IRON HEROES

REVISED

A VARIANT PLAYER'S HANDBOOK
BY MIKE MEARLS

Fiery Dragon

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A Variant Player's Handbook by Mike Mearls

Requires use of the Dungeons & Dragons® *Third Edition Core Books, published by Wizards of the Coast, Inc.*
This book utilizes updated material from the v. 3.5 revision.

For supplemental material, visit the *Iron Heroes* Website:
www.fierydragon.com/ironheroes

Fiery Dragon

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INTRODUCTION:

ACTION FANTASY!

Welcome to Iron Heroes, *a variant player's handbook. This book takes the basic rules you already know and introduces a set of expansions designed to promote a different style of play.*

I*ron Heroes* focuses on action and adventure. Your character's talents and abilities, rather than his equipment, determine his capabilities. Magic in *Iron Heroes* is a dangerous force, one that is as likely to harm its user as his enemies. Before you get started with the rules, this introduction gives you an overview of what you can expect from this book.

WHAT IS THIS BOOK?

Iron Heroes is a handbook for people who want to play a fantasy roleplaying game. It contains all the information you need to create a character, fight foes, and play out adventures. Although this book is a stand-alone work, you can use it alongside other player's handbooks, mixing and matching the races, classes, skills, feats, spells, and even some of the rules, if you wish. This book expands your available roleplaying options dramatically.

It should be noted that this book is intended for those who have already played roleplaying games in the past. Beginners looking for a simplistic, tutorial-style game book should look elsewhere. This is an advanced rulebook.

Here's what you'll find in each chapter of *Iron Heroes*:

Chapter One: Abilities. This chapter contains all you need to know about Strength, Intelligence, and a character's other abilities, plus how to generate them for your character.

Chapter Two: Traits. *Iron Heroes* player characters (PCs) are defined by their traits rather than a specific race. A tall warrior from the northern, arctic wastelands has different traits than a lithe, scimitar-wielding horseman of the desert. The trait system allows you to define your character's physical and mental attributes with superior precision.

Chapter Three: Character Classes. From the deadly executioner to the dauntless armiger, the 10 character classes in *Iron Heroes* present you with a set of heroic templates that you can customize with the innovative new feat system.

Chapter Four: Skills and Ability Checks. Danger and combat are the meat and drink of a heroic warrior, and as such the core skills receive new rules that cover their use in such situations.

Chapter Five: Feats. More than simple abilities, the new rules for mastery, feat categories, and descriptors bring unparalleled flexibility, excitement, and customization to the game.

Chapter Six: Roleplaying *Iron Heroes.* This chapter covers guidelines on creating your character's personality, background, and the nonrule qualities that make him interesting. It also presents brief notes on a typical *Iron Heroes* campaign setting.

Chapter Seven: Equipment. This chapter gives you new types of weapons and armor, plus all the basics.

Chapter Eight: Combat. The core structure of the game remains familiar to established roleplayers, with a few variant twists for experienced players or for those who simply want to take advantage of advanced development of the rules. Of special interest are challenge and stunt systems that allow players to accomplish amazing tasks.

Chapter Nine: Adventuring. This chapter includes many of the basic rules needed for a variety of adventuring situations, from determining how much equipment you can carry to keeping track of how much light a torch casts over an area.

Chapter Ten: Magic. Magic exists in *Iron Heroes*, but don't rely on it to save the day. There are no formulaic spells. Instead, casters summon magical energy, attempt to shape it to their desire, and unleash it upon the world. Sometimes a spell works perfectly. Most of the time, it causes as many problems as it solves.

Appendix. Finally, the appendix offers suggestions for DMs to mix and match *Iron Heroes* rules with standard d20 System rules and provides additional gamemastering tips.

The rules in this book are entirely compatible with other fantasy roleplaying supplements you might own. In most cases, these rules remain the same as those in games compatible with the d20 System, although various sections of this book discuss some changes you need to learn. While *Iron Heroes* contains all you need to play the game, you will find mentions of some basic game concepts (such as certain conditions or specific magic items) explained more fully in the DMG. You will also read some references to monsters found in the MM.

Bonus source material and ideas to augment the information in *Iron Heroes* appear online at <www.fierydragon.com/ironheroes>. This rulebook is protected content except for items specifically called out as Open Game Content on the title page. For full details, please turn to page 254. Open content is not otherwise marked in the text of this book.

COMBAT: OPTIONS AND CHOICES

Iron Heroes focuses on fantasy action and adventure. As such, combat plays an important role in the system. At its core, combat works the same as in the core rules. Initiative, critical hits, attack rolls, and saving throws remain unchanged. Some portions of the rules, such as attacks of opportunity, appear here in simplified forms. In most cases, the changes simply add to the game system rather than truly alter how things work.

The *Iron Heroes* combat rules—and, by extension, character classes and feats—are designed with the idea that options and choices make a game fun. While you can simply charge into a fight and hack at an opponent, *Iron Heroes* supports a variety of styles. It does this in a number of ways.

First, *combat challenges* are additional benefits you can apply to an attack in return for a penalty on your roll. You can also accept penalties to your defensive abilities in return for other benefits. For example, you can take a penalty to an attack for the chance to force your opponent to move away from you. In this case, you make a wild, powerful swing that knocks your target backward if you hit. If you accept a penalty to your defenses, you can go on the offensive to gain a bonus to attacks and damage. These challenges allow you to weigh the benefits and drawbacks of an aggressive attack or a passive defense. If a foe is near defeat, you can cast aside caution and throw everything into an attack to finish him off. When the battle goes against you, just dig in, defend yourself, and wait for allies to rescue you. The challenges are open to everyone; you do not need any special abilities or feats to use them.

The *rules for stunts* give you the tools to cover a wide range of actions beyond the scope of the standard combat rules. Stunts are effect based, which means you first figure out the stunt's result in game terms, then build a description around it. When you attempt a stunt, you make a skill or ability check. The total result of the check determines your stunt's effectiveness. You can use stunts to gain a bonus to attacks and damage, inflict a penalty to an opponent's actions, knock a foe prone, and other benefits. In essence, stunts are free-form actions that aid your attack actions.

Defense, a measure of your ability to dodge and parry blows, replaces Armor Class. Armor in *Iron Heroes* provides you with damage reduction, the ability to reduce the damage you suffer from an attack. Your defense bonus measures your ability to avoid your opponent's attacks. Like your base attack bonus, it increases with level. Also like the attack bonus, it increases at a rate determined by your class' focus on defense, speed, and agility. This change has two important effects on the game. Touch attacks become less of a sure thing, since most characters are now much better at avoiding attacks. On the other hand, being caught flat footed is a recipe for disaster. When you aren't on your guard, you lose your class defense bonus. Thus, it pays to keep active watch for hidden enemies and stay alert.

Combat in *Iron Heroes* is designed to bring out your creativity. It offers you more options than in other games, so approach it with a creative flair that leads you to take actions you might never have considered before.

CHARACTER CLASSES

The character classes in *Iron Heroes* each embody a particular style of fighting rather than professions or roles. They are intentionally divorced from any tight connections to a specific ethos, culture, or organization. Instead, they form distinct sets of tools that your character uses to interact with the world. A thief is a clever trickster who thrives on deception. The berserker fuels his attacks with his inner fury. The harrier dashes across the battlefield, dodging and tumbling past enemies with deadly, elegant speed. Choosing a class is a matter of finding the fighting style that suits your taste.

Many of the classes use *token pools* to reflect their talents. Tokens encourage you to embrace your class' favored tactics. When you follow these tactics, you build up tokens that you can spend to activate special abilities. Think of the tokens as an abstract method of representing a combination of maneuvers that yields a result greater than the sum of its parts.

For example, the "parry" token pool allows you to build up tokens when an opponent attacks and misses you. This represents your ability to turn aside blows and set up a foe for a devastating counterattack by knocking his weapon aside or luring him into overextending himself. As you evade more attacks, you can take greater advantage of your opponent's frustration and increasingly risky attacks.

Character classes in *Iron Heroes* have a few other distinctive features as well. They have much better saving throws than classes from other games, and their base attack bonuses and skill ranks are higher than normal, too. *Iron Heroes* characters have far more hit points, plus they have about twice as many feats as the average character from other games.

With these advantages, you might expect that *Iron Heroes* classes are far more powerful than classes from other fantasy games. In some ways,

this is true. However, the *Iron Heroes* classes are designed with the assumption that the characters do not have access to magic items. In the implied setting of *Iron Heroes*, magic is dangerous, unpredictable, and almost impossible to control. Arcane power is the province of powerful monsters, strange beings from other worlds, and deadly villains. The characters must rely on their training, clever tactics, and natural abilities to defeat their enemies. You'll never have a magic wand, a scroll, or a magic sword waiting in your backpack to save the day. What you do have is your talent, training, and inventiveness.

FOCUS ON SKILLS

Without access to reliable magic spells and powerful enchanted items, skills play a big role in defining what your character can do. The *skill challenges* are the main addition to how skills work in *Iron Heroes*. In exchange for a penalty to your skill check or an increase in the skill attempt's Difficulty Class, you gain added benefits from a successful result. You can climb faster than normal, search an area for traps and disarm them in a single action, or use a skill as a free action.

Skills are also critically important to completing stunts. When you attempt a stunt, you must pick a skill relevant to the task at hand. You might use Climb to scramble up a giant's back, or Knowledge to figure out how to send a pillar tumbling to the ground. Think of skills as flexible tools you can use to overcome your problems. As with combat, let your imagination help you apply your skills in interesting new ways.

Iron Heroes makes no distinction between class and cross-class skills. Instead, any character can spend ranks in any skill without penalty. However, each class grants access to different *skill groups*. A skill group is a set of connected abilities that have a natural synergy. If you are a strong and athletic swimmer, you can probably climb and jump better than normal. Skill groups reflect this fact by allowing you to develop your ability in several skills at once. If you spend ranks to improve a skill group as a whole, you gain ranks in all the skills it covers. Thus, characters in *Iron Heroes* tend to have ranks in a greater number of skills than characters in other games.

This emphasis on skills ties back into the idea that, when you play *Iron Heroes*, you must develop imaginative and cunning uses for your character's talents. Your skills are only as good as the work you put into using them

MORE FEATS

Building on the idea of options, characters in *Iron Heroes* gain far more feats than those in other systems. Feats in *Iron Heroes* grow with your character as the PC gains levels. Each feat includes a variety of expanded options you can select to improve the base feat. At 1st level, the Weapon Focus feat grants a +1 bonus to your attacks. By 20th level, you can spend additional feat slots on it to raise that +1 bonus to a +5 bonus to attacks and a +6 bonus to damage. Other feats grant access to new combat maneuvers, special attacks, and other abilities.

Iron Heroes introduces the concept of *mastery*, a measure of your skill and training in a specific area. Many feats are rated in a mastery category. In order to take the feat, you must have the minimum mastery rating in the proper category. As your mastery increases with your character level, you can take more powerful feats or improve in your current ones.
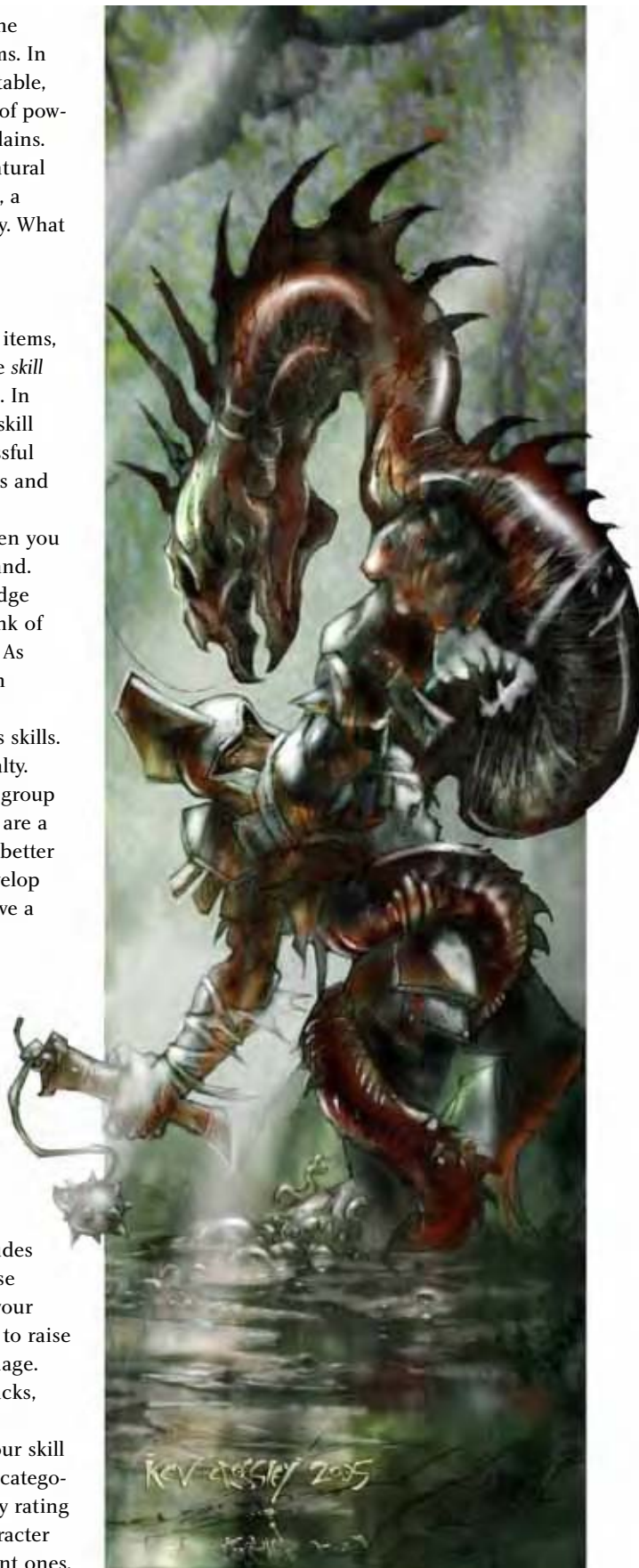
The mastery ratings replace the standard prerequisites for feats.

Some feats work only with certain weapons. These rules are meant to create vivid, distinct character concepts. A warrior who fights with a greatsword uses different tactics than a swashbuckler who favors the rapier. In *Iron Heroes*, a feat's prerequisite determines the type of weapon you can use to gain the feat's full benefits.

AN IMPLIED SETTING

Iron Heroes features an implied setting rather than an explicit overview of one particular fantasy world. This book contains few references to locations, history, or gods. Instead, *Iron Heroes* is ruled by a general feel and tone that guided the rules' creation. Four basic statements encapsulate this tone and feel.

1. ACTIONS, NOT WORDS

Characters in *Iron Heroes* are defined by how they act. A berserker is a warrior who draws on his inner anger to beat down his enemies. An executioner hides in the shadows and slices her victims apart with cruelly placed cuts. You define your character by what he does rather than by what he believes or says. There are no alignments, and the gods are at best unknowable. There are no clerics or other divine spellcasters, leaving the world without any direct physical evidence of the presence of godly powers.

The game mechanics reflect this factor. For instance, without magic items and spells to fall back on, you must apply your talents, skills, and feats in inventive ways to defeat your enemies.

Therefore, you gain tokens by taking actions consistent with your character's fighting style.

2. CHARACTERS AS MOVERS AND SHAKERS

The player characters are a cut above other warriors. The gap between the nonplayer character (NPC) and player character classes in *Iron Heroes* is steep. Anyone with PC class levels is noteworthy and important. By the same token, there are few such folk in the world. A 10th-level weapon master is one of the dozen most skilled warriors in even a large city. The commander of the local militia is probably no more than a 3rd-level warrior. Even a 1st-level player character could defeat him.

Since the player characters are more skilled than the typical person, they invariably become

enmeshed in the most important events of the age. If a dragon emerges from the mountains to menace the land, the king sends messengers to the player characters asking for help. This isn't a matter of a plot device or a convenient hook. Chances are, the player characters are the only ones in the land both qualified to fight the wyrm and concerned about the realm's best interests.

As a player character gains levels, he invariably becomes a force to be reckoned with. A mighty warrior can defeat dozens of opponents, tipping the tide of a battle. A skilled executioner can fell kings by her hand, while a talented thief has the abilities to seize control of a realm through political wrangling and manipulation. The few high-level characters in the world are important movers and shakers. Few bother to wander the land in search of adventure, making the PCs stand out even more if they remain independent. Whether they like it or not, high-level player characters attract a lot of attention—both from those who fear their power and from those who want to turn them into useful assets. If the characters don't shape their own destiny, someone else will do it for them.

3. Options and Decisions

The *Iron Heroes* mechanics are laced with options and choices. Thus, player characters in *Iron Heroes* make their own fates. Venal monarchs may court their favor, powerless serfs may beg for their defense, and rivals may arise who perceive them as threats. While these outside forces conspire to control or manipulate the PCs, in the end, the characters are masters of their own destinies. You set your plans, you decide on your goals, and you determine your fate.

