest you turn on your party, or worse, become easy pickings for these horrors.

Heavy Infantry: Avoid becoming a dangerous puppet and another opponent for your party to face by fighting alone and keeping your distance from your allies. If you turn against them, such as by the aboleth’s domination ability, they should notice what you’re doing and be able to avoid you until the combat is over.

Skirmishers: As always, fill in the obvious gaps left by the other warriors. Employ ranged attacks where able, but, like the heavy infantry, isolate yourself from the other characters in case you lose control over your character. Finally, use poison and things targeting Fortitude saves like thunderstones and the like to keep the combat in your favor.

Example: Chuuls (CR 7)

Chuuls are unusual aquatic aberrations dwelling in temperate marshes. The nature of their favored terrain ensures a difficult fight given the bogs, underbrush, and uncertain footing. These monsters have a high AC, though their touch AC is low and easy to hit by 7th-level characters with the right types of spells. These creatures strike with their claw attacks to get a hold, dealing constriction damage until their target succumbs. They also use paralytic tentacles. Given their human-level intellect, they focus on spellcasters and wounded characters, employing group strategies and tactics when in numbers.

Preparation: First, get a magic weapon of some sort to hit their high AC – a chuul has an AC 22. CR 7 creatures have ACs around 20. Without a magic weapon and a 16 Strength, a 7th-level fighter should hit this creature on a 12 or better. Hence, you need at least a +2 weapon to even the odds. The good news is a chuul only has a 5 ft. reach, and a speed of 30, so you should be able to outmaneuver this monster easily with a little effort. Finally, don’t waste your time with poison; they’re immune.

First Round Tactics

Opponent: Chuul (CR 7)

Party: Ftr 7, Clr 7, Wiz 7, Rog 7

Note: The example assumes impeded movement, with each square costing 2 spaces of movement.

Round 1:

Fighter: Ranged attack, move and draw melee weapons

Cleric: Casts *prayer* on allies and stays with the wizard

Rogue: Ranged attack and move

Wizard: Casts *blink* and moves

Chuul: 5-ft. step and full attack on cleric

Tough

Toughs fill the roll of the villain's underlings, soldiers and servants. Toughs include Giants, Humanoids and Monstrous Humanoids. Giants are large humanoids, though some have unusual special abilities, like the troll for example. Monstrous Humanoids are humanoids with animal characteristics, such as the minotaur, harpy, or centaur. The more powerful monstrous humanoids have supernatural and extraordinary abilities. Finally, Humanoids are the most common opponent, being composed of goblins, lizard folk, and orcs.

Parlay: Many of these creatures are willing to negotiate, especially if they're losing the battle.

Tough Tactics: Toughs employ complex strategies, traps and direct conflict depending on their intelligence and alignment. As all toughs can advance in character classes, many keep a spellcaster nearby. Specifically, giants prefer to soften their enemies with ranged attacks before closing for melee combat. Monstrous humanoids, however, use their spell-like abilities to confuse, beguile, and disrupt their enemy. Note many monstrous humanoids have other movement modes aside from land speed, and they always use them to gain tactical advantage if possible.

Archers: Employ Rapid Shot when possible to weaken several of the opponents before they reach the fighter with Cleave. Against larger and more solitary opponents, draw attention from the spellcasters who can quickly overcome most toughs with no problem.

Cavalry: Use a trample to crush standard humanoids, while employing Ride-By Attacks to harass giants. Against monstrous humanoids, charge first and hammer into them, using your size to help and achieve flanks.

Guerrillas: Develop the Power Attack tree to hack through multiple opponents and Spring Attack for fighting giants and creatures with reach. As these foes are bipedal, use bull rush and trip attacks to unbalance them.

Light Infantry: Like the guerrilla, use trip attacks against monstrous humanoids, and work with other characters to gain flanks.

Heavy Infantry: Charge and start chopping up the bad guys. Get up close to giants as soon as possible to avoid their ranged attacks. Against monstrous humanoids, make sure you have the proper defenses in place before engaging, such as antitoxin, Wisdom buff spells and so on.

Diagram 7-9: Round 1 vs. the Chuul

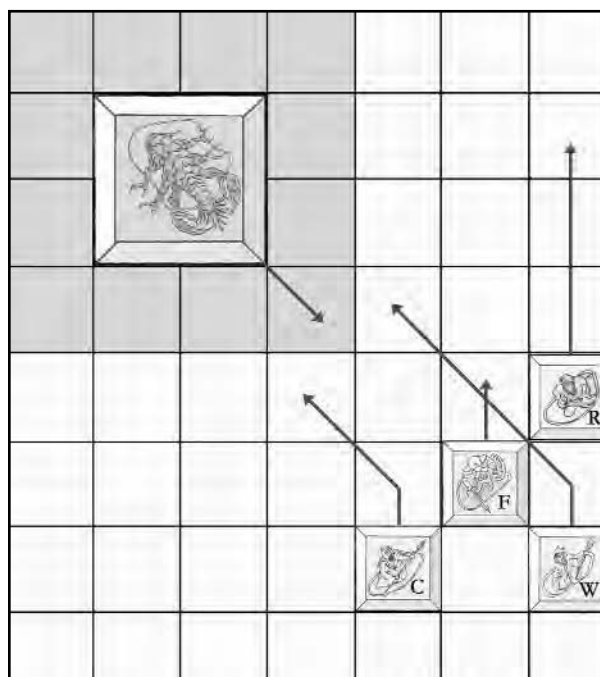


TABLE 7-10: TOUGHS

Type	HD	Good Saves	Special Notes
Giant	d8	Fort	Low-light vision
Humanoids	Usually by character class		
Monstrous Humanoids	d8	Ref, Will	Darkvision

Skirmishers: Focus on defense. Toughs can swarm in and attack weak links, targeting the wounded, the wizards, and rogues in the party. Don't let yourself get bogged down by one combat and focus on keeping other party members alive.

Example: Grimlocks (CR 1)

Grimlocks are dangerous underground. These creatures have blindsight to 40 ft., so they're immune to any special attacks relying on vision. For CR 1, they have a slightly higher AC than normal, so they're harder to hit than other creatures of an equal power level. One thing to note though is they have scent, so even if you're outside of their blindsight radius, they can still detect you.

Preparation: Though grimlocks have hit points, numbers, and the advantage underground, there are things you can do. Rely on sound-based attacks. Thunderstones can deafen and confuse them. *Silence* and *gust of wind* mask your approach. *Blindness/deafness* (the *deafness* effect of course) gives you concealment as if you were invisible. Essentially, any spell or effect masking sound adds a decided advantage whenever you face these creatures.

TIPS VS. GRIMLOCKS

Use sound-based attacks to deafen them

Wounded and spellcasters should stay 40 ft. or more away from them

Use multiple attacks to overcome their high hit points

First Round Tactics

Opponent: 3 Grimlocks (EL 3)

Party: Ftr 3, Clr 3, Wiz 3, Rog 3

Round 1:

Fighter: Charge the two grimlocks closest together

Cleric: Cast *doom* on the third grimlock and move

Rogue: Ranged attack at the third grimlock and move

Wizard: Move and cast *silence* on rogue's arrow/bolt

Grimlocks: Two grimlocks attack the fighter. The third grimlock engages cleric. All three fight as though their opponents had total concealment, though the monsters function as if they had the Blind-Fight feat.

Diagram 7-11: Round 1 vs. Grimlocks

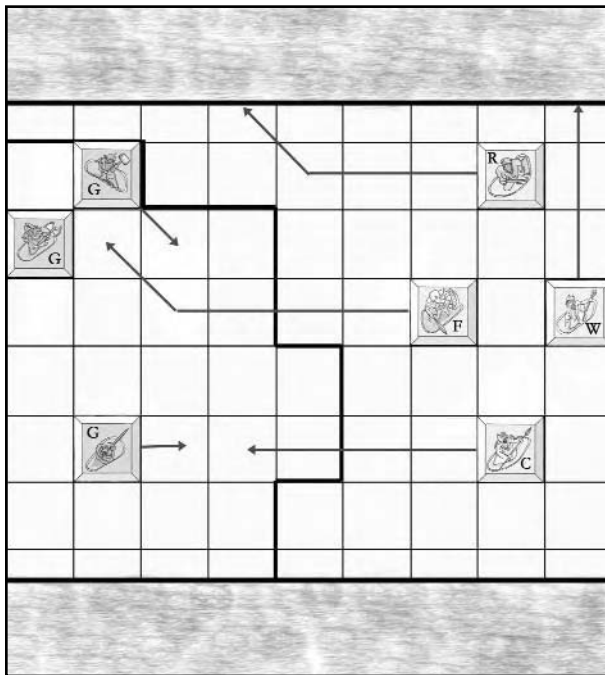


TABLE 7-12: UNDEAD

Type	HD	Good Saves	Special Notes
Undead	d12	Will	No Constitution; darkvision; immune to all mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, crits, nonlethal damage, etc.

Undead

The last of the monster archetypes is undead. Undead come in two varieties: corporeal and incorporeal. Corporeal undead include common types like zombies, wights, and skeletons. Incorporeal undead include spectres, ghosts, and wraiths. The more powerful the undead, the more negative energy levels it bestows or ability drain it deals, suggesting you need special defense whenever fighting these creatures. Likewise, there is a 50% miss chance from any attack made against an incorporeal undead, unless the weapon has the *ghost touch* quality. Many undead creatures, especially those of a low CR, are mindless, but the more powerful ones are smarter and nastier, decked out with an arsenal of life-draining powers.

Parlay: Sometimes, but only the more intelligent types of undead such as ghosts and vampires. The hunger for life compels mindless or extremely savage undead, like zombies, ghouls, and wraiths, to ignore the pleas of the living.

Undead Tactics: Mindless undead swarm their opponents, intent on devouring the living. Liches, vampires and other powerful undead use minions and servants for combat, confronting PCs when no other options remain. These undead use special abilities to drain the physical and spiritual resources from their foes.

Archers: Archers are not successful against these opponents. Piercing weaponry is ineffective against skeletons. Unless you have a *ghost touch* bow or other ranged weapon, you're not going to prevail against incorporeal undead either. Focus on the undead's minions, leaving more powerful foes for the clerics and paladins to handle.

Cavalry: The mounted charge is virtually ineffective against undead opponents as they are immune to critical hits. Worse, undead monsters can scare the crap out of mounts, having abilities like an unnatural aura. Like the archer, you're not much help except to have the means to beat a hasty retreat.

Guerrillas: Target the bigger and nastier undead with the cleric's help. You're not going to have the modifier for turn attempts to make much headway against the bigger foes, but with the right spells and magic items (stat buffs, *death ward*, and *ghost touch* weapons, for example), you can handle just about anything undead your DM throws at you.

Light Infantry: Touch AC is important against incorporeal undead, so you're the best opposition against these types of creatures. Distract these foes and give your allies the time to mount a proper defense.

Heavy Infantry: Heavy infantry are great at taking on weaker undead, but awful at facing the incorporeal foes. Make sure you carry a weapon of each damage type to overcome the damage reduction.

Skirmishers: You have a number of tools useful against these creatures. With cleric levels, spend an action turning away the smaller and weaker undead. Against more powerful opponents, use aid another actions to boost your allies' ACs and attack rolls. Heal fallen comrades, and be where you're most needed.

Example: Wights (CR 3)

Nobody likes fighting wights. They deal crippling damage, bestowing a negative energy level with each hit. Whenever these foul creatures slay a living creature, the corpse animates as a wight in 1d4 rounds to side against you. Coupled with the other undead traits, these are tough monsters to face for the unprepared.

Preparation: Build up your AC. If the wight can't hit you, it can't bestow negative energy levels. For after the fight, invest in save-buffing magic items, like *cloaks of resistance*, *potions of bear's endurance*, *potions of resistance*, and anything helping you remove those negative energy levels. Last, protect the cleric. Give him anything he needs to stay alive. Without a cleric, you have no advantage against these monsters.

First Round Tactics

Opponent: 1 Wight (CR 3)

Party: Ftr 3, Clr 3, Wiz 3, Rog 3

Round 1:

Fighter: Ranged attack and retrieve flask of alchemist's fire, moving 5 ft.

Cleric: Turn undead and draw weapon

Rogue: Ranged attack and move

Wizard: Moves and casts *scorching ray*

Wight: If turned, it flees. Otherwise, it charges the cleric

Prioritizing Opponents

At the start of combat, assess the greatest threat to the party and address it first. While it may be tempting to cut through the horde of CR 1/2 goblins, the 7th-level evoker tossing the *lightning bolts* is the bigger problem. Consult Table 7-14 to gauge which opponents to face first.

TIPS VS. WIGHTS

- Fight defensively
- Use ranged attacks
- Use fire or electricity attacks
- Forget flanks, they're immune
- Withdraw whenever you fall below 10 hit points or one-half your levels

Diagram 7-13: Round 1 vs. Wight

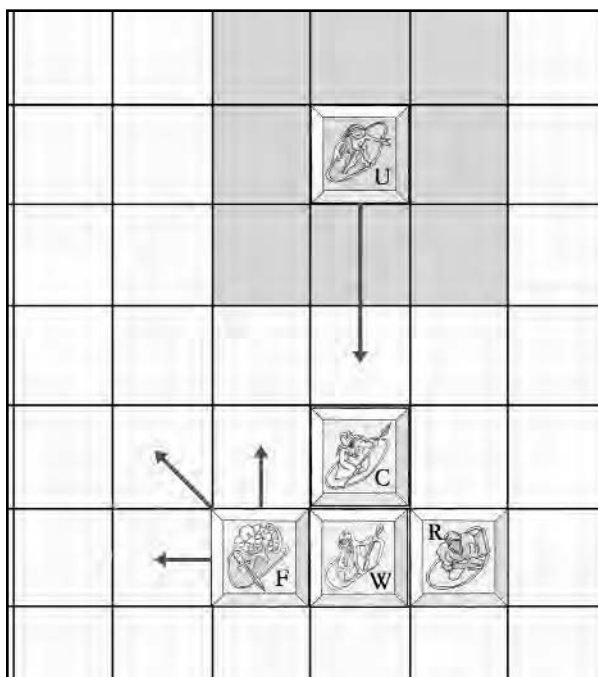


TABLE 7-14: THREAT PRIORITY

- Fiends
- Spellcasting NPCs
- Other NPCs
- Powerful Undead
- Terrors
- Toughs
- Critters
- Weak Undead

Action Plan

Having examined the battlefield and the foes you face, you need to come up with an action plan. It's good to have several contingency plans in place prior to combat, because in many instances a prolonged discussion on what everyone should do is not practical or even possible. This final section details what to do and not to do in combat, with some analysis on the techniques and special attacks available to you. By the end of this section, you'll have all the tools not only to survive combat, but to win.

Initiative

There are special things you can do with your initiative. The two initiative-modifying actions are ready and delay. For most warriors, when you act in a round is not as critical, but occasionally there are times when adjusting your initiative to some later or earlier point can mean the difference between life and death. What follows are tips on both actions.

Delay: Never, ever, delay on the first round of combat. Delay is not an action. That means you're flatfooted until you do act. But if you'd rather move earlier in the round, delay allows you to adjust your initiative to any point between the time you act and the time when you act again. Essentially, you can delay to a point allowing you to act earlier in the subsequent rounds. (This replaces refocus from 3.0.)

Ready: Readied actions are far more complex than simply delaying your initiative count. You can ready any standard, move, or free action provided you specify the action and the triggering condition allowing you to take

DO SOMETHING — ANYTHING!

Each round of combat presents an opportunity to overcome your enemies. Many players believe erroneously they can do nothing against a foe and waste entire rounds lamenting their fates. Not having the right kind of weapon to bypass damage reduction, or being so low in hit points they're afraid of taking any more damage, or worse, using poor knowledge of the rules to do something they just can't do. What they don't realize is by not stepping up and contributing, the party functions as if they had one less PC. In larger groups, this is almost a forgivable sin, but in smaller parties with 4 or 5 players, the loss of a character causes the whole team to unravel.

This game is about action. Period. There is always something to do, no matter what the situation. Even if you failed your initial save against *hold person*, you can still try a new saving throw on the next round. The trick is you have to do the right action. If you can't swing a sword, cast a spell, or ambush a foe with a sneak attack, there are things available to allow you to contribute. Take a close look at the Special Attack sections of Chapter 8: Combat in the PHB. There are some real nuggets in there. Remember, if everything else fails, use the aid another action to help another party member; at least there, you're doing something.

that action. Clarity is your best ally here. Don't be ambiguous or too specific; simply state what it is you want to do and under what circumstances you'll do it. Being ambiguous creates a possibility that you may never see the results of your readied action. The same holds true if you're too specific. For example, "I ready my long spear to attack when the ogre charges me," is too specific. If the orc fighter charges you instead, you have no action. Likewise, "I hurl an axe at the next thing I see moving through the door," is too broad. You may wind up tossing the axe into an ally. Find the happy middle ground, and all should be well for you and readied actions.

Attacks of Opportunity (AoO)

No matter how much clarity the PHB provides for attacks of opportunity (AoO), it seems there will always be some debate as to what actions trigger an AoO. The best rule of thumb before we move into particulars is if you do anything other than focus your entire attention on defeating your opponent, you provoke an AoO.

You trigger an AoO when in a threatened square. You only take an AoO against an opponent who you threaten. You threaten all the squares you can reach. So, if you have a 5-foot reach, you threaten all squares adjacent to your position (see diagram 7-15). Monsters with a 10-foot reach threaten two squares from their base (see Diagram 7-16). Weapons with reach do not threaten the square adjacent to you. They instead threaten a square the indicated distance away (see Diagram 7-16 for a 10-foot reach weapon). You can't take an AoO if you're flatfooted. Being flatfooted deprives you of your Dex bonus (if any) to AC, but being deprived of your Dex bonus to AC does not make you flatfooted.

Moving to engage a target does not provoke an AoO unless the target has natural reach, such as with a Large creature. Looking at Diagram 7-18 (page 86), we can see the character provokes an AoO because he leaves a threatened square to enter a position where he can attack his opponent.

While in a threatened square, four basic actions provoke attacks of opportunity: movement, casting a spell, attacking with a ranged weapon, and special actions.