As a character in *Iron Heroes*, you always make your own decisions. There are no gods or similarly powerful figures to boss you around. If anything, those with power seem suspicious of you. Whether you use your abilities for good, ill, or your own selfish ends, you have the potential to turn the tide of global events. Not only are you important in the grand scheme of the world, but part of your importance derives from your independence.

4. The Unknown Awaits

The world of *Iron Heroes* is relatively young. The great nations of man have yet to arise. Few wanderers have returned from over the horizon. The upper peaks of the mountains remain unexplored. The land beyond the limited boundaries of civilization is almost completely unknown. When the player characters wander into the wilds, chances are good that they are the first ones to find the strange ruins, bizarre sites, and dangerous monsters they encounter.

This aspect of *Iron Heroes* ties into the first three points above. With civilization so limited and the world at the dawn

of history, society has not yet had the chance to calcify into a rigid hierarchy. The characters are so powerful and noteworthy because they number among the first of their kind. There are no great emperors, no endless legions of warriors, and no conclaves of archmages to claim power over the land. The few self-styled kings or warlords are accomplished adventurers who, through force of arms or clever planning, seized power for their own.

Civilization is fragile. It exists in a few shards scattered across the world. In many areas, barbarism reigns supreme. Mankind is its own worst enemy, as the few pockets of civilization face assaults not only from terrible monsters and humanoid tribes, but from barbarians who would loot, pillage, and slay for their own short-term benefit. The small, stunted cities remain havens for tricksters, thieves, and beggars. Noble families scheme for power, resorting to murder, intimidation, and other low tactics to gain it. While barbarians and monsters assail humanity from without, corruption, greed, and arrogance tear it apart from within.

Onto this stage step the player characters. With their tremendous skill, talent, and ambition, they stand to leave their mark upon the world. Whether they will go down in history as heroes, villains, or something in between is up to you to decide.

GETTING STARTED

If you have played other games that use the same general Open Game License (OGL) mechanics as *Iron Heroes*, start with Chapter Three to get an understanding of the character classes and how they work. Then skim over Chapter Four: Skills and Ability Checks and Chapter Eight: Combat to brush up on the new rules. Finally, when you are ready to create a character, browse through Chapters One through Seven to get an idea of the possibilities available to you. Then come back to the "Creating Characters" section on the next page.

Don't worry about learning all the new rules at once. When you begin, focus on getting a feel for the tone of *Iron Heroes*. Don't think you have to memorize everything. Once you have made a character or two and perhaps tried a few mock combats, you should have a good feel for the changes.

THE BASICS

If you need a refresher on the basic rules available through the Open Game License, keep these important concepts and assumptions in mind as you read through *Iron Heroes*.

DICE NOTATION

The rules in this book use the following die notations:

d2 = a coin toss	d10 = ten-sided die
d4 = four-sided die	d12 = twelve-sided die
d6 = six-sided die	d20 = twenty-sided die
d8 = eight-sided die	d% = percentile dice

Die rolls are expressed in the following format:

[#] die type [+/– modifiers]

Example: 3d6 + 2 means "Roll three six-sided dice. Add the result of the three dice together. Then add 2."

ROUNDING FRACTIONS

In general, if you wind up with a fraction, round down, even if the fraction is one-half or larger.

Exceptions: When dividing to determine the mana cost for casting a spell (as described in Chapter Ten: Magic), always round up.

In addition, certain rolls, such as damage and hit points, have a minimum of 1, which may prevent you from rounding down.

MULTIPLYING

Sometimes a special rule makes you multiply a number or a die roll. As long as you're applying a single multiplier, multiply the number normally. When two or more multipliers apply, however, combine them into a single multiple, with each extra multiple adding 1 less than its value to the first multiple. Thus, a double (× 2) and a double (× 2) applied to the same number results in a triple (× 3, because 2 + 1 = 3).

BASIC TASK RESOLUTION SYSTEM

These rules assume a standardized system for determining the success or failure of any given task. That system is as follows:

d20 roll + any modifiers = result vs. a target number

The modifiers and target number are determined by the type of task. If the result of the d20 roll plus the modifiers equals or exceeds the target number, the task is successful. Any other result means a failure. For example, on a saving throw or a skill check, the target number is the Difficulty Class (DC).

A "natural 20" on the die roll is not an automatic success. A "natural 1" on the die roll is not an automatic failure. The only exception to this are attack rolls.

CREATING CHARACTERS

More than anything, this book is a guide to help you create fantasy characters. It also offers the rules you need to have these characters take on challenges, such as engaging in combat and casting spells.

When creating a player character, use a photocopy of the character sheet on page 250. Review Chapter Six: Roleplaying *Iron Heroes* while you follow these steps:

1. Come up with a concept. This is the most important step. Don't think in terms of game mechanics or stereotypes. Come up with your own idea for a character. Don't use easy hooks like "good" and "evil," but imagine a realistic personality and outlook. Think in terms of the character's background, his goals, and his likes and dislikes.

2. Figure ability scores. To assign ability scores to your character, start with a base number for each ability and spend points from a pool as described in the "Generating Ability Scores" section of Chapter One: Abilities. While you do this, flip ahead to Chapters Two and Three to be aware of how your ability scores will affect your traits and class. Use a pencil as you write your ability scores on your character sheet, so you can switch them around later if you need to. If you'd prefer not to calculate the ability scores yourself, select from the precalculated quick stats at the end of Chapter One or use

the 1st-level character starting packages for each class found in Chapter Three.

3. Choose your traits and class. This step often takes place after you roll the dice in Step 2 but before you assign the scores to abilities. However, do it the way it feels most natural. Every character starts with two traits (refer to Chapter Two) and one class (see Chapter Three). Make any necessary adjustments to your character's ability scores based on your selected traits.

After you choose, fill in the appropriate spaces on your character sheet with special trait and class abilities, your base attack and defense bonuses, and initiative modifier. Your saving throw modifiers each are equal to your experience level (+1 for now). If you've chosen to play an arcanist, jot down the schools you can access and their mastery ratings, as well as your mana limit, available mana, and the save Difficulty Class of your commonly used spell methods.

If your class grants you any token pools, note them where indicated on your character sheet.

4. Buy skills. Every class has a number of starting skill points you can use to buy skills for your character. Remember that spending points on skill groups allows you to gain ranks in all the skills in the group at the same time. Select your skills from those described in Chapter Four, adjusting them as

needed based on your chosen traits. Note your skills and ranks on your character sheet.

5. Choose feats. Every character starts out with two feats. You'll find feats described in Chapter Five. Choose general feats or mastery feats for which you have the required mastery rating, or one of each. Select only from the feat categories allowed by your class. Add your selections to your character sheet where indicated and note your mastery ratings.

If your feats grant you access to any token pools, list them on your character sheet where indicated.

6. Figure hit points. Each class has an associated Hit Die listed in Chapter Three. Assume that you rolled the highest number on the die, then add your Constitution modifier to the total. The result is your hit point total at 1st level. Note it on your character sheet, along with the same number of reserve points.

7. Buy equipment. Roll 5d4 and multiply the result by 10. That's your starting number of gold pieces to buy equipment. You'll want to make sure you get a weapon to complement your class and feats (or perhaps two—one for melee and one for ranged attacks), as well as some armor, as befits your class. See the equipment listed in Chapter Seven. Once you've listed your equipment on your character sheet, you can also determine your defense rating and carrying capacity. Note your remaining gp on your sheet under "Money."

8. Complete your character sheet. Now that you know your character's basic abilities and skills, and you have an idea of what he owns and what he can do, you can fill out the rest of your character sheet. Refer to the questionnaire in Chapter Six to work out aspects of your character's personality. Name your character, and jot down some details about his defining qualities, background, age, appearance, and personal goals.

GAINING LEVELS

You gain new levels by earning experience points (XP), as described in Chapter Three. When your character has earned enough experience points to advance a level, follow these steps:

1. Choose a class level. When you gain a level, the most common thing to do is to take the next higher level in your current class. However, you are free to take the first level in another class. Taking levels in two or more classes is called *multiclassing.* You can advance in as many classes as you wish, but you can only gain a level in one class at a time.

2. Apply changes to base attack and defense bonuses, base saving throw modifiers, and feat mastery ratings. Refer to the tables associated with the class in Chapter Three for your new base attack and defense bonuses and masteries. Your saving throw modifiers are equal to your total character level.

3. Record any new class abilities. Many classes gain special abilities when they acquire a new level. Arcanists should review their mana limit and mastery ratings for new schools of magic.

4. If the level is even numbered, choose a new feat. All characters get a new feat when they achieve a new even-numbered level. Some characters gain additional bonus feats based on their class. Remember, you can choose an expanded mastery level of a base feat you already possess or an entirely new feat.

5. If the level is 4th, 8th, 12th, 16th, or 20th, add a point to one ability score. At these levels, you can add 1 point to any ability score you choose. If the change alters your modifier, make sure you change all other relevant scores, such as skill bonuses, saving throw bonuses, attack bonuses, and so on.

6. Buy skills. Use your class' skill points to buy new ranks in skills and/or skill groups. Make sure not to exceed your maximum ranks as noted at the start of Chapter Three in any skill.

7. Roll for hit points. Each class has an associated Hit Die. Roll the die, add your Constitution modifier to the result, and add that result to your hit point and reserve point totals.

CHAPTER ONE:

ABILITIES

Ability scores are the foundation of your character's talents and capabilities. If you have played games compatible with the d20 System, you already have a clear idea of how abilities work in Iron Heroes. *This game uses the standard six ability scores and the standard method for determining an ability score's modifier. In addition, the six abilities cover the same areas, govern the same skills, and fill the same basic roles as in games you're already familiar with.*

The average score in an ability is 10. As a rule of thumb, 50 percent of humans have a score of 10 in a given score, 25 percent have lower scores, and 25 percent have higher ones. Player characters in *Iron Heroes* are a cut above the rest of the population, however. Most of them have one or two scores of 16 or above. Rules for generating ability scores for both player characters and normal folk appear at the end of this chapter (see page 17).

ABILITY MODIFIERS

After you make the necessary adjustments based on your character's traits (see Chapter Two: Traits), each ability has a modifier ranging from –5 to +5. The modifier applies to checks made with that ability, skill attempts related to that ability, and so forth. For example, to push a heavy rock up a hill, you need to make a successful Strength check. In this case, you would roll a d20 and add your Strength score's modifier to the result. If your total is greater than or equal to the Strength check's target number, or *Difficulty Class*, you succeed. If the total instead is below the Difficulty Class, you fail.

A positive modifier is called a *bonus*, and a negative modifier is called a *penalty*. This distinction is important, since in some cases you might be asked to ignore a bonus or a penalty that an ability score can provide. If an opponent catches you by surprise, for instance, you might lose your active bonus to defense. However, you would not ignore a Dexterity penalty to defense—the rules specifically cite your Dexterity *bonus* in this case (see "Surprise," Chapter Eight: Combat). A situation can cause you to lose the benefits an ability score provides, but it might not remove a penalty. The opposite situation, though rare, sometimes comes into play as well.

An ability score modifier equals your score –10, divided by 2, rounded down if the result is positive. If the result is negative, round it away from zero. The following table computes the modifiers for you:

Score	Modifier	Score	Modifier
1	–5	24–25	+7
2–3	–4	26–27	+8
4–5	–3	28–29	+9
6–7	–2	30–31	+10
8–9	–1	32–33	+11
10–11	0	34–35	+12
12–13	+1	36–37	+13
14–15	+2	38–39	+14
16–17	+3	40–41	+15
18–19	+4	42–43	+16
20–21	+5	44–45	+17
22–23	+6		

THE ABILITIES

Each of the six abilities describes your character and affects some of his or her actions. Think of the abilities as your character's foundation. Each character class (discussed in Chapter Three) favors different abilities. The berserker thrives with a

good Constitution score, while a high Dexterity score serves an archer well. None of the classes requires minimum ability scores, but in some cases, if your scores don't match a class' strengths, you might lose out on special abilities or have trouble making use of your character's talents.

STRENGTH (STR)

Strength measures your character's muscle and physical power. It modifies melee attacks and damage rolls. A character with a good Strength score has a natural talent for power weapons—bulky, punishing armaments such as greatswords, mauls, and axes. Strength also limits the amount of equipment your character can carry. The man-at-arms and the weapon master need good Strength scores to wield their weapons. A berserker with a high Strength is a fearsome foe indeed, as his massive, heavy weapons can cleave through armor and bone.

You apply your character's Strength modifier to these situations:

- Melee attack rolls.
- Grapple checks.
- Damage rolls when using a melee weapon or a thrown weapon (including a sling). For off-hand attacks, apply only half the character's Strength bonus, but for two-handed attacks, apply one and one-half times the Strength bonus. A Strength penalty (but not a bonus) applies to attacks made with any bow other than a composite bow. Remember, *Iron Heroes* makes a clear distinction between ability bonuses and penalties.
- Climb, Jump, and Swim checks. Strength is the key ability for this Athletics skill group. Skills that rely on raw athletic power rather than finesse or speed draw on Strength.

- Attempts to break down doors, push a rock off a wall, or win an arm-wrestling contest. Strength measures your raw physical power. Use this score to move a heavy object or overcome an opposing physical force.
- Stunts that demand raw power or that draw on Strength-based skills. Your character needs a good Strength score to jump over a wall and tackle a fleeing assassin, for example.

DEXTERITY (DEX)

Dexterity measures hand-eye coordination, agility, reflexes, and balance. Thieves, executioners, and harriers thrive on a good Dexterity score. They rely on speed to catch their opponents by surprise, and they favor light, fast weapons such as daggers and rapiers.

You apply your character's Dexterity modifier to these situations:

- Ranged attack rolls, including those for attacks made with bows, crossbows, throwing axes, and other ranged weapons.
- Defense, provided that the character can react to the attack. This benefit is an active bonus to defense. (Active bonuses are described in full detail in Chapter Eight: Combat.)
- Reflex saving throws, for avoiding explosive spells and other attacks that one can dodge.
- Balance, Escape Artist, Hide, Move Silently, Open Lock, Ride, Sleight of Hand, Tumble, and Use Rope checks. Dexterity is the key ability for the Agility and Stealth skill groups.
- Attempts to jump off a collapsing tower before it crashes to the ground, leap onto a speeding wagon, or slide under a gate before it shuts.

- Many stunts rely on Dexterity, particularly those that demand agility, speed, and timing. If you want to roll between a cave giant's legs and slash at its hamstrings, you had better have a good Dexterity.

CONSTITUTION (CON)

Constitution represents your character's health and stamina. A Constitution bonus increases a character's hit points—a measurement of his or her physical condition—so this ability is important for all classes. In particular, armigers need a good Constitution score to make the most of their defensive abilities. They excel at wearing down an opponent's endurance slowly. The toughest armigers can hang in a battle longer than normal.

If a character's Constitution score changes enough to alter his or her modifier, the hit points also increase or decrease accordingly. Apply any changes immediately. For example, say a monster with 10 HD has 8 hit points remaining after a hunter strikes it with a poisoned arrow. The creature suffers 2 points of temporary Constitution damage from the poison, reducing its bonus by 1 point. Its maximum and current hit points both drop by 10 points to reflect the change in its modifier. The monster falls, its hit points reduced to −2.

You apply your character's Constitution modifier to these situations:
- Each roll of a Hit Die, though a penalty can never drop a result below 1. You always gain at least 1 hit point each time you advance in experience level.
- Fortitude saving throws to resist poisons, diseases, and similar threats that your body's natural defenses or your sheer toughness can overcome.
- Concentration checks. Constitution is the key ability for Concentration, an important skill to spellcasters and warriors who rely on mental focus.
- Attempts at such actions as marching across a desert with a heavy pack, thrusting one's hand into a pot of boiling water to recover a dropped key, or winning a long-distance foot race.
- Stunts that push your physical endurance to its limit. If you want to run through a burning building to attack the mad wizard within, you must attempt a stunt that uses Constitution.

INTELLIGENCE (INT)

Intelligence determines how well your character learns and reasons. This ability is important for arcanists, as it helps them master a variety of lore. Hunters and executioners also benefit from a good Intelligence score, since some of the special abilities they can select depend on study, training, and memorization. A hunter who wants to dabble in poisons needs a sharp mind to mix venoms properly. Intelligence is also important for any character who wants a wide assortment of skills (see Chapter Four).

An animal has an Intelligence score of 1 or 2. A creature of humanlike intelligence has a score of at least 3.

You apply your character's Intelligence modifier to these situations:
- The number of languages you know at the start of the game.
- The number of skill points gained at each experience level, though you always get at least 1 skill point per level. If your Intelligence score changes, you do not retroactively gain skill points. You only gain bonus skill points for levels that you subsequently gain. The reverse is also true; if your Intelligence drops, you do not lose ranks that you already gained.

- Appraise, Craft, Decipher Script, Disable Device, Forgery, Knowledge, Search, and Spellcraft checks. Intelligence is a key ability for the Academia skill group.
- Attempts to remember a password, memorize a poem, or defeat an opponent in a game of chess.
- Stunts that require a clever mind or good planning. A fiendish sorcerer's lab is a playground or a battlefield for a character with a high Intelligence. You can use stunts to improvise explosive alchemical mixtures or pick out just the right vial of chemicals to hurt a demon.