Movement

While threatened, movement suggests you are doing something other than responding to the threat your opponent represents. If you move more than 5 feet while threatened you provoke an AoO. Other move actions also provoke AoOs, such as controlling a frightened mount, loading a weapon, moving a heavy object, picking up an item, sheathing a weapon, retrieving a stored item, or even standing up from a prone position. For a full list of move actions and those provoking AoOs, consult Chapter 8: Combat in the PHB.

Diagram 7-15: 5-foot reach

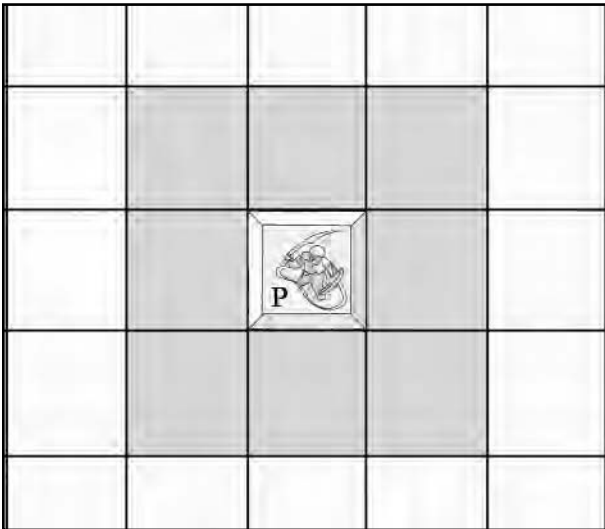


Diagram 7-16: 10-foot reach

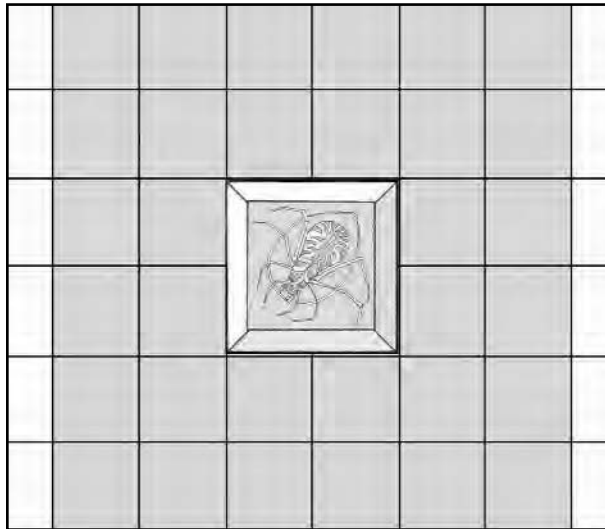
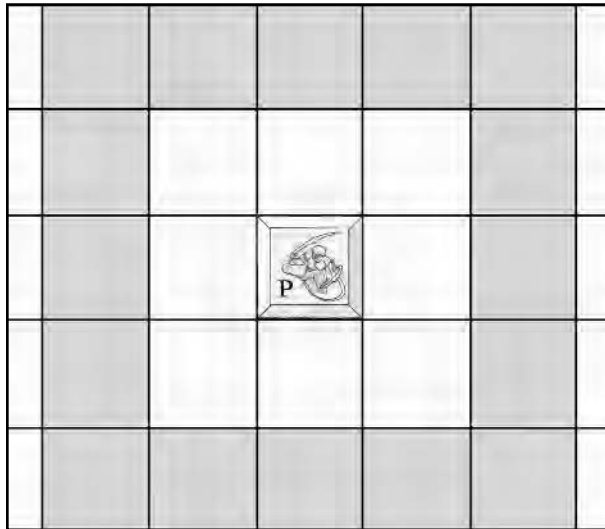


Diagram 7-17: Reach weapon



The best way to avoid attacks of opportunity from movement is to avoid moving until your opponent is dead. No combat is this easy, of course, and there are times when you need to reposition yourself to gain an advantage or to avoid a dangerous predicament. There are three ways to move without provoking an AoO: Tumble, which is covered in Skills; withdraw; and the 5-ft. step.

Withdraw: Provided your opponent does not have a 10-foot or greater reach, you can always safely get away from him by withdrawing. This is a full-round action that allows you to move up to twice your speed away from a target, preventing a visible foe from making an AoO. However, if you are unaware of the foe, it still gets an AoO. See Diagram 7-19 (next page). IM is an invisible monster and it gets an AoO against the character because the withdrawing character is unaware of his position and moves through a threatened square. (See the Full-Round Actions section of Chapter 8: Combat in the PHB for full details on the withdraw action.)

5-foot Step: If you don't actually move in the round, you can always take a 5-foot step in a round to adjust your position, even if you take a move-equivalent action. This never provokes an AoO unless you do something else in the round normally provoking an AoO. This is especially handy when fighting with a reach weapon against an opponent who advances beyond the threat range, allowing you to step back and readjust. This is also effective against foes with reach weapons, and when you need to get in an attack.

Casting a Spell

There are two sure ways, and one not-so-sure way, to avoid attacks of opportunity when casting spells in combat. First, never cast a spell while in a threatened square. The spell effect is almost never worth the damage you could take. Second, if in a threatened square, use a 5-foot step to get out of the threatened square before casting it. In most cases, this isn't a problem. Just reposition to use the spell to the most advantageous effect. Third, if you have Combat Casting, aside from ignoring everything in this book, you could use the cast on the defensive option. However, there is so much wrong with your warrior wiggling fingers and muttering incantations when he should be cutting his way through the bad guys that you deserve the attack of opportunity.

THINGS LIKE SPELLS

The following actions are like spells and provoke AoOs:

- Drink a potion
- Apply an oil
- Read a scroll
- Use a spell-like ability

Diagram 7-18: AoO from Movement

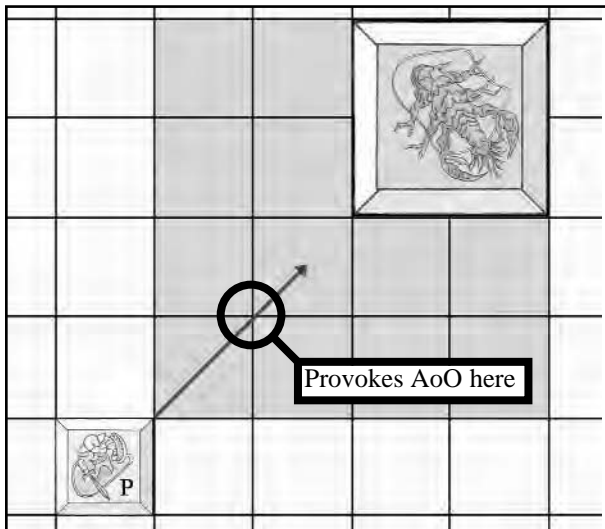
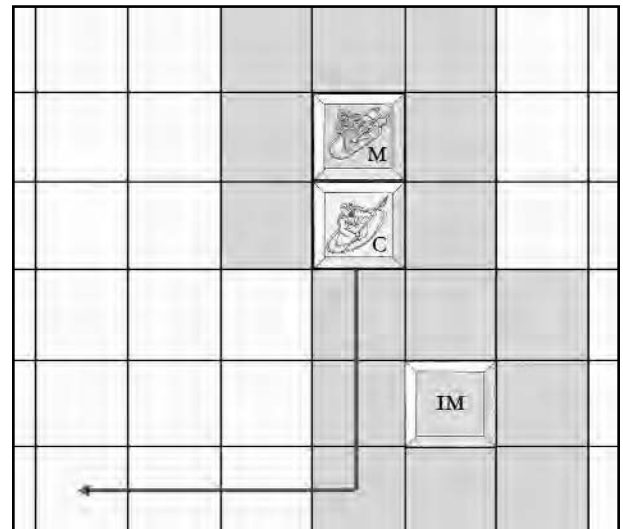


Diagram 7-19: Withdraw



REACH WEAPONS

Speaking of reach weapons, these weapons allow you to hit targets 2 or more squares away depending on the weapon and its size. While attacking with these weapons, you attack your opponents while they don't immediately threaten you. When they advance on you on the following round, you can simply take another 5-foot step back and attack again, effectively leading your opponent around the battlefield.

Attacking with Ranged Weapons

Using ranged weapons in melee has the same result as casting a spell in melee: you're going to take a hit. This should never, ever be a problem for you, because you can always take a five-foot step to adjust your movement outside of the threatened area. If you can't get outside of the threatened area, such as if you're backed up to a wall, or the monster has reach, then drop the bow as a free action and draw a melee weapon. You can always use an arrow as a dagger, albeit at a -4 penalty.

Special Actions

There are all sorts of things you can do to trigger attacks of opportunity. The key to sorting out which ones do and which ones don't is to know that actions taking your attention away from an opponent provoke the free attack. Lighting a torch, controlling an upset mount, loading a bolt, and picking something up off the floor are all things requiring your attention, even for the briefest of

CHANGING WEAPONS

Never sheath a weapon in combat. Always drop it. Sheathing a weapon is an AoO-provoking move action. Dropping an item action is a free action and does not provoke an AoO. Just make sure you notate where you dropped the item, so you don't forget it.

moments. It is in these moments the bad guy gets to attack.

Defensive Measures

There are times when everything seems to be flushing down the toilet. Perhaps the troll just tore your flesh with a rend attack and the cleric is too far away right now to slip you a few extra hit points. What are you supposed to do now? There are two options available to you, without having to withdraw.

Fighting Defensively

Choose to fight defensively as part of a standard attack or as part of a full-round attack. Essentially, you're trying to be careful and not leave the openings you normally leave in combat. By fighting defensively, you voluntarily reduce your attack bonus by 4 to increase your AC by 2. You can also use Combat Expertise with this action to increase your AC further, but this action necessitates an attack roll.

When using the fighting defensively option, you severely retard your ability to hit the opponent. The fewer times you hit your opponent, the more opportunities your opponent has to hit you. The following example shows a combat between our two rangers from Chapter 2. The human ranger fights defensively, while the gnoll fights normally against the ranger, not using Power Attack as he knows the ranger fights defensively. Both employ the full attack option. This comparison does not include the ranger's wolf companion.

Human ranger fighting defensively: Hp 22, AC 18, longsword +1 melee (1d8+2/19-20), shortsword +0 melee (1d6+1/19-20)

Human ranger fighting normally: Hp 22, AC 16, longsword +5 melee (1d8+2/19-20), shortsword +4 melee (1d6+1/19-20)

Gnoll ranger full attack: Hp 23, AC 15, battleaxe +6
melee (1d8+4)

Expected Hits Per Round (and Average Damage)

While the human is fighting defensively:

Human: longsword 0.35 hits (2.275) + shortsword
0.3 hits (1.35) = 3.625 average damage

Gnoll: 0.45 hits (3.825) = 3.825 average damage

If the human were fighting normally:

Human: longsword 0.55 hits (3.575) + shortsword
0.5 hits (2.25) = 5.825 average damage

Gnoll: 0.55 hits (4.675) = 4.675 average damage

The result of this comparison is that the human ranger, while increasing his AC, deals significantly less damage than he would normally inflict, while only reducing the gnoll's chances of hitting him by 10% (+2 AC) and reducing his average damage by less than a point per round. Carried out over several rounds of combat, the ranger fighting normally would slay the gnoll before he himself were felled (5.825 damage per round works out to killing the gnoll on the fourth round, while the gnoll wouldn't down the ranger till the fifth round), but the ranger fighting defensively would actually die one round *before* the gnoll! Of course, this is all statistical averages, and if you have faith in your lucky 20-sider, you might be willing to take more chances. But statistically speaking, you should reserve fighting defensively for final efforts, when there is no hope at all.

Total Defense

Only a standard action, total defense boosts your AC by +4 for 1 round, helping you avoid AoO's or other normal attacks. Because you're not attacking, you can't boost your AC further with Combat Expertise or fighting defensively, nor can you make any AoO while taking this action. This is an excellent choice for monks on the move using Tumble. Tumbling through bad guys to reach another position, along with Mobility, makes the monk virtually untouchable. Note you can't use total defense with the withdraw action (it is a full-round action). The only certain time to use total defense instead of withdraw is when the opponent you face has reach greater than 5 feet. Total defense improves your AC, helping you avoid the inevitable hit from the unavoidable AoO.

Special Attack Options

The PHB is chock full of special attacks to provide more options than the average fighter knows what to do with: everything from bull rushing to charging to shattering the bad guy's weapon. This section provides an overview of the special attack options presented in the PHB and offers tricks and tips to use them to your best advantage, while giving you the skinny on the archetypes best at each.

Aid Another

Step 1: Move adjacent to a PC.

Step 2: Make an attack roll or skill check against an AC 10 or DC 10, respectively.

Step 3: Apply +2 bonus to the adjacent PC's attack, AC, or skill check.

Aid another is a hard action to take, because it gives the glory to another character and most players' egos don't allow this sort of thing to happen. Suck it up. You want to win, right? There are all sorts of situations arising in a game where a particular character has the right skills to overcome some particular nasty. Sure, you may be able to do a little, but if you help your buddy, your buddy can do a lot. This is even truer when the ogre sunders your favorite *+1 longsword*. Feeling useless, you drop back to mope a bit, right? Wrong. You take it like a hero, and jump in and aid the other warriors who are still fighting the brute. By simply taking an aid another action, you can help your allies boost their AC against the ogre's devastating attacks, or buff their attack roll to hit the ogre's stupidly high AC. What follows are some tricks for particular combat options.

With Barbarian's Rage: When a barbarian rages, he loses his AC. Worse, if he charges the penalty drops to -4. Position yourself where you threaten an opponent the barbarian plans to charge and ready an action allowing you to aid another (AC) when the barbarian charges. This alleviates some of the penalties associated with charging, and lets your group deal the needed damage.

With Combat Expertise: Use aid another (attack) to help a character using Combat Expertise. Monsters are wont to attack the individuals hurting them; your aid action helps the character continue to smack the bad guy, while also keeping him from taking damage.

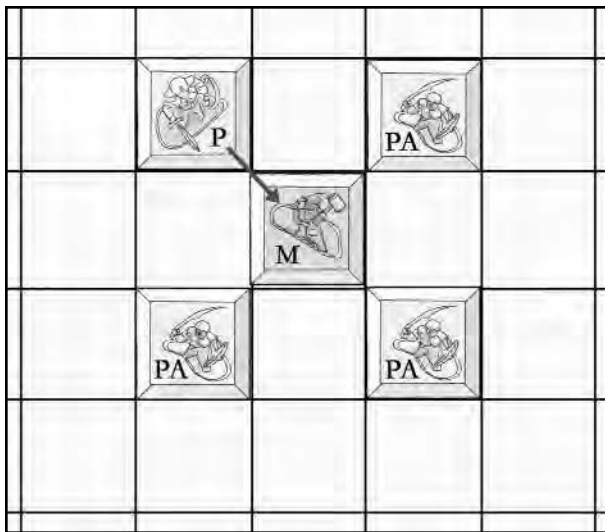
With Feints: There are two obvious ways to use aid another with a feint. First, make a DC 10 Bluff check and add +2 to the feinting character's Bluff check. Second, ready your action to aid in his attack roll when the opponent loses his Dexterity bonus to his AC. This is especially nasty when used with a rogue who has Improved Feint.

With Monk Special Attacks: At lower levels, monks take some penalties when using flurry of blows. Aid another allows you to eliminate the penalty to one of the attack rolls, or even improve them. When used in conjunction with Stunning Fist – even though this is a feat anyone can take, monks are the most likely to do so – you ensure the attack hits. For higher-level monks, help the monk make a Quivering Palm attack.

With Power Attack: The benefit comes into play when there are several of you. One guy giving up an attack so another gets a +2 bonus to hit isn't great, but as long as all of the allies are in position to make a melee attack, the

benefits quickly manifest, especially when fighting a single monster with damage reduction or high AC. If your party lacks the means to damage the opponent, and your fighter has Power Attack, get all the characters within range for a melee attack. There they can all aid the fighter with the Power Attack feat. In a party of 4 characters, they grant up to a +6 bonus and the extra damage dealt by the Power Attack should be enough to breach the monster's damage reduction with no problem. In Diagram 7-20, PA represents the three characters using aid another actions to help fighter P with his Power Attack against the monster, M. In addition to the +6 from the aid attacks, P also gains +2 for flanking, netting a total of +8 to hit.

Diagram 7-20: Aid Another with Power Attack



With Smite Attacks: When fighting alongside a paladin, especially a high-level one, it may be a good idea to help the paladin with his smite evil attack, or a cleric with the smite anything attack. Each aid allows the paladin to sacrifice more from his BAB, and ultimately deal an extraordinary amount of damage.

With other Special Attack Actions: Aid another is also useful when combined with many other special actions. For example, you could aid in disarms, sundering, grappling, tripping (attack), and skill checks made as part of movement like Climb, Tumble, Jump, and just about anything else falling under the criteria of attack, AC or skill check.

Archetypes: Any archetype does well with the aid another action. Skirmishers are best, because they fill in on the battlefield where most needed. Archers lack the positioning to take the action, while the heavy infantry is on the front ranks swinging his sword rather than helping other characters hit or defend.

Bull Rush

Step 1: Move into defender's space.

Step 2: Defender gets an AoO unless either they are flat-footed or you have the Improved Bull Rush feat.

Step 3: Both you and defender make a Strength check, modified by size or if you're charging.

Step 4: If you have the higher result, you push the defender back 5 feet for each 5 points you beat him, not moving more than your speed allows. If the defender has the higher result, you move 5 feet back to where you were.