Wisdom (Wis)

Wisdom describes a character's willpower, common sense, perception, and intuition. While Intelligence represents one's ability to analyze information, Wisdom reflects how well one is in tune with one's surroundings. The weapon master benefits from a good Wisdom, as does any character who uses a fighting style that seeks out and exploits an opponent's weaknesses. A high Wisdom makes it easier to notice that a foe favors on side over the other, or that a villain uses a predictable series of cuts and parries. If you want your character to have acute senses, put a high score in Wisdom.

You apply your character's Wisdom modifier to these situations:

- Will saving throws to resist mental attacks and other abilities that pose a psychic threat. Will saves allow a character to overcome illusions, a hypnotic sorcerer's attempt to beguile, and so forth. It also helps a character fight on in the face of a daunting, fearsome enemy. In general, it measures one's mental toughness.
- Heal, Listen, Profession, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks. Wisdom is a key ability for the

Perception skill group—these skills all rely on your awareness of the environment and perception.
- Attempts to realize that your friend has been replaced with a simulacrum or to pick up the proper terms of address in a foreign court.
- Stunts that draw on perception, intuition, or mental toughness. A good Wisdom score would help you fire an arrow into a creature's maw just as it opens its mouth to roar.

Charisma (Cha)

Charisma measures a character's force of personality, persuasiveness, magnetism, leadership, and physical attractiveness. This ability represents actual strength of personality, not merely how others perceive you in a social setting. Charisma is most important for thieves, as they favor trickery and use ruses to throw off an opponent's defenses. It also matters to arcanists, who can use their fearsome talismans to intimidate others. Every creature has a Charisma score.

You apply your character's Charisma modifier to these situations:

- Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Gather Information, Handle Animal, Intimidate, Perform, and Use Magic Device checks. Charisma is the key ability for the Social skill group.
- Checks to influence others. If you want to convince the queen that her minister schemes against her, you may need to attempt a Charisma check.
- Attempts to entertain a crowd, capture an amorous merchant's attention, or lie convincingly.
- Stunts that draw on the force of your personality. A hulking berserker might use Charisma to loose a terrible roar that causes his skittering mutant foes to flee in terror.

GENERATING ABILITY SCORES

Characters in the world of *Iron Heroes* are heroic figures. They are stronger, tougher, and faster than normal people. They may develop these talents through hard work, a demanding life, or natural ability. In any case, player characters have higher than normal ability scores.

You start with a core of 10 in all six ability scores. You have a pool of additional points that you may spend to improve your scores. Each point you spend increases a single ability by 1 point until that score reaches 15. For each point above 15, it costs 2 points to improve an ability. For each point above 17, it costs 4 points to improve an ability by 1.

In addition, you can pick one of your scores as a weakness. In such a case, you drop that score to 8 and cannot spend points to improve it at this time. In return, you gain 2 bonus points to spend on your abilities.

Player characters start with 24 points to spend on their ability scores. You cannot purchase a score higher than 18 in this way. Of course, your DM may change these values to reflect the campaign's particular tone and focus. Tougher campaigns have lower point values, while heroic ones offer more points to spend and allow one to purchase scores above 18. Villains, important enemies, and other foes that characters might face also have 24 points to spend.

The average person (not a PC or villain) starts with an 8 in each ability score and may spend 16 points to improve them. Thugs, soldiers, and other common warriors that one might meet usually generate their ability scores in this manner.

Quick Stats

If you don't want to go to the trouble of spending points to create your character, you can use the following standard point distribution. Simply assign the following scores to your abilities as normal. In addition, each character class in Chapter Three has a fully generated 1st-level sample character that includes ability scores.

Standard Ability Scores: 16, 16, 14, 14, 12, 10

The standard spread above gives a character a balanced set of abilities and talents. It allows one to excel in several areas.

What follows are several different variations you can choose from when constructing your character.

Focused Character Scores: 18, 16, 14, 12, 10, 8

The focused spread above gives you one very good ability score, one poor one, and one average score. If you want a character who focuses on a single talent or ability, this is a good spread of scores.

Jack of All Trades: 14, 14, 14, 14, 14, 14

The jack-of-all-trades spread of abilities has no weaknesses, though it lacks any particular advantages. If you want a character who performs above average in a broad range of areas, this is a good choice.

ABILITY SCORE BONUSES AND DAMAGE

During the game, one's ability scores may undergo temporary or permanent changes. As a character gains levels, she earns a bonus to ability scores. A sorcerer might curse a character to rob her of Strength until she fulfills a certain task. A monstrous spider's venom saps one's health, reducing one's Constitution score until after rest and recovery.

In most cases, when an ability score changes, you update your character's modifier based on the new value. If the Dexterity score goes down, the defense bonus drops or becomes a penalty. Apply such changes immediately. If a monster's first attack targets a character's Dexterity, the reduced defense applies to its next attack. Note that you do not alter the character's total number of skill ranks due to a change in Intelligence score. The new Intelligence modifier affects one's skill checks and the ranks one gains at later levels. Ignore temporary Intelligence score damage when determining how many skill ranks a character gains at a new level.

If one's ability score—other than Constitution—drops to 0, the character is in dire peril. She becomes immediately incapacitated, unable to take actions. Any additional ability score damage reduces one's Constitution score. If the character's Constitution drops to 0 or lower, she immediately dies.

Temporary damage to ability scores heals at a rate of 1 point per ability per day. Permanent ability score drain does not heal naturally. Instead, drained characters must find a skilled healer to tend them back to health.

CHAPTER TWO:

TRAITS

In the face of a terrible foe, a dauntless warrior battles on even as his allies flee in terror. A clever thief, born and raised in the great cities of man, knows exactly where to go to find the right informant. A towering berserker uses his long, powerful arms to cut down opponents before they can reach him. All of these adventurers take advantage of talents they were born with or abilities they developed early in life as core parts of their personalities. Regardless of the career they choose—adventurer, baker, or laborer— these characteristics define them.

S uch personality and background characteristics are called *traits*. Traits allow you to define your character in terms of background, personality, and physical facets. In terms of game mechanics, traits function in a manner similar to racial skills: They grant you a special ability or a bonus in specific situations. In the case of traits, these bonuses and abilities tie into the characteristics they describe.

Traits cover your character's important personal talents that, in most cases, will stand no matter which class you choose. They describe notable physical, emotional, and mental aspects of a character. You can also select traits that reflect your character's origin.

SELECTING TRAITS

Every character starts with two traits. There are a few limits on how you can select your traits, based on the three trait categories. (See the table, above right.)

Background traits relate to your character's history and origin. They cover different climates, terrain, and social posi-

tions. You can select no more than one background trait, and you do not have to take one if you don't want to.

Mental traits describe a character's emotional and intellectual talents. Precise memory, bravery, or an iron will all fall into this category. You can use from zero to two of your trait selections on this category.

Physical traits cover a character's natural talents. They apply to exceptional height, inherently superior strength or endurance, and so forth. You don't have to select any physical traits, or you can use both your trait selections on them if you wish.

Trait Type	Maximum Allowed
Background	1
Mental	2
Physical	2

Once you select your traits, you cannot change them. You cannot take additional traits later on, as these abilities define characteristics that you developed over the course of many years or as part of your childhood or adolescence.

The sections that follow offer more discussion of the three trait categories. Descriptions of each trait appear alphabetically in a general listing starting on page 19.

TRAIT CATEGORIES

See the Traits by Category table on the next page for a look at the traits available in *Iron Heroes*. All traits are extraordinary abilities, unless otherwise noted.

BACKGROUND TRAITS

As discussed earlier, you cannot select more than one background trait. These traits each cover one climate, terrain, social environment, or similar type of origin. Your DM may disallow certain background traits depending on the campaign world. For example, on a world covered with searing hot deserts, you probably shouldn't play a character who grew up in a frigid arctic environment.

TRAITS BY CATEGORY

Name	Category	Description
Arctic Born	Background	You hail from a land of endless ice and snow.
Artisan	Background	You trained in a craft before becoming an adventurer.
Child of Faith	Background	You were raised in a strict, religious environment.
City Rat	Background	You grew up in the slums of a great city.
Desert Born	Background	Your homeland is a searing hot desert.
Forest Born	Background	You grew up among the trees of a great forest.
High Born	Background	You are of noble blood, though you lack an official title.
Jungle Born	Background	You grew up in a tropical jungle.
Mountain Folk	Background	The great mountains are your native home.
Nomad	Background	Your people are great horsemen and wanderers.
Sea Child	Background	You grew up on the shores of the sea.
Shadow Born	Background	Your parents have a sinister reputation for arcane doings.
Bewitching	Mental	You can bend others to your will for a short time.
Bloodthirsty	Mental	When you slay a foe, you gain +1 bonus to damage and a +2 bonus to Will saving throws.
Brave	Mental	You are immune to fear.
Charismatic*	Mental	You gain a +2 bonus to Charisma.
Eidetic Memory	Mental	You have perfect, photographic recall of events.
Faithful Friend	Mental	You gain a +1 bonus to attacks, checks, and saves, when a friend is in danger.
Inspiring Presence	Mental	You grant a bonus to attacks or checks equal to your Charisma bonus.
Intelligent*	Mental	You gain a +2 bonus to Intelligence.
Master of Lore	Mental	You may use your Intelligence bonus as ranks in untrained Knowledge topics.
Perceptive	Mental	You have a good sense for noticing disguises and hidden items.
Weapon Bond	Mental	You gain proficiency with a certain weapon and may use an alternate key ability with it.
Wise*	Mental	You gain a +2 bonus to Wisdom.
World Traveler	Mental	You enjoy a +2 bonus to Diplomacy checks and two bonus languages.
Dexterous*	Physical	You gain a +2 bonus to Dexterity.
Lithe Acrobat	Physical	You can Tumble at your normal speed without penalty.
Mighty Build	Physical	You can use Large weapons.
Nondescript	Physical	You can use Hide to escape notice in social situations.
Resilient Toughness	Physical	You heal from your reserve pool as a full-round action.
Savage Appearance	Physical	You may draw attacks from allies and can cause a Spot penalty.
Short	Physical	You are size Small.
Stout	Physical	You gain a +1 natural bonus to defense.
Strong*	Physical	Your powerful build grants you a +2 bonus to Strength.
Tall	Physical	Your great height grants you improved reach in combat.
Tough as Iron*	Physical	You gain a +2 bonus to Constitution.

* These traits come with a drawback. See the trait descriptions.

MENTAL TRAITS

Mental traits focus primarily on aspects of a character's personality, but they also include intellectual talents such as eidetic memory. Such talents are born rather than made, making them suitable options only for 1st-level characters.

PHYSICAL TRAITS

The physical traits focus on notable qualities that define a character and dictate how others view him. Thus, these traits tend toward extreme, exaggerated characteristics rather than subtle ones.

TRAIT DESCRIPTIONS

The mechanics and detailed descriptions for all three types of character traits appear below in alphabetical order. Each of the three dozen descriptions includes the trait's name, category, a basic overview of what it provides a character, its mechanics, and any applicable options.

ARCTIC BORN [BACKGROUND]

You were born to the ice and snow of the arctic. The bitterest cold has little effect on you, and you excel at traveling in areas similar to your homeland.

Mechanics: You gain a +4 bonus on all saves against cold effects. You treat heavy snow as normal terrain rather than difficult terrain. You gain a +2 bonus on Survival checks and can use that skill trained, even if you lack ranks in it, while traveling through snowy areas.

In addition, select one of the following trait abilities:

Bear's Toughness: You can heal nonlethal damage with your reserve pool as a full-round action even during combat. You can spend a number of reserve points equal to your Constitution score in this manner per day. Points spent using this special ability heal nonlethal damage as normal, but they do not heal regular damage.

Ice Water Veins: You remain stoic even in the face of danger. After surviving howling blizzards and spending months at a time inside your clan home, you have developed mental toughness. You enjoy a +2 bonus on saves against mind-affecting effects.

Wanderer at the Edge of Creation: Your curiosity always drove you to penetrate farther and farther into the arctic wastes. You gain a +2 bonus on all Balance, Climb, and Survival checks to reflect your experience.

ARTISAN [BACKGROUND]

You trained as a blacksmith, a cobbler, or in some similar craft before becoming an adventurer. Perhaps you never intended to have this life, but circumstances placed a sword in your hand and granted you the enduring drive to make a name for yourself with it.

Mechanics: You gain 4 ranks in Craft at 1st-level and 1 bonus rank to spend upon it at each subsequent level. You can purchase goods that you can make with your Craft skill at a 10 percent discount, as you know enough about your trade to find bargains on quality goods.

In addition, select one of the following trait abilities:

Clever Worker: Your long apprenticeship and many hours at work have taught you efficiency. When you take 20 on a skill check, you use half the normal time. You can use this ability on any skill check where you are able to take 20.

Materials Expert: You have a keen eye for spotting flaws in objects. When you damage an inanimate object, you inflict 1.5 times your Strength bonus in damage with a one-handed weapon, or twice your Strength bonus in damage with a two-handed one.

Merchant's Eye: You have an almost uncanny ability to spot valuable items. You gain a +2 bonus to Appraise checks and can sell items at 10 percent more than their normal price.

BEWITCHING [MENTAL]

You have an uncanny ability to manipulate others, perhaps due to an alluring physical trait. Your eyes may be a strange color that captivates men and women, or you simply have a talent for twisting others around your finger.

Mechanics: When dealing with NPCs whose starting attitude toward you is not hostile, you can choose to use this ability to temporarily improve their attitude toward you by a greater degree than normal.

When making your diplomacy check, treat the NPCs starting attitude as one level higher than it actually is for the purpose of determining their new attitude. That is, you would treat an unfriendly individual's starting attitude as indifferent, or an indifferent individual's starting attitude as friendly.

If you choose this option, the NPC's new attitude lasts only for a number of minutes equal to your Charisma score. After that time, it returns to the state it held before you made your Diplomacy check. If circumstances in the interim have rendered the NPC violent or hostile, such as if you attacked him, he remains there rather than returning to his original state.

You do not have to use this trait when dealing with an NPC. You can choose to make a normal Diplomacy check instead, in which case the NPC's change in attitude is more lasting, at the cost of a higher DC to achieve the change.

Bloodthirsty [Mental]

The sight of blood stirs you to a minor frenzy. Perhaps you were exposed to violence at a young age, or you may simply like inflicting pain on foes.

Mechanics: If you deliver an attack that immediately causes an opponent to die by dropping to –10 hit points or lower and failing her Fortitude save, you gain several benefits. You gain a +1 morale bonus to damage and a +2 morale bonus on Will saves. These benefits last until the end of combat.

Note that you must deliver a blow that slays a conscious, active opponent. You cannot *coup de grace* or kill a helpless foe to gain this benefit.

Brave [Mental]

You have always stood and fought when others have turned and run away. Whether it is because of an insane sense of invulnerability, religious faith, or a relentless desire to win, you never give up.

Mechanics: You are immune to fear effects.

Charismatic [Mental]

Through a combination of good looks and a powerful personality, you excel at winning the hearts and minds of others. However, your sense of intuition suffers as a result.

Mechanics: You gain a +2 bonus to Charisma and a –2 penalty to Wisdom. While you can manipulate others, you tend toward self-absorption.

Special: If you spend both of your trait selections on this trait, you gain the +2 Charisma bonus but ignore the associated Wisdom penalty.

Child of Faith [Background]

You were raised in strict observation of religious tenets. You might even be a priest of the faith, though you are an adventurer now.

Mechanics: As long as you have a holy symbol of your religion on your person, you are filled with resolution and faith that your god watches over you. You gain a +2 bonus against all fear effects and, once per day, may opt to gain a +2 bonus on a single d20 roll of your choice. In addition, you enjoy one of the following trait abilities:

Fanatic: You fight in the name of your god, and your faith drives you forward against the enemy. Once per day, you gain a +4 bonus to damage on a single attack as you strike with strength fired by your faith.

Inquisitor: You gain a +2 bonus to all Sense Motive checks. As part of your religious training, you learned how to detect heresy among the faithful.

Ordination: You are ordained as a priest of the faith, though your rank is just above that of a lay person. When dealing with others of your faith, they must obey your orders within reason. They do not fight for you unless the need is dire, and they do not sacrifice themselves. You can expect them to treat you as a valued friend, such as by offering information, giving you a place to stay, feeding you for at least a few days, and so forth. A title may come with this position. Consult with your DM for information on religions in the campaign.

City Rat [Background]

You grew up on the tough streets of a city. From a young age, you learned to scavenge and survive at the shadowy edge of the cradle of civilization.

Mechanics: You can make Survival checks in the city with a +2 bonus, even if you lack any ranks in that skill. You can use Survival to track down any specific dealers and informants. When searching for a specific item, you can make a Survival check (DC equal to the cost of the item you seek divided by 50 gp) to uncover a dealer who offers it.

In addition, select one of the following trait abilities:

Bravo: You are an experienced street fighter. You gain the ability to sneak attack for 1d6 points of damage. If you already have sneak attack, increase its damage by 1d6 points. See the executioner or thief class in Chapter Three for an explanation of sneak attack.