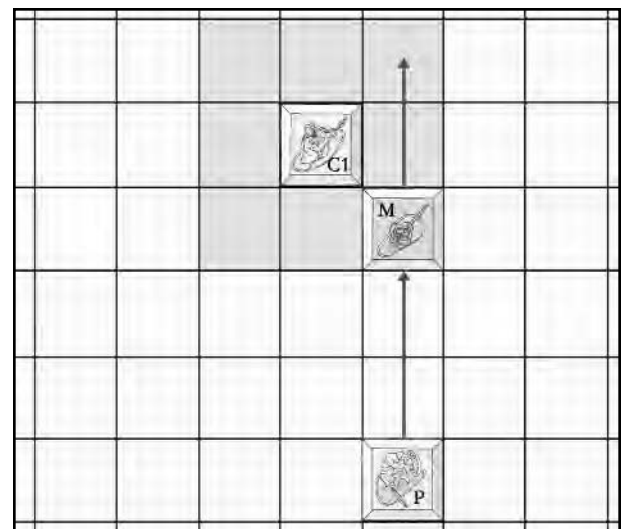
Recap: Bull Rush Modifiers

Each size larger than Medium	+4
Each size smaller than Medium	-4
Charging	+2
More than four legs	+4
Stability (dwarves)	+4

If you need to move an opponent on the battlefield, you have two options. First, you can try to overrun him (see below). A more successful choice, however, is the bull rush. Use bull rush attacks to knock a foe off a cliff, a table, the side of a heaving ship, or any other surface. You can also use this special attack to break up flanks or create a path for escape. Don't bother bull rushing quadrupeds, dwarves, or weirdo creatures like oozes, centipedes, worms, or things bigger than you.

To Prevent & Gain AoOs: Bull rush is a great tool to help your allies get the hell away from bad guys seriously outclassing them. A successful bull rush takes the character out of a threatened square and perhaps even allows the character an attack of opportunity too. In the example below, P is the bull rushing character, C1 is the character's ally, while M is the bad-guy monster. A successful bull rush can knock an opponent back more than one space, allowing the other character to take an AoO.

Diagram 7-21: Bull Rushing to Gain an AoO



As a Barbarian: When chewing on your shield in the heat of a rage, you've got an advantage of strength in bull rush attempts. On successful bull rushes, you can move the bad guys where you want them, controlling the battlefield rather than letting the battlefield control you. Plus, with your fast movement, you're sure to knock them back even further.

With Bull's Strength: If possible, before bull rushing, get your cleric to slap a *bull's strength* on you. The more you beat your opponent's opposed check, the further back you push them.

Against Flanking: If one of your friends faces a couple of nasty rogues, use a bull rush action to break up the flank. This gets you into position to help your friend, and keeps your friend standing to return the favor.

Against Spellcasters: Pesky wizard/cleric/spellcasting aberration on the battlefield? Bull rush 'em. A well-placed bull rush forces a Concentration check, screws up their spell placement, and puts you in the fortunate position of being able to smack the heck out of them when they cast another spell. It's best to charge while bulldozing a spellcaster.

Archetypes: Guerrillas and any other character with a good speed and Strength can be devastating on the battlefield moving opponents where they will. Heavy infantry are also solid when bull rushing as part of a charge. Cavalry, whose size equals the size of the creature they ride, gain an additional +4 bonus to the opposed Strength checks. Just as in the case of aid another, archers should remain out of melee attacks, leaving such maneuvers to other warriors.

Charge

Step 1: Select target to which you have a clear and unobstructed path.

Step 2: Move up to twice your speed to the closest square threatening him.

Step 3: Make a single melee attack adding +2 to the attack roll. For the remainder of the round, take a -2 penalty to AC.

A recent erratum prevents characters from using overrun as part of a charge, so forget that combo. Many folks use the charge action in every combat. While this kind of enthusiasm is laudable, don't fall into the charge trap. Charge is reckless, it exposes you to all sorts of risks, and now, more than ever, it's harder to pull off well, requiring a clear and unobstructed path to leap into the thick of things. On the other hand, nothing says warrior more than the bold barbarian blasting into the thickest chunk of orcs and knocking them down.

The Obvious Combos: If you want to be the charging reckless barbarian, stick to lighter armors to gain fast movement, then rage and watch the blood fly. This is super, super obvious, but some folks need big roadmaps

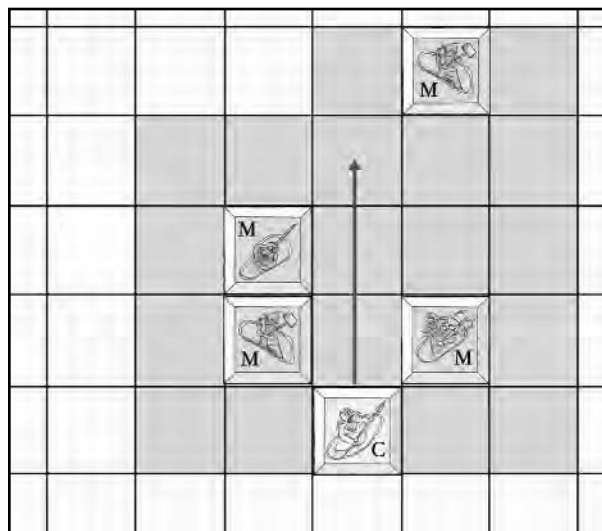
for success. Another one is to delay your action, but when you're no longer flatfooted, until a clear path presents itself. Not rocket science. Combining smite evil attacks with charges provides an extra +2 to hit, helping you smack the bad guy for sure. Using Power Attack with charges lets you gain two points without penalty. Combined with Cleave and Great Cleave, characters can drop tons of low powered bad guys with a +2 bonus to all attacks for the round.

A COMMON SCREW-UP

A charge is a special full-round action that gives you an attack at the end of your movement. You cannot combine it with fighting defensively or Combat Expertise.

The Unstoppable Charger: Characters with enough ranks in Tumble and the Mobility feat can charge unmo- lested through threatened squares to land a telling blow against a spellcaster or some other powerful and in-the- back opponent. Charging requires the squares be unob- structed (i.e., no walls, difficult terrain, friends/baddies). But it does not require the squares to be unthreatened, nor does it require you to attack the nearest opponent. You're free to select whatever target you would like, pro- vided the conditions are right. Monks are the best at this particular technique. Throw in some Stunning Fist action, and watch the enemy sorcerers and wizards fall down. Diagram 7-22 demonstrates how combining Tumble allows a character to attack the best target avail- able and get past the bad guys standing in his way. Note, the diagram example requires three Tumble checks against DC 15, 17, and 19 respectively.

Diagram 7-22: Tumbling while Charging



Woodsman Charger: Rangers of 7th-level or higher can move through any sort of undergrowth at their normal speed and without taking damage or *suffering any other impairments*. This means rangers can charge through

heavy undergrowth, while the bad guys are getting stuck and crawling through the mess. Oh, and druids? Get off your rears, because in outdoor fights, you can step up to the plate at 2nd-level. Add a little wildshape to the mix and you're nasty as hell.

With Lay on Hands: Against undead, paladins can use lay on hands as a melee touch attack. Charge the undead bad guy for the extra +2 to hit. You can't, however, add your smite to lay on hands attacks, as lay on hands is not a normal melee attack.

Archetypes: Charge attacks are excellent for warriors with lower BABs and high speeds, such as the monk and multiclass warriors. Heavy infantry are also good choices because it allows them to move across the battlefield without too much of a penalty to their high ACs, letting them drop foes early in the combat. Cavalry can be devastating in charge attacks, for with the lance, they can shell out staggering amounts of damage.

Disarm

Step 1: You provoke an AoO with a weapon in hand, unless you have Improved Disarm. If the defender deals damage, the disarm attempt fails.

Step 2: Both you and the defender make attack rolls. The one with the higher result wins.

Step 3: If you beat the defender, you disarm him and if you made the attempt unarmed, you seize the weapon. If the defender beats you, the disarm attempt fails and the defender may attempt to disarm you as a free action unless you have the Improved Disarm feat or a special weapon.

Recap: Disarm Modifiers

Wielding a two-handed weapon	+4
Wielding a light weapon	-4
Larger combatant	+4 per size difference
Target isn't melee weapon	-4
Defender uses a locked gauntlet	+10

In most fights, it's easier to just kill the opponent outright than it is to disarm them. In fact, against grunts like orcs and bugbears, you'd be better off just attacking to kill, and against bigger threats, like NPCs and fiend, the AoO is something you want to avoid. However, disarming is useful when fighting several foes, of whom you can't dispatch them all in just one or two hits. By disarming them, they have to pick up their weapons from the floor, provoking an AoO. With Combat Reflexes, you get to smack several of them for free.

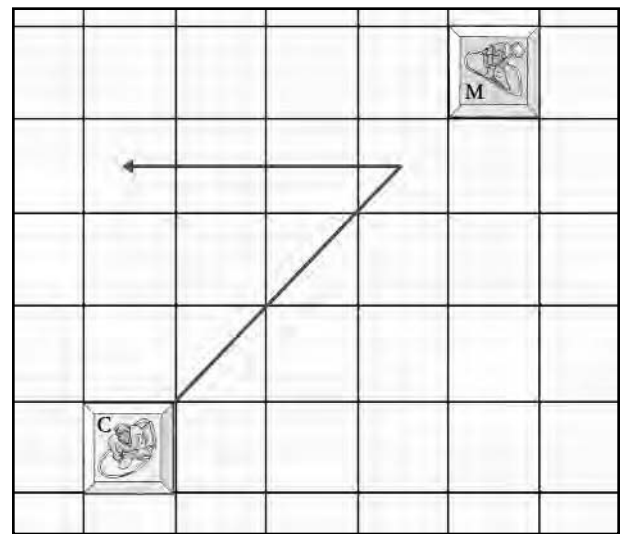
Item Thief: A better use of the disarm attack action is to grab items from an NPC. If you have the Improved Disarm feat, always go after spellcasters first. If you snatch the cleric and druid's divine focus, you don't have to worry about spells from them, unless they keep a few

spares. Grab the sorcerer and wizard's spell component pouches and you pretty much ruin their day. Is a wizard using a *wand of magic missiles* against you? Grab it. You're a fighter. You have a high BAB; use it to cripple the spellcasters before pasting them.