Burglar: You gain a +2 bonus to Hide and Move Silently. In your younger days, you relied on theft to keep yourself fed.

Face in the Crowd: You know the value of blending into the crowd to escape notice. While in a large group, you can make a Disguise check as a standard action rather than spending long minutes preparing your disguise. You cannot use this benefit if the crowd is hostile or if you do not share the same basic dress or ethnicity.

Desert Born [Background]

While others see the endless dunes of the desert as a daunting obstacle, to you they are home. Intense heat has little effect on you.

Mechanics: You enjoy a +2 bonus on all saves against fire effects. You treat Survival as a trained skill while in the desert and gain a +4 bonus to all Survival checks made in that environment. You can survive on half the standard amount of food and water; if you carry a three-day supply of food and water, for instance, it lasts you six days.

In addition, select one of the following trait abilities:

Dunestalker: You can run across the shifting sand dunes with ease, while others might slip or stumble in the sand. You gain a +2 bonus to all Balance and Tumble checks.

Camel's Tenacity: The desert is a deadly environment, and several times you have survived dust storms and long periods without water through sheer willpower. Each round your hit points are 0 or fewer, you can attempt a Fortitude save (DC 15 + your negative hit point total). If this save succeeds, you can take a standard action that round, and you do not fall unconscious.

You continue to lose one hit point each round while your hit points are below 0. Additionally, you automatically fall unconscious at −10 hit points and may die as normal thereafter.

Dexterous [Physical]

You are quick and agile, though your body might be thinner than normal or otherwise prone to injury.

Mechanics: You gain a +2 bonus to Dexterity and a −2 penalty to Constitution. While you are lithe and flexible, your bones are somewhat brittle and susceptible to injury.

Special: If you spend both of your trait selections on this trait, you gain the +2 Dexterity bonus but ignore its associated Constitution penalty.

Eidetic Memory [Mental]

You have perfect recall, allowing you to remember minor details from an event that others have long forgotten.

Mechanics: You enjoy a +1 bonus to all Knowledge checks. You gain a +2 bonus on Spot checks to detect a disguise. If you have any questions about an event, such as a person's name or exactly what happened, your DM must tell you the details even if you, as a player, have forgotten them. You cannot remember extremely fine details, such as the text of a book left open on a desk, but you can remember the general gist of the book or the topic the passage covered. You always remember faces, names, and the basic sequence of events.

FAITHFUL FRIEND [MENTAL]

You are true to your friends to the bitter end. When they need your help the most, you are at your best.

Mechanics: You may designate up to six people as close friends. These individuals do not have to be player characters. When one of your friends is rendered helpless in any way, you gain an immediate +1 morale bonus to attacks, checks, and saves until he is safe. A friend is safe if he no longer remains helpless or if he is somehow removed from danger. You gain this benefit until the end of the encounter.

You can change your faithful friends over time. Once you remove someone from this list, you must wait 24 hours before adding a new person. You can drop one person from your list of friends per day.

FOREST BORN [BACKGROUND]

You grew up among the towering trees of the forest, where you are at your best. Perhaps you feel uncomfortable in a situation where you can see the horizon.

Mechanics: You gain a +2 bonus to all Survival checks in forested areas and may use Survival untrained in such regions. In addition, select one of the following trait abilities:

Ghost in the Green: You can step into a forested area and effectively disappear in the blink of an eye. Your talent for finding cover in foliage is born of years spent in the woods. You can take 10 on Hide checks in the forest at any time, even during combat or other stressful situations.

Tree Runner: From a young age, you have spent as much time climbing trees as wandering the forest floor. You gain a +4 bonus on all Climb checks and retain your active bonus to defense while climbing.

HIGH BORN [BACKGROUND]

You were born into the nobility and enjoyed a life of simple leisure. However, for some reason you have been denied the true fruits of your birthright. Perhaps you were the second or third born and thus have no claim to an inheritance, or maybe your realm was overrun by invaders. Despite this setback, you still enjoy many of the advantages of your station.

Mechanics: You gain a +2 bonus on all Diplomacy checks when dealing with nobles and officials. Your bearing shines through in formal circumstances. You also start with double the normal amount of gold to purchase equipment (see Chapter Seven). In addition, select one of the following trait abilities:

Title: You bear an official title in a nation or domain chosen by the DM. While in this land, you can access the upper levels of the nobility or government. You might not gain an audience with the king, but you can speak with an official or minor noble, if you wish.

Well Educated: You studied a wide range of topics in your youth. You gain 4 bonus skill ranks at 1st level and 1 bonus rank at each subsequent level. These ranks are in addition to the normal ranks you gain. Add them to your total ranks after accounting for your Intelligence bonus or penalty, not before.

INSPIRING PRESENCE [MENTAL]

You possess an innate ability to bring out the best work in others. With a few words of encouragement from you or your determined effort to lead the way, your allies perform much better than normal for a brief time.

Mechanics: As a standard action usable three times per day, you can grant an ally a morale bonus equal to your Charisma bonus. This bonus applies to one single attack or skill check of your choice. When you activate this ability, you must choose a target. Until your next turn, you can opt to grant the bonus to a single d20 roll the target attempts. You must choose to apply the bonus before the roll.

The target of this trait must be able to see, hear, and understand you in order for it to take effect.

INTELLIGENT [MENTAL]

You have a keen, well-honed mind, but your physical fitness has suffered from your bookish obsession with learning.

Mechanics: You gain a +2 bonus to Intelligence and suffer a −2 penalty to Strength. While your mind is powerful, your body's might lags behind.

Special: If you spend both of your trait selections on this trait, you gain the +2 Intelligence bonus but ignore its associated Strength penalty.

JUNGLE BORN [BACKGROUND]

Born and bred in the tropics, you wander the dense rain forests and jungles with the same ease that civilized folk stroll down a street.

Mechanics: You gain a +2 bonus to Survival checks and may use that skill trained in jungle and rain forest terrain. Heat and humidity have little effect on you. You gain a +2 bonus to Fortitude saves made to resist high temperature conditions. In addition, you may choose one of the following trait abilities:

Ape's Agility: While climbing, you can fight without penalty or retain the benefits of a shield you carry. You have learned to fight and defend yourself while perched in a tree.

Emerald Sentinel: If you have time to prepare an ambush site, you can create face paint and arrange the area to better hide your companions. If you spend 10 minutes preparing an ally, he uses your Hide bonus until he moves.

Friend of Snake and Spider: You gain a +2 bonus on all saves against poisons. Many creatures of your homeland have venomous bites, and you have built up a stronger than normal resistance to them.

LITHE ACROBAT [PHYSICAL]

You are graceful, flexible, and acrobatic. You move with excellent coordination and complete difficult acrobatic maneuvers with relative ease.

Mechanics: You gain a +2 bonus to all Tumble checks. In addition, you can use Tumble to move at your normal speed without penalty.

MASTER OF LORE [MENTAL]

You have spent years studying a variety of topics, granting you a broad though not necessarily deep education.

Mechanics: You may make Knowledge skill checks on topics that you do not have currently have access to as if you had ranks in that type of Knowledge equal to your Intelligence bonus. For instance, if you had an Intelligence 18 (a bonus of +4) and 2 ranks in Knowledge, you attempt Knowledge skill checks by applying your Intelligence modifier of +4 instead of your 2 Knowledge ranks to the d20 roll + key ability bonus (Intelligence) as normal.

If your Intelligence bonus is zero or less, you gain no benefits from this trait.

Should you fail a Knowledge check, you can try again after eight hours of rest. As you relax, you might gain an insight into a half-forgotten lesson or an ancient text you once inspected.

MIGHTY BUILD [PHYSICAL]

Your solid, broad build allows you to use tools and weapons that others would find unwieldy. While an enormous sword might pull someone else off balance, you have the steady feet and powerful arms needed to use it properly.

Mechanics: You can wield weapons up to one size category larger than normal for you without penalty. You still suffer the normal penalties for weapons above that size and for smaller ones. For example, if you are Medium, you can use a Large weapon without penalty. However, you suffer the full penalties for a Medium creature using a Huge weapon; you do not act as a Large creature using a Huge weapon.

The benefits of this ability do not extend to shields. You cannot shield bash with larger shields than normal.

MOUNTAIN FOLK [BACKGROUND]

You hail from the towering mountains. Traversing the steep slopes, jagged cliffs, and perilous trails of the peaks seems no more daunting to you than a simple walk through a cleared green field.

Mechanics: You gain a +2 bonus to all Survival checks made in the mountains. In addition, you are steady on your feet from long hours spent walking along narrow paths. You gain a +2 bonus to any check or saving throw you make to keep yourself from being knocked prone.

You may select one of the following trait abilities as well:

Mountaineer's Luck: If you should fall from any height, you immediately may make a Reflex save (DC 10) to grab hold of a ledge or similar outcropping (assuming such is available). Success means you stop falling and suffer no damage. You dangle in the air and lose your active bonus to defense until your next action.

Rock Hurler: You can throw rocks with unerring accuracy. You are proficient with them and treat them as thrown, two-handed, simple weapons with a 10-foot range increment. The stones inflict damage based on their size. Your DM judges the stone's size by comparing it to other weapons. Normally, a Medium stone is large enough that a human must hoist it in two hands.

Picking up a stone to throw it is a move action.

Stone Size	Thrown Stone Damage
Tiny	1d2
Small	1d4
Medium	1d6
Large	2d6
Huge	3d6
Gargantuan	4d6
Colossal	6d6

Tough as Stone: The mountains have bred toughness and tenacity into you. You gain +3 hit points at 1st level and +1 hit point at each subsequent level.

NOMAD [BACKGROUND]

Your people wandered the steppes on horseback, going where they pleased and robbing, herding, and conquering as they saw fit. You were born into the saddle.

Mechanics: You gain a +2 bonus to all Ride checks, as you have spent more time on horseback than on your own feet since you were born. In addition, select one of the following trait abilities:

Cavalry Warrior: You learned to fight in the saddle from an early age. Given enough time to form a bond with your horse, you fight with deadly efficiency. If you spend more than two days with a normal horse, it counts as a warhorse while you ride it. You gain a +1 bonus to attacks when fighting from horseback with a horse that you have ridden into combat for at least one week and two battles.

Horsemaster: Under your care, a horse becomes stronger, faster, and tougher than normal. Through a combination of exercise and training, you grant any horse that you own for more than a week a +2 bonus to Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution. This bonus fades if the horse leaves your possession for more than a week. Only one horse can gain these benefits at a time.

NONDESCRIPT [PHYSICAL]

You have a face that seems to blend into crowds. You lack any noteworthy features or characteristics that would make you easy to identify. If you wish, you can remain nearly anonymous.

Mechanics: During any noncombat situation, you can make a Hide check modified by your Charisma rather than Dexterity to fade into the background. Make a Hide check, while everyone present attempts a Spot check to oppose it. Those who succeed note your presence and act accordingly.

Those who fail simply do not notice you. They are too absorbed in other things. Unless you take some noteworthy action or someone seeks you out, those nearby fail to note your presence unless they must physically interact with you. Should you move within 5 feet of someone, your presence immediately becomes apparent, unless you remain physically hidden or out of sight.

Otherwise, people in the area act as if you are not there. They might speak freely about secret topics or fail to notice as you draw a dagger and move to attack. Anyone in the area who specifically wants privacy may make a Spot check each round to notice you as a free action. For each consecutive round a character attempts the check, she gains a cumulative +2 bonus. On the first round, the bonus is +0; on the second round it is +2; third round +4; and so forth.

You do not gain the benefits of this trait if anyone actively seeks you out or is on watch for intruders. For example, you could not use this ability to walk past a pair of guards. You could use it to blend into a crowd at a tavern and spy on someone, however.

PERCEPTIVE [MENTAL]

You possess an uncanny ability to notice tiny details that others would miss, even if you do not actively seek them out.

Mechanics: The DM makes Spot, Search, and Sense Motive checks for you in secret whenever such a check would reveal a falsehood or hidden object or person. If the check succeeds, you learn that something is amiss. You must make another normal check yourself to determine the exact nature of the deception; the first check gives you only its general location or nature.

For example, if a woman in a disguise walked past you, you might notice that something is amiss about her dress or appearance.

Resilient Toughness [Physical]

You can overcome pain and injuries that would leave others in battered, defeated heaps. You have an almost superhuman capacity to fight through pain and ignore wounds.

Mechanics: As a full-round action, you can spend a number of points from a reserve pool up to to your Constitution score to heal yourself. You can use this ability as many times per day as you want, but the total points you transfer cannot exceed your Constitution score.

Special: If you possess the Diehard feat, you may activate Resilient Toughness while disabled as a standard action.

Savage Appearance [Physical]

You wear war paint, have a bizarre haircut (such as a mohawk), are covered in elaborate tattoos, or carry a gruesome war banner. In any case, your appearance promises bloodletting on the battlefield. Consciously or not, your opponents pay more attention to you in a fight than to your allies.

Mechanics: During combat, any opponents who can see you suffer a −2 penalty to Spot checks as they find their gazes invariably drawn to your strange appearance. This opening may allow your allies to sneak into position. If an opponent threatens you and one or more of your allies, you may attempt to force the foe to attack you as a free action. The foe must make a Wisdom check opposed by your Charisma check. If you successfully oppose the check and he chooses to attack your allies, he must attack you at least once during the attack. You may use this trait ability once per round.

Special: Note that, in the case of the berserker class, absorbing attacks is an excellent way to build up fury tokens (see Chapter Three: Character Classes).

Sea Child [Background]

The sea is your home, whether you grew up on the coast or have spent more time aboard ship than on dry land.

Mechanics: You ignore any penalties to fighting aboard ship due to heavy seas or swaying decks. You gain a +2 bonus to all Balance checks.

In addition, you may select one of the following trait abilities:

Dolphin's Agility: An expert swimmer, you can slip through the water with unmatched agility. When you attempt a Swim check, roll two d20s and take the higher of the two die results.

Fisherman: When you were younger, you cast a net to haul in fish for dinner or to sell at market. Now, you use a net to entangle your enemies. You gain Exotic Weapon Proficiency (net) as a bonus feat.

Marine: You know the seas are dangerous to any who travel them. From sea serpents to pirates, danger always lurks over the horizon. You gain a +1 bonus to attacks with scimitars, crossbows, and clubs.

Shadow Born [Background]

Your forebears were noted for their mysterious dealings, sinister reputation, and aptitude for magic. From a young age, you displayed strange talents that, it is whispered, derived from a diabolical pact between your parents and an otherworldly being.

Mechanics: You gain a +2 bonus on all Knowledge checks with the arcana field of study and Spellcraft checks due to your arcane upbringing. In addition, your blood is tainted with demonic influence—one of your ancestors was from beyond the veil of reality. Select one of the following trait abilities:

Arcane Nature: You gain a +2 bonus to your mana limit each day, allowing you to gather more energy without penalty. (See Chapter Ten: Magic.)

Infernal Glower: You exert a strange influence over others, as your unusual ancestry shines through when you are angry or upset. Your eyes may glow for a brief moment, or the scent of brimstone briefly wafts through the room. The phenomenon grants you a +4 bonus to Intimidate checks.

Precognition: You enjoy the peculiar ability to catch brief glimpses of the future. Once per day, you can ask a question about the results of an action that you might take. There is a percentage chance equal to 60 + your Charisma score that you receive a brief insight about this action's result. Your DM informs you if the action will yield a result that is good, ill, or both good and ill.

Short [Physical]

You are much smaller than normal—so much so that you count as one size category smaller than other humans.

Mechanics: You are size Small if you ordinarily would be size Medium, Medium if you would be Large, and so forth. As a Small creature, you gain a +1 size bonus to passive defense, a +1 size bonus to attacks, and a +4 size bonus to Hide checks. You suffer your choice of either a -2 square (-10 foot) penalty to your base speed or a -2 penalty to Strength. You must make this choice immediately and cannot subsequently change it. You also must wield weapons one size smaller than normal.

Special: The short trait cancels the benefits of the tall trait, if you select both of them. Note that the strong trait effectively trades in the Strength penalty above for a −2 modifier to Intelligence and one other ability score.

Stout [Physical]

You are stocky, compact, or even overweight. Your body might be bulkier than normal, but the added mass is muscle and thick bones, not just flab. You resist damage better than others do.

Mechanics: You gain a +1 natural bonus to defense. If you already have natural armor, its bonus improves by 1 point.

Strong [Physical]

Your bulging, powerful muscles allow you to push aside material obstacles with ease. But this physical mastery comes at the cost of mental acuity.

Game Mechanics: You gain a +2 bonus to Strength but suffer a −2 penalty to Intelligence and a −2 penalty to a second ability score of your choice other than Intelligence.

Special: If you spend both of your trait selections on this trait, you gain the +2 Strength bonus but you may ignore one of its associated ability score penalties. You still must accept the −2 penalty to either Intelligence or one other score of your choice.

Tall [Physical]

Your long arms and legs let you tower over others. In battle, your height grants you improved reach, a key advantage.

Mechanics: You gain a +2 size bonus when making grapple checks. If you already have a size bonus, increase it by 2 points. In combat, you threaten one additional square beyond your normal threatened area. This square must be adjacent to a square you threaten, but it cannot be adjacent to you. You must have line of sight and line of effect to the square you choose. You do not threaten this square if you do not threaten any other space. You must decide which extra square you threaten on your action. Until you designate a square, you do not threaten an extra space. You can change the square you threaten to a different one on your next action.

Tough as Iron [Physical]

You can withstand pain and terrible conditions for far longer than other people, though your solid frame is less flexible than normal.

Mechanics: You enjoy a +2 bonus to Constitution, but you suffer a −2 penalty to Dexterity.

Special: If you spend both of your trait selections on this trait, you gain the +2 Constitution bonus while ignoring its associated Dexterity penalty.

Weapon Bond [Mental]

You have a natural talent for wielding a single, specific type of weapon such as a longsword or crossbow. From a young age, you demonstrated an advanced mastery of its use.

Mechanics: Select a single simple, martial, or exotic weapon from Chapter Seven. You are automatically proficient with this weapon, even if your class does not normally grant access to it.

You feel so comfortable with the weapon, it feels like an extension of your body, personality, and intellect. You may choose an ability score other than Strength to modify your attacks and damage with the bonded weapon; consider the chosen ability score's bonus your Strength bonus for these purposes. For example, you still gain 1.5 times the ability's bonus to damage when using a two-handed weapon.

You do not gain the bonus for Strength *and* your chosen ability when using your bonded weapon type. You gain the benefits of only one of them, and you may switch between the two as a free action.

Wise [Mental]

You are insightful, well attuned to your surroundings, and given to delving correctly into the motivations of others. However, at times you allow your intuition to override your sense of how to relate to others.

Mechanics: You enjoy a +2 bonus to Wisdom but suffer a −2 penalty to Charisma. While you can read emotions, you sometimes have trouble turning your gut instincts into compelling arguments.

Special: If you spend both of your trait selections on this trait, you gain the +2 Wisdom bonus but you may ignore its associated Charisma penalty.

World Traveler [Mental]

You traveled far and wide from your childhood on, exposing you to a tremendous variety of cultures. You fit in even in strange social circumstances and have mastered a variety of dialects.

Mechanics: You enjoy a +2 bonus to Diplomacy checks and gain two bonus languages.

CHAPTER THREE:

CHARACTER CLASSES

A character class is the basic vehicle for defining your character. Rather than covering various unique professions and roles found in a game's setting, the classes in Iron Lore *each represent a different fighting style, from a berserker's reliance on fury and strength to the weapon master's unmatched expertise. The classes relate to the setting only in that people within the world use the methods of each class in battle.*

I ron Heroes character classes cover fighting styles that are, at best, rare in the world. The vast majority of NPCs have levels in warrior, aristocrat, commoner, and expert, as described in Chapter Four: Nonplayer Characters of the DMG. These classes reflect the typical abilities that a town guard, the lord mayor, or a merchant might develop. Anyone with levels in the *Iron Heroes* character classes is a notable and important person. The training and focus required to master the talents of these classes exceed the abilities of the typical person.

LEVEL-DEPENDENT ABILITIES

A character's *experience level* represents his talent, skill, and adventuring history. A higher-level character is more powerful than a lower-level one. As you advance in level, your fighting ability improves, you learn to resist dangers better, and you gain new special abilities. The tables on the next page summarize the benefits you gain at various levels in different categories.

SAVING THROWS

Iron Heroes uses three different *saving throw* types: Fortitude, Reflex, and Will. Fortitude saves allow you to resist disease, poison, and similar threats. Reflex saves measure your ability to dodge powerful attacks, while Will saves indicate your mental toughness. For a more thorough discussion, see "Saving Throws" in Chapter Eight: Combat.

A character in *Iron Heroes* has a base saving throw bonus in all three save categories equal to his level. Unlike other d20 games, *Iron Heroes* characters do not have weak or strong saves. On average, their base saves are much higher than normal, though they cannot boost them with magical items.

See the table on the next page for saving throw modifiers by level.

BASE ATTACK BONUS

Your *base attack bonus* measures your fundamental ability to strike an opponent in combat. It normally applies to attacks with a sword, a bare fist, an arrow fired from a bow, and so forth. Some classes grant a character more than one base attack bonus to reflect mastery with different sorts of weapons. For example, the archer has a better attack bonus with a bow or sling than with an axe.

Base attack bonus is divided into three categories: poor, average, and excellent. Characters in *Iron Heroes* use one of these progressions, based on the class.

See the table opposite for base attack bonuses by level.

BASE DEFENSE BONUS

Your *base defense bonus* measures your talent for deflecting attacks with skilled parries, dodges, and other defensive maneuvers. When an opponent attacks you, your defense determines if her swing connects. See "Defense" in Chapter Eight: Combat, for more details.

Characters in *Iron Heroes* use either the poor, average, or excellent progression for their base defense bonuses, as shown on the table on the next page. Some classes focus on defense, while others see the best defense as a good offense.

SAVING THROW, BASE ATTACK, & BASE DEFENSE BY LEVEL

Level	Saving Throws	Poor Base Attack	Average Base Attack	Excellent Base Attack	Poor Base Defense	Average Base Defense	Excellent Base Defense
1	+1	+0	+1	+1	+0	+1	+1
2	+2	+1	+2	+2	+1	+2	+2
3	+3	+2	+3	+3	+2	+3	+3
4	+4	+3	+4	+5	+3	+4	+4
5	+5	+3	+5	+6	+3	+5	+5
6	+6	+4	+6	+7	+4	+5	+6
7	+7	+5	+7	+8	+5	+6	+7
8	+8	+6	+8	+10	+6	+7	+8
9	+9	+6	+9	+11	+6	+8	+9
10	+10	+7	+10	+12	+7	+9	+10
11	+11	+8	+11	+13	+8	+10	+11
12	+12	+9	+12	+15	+9	+10	+12
13	+13	+9	+13	+16	+9	+11	+13
14	+14	+10	+14	+17	+10	+12	+14
15	+15	+11	+15	+18	+11	+13	+15
16	+16	+12	+16	+20	+12	+14	+16
17	+17	+12	+17	+21	+12	+15	+17
18	+18	+13	+18	+22	+13	+15	+18
19	+19	+14	+19	+23	+14	+16	+19
20	+20	+15	+20	+25	+15	+17	+20

GAINING SKILL RANKS

In *Iron Heroes*, you can use *skill points* to purchase up to a maximum of your level + 3 ranks in any skill. Your class determines your access to skill groups, closely related skills that fit into a single category. Rather than spend points on skills individually, you can spend a point on a skill group to gain 1 rank in each skill within that group. For all other skills, you must spend points on a 1-point-spent for 1-rank-earned basis.

Please note that *Iron Heroes* does not distinguish between class and cross-class skills. Any character can purchase ranks in any skill as described above without penalty.

GAINING FEATS

Feats are special talents that expand upon your basic talents. The average *Iron Heroes* player character gains many feats. You gain two feats at 1st level and one more at every even-numbered level thereafter. Some character classes described in this chapter grant additional feats as well.

IMPROVING IN ABILITY SCORES

As you gain levels, you hone your natural abilities. A berserker grows stronger as he uses his savage fury to mow through his opponents, while a skilled thief hones his speed and reflexes. You gain a +1 bonus to an ability score of your choice at 4th, 8th, 12th, 16th, and 20th levels.

SKILL, FEAT, & ABILITY IMPROVEMENTS

Level	Max. Skill Ranks	Feats	Ability Score
1	4	1st, 2nd	—
2	5	3rd	—
3	6	—	—
4	7	4th	+1 to any ability score
5	8	—	—
6	9	5th	—
7	10	—	—
8	11	6th	+1 to any ability score
9	12	—	—
10	13	7th	—
11	14	—	—
12	15	8th	+1 to any ability score
13	16	—	—
14	17	9th	—
15	18	—	—
16	19	10th	+1 to any ability score
17	20	—	—
18	21	11th	—
19	22	—	—
20	23	12th	+1 to any ability score

LEVELS BY XP TOTAL

Level	XP Needed	Level	XP Needed
1	0	11	60,500
2	1,100	12	72,600
3	3,300	13	85,800
4	6,600	14	100,100
5	11,000	15	115,500
6	16,500	16	132,000
7	23,100	17	149,600
8	30,800	18	168.300
9	39,600	19	188,100
10	49,500	20	209,000

EXPERIENCE AND LEVELS

Characters in *Iron Heroes* need more experience points (XP) to gain a level than their counterparts in other games. The table below summarizes the experience point values needed to gain each new level in *Iron Heroes*.

CHARACTER LEVEL VS. CLASS LEVEL

"Class level" refers to the number of levels a character has in a single class. For single-classed characters, class level is the same as character level. For multiclassed characters, character level is the total of all the levels the character has in various classes. For example, a 7th-level archer has seven class levels of archer and a character level of 7th. A 5th-level executioner/3rd-level hunter has five class levels in executioner and three in hunter, but a character level of 8th.

In the class descriptions in this chapter, "level" refers to class level (that is, the number of levels a character has in that specific class) unless it specifically says character level, in which case it means total levels in all classes.

NEW CLASS CONCEPTS

Each of the 10 character classes in this chapter follows the same basic format. The classes begin with a brief overview of the strengths and features of the fighting style they follow. After this introductory section come the relevant game mechanics and descriptions of class abilities. *All class abilities are extraordinary abilities, unless otherwise noted.* Tables outline the class features and feat mastery progressions. The final section discusses some basic strategies and models for playing the class, and rounding out each class is a starting package for a sample 1st-level character.

You need to grasp two new concepts before you can fully understand the character classes.

FEAT MASTERY

Iron Heroes uses a system of *feat mastery* to reflect each class' affinity for different types of feats. Each class offers different mastery rating progressions for the various feat categories (finesse, lore, projectile, social, etc.). Chapter Five: Feats explains how mastery works; for now, just remember that high mastery in a category grants you access to more powerful feats.

TOKENS

During an encounter, many of the classes allow you to build up *tokens*, which you can use to power class abilities or cash in for special maneuvers. You earn tokens when you take actions in keeping with your class' tactics and fighting style. Tokens also serve as abstract representations of actions you take to position yourself for a special maneuver.

For example, an armiger earns tokens based on how much damage his armor absorbs. The armiger's fighting style involves taking advantage of an opponent whose weapon strikes his armor. Thus, when a foe hits his armor, he gains tokens. When he gains enough tokens, he can spend them to power different class abilities.

A character assembles his tokens in a *token pool*. Each class that uses tokens has access to one particular type of token pool—the aforementioned armiger has an "armor pool," for example. Characters of certain classes get more efficient at accessing their token pools as they gain levels, meaning they can earn tokens more quickly at 13th level than they did at 3rd.

For instance, archers have an "aim pool" that grants them tokens based on how long they spend taking aim at their target before making a shot. Taking aim for a standard action earns our archer 2 aim tokens, which she can turn around and spend to enhance her attack. Her token-powered potential attacks against her target include such options as an "armor-piercing shot" or a "distant shot."

Available token pools are described in the "Class Features" section of each class that uses tokens. Some classes—the harrier, man-at-arms, and thief—do not have token pools; they make good character choices for players who would rather not get involved with the token concept. And even these classes can choose to access token pools through the use of certain feats, as described in Chapter Five.

The easiest way to keep track of tokens is to use a pool of pennies, poker chips, or chits that every player draws on. When you earn a token, take a penny from the pile. When you spend a token, return a penny to the pile. Having a small stack of coins or chips serves as a useful visual reminder of your token pool.

TOKEN MECHANICS

While the different types of token pools allow you to build up and use tokens in different ways, a few standard mechanics apply to all of them. Those rules are as follows.

You can never have more tokens than 10 + your level in a pool at once. You lose any extra tokens you build up above this limit.

Many token pools allow you to spend an action to gather tokens. You can take only one action per round to do nothing but build up tokens, even if it is a free action. This does not apply to events or conditions that, in addition to their normal effects, allow you to build up tokens. For example, the berserker gains fury tokens whenever his foes strike him. There is no cap on the number of times he can gain tokens in this way (though he must obey the limit given above), but he could not spend two move actions to stoke his fury simply to build up tokens.

ARCHER

The *archer* is a master with ranged weapons. Though the name of this class indicates a close connection to bows, many "archers" prefer to fight with thrown weapons, crossbows, or slings.

The archer excels at long-range combat. If you choose to play an archer, you should focus on keeping away from the enemy. You are at your best when your enemy cannot reach you—and you can rain arrows, daggers, or bolts upon him. Either find adventuring companions who can occupy your opponents while you fight at range, or seek out inaccessible firing points, such as in a tree, atop a boulder, behind cover, and so on.

Dexterity is the archer's most important ability, as it improves your chances of hitting with ranged weapons.

Hit Die: 1d4+4/level

Skill Groups

Archers learn to fight on the run, and their long hours of practice with ranged weapons hone their senses to a fine edge. They gain access to the Agility, Athletics, and Perception skill groups and may purchase skills from other groups as normal.

An archer needs good Spot and Listen skill ranks to notice enemies before they can draw too close. Agility and Athletics allow her to escape from dangerous situations or reach spots that offer excellent sniping opportunities.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Intelligence modifier) ×4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Intelligence modifier

Feats

Archers focus on ranged combat and, as such, they gain excellent mastery with Projectile feats. They gain average mastery with Defense feats, as they learn to avoid blows and flee melee for a safe firing position. They gain some mastery in Finesse, too—when they must fight in melee, they generally prefer light weapons that take advantage of their excellent agility.

Class Features

The archer's class abilities revolve around access to the aim token pool. The aim pool represents an archer's genius at locking onto one target, taking careful aim, and firing a single dart with incredible precision. A skilled archer not only hits her target, she strikes him at the exact point she chooses.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Archers are proficient with all simple weapons, all thrown and projectile martial weapons, and light armor. As an archer, you trained to hit opponents from a distance. You studied melee combat only as a tactic of last resort.

Ranged Base Attack Bonus: Archers focus much of their training on bows, crossbows, slings, and thrown weapons. When using a projectile weapon or throwing a thrown weapon, use the ranged base attack bonus on the Archer

IRON HEROES TOKEN POOLS*

Here's a handy list of the different types of tokens characters can earn and use in *Iron Heroes*, and how they gain access to them.

Type	Granted By…
Aim	Archer class
Armor	Armiger class
Cleave	Cleave expanded mastery ability (8)†
Deception	Devious Manipulator feat†
Dodge	Dodge feat†
Execution	Executioner class
Fury	Berserker class, Cleave expanded mastery ability (6)†
Lore	Beast Lore feat†
Manipulation	Political Mastermind feat†
Parry	Combat Expertise expanded mastery abilities (3, 4, 6, 7, 8)†
Popularity	Political Mastermind expanded mastery ability (2)†
Strategy	War Leader feat†; Tactics of the Mind expanded mastery ability (2, 3, 4, 6, 9)†
Stun	Stunning Strike feat†
Tactical	Hunter class
Venom	Venom Mastery feat†
Weapon	Weapon master class

* You can accumulate a maximum number of unspent tokens for any token pool equal to your level + 10.

† See Chapter Five: Feats

Class Features and Mastery table (see page 33). When armed with any other sort of weapon, or using a thrown weapon in melee, use the normal base attack bonus. If you take levels of other classes, add the ranged base attack bonus to your other class' base attack bonus to determine your modifier when using projectile weapons and when throwing thrown weapons. Add in the archer's normal base attack bonus for all other circumstances.

Aim Pool: At the start of your turn, you may designate a single opponent that you can see (a creature or object) as the target of your aim token pool. You earn 1 aim token against him if you spend a move action doing nothing but aiming at him. You earn 2 aim tokens if you spend a standard action doing nothing but aiming at him. You earn 4 aim tokens if you spend a full-round action drawing a bead on him, doing nothing but aiming.

In addition, you automatically earn an additional aim token if your target did not move between your last action and your current one. You can take aim against a motionless enemy with ease. You gain this token at the start of your action.

You spend aim tokens to power various archer class abilities, described below. The longer you aim, the better your shot. In other words, if you spend more aim tokens on an attack, it garners more powerful effects.

You keep building up aim tokens until you select a different opponent as the target for your aim pool. You can never have more tokens than 10 + your level in a pool at once. You lose any extra tokens you build up above this limit. At some point, additional aiming fails to improve your accuracy.

When you select a new foe as your target, you lose the aim tokens you have built up and must start accruing them again. Aim tokens that go unspent upon a particular target grant you no special benefits; you must discard them and may begin accumulating new tokens against a different target. You cannot carry aim token pools against more than one target at the same time.

Action Spent Aiming	Aim Tokens Gained
Move	1
Standard	2
Full-round	4
Opponent remains still	1

Deadeye Shot: Each time you gain deadeye shot (at 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th levels), you select a new ability from those listed below. Each deadeye shot ability costs a number of aim tokens to use. You spend aim tokens as a free action and apply the effects to the shots you take for the rest of your turn. You can complete this free action before taking a shot, but you cannot use aim tokens to benefit more than one deadeye shot ability in a given attack.