Grappling Grab: Combine a grab attack while grappling an opponent and you can pretty much take whatever you want.

Grab and Run: Want to take an item away and keep it away? Combine grab attacks with spring attacks. You can leap in, snatch the object and get the hell out, and no attack of opportunity. Sure, you've made an enemy for life, but with this technique, the enemy won't be around much longer anyway. The below example assumes a monk with a 50 speed.

Diagram 7-23: Spring Attack Grab



Iterative Attacks: Both a trip and a disarm count as a melee attack, so you can attempt them for as many times as you have iterative attacks. High-level characters can do some scary things. For example, a high level character can run up and grab a sword from an opponent. On the next attack, trip the same opponent and then beat the living crap out of him with his own sword.

Archetypes: Light infantry and guerrillas are good enough to move and disable as many opponents as possible. Skirmishers can prove to be good at disarming too, especially against troublesome archers and spellcasters.

Feint

Step 1: As a standard melee action (unless you have Improved Feint, which functions as a move action), make a Bluff check opposed by the opponent's Sense Motive check, plus his base attack bonus.

Step 2: If your Bluff check exceeds your opponent's Sense Motive check, that opponent loses his Dexterity modifier to his AC (if any).

Recap: Feint Modifiers

Against nonhumanoids	-4
Against creatures with animal Intelligence	-8

This is the rogue's favorite special attack. It's the perfect set up for a sneak attack. For other characters, feinting can be useful. If you have the Improved Feint feat, you can feint as move action, improving your chances to hit your target. Of course, this does nothing for you if your opponent already lacks a Dexterity bonus to his AC, or worse, has uncanny dodge.

Opponents losing their Dexterity adjustment to AC still threaten the squares in their reach, so you cannot use feint to avoid AoOs.

Archetypes: Of course, multiclassed rogue-warriors excel at using the feint ability. Most multiclassed rogues wind up being guerrillas or skirmishers, so these archetypes are the best.

Flanking

Find a buddy in your gaming group, preferably a rogue. You two work together. Between your heavy hitting and the rogue's sneak attacks, you make short work of anything subject to critical hits you come across.

Avoiding Flanks: The best way to avoid flanks is to stick with your buddy. This way, one of the two of you can knock out the offending flanker. Alternatively, look for a wall and stick to it. It's going to take a lot more movement for the bad guys to get a flank without an attack of opportunity than it would if you were out in the open.

Archetypes: Again, this combat technique is best suited for rogues or for helping rogues. All archetypes benefit from the +2 bonus to attack rolls when flanking.

Grapple

Step 1: Unless you have Improved Grapple, this special attack provokes an AoO.

Step 2: Make a melee touch attack to grab the opponent. If you miss, the grapple fails. If you hit, move to step 3.

Step 3: Make an opposed grapple check as a free action. If you lose, the grapple fails. You cannot achieve a hold

on a creature more than two size categories larger than you. If you win, you are grappling and deal damage as if you had hit with an unarmed strike.

Step 4: Next round, move into target's space to maintain grapple.

See the Combat chapter in the PHB for more details.

Grappling is complicated and can have some practical application. When in a group of grapplers, one character can pin the bad guy, while others carve him up. Grappling is also useful for preventing a spellcaster from being a threat in combat, but it's better to hack through the necromancer than it is to hug him. Most times, grappling comes into play when a monster with Improved Grab attacks you. This is bad news for you, and you should try to escape. Remember, you can always draw and use a light weapon while grappling, provided, of course, you make the grapple check. The best defense against a monster with Improved Grab is to avoid being hit. If you're held, your allies should distract the monster and draw his attacks away from you. Grappling monsters with Improved Grab have a -20 to their grapple checks when fighting opponents other than the ones they grapple.

Against Opponents with High Armor Classes: Make a grapple check against an opponent with a high AC, but with a low or normal touch AC. This allows you to deal damage you otherwise would not be able to deal for their high AC. By having to make a touch attack, you bypass all of their armor and natural armor.

Grapple with Armor Spikes: Make grapple attacks while wearing armor spikes to deal extra damage.

More Tricks: See Grapple in the Combat chapter in the PHB for a full list of grapple options.

Archetypes: The best grapplers are monks, so light infantry, guerrillas or skirmishers do well. Heavy infantry, while strong, lack the light weaponry necessary to carve up the grappler. Of course, armor spikes are guaranteed to poke some holes in their foes.

Overrun

Step 1: Resolve AoO. Overruns provoke AoOs.

Step 2: The opponent has the option to avoid the overrun (unless you have Improved Overrun or if mounted and with the Trample feat). If the defender instead opts to block, go to step 3.

Step 3: Make a Strength check opposed by the defender's Dexterity or Strength check. If you win, you knock the defender prone. If you lose, the defender may attempt to knock you down.

Step 4: If you win, you may continue movement as normal. If you fail, you move 5 feet back the way you came.

Overrun, according to the errata, cannot be used as part

of a charge and you cannot overrun through friendly squares. Despite these changes, overrun is still useful, even if you don't have Improved Overrun. With this attack action, you can break up flanks, knock down opponents, and get out of a nasty situation in combat. You can ready this action.

Overrun for Positioning: Use this special attack to get to highly coveted spots on the battlefield, such as higher ground, through a closing gate, or anywhere it's advantageous to be. You can use overrun with Tumble to let you avoid plowing down tougher foes to focus on the weaker combatants. Finally, use overruns to contain enemy spellcasters and monsters with spell-like abilities.

Archetypes: Cavalry are the best at overrun actions as they have the size and speed to be successful. Heavy infantry are also good at this technique, allowing them to get into the thickest parts of the fight. Light infantry with high speeds can make impressive overrun attempts, knocking down the enemy from across the battlefield.

FAVORABLE AND UNFAVORABLE CONDITIONS

Higher Ground: When possible, always attack from a position of higher ground. This gives you a free +1 bonus to melee attacks. If you employ ranged attacks, focus your attacks on those opponents so positioned. They are usually clear of cover and make prime targets.

Prone: In melee, don't be prone. Against ranged attacks, on the other hand, it's a good idea, because you get a +4 bonus to AC.

Kneeling and Sitting: While not exactly prone, your AC still increases by +2 against ranged attacks. Combined with cover, you are practically untouchable.

Sunder

Step 1: Sunder provokes an AoO unless you have the Improved Sunder feat.

Step 2: You and opponent make opposed attack rolls.

Step 3: If you beat the defender, you deal damage to his weapon. If you fail, you don't deal any damage.

Recap: Sunder Modifiers

Two-handed weapons	+4
Light weapons	-4
Per size difference	+4

Sunder allows you to break an opponent's weapon, disarming them. This is a defensive measure as it sacrifices an attack to prevent your opponent from striking you. There are some inherent problems with this tactic, though. First, if you broke the bad guy's +2 *longsword* during the fight, you just threw away 8000 gp. Second, sundering is risky with little guarantee of success, and it provokes an AoO unless you have Improved Sunder. In most circumstances, use the attack to kill the bad guy.

You can sunder shields, but not armor.

Attacking Objects: You can use sunder to smash objects held or worn by your opponents. Such objects include magic wands, potions, holy symbols or anything else the bad guy would use against you. Sure, you lose the magic item from treasure, but you and your allies should be able to run through just about any cleric you encounter.

Archetypes: Tanks, heavy infantry that is, are the best at sunder attacks, because they wield big mean weapons. Light infantry are good at this too; nothing spells broken wand like a ticked-off barbarian.

Trip

Step 1: Unarmed trip attacks provoke AoOs unless you have the Improved Trip feat.

Step 2: Make a melee touch attack.

Step 3: If you succeed, make a Strength check opposed by your opponent's Strength or Dexterity check. If you win, the defender falls prone. If you fail, the defender can try to trip you.

Recap: Trip Modifiers

Every size category larger than Medium	+4
Every size category smaller than Medium	-4
Stability (e.g., dwarves)	+4
More than two legs	+4

Trip is undervalued. It's a great technique to keep your enemies on the ground. When used in conjunction with Improved Trip, it gives you a free attack, and when they struggle to their feet you get an additional attack. Prone opponents are the best foes, because when they crawl, stand up or do anything to get away they provoke attacks of opportunity – and while they're prone, they have a -4 AC penalty against melee opponents. If you're a finesse fighter, you can't live without this special attack. By the way, as the equipment chapter mentions, always use a weapon to trip folks, and not your hands.

Pile-on: Use the Improved Trip feat with grapple/disarm to impose the -4 penalty to their AC then take away all of their goodies for free.

Against Mounted Opponents: Got a pesky rider causing all sorts of headaches? Get your friends to aid another and use Improved Trip to drag him from his horse and then club him while he's on the ground. It's ugly, but spectacular.