Unless otherwise stated, a deadeye shot ability costs 1 aim token to use. You can spend more than one aim token on a single ability to gain its benefits multiple times. For example, if you spend 2 tokens on *distant shot,* you reduce the range penalty to your attacks by 4. You cannot reduce a penalty beyond 0 to turn it into a bonus. Where noted below, certain abilities are not available to use more than once in a single attack.

Unless otherwise stated, a deadeye shot inflicts normal damage in addition to the effect described below.

You can gain the benefits of deadeye shot abilities only against the target of your aim pool.

Accurate Shot: You take aim at the smallest bit of an exposed foe, hitting him despite cover. Accurate shot reduces your opponent's defense bonus due to cover by 2 points for each token spent. You cannot reduce the defense bonus of an opponent who enjoys full cover from you if that cover blocks your line of sight to him.

Armor Piercing Shot: You take aim at a chink in your opponent's armor, hoping to overcome his defenses by hitting a poorly defended spot. Your shot inflicts a –1 penalty to your foe's damage reduction for each token spent. However, you cannot reduce the damage reduction below 0.

Deadly Shot: Your ranged attacks are particularly damaging. By spending 2 aim tokens, your next attack gains a bonus to damage equal to half your Dexterity bonus. You cannot use this ability more than once on a given attack. This is not precision-based damage: it applies in full against creatures which are immune to critical hits, and to all projectiles fired

as part of single attack, such as when using Volley Shot (see page 34).

Disrupting Shot: You shoot an arrow at an opponent's hand, weapon, talon, or paw to disrupt his attacks. Rather than inflict damage, you cause him to suffer a –1 penalty to his attacks until the end of his next action for each token spent, unless he succeeds in a Fortitude save (DC equal to your attack's result).

Distant Shot: Even at long range, your shots hit with uncanny accuracy. You reduce the range penalty to your attacks by 2 points per token spent.

Hamstring Shot: To use this ability, ready an action to fire at your target when he moves. If your readied attack hits, your opponent must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half your archer level + number of tokens spent on this shot) or move at half his normal speed until the end of his current action.

Storm of Arrows: As a full-round action, you fire a volley of arrows at your target and the area around him. You fire four additional arrows for every 2 aim tokens spent. You rain shots upon the area where your foe stands and immediately around him, forming a great cloud of darts. Resolve your attack as normal, but compare the attack result against your target's defense and the defense of every opponent adjacent to him. On a hit, your target suffers normal damage, but any adjacent targets who are hit suffer 1 point of damage per additional arrow fired. An adjacent target cannot suffer damage greater than your Dexterity bonus.

You inflict damage for only one shot against your target, regardless of how many arrows you actually put into the air. The *storm of arrows* represents a great stream of shots falling from the sky.

Unerring Shot: Before you resolve your attack, your opponent must attempt a Reflex save (DC 10 + half your archer level + number of tokens spent on this attack). If his save fails, he loses his active bonus to defense against your next shot. This ability does not apply to subsequent shots.

Bonus Feats: At 2nd, 6th, 10th, 14th, and 18th levels, you gain a bonus feat that must come from the Projectile feat category. You can spend this selection on any Projectile feat of your choice, provided that you meet its mastery requirements.. Bonus feats are in addition to the feat a character gets at every even-numbered level.

Improved Aim Pool: You can now fill your aim pool faster than before, as you quickly assess a target and prepare to fire; see the table below for the improved token values for time spent aiming. Note that you can take a free action to aim only once per round.

Action Spent Aiming	Aim Tokens Gained
Free	1
Move	2
Standard	3
Full-round	5
Opponent remains still	2

Sniper Shot: Each time you gain sniper shot (at 11th, 13th, and 15th levels), you may select one of the abilities described

ARCHER CLASS FEATURES AND MASTERY

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Ranged Base Attack Bonus	Base Defense Bonus	Special Abilities	Defense Feat Mastery	Finesse Feat Mastery	Projectile Feat Mastery	Other Feat Mastery
1	+0	+1	+1	Aim pool, deadeye shot	1	—	2	—
2	+1	+2	+2	Bonus feat	1	—	2	—
3	+2	+3	+3	Deadeye shot	2	1	3	—
4	+3	+5	+4	—	2	1	3	—
5	+3	+6/+1	+5	Deadeye shot	3	2	4	1
6	+4	+7/+2	+5	Bonus feat	3	2	4	1
7	+5	+8/+3	+6	Deadeye shot	4	3	5	2
8	+6/+1	+10/+5	+7	—	4	3	5	2
9	+6/+1	+11/+6/+1	+8	Deadeye shot	5	4	6	3
10	+7/+2	+12/+7/+2	+9	Bonus feat, improved aim pool	5	4	6	3
11	+8/+3	+13/+8/+3	+10	Sniper shot	6	5	7	4
12	+9/+4	+15/+10/+5	+10	—	6	5	7	4
13	+9/+4	+16/+11/+6/+1	+11	Sniper shot	7	6	8	5
14	+10/+5	+17/+12/+7/+2	+12	Bonus feat	7	6	8	5
15	+11/+6/+1	+18/+13/+8/+3	+13	Sniper shot, supreme aim pool	8	7	9	6
16	+12/+7/+2	+20/+15/+10/+5	+14	—	8	7	9	6
17	+12/+7/+2	+21/+16/+11/+6	+15	Killing shot	9	8	10	7
18	+13/+8/+3	+22/+17/+12/+7	+15	Bonus feat	9	8	10	7
19	+14/+9/+4	+23/+18/+13/+8	+16	Killing shot	9	8	10	7
20	+15/+10/+5	+25/+20/+15/+10	+17	Legendary shot	9	8	10	7

below or one of the deadeye shot abilities above. You spend your aim tokens on sniper shots in the manner described for deadeye shot abilities. You may spend tokens on both a deadeye shot and sniper shot ability at the same time.

Arrow Ladder Shot: Unlike other aim pool-based abilities, you can use this option only against objects or creatures at least one size category larger than you. You earn your aim tokens against such targets as normal. In the case of objects, you earn aim tokens as normal if they are motionless.

When you make your attack, you may spend 1 aim token for every 5 feet of the creature's height to create a "ladder" of arrows. You perforate the target with projectiles that you and your allies can then use as rungs to climb up the target (Climb check, DC 5). You use 2 arrows per 5 feet of height; completing this attack requires a full-round action. If your attack misses, the "rungs" are spaced too far apart to be usable, or perhaps some of the arrows loosen and fall. You can start an arrow ladder on one round and complete it on the next.

This attack inflicts damage for one ranged attack as normal. If the damage fails to beat an object's hardness, you fail to form the ladder. Your weapon must inflict piercing damage to use this ability. You can choose to create a persistent ladder, or it can fall apart after one use.

As a tactical note, when planning an ambush, you can use this ability to sow arrow ladders around the area in advance. This option also ensures that you almost always have a convenient escape route.

Critical Shot: If you take careful aim against an opponent, you can make a deadly shot to his eyes, throat, or other vulnerable spot. With some luck, you can strike a foe dead in one shot. Using this ability requires an expenditure of 8 aim tokens. Make a single attack as a full-round action. If your attack succeeds, you automatically cause a critical hit. You cannot use this ability more than once on a given attack.

Daunting Shot: You fire an arrow that nicks a creature's ear, creases his skull, sticks directly in the center of his coat of arms, or otherwise demonstrates your uncanny accuracy. Your target must make a Will save (DC 10 + half your archer level + the number of aim tokens spent) or become shaken for 2d4 rounds. You cannot use this ability to impose a condition worse than "shaken" upon a creature.

Flanked Shot: When your target is flanked or denied his active bonus to defense, you can inflict extra damage if you are within 30 feet of him. For every 2 aim tokens spent, your attack causes +1d6 points of damage. Do not multiply this damage on a critical hit. Creatures immune to criticals are also immune to this ability.

Sundering Shot: You can shoot small items off a creature's body, cut belts, and destroy similar little items. By spending 4 aim tokens, you may make an attack against a single item carried by your target; the item must have a hardness of 2 or lower. Your shot suffers a –4 penalty. On a success, you damage the item as normal. You can choose to damage an item directly, thus possibly destroying it, or sever a belt or pouch

to knock it to the ground at the target's feet. You cannot use this ability more than once on a given attack.

Volley Shot: You use your first shot to guide the rest of your attacks as part of a full-attack action. If your first arrow strikes home, the rest will almost invariably follow into the target. If it misses, your arrows hit nothing but air. Before making your attack, spend 4 aim tokens.

Roll a single attack against your opponent as normal. For your iterative attacks (the extra attacks you gain from having a high base attack bonus), use the following method to determine whether they hit: Subtract 3 points from the first attack's result. This total is the result for your second arrow. Subtract another 3 (6 total) for the third arrow's result, and 3 more (9 total) for the fourth arrow's result. Use this method in place of rolling your attacks and using your iterative attack bonuses.

When using a volley shot, you cannot employ feats that grant you additional attacks. You may use this ability only once on a given attack. Regardless of the number of projectiles you fire or throw, apply precision-based damage, such as sneak attacks, only once. If you score a critical hit, only the first shot deals critical damage, while all others deal regular damage.

Vulnerable Shot: To use this ability, you must spend 2 aim tokens and ready a ranged attack for when your target suffers damage from any other source. Your target loses his active bonus to defense against your readied attack. In addition, you inflict bonus damage equal to your Dexterity bonus. You may use vulnerable shot only once on a given attack.

Supreme Aim Pool: As with the improved aim pool ability, above, you gain even more tokens for spending actions to aim, as shown in the following table.

Action Spent Aiming	Aim Tokens Gained
Free	2
Move	4
Standard	6
Full-round	10
Opponent remains still	4

Killing Shot: Each time you gain a killing shot (at 17th and 19th levels), you can select one of the abilities described below or one of the deadeye or sniper shot abilities above. You spend aim tokens on killing shots in the manner described for deadeye shot abilities. You may spend tokens on a deadeye, sniper, and killing shot ability at the same time.

Death Shot: You put an arrow into a foe's eye, skewer his throat, or pierce his heart. Using this ability requires an initial expenditure of 8 aim tokens. Then you must spend additional tokens to establish this attack's Fortitude save Difficulty Class (DC 10 + half your archer level + number of *additional* tokens spent).

Make a single ranged attack as a full-round action. If you hit and inflict damage, your target must succeed at the Fortitude save described above or immediately fall to –1 hit points. This ability remains a favorite of snipers and others who can hide and observe a target for several minutes. You cannot use this ability more than once on a given attack.

Improved Deadly Shot: By spending 2 aim tokens, you gain a bonus to damage equal to your Dexterity bonus on all your ranged attacks against your target. This bonus lasts until your next action. You cannot use this ability more than once on a given attack.

Power Shot: You may spend 2 aim tokens to use your ranged weapon as a melee weapon against your chosen target. You threaten him if he is within your natural reach. You do not provoke attacks of opportunity for making ranged attacks against him while he is within your natural reach. You gain double your Strength bonus to damage on shots made in this manner if you wield a weapon that allows any Strength bonus to damage. You gain this benefit even if your bow normally has a cap on the bonus damage. You cannot use this ability more than once on a given attack.

Ranged Disarm: You fire an arrow to knock a weapon from an opponent's hand. Spend 4 aim tokens and make a single attack as a standard action; your foe makes an opposed attack. If your result is higher, you knock his weapon to the ground in his current space. The target gains a +4 bonus if his weapon is two-handed. If his weapon is larger than yours, he gains an additional +4 bonus for each size category of difference between his weapon and yours. You do not gain a benefit if you wield a larger weapon. You cannot use this ability more than once on a given attack.

Ranged Trip: As a normal attack, you may spend at least 4 aim tokens to attempt to trip a target. Resolve your attack as normal. If you hit and inflict damage, your target must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 10 + half your archer level + number of tokens spent) or be knocked prone. He gains the benefits of being prone (and the drawbacks, if applicable) against the rest of your attacks on your action.

Legendary Shot: The legendary shot, gained at 20th level, is the stuff of epic tales. It is the ultimate expression of the archer's talents, and those who witness these demonstrations of supreme mastery rarely forget them.

To attempt a legendary shot, you must spend 10 aim tokens before your attack. You then may fire at your chosen target with one of the following special benefits:

- All of your shots for the rest of your action hit, as long as you have line of sight to your target. Do not roll to resolve your attacks.
- Any shot that hits automatically inflicts maximum damage. Treat all damage dice rolled as maximum values.
- You may take a single shot at an opponent who is out of your line of sight by banking and ricocheting shots. You suffer a –4 penalty to all your attacks, and your opponent must have been in your line of sight on your previous action. This attack assumes that a clear, physical path exists between you and your target.
- You may attack your target at up to double your weapon's maximum range without range penalties.

Choose one benefit from the list above; you cannot spend tokens to gain more than one of them at the same time. You may combine a deadeye, sniper, or killing shot ability with a legendary shot.

PLAYING AN ARCHER

Archers fit into almost any culture that develops ranged weapons, such as bows, crossbows, or even thrown weapons. Their expertise makes them valuable allies and deadly enemies. The archer's talent for ranged fighting makes her stand out from the other classes. No one else is as good at launching an effective attack at long range.

Some cultures might celebrate archery as the ultimate fighting art. On the open plains or desert, a warrior who engages her opponent at a distance has a tremendous advantage. The archer reigns supreme in areas with little cover or other obstructions. While you might think of the berserker as the best class to model a barbaric civilization, nomadic archers could use horses to swoop down on civilization, launch a deadly raid, and disappear before the town guard can engage them.

The archer also makes an ideal assassin. In times of war, a single archer can wreak havoc on an army by sniping its generals and other leaders. Even the mightiest emperor fears an archer's barbed arrows, and a monarch's guards must spread far and wide to ensure that an archer does not lurk in a nearby tower or building. Some rulers might ban ranged weapons precisely because of the threat that archers pose to public figures.

CAMPAIGN MODELS

Thanks to her unique talents, the archer stands in contrast to the other classes in *Iron Heroes*. The focus and dedication this class demands make it a distinct path of training.

Frontier Warriors: In this campaign model, the archer's fighting style contrasts with methods commonly employed in cities and towns. Perhaps the longbow is a recent invention, one that frontier settlers have learned to use to deadly effect against monsters that lurk at civilization's edge. With their newfound fighting talents, the settlers push for independence and greater political power, causing simmering tension with the civilized regions whence they sprang. The archer is seen as a rural warrior, an unrefined, poorly trained rabble who doesn't know enough to fight with a sharp sword and stout shirt of chainmail. She also could be seen as a rebel, the fighting arm of a band of outlaws and revolutionaries similar in style to Robin Hood. In this case, the archer is a warrior of the lower classes, a champion of the people who stands against the landowners and other nobles.

Masters of the Bow: The archer's focused training and rigorous study are available only in small, secretive dojos. In monasteries, hidden academies isolated in the wilderness, and assassin's guilds that hide behind unassuming facades, archers train in their craft. They study under revered masters, learning not only the way of the bow but the mental and physical exercises to become one with their weapons. Archery is much like the martial arts, with different archers focusing on various schools of training. In this model, archers are mysterious warriors with talents built around and refined by a distinct spiritual and intellectual philosophy.

Slayer's Brotherhood: The archer's craft is one of killing from a distance, and most archers hunt the rich and powerful

on behalf of their employers. In this model, archers are feared and mistrusted. Their talents make them deadly warriors in the secret battles between rival criminal gangs, trade cartels, and noble families. An archer is an assassin, one specialized in silencing her patron's enemies with a single well-placed arrow. The best archers eliminate their targets from a distance and in utter quiet, leaving their victims' corpses undiscovered for hours or even days.

ARCHER STRATEGY

Playing an archer is a study in contrasts. As you will see in Chapter Five, many of the Projectile feats give you additional attacks as part of a full-attack action. Early in the encounter, identify your target and build up as many aim tokens as possible. When he draws near, and you no longer suffer a range penalty to attacks, pour your tokens into a powerful volley. Getting the drop on your foe is critical for an archer.

In terms of position, find a spot where you can avoid melee attacks while dishing out volleys. While taking cover behind your friends may seem like an obvious tactic, it has its drawbacks. Any opponent with enough ranks in Tumble can slip by them to attack you, and there may be times when an ally must rush forward and leave you behind. Seek out high points in encounter areas, especially ones that require Climb checks to reach. Safe in your perch, you cut off easy approaches to you while gaining a bird's-eye view of the action.

ARCHER STARTING PACKAGE

Ability Scores: Str 14, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10

Skill Groups: Agility, Athletics, and Perception 4 ranks each.

Skills: One more at 4 ranks.

Feats: Point Blank Shot plus one more feat of player's choice.

Armor: Studded leather armor (DR 1d3).

Weapons: Composite longbow (1d8 damage, ×3 critical), dagger (1d4 damage, ×2 critical)

Gear: Backpack, bedroll, quiver, arrows (40), torches (4), flint and steel, waterskin, 5d4 gp.

Traits: Choose two and apply their modifications, if any.

ARMIGER

While other warriors rely on speed or canny parries to defend themselves, the *armiger* trusts in his armor. Armigers create their own protective gear and improve it over time. They can stand before dozens of opponents, confident that their armor will shield them from harm.

The armiger wins battles by wearing down his foes. If you decide to play an armiger, keep close to your friends but stay near the front of every battle. Ideally, the most powerful monsters and opponents you face focus their attacks on you. This may sound suicidal, but the armiger excels at defending himself. Attacks that barely faze you could seriously injure

ARMIGER CLASS FEATURES AND MASTERY

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Base Defense Bonus	Special Abilities	Armor Feat Mastery	Power Feat Mastery	Tactics Feat Mastery	Other Feat Mastery
1	+1	+0	Master armorer, tough as nails, armor mastery	2	1	—	—
2	+2	+1	Bonus Feat	2	1	—	—
3	+3	+2	Armor pool, armor ability	3	2	1	—
4	+4	+3	Uncanny dodge	3	2	1	—
5	+5	+3	Armored redoubt	4	3	2	1
6	+6/+1	+4	Bonus Feat	4	3	2	1
7	+7/+2	+5	Armor ability	5	4	3	2
8	+8/+3	+6	—	5	4	3	2
9	+9/+4	+6	Reinforced defenses	6	5	4	3
10	+10/+5	+7	Bonus Feat	6	5	4	3
11	+11/+6/+1	+8	Armor ability	7	6	5	4
12	+12/+7/+2	+9	Improved uncanny dodge	7	6	5	4
13	+13/+8/+3	+9	Armor as second skin	8	7	6	5
14	+14/+9/+4	+10	Bonus Feat	8	7	6	5
15	+15/+10/+5	+11	Armor ability	9	8	7	6
16	+16/+11/+6/+1	+12	—	9	8	7	6
17	+17/+12/+7/+2	+12	Armor ability	10	9	8	7
18	+18/+13/+8/+3	+13	Bonus Feat	10	9	8	7
19	+19/+14/+9/+4	+14	Armor ability	10	9	8	7
20	+20/+15/+10/+5	+15	Supreme reinforced defenses	10	9	8	7

your friends. As your foes' attacks harmlessly rebound off your armor, you wear down their stamina and position yourself for a devastating counterattack.

Constitution is the armiger's most important ability. He needs lots of hit points to survive. Plus, in some cases, he can use Constitution rather than Strength as his key ability.

Hit Die: 1d4+6/level

Skill Groups

Armigers gain access to the Athletics skill group. They also gain free ranks in the Craft skill, as described below. Armigers focus on fighting and armorcrafting to the exclusion of almost all else. The other skills they cultivate derive from their personal interests rather than their studies and traditions.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Intelligence modifier) ×4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Intelligence modifier

Feats

Armigers focus on defense above other pursuits, granting them excellent mastery in both the Armor and Defense feat categories. When they fight, they prefer Power weapons over other options, as their heavy armor makes light, agile weapons impractical.

Class Features

Armigers craft their own armor, allowing them to create custom-fit pieces that provide far superior protection when compared to normal defensive equipment. An armiger's abilities focus on his armor token pool. He can wear down an opponent's strength by absorbing attacks. While an enemy wastes energy trying to smash through an armiger's armor, the armiger carefully waits for the precise moment to attack.

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: Armigers are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, all armor, and all shields.

Armor Mastery: Drawing on his ability to modify armor and his uncanny talent for using it to absorb blows, the armiger is the unquestioned master of armored fighting. When he wears armor, he improves its abilities according to the Armor Traits and Ratings table. Its headers are explained below.

Max. Dex Increase: You increase the maximum Dexterity bonus to defense for your armor by the listed amount.

Armor Check Reduction: When you wear armor, it is like a second skin to you. You can move and maneuver in it with unmatched speed and grace. Reduce the armor's check penalty by the listed amount, down to a minimum of 0.

Speed Category: You move much faster than normal while wearing armor. Treat your armor as one category lighter from class levels 1 to 10, and two categories lighter from class levels 11 to 20 for the purposes of determining your speed. Otherwise, its category type remains unchanged. You cannot reduce armor's category to less than light. For example, a 1st-level armiger in medium armor moves as if he wore light armor, while one in heavy armor moves as if he wore medium armor.

Master Armorer: Armigers gain access to the special Craft (Master Armorer) skill that allows them to create armor. This

ARMOR TRAITS AND RATINGS

Class Level	Max. Dex Increase	Armor Check Reduction	Speed Category
1	+0	0	1 category
2	+0	0	1 category
3	+0	0	1 category
4	+0	0	1 category
5	+0	1	1 category
6	+1	1	1 category
7	+1	1	1 category
8	+1	1	1 category
9	+1	2	1 category
10	+1	2	1 category
11	+2	2	2 categories
12	+2	2	2 categories
13	+2	3	2 categories
14	+2	3	2 categories
15	+2	3	2 categories
16	+3	3	2 categories
17	+3	4	2 categories
18	+3	4	2 categories
19	+3	4	2 categories
20	+3	4	2 categories

skill grants you ranks in Craft equal to your armiger level + 3, but you can use these ranks only to create and repair suits of armor and shields. To expand into other Craft areas, you must purchase the skill as normal using your skill points.

If you choose, you can apply your Constitution modifier rather than your Intelligence modifier when using your Craft (Master Armorer) skill.

Tough as Nails: Armigers can carry heavy loads that would reduce others to exhausted wrecks. When determining how much equipment you can carry (see "Carrying Capacity" in Chapter Nine: Adventuring), use either your Strength score or your Constitution + your Strength modifier, whichever is higher. Using sheer toughness and determination, you shoulder your equipment with relative ease.

Bonus Feats: At 2nd level and every 4 levels thereafter (6th, 10th, 14th and 18th) you gain a bonus feat that must come from the Armor category. You can spend this selection on any Armor feat of your choice, provided that you meet its mastery requirements. Bonus feats are in addition to the feat a character gets at every even-numbered level.

Armor Pool: The armor token pool represents your ability to wear down opponents by absorbing their blows. Your implacable stance frustrates your enemies and pushes them to adopt overly aggressive tactics. By waiting for the right moment to strike, you can deal a grievous injury when a foe oversteps her defenses. Your opponent may take a wild, uncontrolled swing out of frustration or tire herself out as she throws herself against your unyielding defense.

Starting at 3rd level, whenever you suffer an attack, keep track of the damage your armor absorbs. For every 10 points it soaks up, you earn 1 armor token to spend against that foe.

You can accumulate armor tokens against all the opponents who attack you. Use the tokens from this pool throughout the encounter against any opponent you like, as long as the foe has hit your armor. You lose all unspent tokens at the end of an encounter.

Armor Abilities: Armor abilities are special combat options. Beginning at 3rd level, you may spend tokens on them to activate them in battle. They represent the tactics you attempt with your armor, the strategies armigers employ to defeat their enemies.

When you activate an armor ability, you may select any opponent within your threatened area. In addition, the target must have made at least one attack against you during the encounter. You can spend armor tokens as a free action, but you cannot use more than one armor ability per round. If you use an armor ability, you cannot use another one until the start of your next action.

Many armor abilities are defensive in nature. You activate them in response to an opponent's attacks, actions, or as the result of a strike, and thus they often do not take effect on your own turn.

Each time you gain an armor ability (at 3rd, 7th, 11th, 15th, 18th, and 19th levels), select a new ability from those listed below.

Armored Trap: You prepare a counterattack against an opponent, timing your strike to coincide with hers. You must spend 1 armor token to use this ability, then ready an action to attack when an enemy hits you with a melee attack. When you take your readied action, you may spend additional armor tokens to gain a competence bonus to your attack equal to the number of tokens spent. On a hit, you gain a bonus to damage equal to the amount of damage your armor absorbed from your opponent's attack.

Combat Magnet: You assume a combat stance devised to draw attacks to you while defending your allies. As a full-round action, spend 2 armor tokens to enter this stance. After this preparation, should an ally adjacent to you suffer a melee attack, you may immediately spend 1 armor token to force that attack to be resolved against you instead. Each individual attack requires the expenditure of a separate token, and you must spend the token before resolving the attack. You earn additional armor tokens as normal for the damage your armor absorbs from these attacks. This combat stance lasts until your next action. You cannot make attacks of opportunity while you act as a combat magnet.

Defensive Stance: As a full-round action, you assume a defensive stance and wait for your enemies to expose themselves to your counterattacks. Each time an opponent attacks and hits you, you may spend 1 armor token to make an immediate attack of opportunity against her. You cannot make more than one attack of opportunity against a target as normal, but attacks you make in this manner do not count against your normal limit on attacks of opportunity. You gain the benefit of your defensive stance until the start of your next action. You must make your attack of opportunity before your opponent resolves her attack.

Distracting Lure: By making yourself a tempting target, you lure an opponent into attacking you at the expense of defending herself against your allies. You spend 4 armor tokens as a free action to activate this ability and designate a single foe as its target. When your chosen foe attacks you, you immediately spend additional tokens to force her to make a Will save (DC 10 + half your armiger level + your Constitution modifier + number of additional tokens spent). Upon a failure, she loses her active bonus to defense against the next attack that targets her. You have made yourself enough of a target that your opponent throws all her energy into hammering home her strikes.

Draining Defense: You coax your opponent into wasting her strength on wild, uncontrolled strikes. With each attack, you sap her stamina until she is left vulnerable to your counterattack. You must designate a single foe as the target of this ability and spend at least 2 armor tokens as a move action. The target then attempts a Will save (DC 10 + half your level + your Constitution modifier + number of tokens spent). Failing the save means that, if she attacks you, she automatically takes an amount of nonlethal damage equal to 1d4 + your Constitution modifier (up to once per round). The target cannot suffer this damage more than once per round. She wastes energy on her attacks, or you step into her blows to jar her with a body check or similar harassing attack. The effects of this ability last until the start of your next action.

Indomitable Wall of Iron: As your enemy's attacks rebound off your armor, she slowly grows more frustrated and impatient. You are an easy target to hit, but a difficult one to injure. Your opponent must succeed at a Will save (DC 10 + half your level + your Constitution modifier + number of tokens spent on this ability) or suffer a –2 morale penalty to attacks against you and to defense against all attacks for the rest of the encounter. Your foe loses faith in her ability and makes wild attacks at you while ignoring her own defense. Indomitable wall of iron is a mind-affecting effect.

Iron-Sheathed Counterattack: You lock an opponent's weapon in your steely grasp, pulling the foe off balance. You can activate this ability once per round as a free action by spending 4 armor tokens. You can use it when an opponent hits you with a melee weapon and fails to inflict enough damage to beat your damage reduction. Your enemy provokes an attack of opportunity from you. If you choose to disarm or trip her, she

gets no chance to trip or disarm you on a failed attack. By catching your opponent's weapon in a gauntleted hand, coaxing her into overextending herself and losing her balance, you can make a quick attack as her own strike rebounds from your armor and forces her backward for a moment.

Sentinel's Defense: You use your armor's weight to your advantage in close combat. You may spend 4 armor tokens as a free action to activate this ability. For a number of rounds equal to your Constitution modifier, you gain a bonus to your grapple checks, Strength checks, and base attack checks equal to your armor's damage reduction. Roll the damage reduction along with your normal d20 roll and add the two together. (See Chapter Eight: Combat.)

Uncanny Dodge: A 4th-level and higher armiger can react to danger before his senses normally would allow him to do so.

You retain your active bonus to defense when you are caught flat footed, but not in other circumstances which deny you your active defense bonus. If you already have uncanny dodge from a different class, you instead gain improved uncanny dodge (see below).

Armored Redoubt: Beginning at 5th level, when you occupy a space, you hold it against your enemies like a walking fortress. Any allies who gain cover from you gain an additional +2 cover bonus to defense, for a +6 bonus total. You gain a +4 bonus on defense, checks, or saves to resist any attack that would force you to move or knock you prone.

Reinforced Defenses: Part of the defensive value of your armor comes from your ability to wear it effectively. Starting at 9th level, you learn how to roll with attacks, absorb strikes in heavily plated areas, and otherwise lessen the force of combat. If an opponent strikes you with a weapon that would normally ignore your damage reduction (such as a demon's claw), you may still roll your normal damage reduction (including any armor feats or effects of challenges you have taken) and apply half of the result, rounded down, against the damage from the attack. Even though the weapon cleaves through your armor, you still twist and dodge to reduce the force of its impact.

This benefit also extends to energy attacks and spells that inflict damage in hit points.

Improved Uncanny Dodge: Due to your training and heavy armor, starting at 12th level you cannot be flanked while you wear your suit of armor. If you do not have it on you do not gain this ability.

This defense prevents the use of sneak attack and other precision-based attacks that require flanking, unless the attacker's base attack bonus is 5 or more points higher than your base defense bonus.

Armor as Second Skin: From 13th level forward, you have grown so adjusted to wearing your armor—plus you have made modifications for comfort—that you can sleep in it without penalty.

Supreme Reinforced Defenses: At 20th level, when facing an opponent whose weapons or attacks would normally ignore your armor's damage reduction, you gain the full benefit of your damage reduction. Otherwise, this ability functions as the reinforced defenses ability and replaces that ability's lower value.

PLAYING AN ARMIGER

Armigers' reliance on heavy armor makes them most likely to develop within civilized areas, particularly those with the technology to produce heavy armor and weapons. The class tends to arise in regions with cities and towns, as creating heavy armor requires training that only a skilled artisan can provide. Nomads, barbarians, and others on the borders of civilization usually lack the resources, organization, and social system to support such skilled laborers.

The armiger often takes on a role similar to that of a knight. He needs sufficient resources to build or purchase a suit of armor, or at least to find one to train in. Thus, the armiger is related to a landed noble, the possessor of a title, or linked to a wealthy, powerful organization that can support him. Few armigers are self-made: Most rely on some outside source to get their start. However, the self-made armiger is all the more unique and notable if he can master heavy armor without the typical resources needed to acquire a suit.

CAMPAIGN MODELS

The armiger's unique position makes him relatively easy to place within the context of a campaign.

Knights of the Realm: In this model, the armiger is the champion of the throne, a defender of the land chosen from an early age to protect its borders. Armigers might come from long familial lines trained in the art of fighting in heavy armor. Others could be chosen in their youth for induction into holy or civic warrior brotherhoods, where the faithful or the crown provides them with their armor and training. Such armigers likely have special titles, symbols, and an official position within the hierarchy of their order or noble strata. The classic armored knight is an excellent example of this model.

Steel Warriors: Perhaps heavy armor is a relatively new development in your campaign world. The first armigers are also the first smiths to produce platemail. By combining their superior craftsmanship with their fighting talents, these warriors usher in a new generation of fighting arts. In this model, armigers might arise from the commoners or appear spontaneously. Their armor is a patchwork of different styles and combinations as each armiger seeks to perfect his abilities. Mass produced heavy armor is rare, if it even exists, meaning that most NPCs in heavy armor are armigers who produced their own gear. The armigers might represent a powerful new political and military force, as they throw their support behind particular factions. Other warriors remain suspicious of them, as their new tactics demand that other martial traditions develop viable counters.

ARMIGER STRATEGY

In battle, focus on moving to the front and drawing as many attacks as possible. You are at your best when you absorb attacks meant for your comrades. Not only can you take the punishment better than they can, but your effort also saves them from serious injuries that could make them less effective. If the enemy focuses on you, the entire party benefits.

You earn armor tokens as long as you suffer attacks, so go ahead and swing away with your weapons. If you are surrounded by many foes, try to allow the weakest ones to attack you first. Delay your initiative or ready an action to set this up, as it maximizes the number of armor tokens you can bring to bear against the tougher, more important targets.

One of the advantages you have over other characters is that you collect tokens for your class abilities regardless of your own actions. So long as enemies attack you, you slowly build up your pool. Sometimes, it might pay to maneuver into a good position, absorbing a few attacks of opportunity in the process, to set up a flank and collect armor tokens in the process. Best of all, the enemy cannot save those attacks for other, less heavily armored members of your party.

ARMIGER STARTING PACKAGE

Ability Scores: Str 16, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 10

Skill Groups: Athletics at 4 ranks.

Skills: Craft (Master Armorer) with 4 ranks, four more skills with 4 ranks each.

Feats: Armor Mastery plus one more of player's choice.

Armor: Chainmail armor (DR 1d6/magic), heavy shield (Medium shield, +3 defense).

Weapons: Longsword (1d8 damage, 19–20, ×2 critical), dagger (1d4 damage, 19–20, ×2 critical).

Gear: Backpack, bedroll, 50 feet of silk rope, torches (6), flint and steel, waterskin, 5d4 gp.

Traits: Choose two and apply their modifications, if any.

BERSERKER

Driven by raw fury, the *berserker* cleaves through his enemies with a combination of heavy weapons, powerful strength, and an endless well of fury. The berserker epitomizes the idea that the best defense is a good offense.

This character overcomes his enemies by hammering them with powerful blows. His defenses are almost nonexistent, but his emotional fury and relentless fighting style allow him to ignore wounds that would leave other warriors mere crumpled lumps of agony.