Archetypes: Monks, be they guerrillas, light infantry, or skirmishers, are the best trippers. They have the tools, the stats, and the techniques to drop people all day long. Surprisingly, heavy infantry do a nice job too, with their high Strength scores. Last, cavalry, counted as Large creatures, have an advantage when performing a trip. Give them a lance, and they can skewer the bad guy when he's down.

Combat Styles

There are three major weapon techniques in combat. The first is the one-hander. This technique allows the warrior to keep a hand free or to use a shield to beef his AC. The second is the two-hander. These brutes ditch the shield and swing the sword like a baseball bat, dealing lots of extra damage, but costing them AC by not having the shield. Finally, the last combo is the two-weapon fighter. Rangers are notorious for this technique, having made it famous. Two-weapon fighting gives you an extra attack, and with the extra attack, extra damage.

Which style is better? Well, let's find out. Tables 7-28 through 7-31 offer a comparison of all three techniques with or without the appropriate feats, so you can see the damage potential of each one. Remember, a skilled warrior changes his combat tactics between two-handed, one-handed, and two-weapon when the situation demands, rather than relying on one technique all the time.

The four tables compare the expected damage for a fighter with a Strength of 15, increasing to 16 at 4th level, 17 at 8th level, 18 at 12th level, 19 at 16th level and 20 at 20th level. The first table reflects the fighter using a single-handed longsword. The second details the fighter using the longsword in two hands. The third presents the fighter using a longsword with a shortsword without the Two-Weapon Fighting feat tree. The final table shows two-handed combat with the appropriate feats. Each table shows four armor classes and does not take into account critical hits. Except for the Two-Weapon Fighting tree in the last table, these tables do not account for feat selection.

At lower levels, use a shield to improve your AC. Using a weapon two-handed only deals slightly more damage, averaging no more than an extra point. But as you advance, switch to two-handed fighting against creatures with low ACs, because your iterative attacks allow you to deal significantly more damage in each round. The higher your Strength and the more attacks per round you have, the greater the benefit of two-handed fighting. At higher levels it makes a huge difference.

The charts reveal that two-weapon fighting is not as useful as one would suppose. It is marginally better than one-handed fighting in some circumstances, and marginally worse in others. It's never a clear-cut winner. At higher levels and with the right feats it's superior to swinging a weapon with two hands, but then again, you had to spend three feat slots to make it better! Like the one-handed technique, it fails to do appreciable damage when compared to the two-handed approach. Moreover, the loss of the shield bonus to AC for the extra possible hit is usually not worth the effort. Reserve two-weapon fighting for those with the feat tree, or at worst, when fighting many smaller foes with low ACs and low hit points, where spreading out damage over multiple hits is more important than punishing the same target over and over again.

TABLE 7-28: ONE-HANDED LONGSWORD

Attack Bonus (Damage/Hit)	Average Hits Per Round (and Average Damage) vs. Given AC			
	15	20	25	30
+3 (Dmg 6.5)	.45 (2.925)	.2 (1.3)	.05 (0.325)	.05 (0.325)
+4	.5 (3.25)	.25 (1.625)	.05 (0.325)	.05 (0.325)
+5	.55 (3.575)	.3 (1.95)	.05 (0.325)	.05 (0.325)
+6 (Dmg 7.5)	.6 (4.5)	.35 (2.625)	.1 (0.75)	.05 (0.375)
+8	.7 (5.25)	.45 (3.375)	.2 (1.5)	.05 (0.375)
+9/+4	1.25 (9.375)	.75 (5.625)	.3 (2.25)	.1 (0.75)
+10/+5	1.35 (10.125)	.85 (6.375)	.35 (2.625)	.1 (0.75)
+11/+6	1.45 (10.875)	.95 (7.125)	.45 (3.375)	.15 (1.125)
+12/+7	1.55 (11.625)	1.05 (7.875)	.6 (4.5)	.2 (1.5)
+13/+8	1.65 (12.375)	1.15 (8.625)	.65 (4.875)	.25 (1.875)
+14/+9/+4	2.2 (16.5)	1.5 (11.25)	.8 (6)	.35 (2.625)
+16/+11/+6 (Dmg 8.5)	2.4 (20.4)	1.8 (15.3)	1.05 (8.925)	.5 (4.25)
+17/+12/+7	2.5 (21.25)	1.95 (16.575)	1.25 (10.625)	.6 (5.1)
+18/+13/+8	2.6 (22.1)	2.1 (17.85)	1.35 (11.475)	.7 (5.95)
+19/+14/+9	2.65 (22.525)	2.2 (18.7)	1.5 (12.75)	.8 (6.8)
+20/+15/+10/+5	3.25 (27.625)	2.6 (22.1)	1.7 (14.45)	.95 (8.075)
+21/+16/+11/+6	3.35 (28.475)	2.75 (23.375)	1.9 (16.15)	1.1 (9.35)
+22/+17/+12/+7	3.45 (29.325)	2.9 (24.65)	2.15 (18.275)	1.25 (10.625)
+23/+18/+13/+8	3.55 (30.175)	3.05 (25.925)	2.3 (19.55)	1.4 (11.9)
+25/+20/+15/+10 (Dmg 9.5)	3.65 (34.675)	3.25 (30.875)	2.6 (24.7)	1.7 (16.15)

TABLE 7-29: TWO-HANDED LONGSWORD

Attack Bonus (Damage/Hit)	Average Hits Per Round (and Average Damage) vs. Given AC			
	15	20	25	30
+3 (Dmg 7.5)	.45 (3.375)	.2 (1.5)	.05 (0.375)	.05 (0.375)
+4	.5 (3.75)	.25 (1.875)	.05 (0.375)	.05 (0.375)
+5	.55 (4.125)	.3 (2.25)	.05 (0.375)	.05 (0.375)
+6 (Dmg 8.5)	.6 (5.1)	.35 (2.975)	.1 (0.85)	.05 (0.425)
+8	.7 (5.95)	.45 (3.825)	.2 (1.7)	.05 (0.425)
+9/+4	1.25 (10.625)	.75 (6.375)	.3 (2.55)	.1 (0.85)
+10/+5	1.35 (11.475)	.85 (7.225)	.35 (2.975)	.1 (0.85)
+11/+6	1.45 (12.325)	.95 (8.075)	.45 (3.825)	.15 (1.275)
+12/+7	1.55 (13.175)	1.05 (8.925)	.6 (5.1)	.2 (1.7)
+13/+8	1.65 (14.025)	1.15 (9.775)	.65 (5.525)	.25 (2.125)
+14/+9/+4	2.2 (18.7)	1.5 (12.75)	.8 (6.8)	.35 (2.975)
+16/+11/+6 (Dmg 10.5)	2.4 (25.2)	1.8 (18.9)	1.05 (11.025)	.5 (5.25)
+17/+12/+7	2.5 (26.25)	1.95 (20.475)	1.25 (13.125)	.6 (6.3)
+18/+13/+8	2.6 (27.3)	2.1 (22.05)	1.35 (14.175)	.7 (7.35)
+19/+14/+9	2.65 (27.825)	2.2 (23.1)	1.5 (15.75)	.8 (8.4)
+20/+15/+10/+5	3.25 (34.125)	2.6 (27.3)	1.7 (17.85)	.95 (9.975)
+21/+16/+11/+6	3.35 (35.175)	2.75 (28.875)	1.9 (19.95)	1.1 (11.55)
+22/+17/+12/+7	3.45 (36.225)	2.9 (30.45)	2.15 (22.575)	1.25 (13.125)
+23/+18/+13/+8	3.55 (37.275)	3.05 (32.025)	2.3 (24.15)	1.4 (14.7)
+25/+20/+15/+10 (Dmg 11.5)	3.65 (41.975)	3.25 (37.375)	2.6 (29.9)	1.7 (19.55)

TABLE 7-30: LONGSWORD AND SHORTSWORD

Attack Bonus at -4/-8 (Damage/Hit)	Average Hits Per Round (and Average Damage) vs. Given AC			
	15	20	25	30
-1/-5 (Dmg 6.5/4.5)	.25/.05 (1.85)	.05/.05 (0.55)	.05/.05 (0.55)	.05/.05 (0.55)
+0/-4	.3/.1 (2.4)	.05/.05 (0.55)	.05/.05 (0.55)	.05/.05 (0.55)
+1/-3	.35/.15 (2.95)	.1/.05 (0.875)	.05/.05 (0.55)	.05/.05 (0.55)
+2/-2 (Dmg 7.5/4.5)	.4/.2 (3.9)	.15/.05 (1.35)	.05/.05 (0.6)	.05/.05 (0.6)
+4/+0	.5/.3 (5.1)	.25/.05 (2.1)	.05/.05 (0.6)	.05/.05 (0.6)
+5/+0/+1	.75/.35 (7.2)	.35/.1 (2.725)	.1/.05 (0.975)	.1/.05 (0.975)
+6/+1/+2	.95/.4 (8.925)	.45/.15 (4.05)	.15/.05 (1.2)	.1/.05 (0.975)
+7/+2/+3	1.05/.45 (9.9)	.55/.2 (5.025)	.2/.05 (1.725)	.1/.05 (0.975)
+8/+3/+4	1.15/.5 (10.875)	.65/.25 (6)	.25/.05 (2.1)	.1/.05 (0.975)
+9/+4/+5	1.25/.55 (11.85)	.75/.3 (6.975)	.3/.05 (2.475)	.1/.05 (0.975)
+10/+5/+0/+6	1.55/.6 (14.325)	.9/.35 (8.325)	.4/.1 (3.45)	.15/.05 (1.35)
+12/+7/+2/+8 (Dmg 8.5/5.5)	1.95/.70 (20.425)	1.2/.45 (12.675)	.6/.2 (6.2)	.25/.05 (2.4)
+13/+8/+3/+9	2.1/.75 (21.975)	1.35/.5 (14.225)	.7/.25 (7.325)	.3/.05 (2.825)
+14/+9/+4/+10	2.2/.8 (23.1)	1.5/.55 (15.775)	.8/.3 (8.45)	.35/.05 (3.25)
+15/+10/+5/+11	2.3/.85 (24.225)	1.65/.6 (17.325)	.9/.35 (9.575)	.4/.1 (3.95)
+16/+11/+6/+1/+12	2.75/.9 (28.325)	1.9/.65 (19.725)	1.1/.4 (11.55)	.55/.15 (5.5)
+17/+12/+7/+2/+13	2.9/.95 (29.875)	2.1/.7 (21.7)	1.25/.45 (13.1)	.65/.2 (6.625)
+18/+13/+8/+3/+14	3.05/.95 (31.15)	2.3/.75 (23.675)	1.4/.5 (14.65)	.75/.25 (7.75)
+19/+14/+9/+4/+15	3.15/.95 (32)	2.45/.8 (25.225)	1.55/.55 (16.2)	.85/.3 (8.875)
+21/+16/+11/+6/+17 (Dmg 9.5/5.5)	3.35/.95 (37.05)	2.75/.9 (31.075)	1.9/.65 (21.625)	1.1/.4 (12.65)

TABLE 7-31: LONGSWORD AND SHORTSWORD WITH TWO-WEAPON FIGHTING FEAT TREE

This table reflects the full progression of feats in the Two-Weapon Fighting feat tree. A character likely must advance his Dexterity rather than Strength to meet the prerequisites for the feats higher in the tree. However, to match the other tables, we'll assume he has a high Dexterity to start with, so the damage improves just as in the other comparisons.

Attack Bonus (Damage/Hit)	Average Hits Per Round (and Average Damage) vs. Given AC			
	15	20	25	30
<i>Ist: Two-weapon Fighting Atk -2 & -2 (damage 6.5/4.5)</i>				
+1/+1	.3/.3 (3.3)	.1/.1 (1.1)	.05/.05 (0.55)	.05/.05 (0.55)
+2/+2	.4/.4 (4.4)	.15/.15 (1.65)	.05/.05 (0.55)	.05/.05 (0.55)
+3/+3	.45/.45 (4.95)	.2/.2 (2.2)	.05/.05 (0.55)	.05/.05 (0.55)
<i>4th: (damage 7.5/4.5)</i>				
+5/+5	.55/.55 (6.6)	.3/.3 (3.6)	.05/.05 (0.6)	.05/.05 (0.6)
+6/+6	.6/.6 (7.2)	.35/.35 (4.2)	.1/.1 (1.2)	.05/.05 (0.6)
<i>6th: Improved Two-weapon Fighting Atk -2 & -2/5</i>				
+7/+2/+7/+2	1.05/1.05 (13.425)	.55/.55 (6.6)	.2/.2 (2.4)	.1/.1 (1.2)
+8/+3/+8/+3	1.15/1.15 (13.8)	.65/.65 (7.8)	.25/.25 (3)	.1/.1 (1.2)
+9/+4/+9/+4	1.25/1.25 (15)	.75/.75 (9)	.3/.3 (3.6)	.1/.1 (1.2)
+10/+5/+10/+5	1.35/1.35 (16.2)	.85/.85 (10.95)	.35/.35 (4.2)	.1/.1 (1.2)
+11/+6/+11/+6	1.45/1.45 (17.4)	.95/.95 (11.4)	.45/.45 (5.4)	.15/.15 (1.8)
<i>11th: Greater Two-weapon Fighting Atk -2 & -2/-5/-10</i>				
+12/+7/+2/+12/+7/+2	1.95/1.95 (23.4)	1.2/1.2 (14.4)	.6/.6 (7.2)	.25/.25 (3)
<i>12th: (damage 8.5/5.5)</i>				
+14/+9/+4/+14/+9/+4	2.2/2.2 (30.8)	1.5/1.5 (21)	.8/.8 (11.2)	.35/.35 (4.9)
+15/+10/+5/+15/+10/+5	2.3/2.3 (32.2)	1.65/1.65 (23.1)	.9/.9 (12.6)	.4/.4 (5.6)
+16/+11/+6/+16/+11/+6	2.4/2.4 (33.6)	1.8/1.8 (25.2)	1.05/1.05 (14.7)	.5/.5 (7)
+17/+12/+7/+17/+12/+7	2.5/2.5 (35)	1.95/1.95 (27.3)	1.2/1.2 (16.8)	.6/.6 (8.4)
+18/+13/+8/+3/+18/+13/+8	3.05/2.55 (39.95)	2.25/2.1 (30.675)	1.4/.1.35 (19.325)	.75/.7 (10.225)
+19/+14/+9/+4/+19/+14/+9	3.15/2.65 (41.35)	2.45/2.2 (32.925)	1.55/1.50 (21.425)	.85/.8 (11.625)
+20/+15/+10/+5/+20/+15/+10	3.25/2.7 (42.475)	2.6/2.3 (34.75)	1.7/1.65 (23.525)	.95/.9 (13.025)
+21/+16/+11/+6/+21/+16/+11	3.35/2.75 (43.6)	2.75/2.4 (36.575)	1.9/1.8 (26.05)	1.1/1.05 (15.125)
<i>20th: (damage 9.5/5.5)</i>				
+23/+18/+13/+8/+23/+18/+13	3.5/2.8 (48.65)	3.05/2.6 (43.275)	2.3/2.1 (33.4)	1.4/1.35 (20.725)

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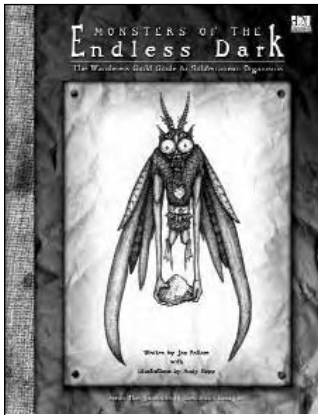
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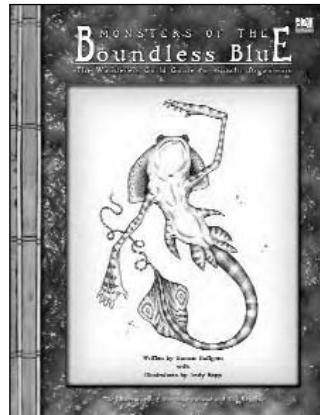
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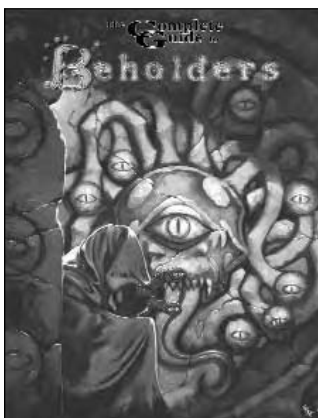
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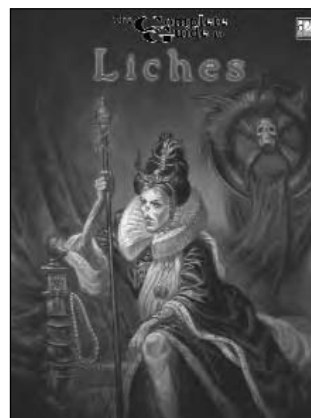
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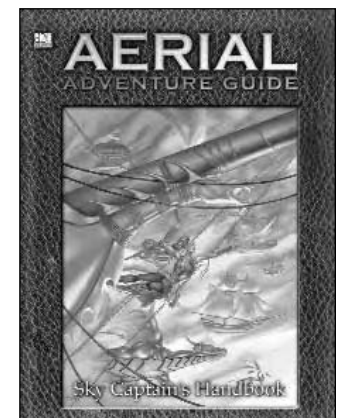
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Power Gamer's 3.5 Warrior Strategy Guide

Errata

Oops! There are a few mistakes in this book. Putting together a tome of min-maxing secrets is bound to attract the most dedicated min-maxers in the world. This book did indeed attract many sharp d20 minds, some of whom found a few things that we missed.

All of the mistakes are minor and do not affect the "big picture" strategies discussed in the Warrior Strategy Guide. The most significant is the table given in the entry for the Power Attack feat, which is accurate only in a certain set of conditions; the feat requires several tables for a full min-max analysis.

Eventually we will compile all such required tables, as well as a complete errata file. For the time being, we refer you to the Goodman Games forums, where you can find discussion of these errata. You can find the discussions here:

<http://www.goodman-games.com/forums/index.php>

Look for the Warrior Strategy Guide thread in the Our Products section of the forums.

If you happen to discover additional errata, or have other questions or comments, please feel free to post your comments on our forums, or e-mail us directly at info@goodman-games.com.