Strength and Constitution are equally important to berserkers. Strength allows their attacks to hit more often and deal more damage, while Constitution increases their hit point totals. Since berserkers absorb many attacks, they need lots of hit points to survive.

Hit Die: 1d4+8/level

Skill Groups

Berserkers gain access to the Athletics skill group. They have little formal training in acrobatics, trades, and other skills. Instead, they tend to learn such talents as a result of their cultural upbringing or personal interests. Few berserkers have any use for formal schooling or intellectual pursuits.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Intelligence modifier) ×4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Intelligence modifier

Feats

Berserkers lack much of the elegant training and combat expertise of other classes. They can use Power weapons with average ability, but otherwise they rely on their endless fury to overcome their enemies. Elegance and expertise are the dead opposites of the berserker's chosen methods.

Berserkers also have special access to the Armor category of feats. You can select and use Armor feats at the mastery level given in the table below if you use them with your berserker damage reduction (see below). While wearing armor of any sort, reduce your Armor feat mastery by 2.

Class Features

Berserkers rely on their emotions and relentless fury to overcome their enemies. Regardless of the injuries they suffer, they battle on. Berserkers are like avalanches or onrushing floods in battle. They cannot be stopped, merely endured until they have vented their boundless energy.

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: Berserkers rely on brute force rather than elegant tactics or training to defeat their enemies. Thus, they rarely master complex weapons. They are proficient with all simple weapons and with three martial weapons of their own choosing. They have no proficiency with armor or shields.

Berserker DR: Berserkers gain damage reduction just as if they wore armor, though it derives from their natural ability to ignore injury rather than any sort of protective gear. They lose this damage reduction if they wear any armor. Just like armor, this damage reduction provides no defense against magical weapons or monsters whose claws or fangs are imbued with arcane energy.

This rating represents your ability to block out the pain from an injury. From 1st to 10th level, you enjoy DR 1d4. After that, the rating increases to 1d6.

As mentioned above, you suffer a −2 penalty to your effective Armor feat mastery while you wear armor of any sort. However, the benefits of those feats apply to your berserker damage reduction as normal.

Fury Pool: A berserker relies on his raw emotional fury to carry his attacks to the enemy. While a weapon master draws on his training and practice, a berserker allows his inner animal instincts to guide his attacks. Some berserkers black out in battle. Their adrenaline and intense emotions overwhelm their rational minds. (And, in many cases, berserkers are barely rational even in peaceful circumstances.)

As a berserker, you gain access to the fury token pool. You spend these tokens to fuel your inner rage. Some actions you commit—and some your enemies commit—allow you to build up more fury tokens. This pool represents the growing rage in your mind as a battle progresses.

BERSERKER CLASS FEATURES AND MASTERY

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Base Defense Bonus	DR	Special Abilities	Armor Feat Mastery	Power Feat Mastery	Other Feat Mastery
1	+1	+0	1d4	Fury pool, bonus berserker ability	—	1	—
2	+2	+1	1d4	—	—	1	—
3	+3	+2	1d4	Berserker ability	1	2	—
4	+4	+3	1d4	Uncanny dodge	1	2	—
5	+5	+3	1d4	Berserker ability	2	3	1
6	+6/+1	+4	1d4	—	2	3	1
7	+7/+2	+5	1d4	Berserker ability	3	4	2
8	+8/+3	+6	1d4	Heedless charge	3	4	2
9	+9/+4	+6	1d4	Berserker ability	4	5	3
10	+10/+5	+7	1d4	Improved fury pool	4	5	3
11	+11/+6/+1	+8	1d6	Berserker ability	5	6	4
12	+12/+7/+2	+9	1d6	—	5	6	4
13	+13/+8/+3	+9	1d6	Berserker ability	6	7	5
14	+14/+9/+4	+10	1d6	Improved uncanny dodge	6	7	5
15	+15/+10/+5	+11	1d6	Berserker ability	7	8	6
16	+16/+11/+6/+1	+12	1d6	—	7	8	6
17	+17/+12/+7/+2	+12	1d6	Berserker ability	8	9	7
18	+18/+13/+8/+3	+13	1d6	Bounding charge	8	9	7
19	+19/+14/+9/+4	+14	1d6	Berserker ability	8	9	7
20	+20/+15/+10/+5	+15	1d6	Ultimate battle rage	8	9	7

You earn fury tokens for a variety of actions and events that are summarized below and on the table under Improved Fury Pool (see page 44). These tokens last till the end of the encounter, and you may use them against any foe. You may have, at most, a number of unspent fury tokens equal to 10 + your class level.

Action	Tokens Gained
Friend defeated	5
Suffer attack	1/attack that hits
Stoke fury	1/move action
Stoke fury	2/standard action
Stoke fury	4/full-round action

Friend Defeated: If any ally suffers injuries that drop her to 0 or fewer hit points, you immediately gain 5 fury tokens as a desire for vengeance wells up within you.

Suffer Attack: As you withstand pain, animal fury naturally rises in you. Like a cornered creature, you summon an inner reserve of courage and anger to defend yourself. You gain 1 fury token for each attack that hits you. If you wear armor, the attack must inflict damage of some sort. If you rely on your berserker DR, the attack does not have to make it through your damage reduction.

Stoke Fury: You bite your shield, howl, stomp your feet, and cut yourself with your weapon to stoke the inner fire of rage that burns within you. Each round, you can use a move action to arouse your fury. When you do so, you gain 1 fury token. You gain 2 fury tokens if you stoke your fury as a standard action, and 4 if you opt for a full-round action.

Berserker Abilities: At every odd-numbered level in this class, including 1st level, you gain a berserker ability chosen from those described below. Your fury tokens power these abilities. You can spend tokens on any combination of berserker abilities at once; spending them is a free action.

At 1st level, you gain an extra berserker ability (for a total of two), selected from the following list: berserk mind, berserk speed, or berserk strength (see below).

Berserk Mind: While in the grip of your rage, your mind becomes a cloud of hatred, bloodlust, and fury. By spending 2 fury tokens, you can enter this almost mindless state of being. You become immune to all mind-affecting effects and spells and gain a +2 bonus on all saving throws. This state lasts for a number of rounds equal to 2 + your Constitution modifier. You can use this ability once per encounter. You can extend its duration at any time by 2 rounds by spending a single fury token. There is no limit to the total duration you may extend it to. You can choose to end this state at any time as a standard action.

Berserk Speed: By spending 2 fury tokens, you enter a raging state that makes you as quick and deadly as a tiger. You gain a +2 bonus to Dexterity and a +2 square (10-foot) bonus to movement for a number of rounds equal to 2 + your Constitution modifier. You gain all the benefits of an enhanced Dexterity as normal. You can use this ability once

per encounter. You can extend its duration at any time by 2 rounds by spending a single fury token. There is no limit to the total duration you may extend it to. You can choose to end this state at any time as a standard action.

Berserk Strength: This ability represents the stereotypical berserker state. It transforms you into a snarling, foaming madman who can cleave through enemies with relative ease. By spending 2 fury tokens, you gain a +2 bonus to Strength and a +2 bonus to Constitution for a number of rounds equal to 2 + your (newly improved) Constitution modifier. You gain additional hit points, and lose those hit points, as normal (see the rules for gaining and losing Constitution points under "Temporary Hit Points" in Chapter Eight: Combat). You can use this ability once per encounter. You can extend its duration at any time by 2 rounds by spending a single fury token. There is no limit to the total duration you can extend it to. You can choose to end this state at any time as a standard action.

Berserk Toughness: When you empty your mind and allow your instinctual rage to guide you, you have a prodigious capacity to absorb wounds that would leave others in terrible pain.

You may use this ability only while under the effects of berserk mind, above. For each fury token you spend on this ability, you can transfer 2 points from your reserve pool immediately to heal your injuries. This healing applies only to hit points of damage. You cannot spend more than 4 fury tokens on berserk toughness per round.

Blade Dancer: You may use this ability while under the effects of berserk speed, above. Each time you drop an opponent to below 0 hit points, you may spend 1 fury token to move one square (5 feet) as part of your attack action. You can then take your move action or complete your full attack action as normal. This movement counts toward your movement allowance for the round, and it provokes an attack of opportunity (or not, if you move one-quarter of your speed or less) as normal.

Blind Rage: You pay little mind to your surroundings as you hack away at your opponents. In this state, you risk accidentally attacking anyone who draws near. It is best to use blind rage while your allies keep their distance.

You may spend 2 fury tokens on blind rage, but only while under the effects of berserk strength, above. You gain an additional +4 bonus to Strength and Constitution from this ability, but at the same time you limit your combat options. You attack a randomly selected opponent in your threatened area using a full-attack action. Should that opponent fall while you still have iterative attacks remaining, you attack a different, random foe. If you no longer threaten any opponents, you charge the closest living creature that you can reach. You never attempt to charge through impassable or deadly terrain. If no such target exists, simply move toward the nearest creature each round. You can take no other actions, though you can continue to spend fury tokens as normal (for example, to renew the effects of other berserker abilities).

You must use your attack of opportunity against the first creature, whether friend or foe, that provokes one from you. If you have more than one attack of opportunity, you strike

the second (and third, fourth, and so on) creature that provokes one.

This state of blind rage lasts until the start of your next action. You can spend tokens on your next action to continue gaining its benefits and drawbacks.

Furious Strike: For each fury token you spend on this ability, you gain a +1 bonus to damage on a single attack you make. You must spend these tokens before resolving your attack.

Furious Throw: You rear back and throw a weapon that is not normally designed for ranged combat. The raw power of your rage allows you to deliver an effective attack at short range. You may throw any one-handed weapon to a range of 20 feet as a normal attack without penalty. You must spend 1 fury token for each attack made in this manner. If you spend 1 additional token, you can first pick up a weapon on the ground in your space (though not one on your belt or in a sheath) as a free action. For example, if you hacked down two guards, you could pick up their swords and throw them using this ability and 4 fury tokens.

March of Ruin: You focus your efforts on a single opponent, bearing down upon her with such grim determination that few would willingly stand in your way. You can use this ability while under the effects of berserk mind, above.

Pick a single target within your line of sight for your march of ruin. If a foe stands between you and your target, you move into the foe's square as described in the overrun combat action (see "Overrun" in Chapter Eight: Combat) as part of a move action. You must pay 1 fury token for each space you enter in this way. In addition, an opponent who wishes to block you must succeed at a Will save (DC 10 + half your level + your Strength modifier). If she fails, she must choose to avoid you. If you wish, you may force an opponent who avoids you to move into the last space you occupied. The rest of this ability is as discussed in the overrun combat action.

Overpowering Assault: You bear down upon a single opponent, overwhelming her with your raw fury. You move into your opponent's square, provoking an attack of opportunity in the process. However, while you occupy this space, you reduce your opponent's reach by one square (5 feet). If this drops her reach to 0, she can only attack opponents in her square. Attempting to leave the square provokes an attack of opportunity from you. Your reach becomes 0 regardless of its original value.

You must spend 2 fury tokens to activate this ability and use one square (5 feet) of movement to enter your foe's space. Anyone who makes an attack into this square may hit either you or your foe; use the rules for attacking into a grapple to determining which combatant was hit.

Overwhelming Charge: When using a charge action, you can spend 2 fury tokens to hurtle into the fray with little concern for your safety or defenses. You literally throw yourself into your opponent. In addition to the standard

benefits of a charge, you may make a free trip attack before or after your strike, even if you normally cannot trip a foe with your weapon. If your attempt fails, your foe can try to trip you as normal. Apply the benefits of a charge to this attack.

Primal Howl: You unleash a ferocious animal scream that strikes terror into your enemies. All enemies within 60 feet of you must attempt Will saves (DC 10 + half your berserker level + your Strength or Charisma modifier + tokens spent). Upon a failed save, any creature with fewer Hit Dice than you becomes frightened, and those with Hit Dice equal to or greater than your own total become shaken. Shaken creatures do not become frightened because of this ability, nor do frightened ones become panicked. The effects of primal howl last a number of rounds equal to 2 + your Constitution bonus. Using the primal howl as a standard action costs a minimum of 2 fury tokens; using it as a move action costs a minimum of 6 tokens; and using it as a free action costs a minimum of 10 tokens.

Relentless Attack: You continue to fight even when your hit points fall below 0. By spending 4 fury tokens each round, you can carry on fighting and acting as normal until you die. You lose hit points and make Fortitude saves to stabilize as normal.

Splintering Strike: Your attacks land with such tremendous force that armor and shields can barely turn them aside. You can use this ability only while under the effects of berserk strength.

You must pay 2 fury tokens for each splintering strike you make. If the attack misses an opponent but would have hit if she did not carry a shield, roll damage as normal and apply it to the shield. If your opponent wears armor and the attack hits, she suffers nonlethal damage equal to half the amount absorbed by her armor. Your attacks land with such force that they cause bruises and other minor injuries despite the protection afforded by armor.

Storm of Fury: Rage clouds your mind, causing you to swing with little accuracy, but your anger sends renewed vigor surging through your arms. You can use this ability only while under the effects of berserk speed (see above).

Using storm of fury, you deliver a flurry of attacks against your opponent. For every 4 fury tokens you spend, you may make an additional melee attack at your best base attack bonus as part of a full attack action. You suffer a –2 penalty to attacks and damage and a –1 penalty to defense for each bonus strike. The penalties last for the entire round. There is no limit to the total number of additional attacks you can gain from this ability, though you must have enough fury tokens to pay for them all.

Suicidal Assault: You pay little heed to your defenses as you rage, slamming into foes with unmatched power. For every fury token spent on the suicidal assault, you gain a +1 bonus to attacks and suffer a –1 penalty to your base defense bonus. You cannot reduce your defense to below 0 in this manner. This bonus and its penalty last until your next action.

Uncanny Dodge: Beginning at 4th level, you retain your active bonus to defense when you are caught flat footed, but not in other circumstances which deny you your active defense bonus. You do not enjoy this benefit if you wear armor of any kind.

If you already have uncanny dodge from a different class, you gain improved uncanny dodge instead (see below).

Heedless Charge: Upon reaching 8th level, when you use the charge attack action, you can forgo your defenses in favor of a more accurate and deadly strike. By taking a –4 penalty to defense rather than the typical –2 penalty, you increase the benefits of charging to either a +4 bonus to your attack *or* a +2 bonus to your attack and a +4 bonus to damage. These benefits apply only to the attack made as part of your charge, but the defense penalty persists until your next action.

Improved Fury Pool: At 10th level, you become more adept at drawing out your inner rage using the stoke fury action described above.

Action	Tokens Gained
Friend defeated	5
Suffer attack	1/attack that hits
Stoke fury	2/move action
Stoke fury	3/standard action
Stoke fury	5/full-round action

Improved Uncanny Dodge: Starting at 14th level, you cannot be flanked when you wear no armor of any sort. Your animalistic combat instincts allow you to dodge and twist to prevent enemies from taking advantage of a flank.

This defense prevents the use of sneak attack and other precision-based attacks that require flanking, unless the attacker's base attack bonus is 5 or more points higher than your base defense bonus.

Bounding Charge: Beginning at 18th level, you leap into battle with long, loping strides. When using the charge action, you may move up to triple, rather than double, your movement. However, if you do so, you increase the charge penalty to defense by an additional –2.

Ultimate Battle Rage: By 20th level, you have become a walking engine of destruction. You automatically gain 1 fury token per round of combat at the beginning of your action. In addition, the ability score, movement and saving throw bonuses provided by the berserk mind, berserk speed, and berserk strength abilities increase by +4 each.

Playing a Berserker

Wild and uncontrollable, most berserkers hail from a barbaric land far from civilization. In such conditions, a man's base animal tendencies can flourish. With his uncontrolled rage and simple fighting techniques, the berserker makes the perfect barbarian.

However, even in the civilized realms, the berserker fighting style can take root. Rural cults, particularly those dedicated to worshipping animal totems, might place a doctrinal emphasis on setting aside the trinkets of civilization and embracing the wild. Such a berserker may seem like any other normal civilized man—until his battle madness overtakes him.

Berserkers are likely to draw suspicion and fear. Civilized folk may wonder whether a berserker is on the edge of entering a murderous rage, for even the simplest bar fight can turn into

a bloodbath if a berserker takes things too far. On the other hand, the berserkers' love of battle may drive civilized folk to recruit them as shock troops. A town on the border of two warring neighbors might be overrun with these warriors, while a rich, prosperous realm could employ entire legions of them.

CAMPAIGN MODELS

Most gamers approach the berserker as a barbarian forced to contend with civilization. While the clichés of a rough man in the city can be a lot of fun, here is another idea that you can use with this class.

Berserker Cults: Berserkers gain their skills through intense meditation, a diet that includes hallucinogenic mushrooms and roots, and strict adherence to their cult's dictates. Each cult worships an animal totem, such as the bear or wolf. When a berserker enters his rage, he taps into that totem and allows its savage nature to cloud his human judgment. The berserker cults are feared and mistrusted. However, these militaristic groups are too deeply rooted in rural areas for direct persecution to prove viable. Berserkers might serve in special military units or as mercenaries. The cult leaders wield tremendous political power, as they command, in essence, a small army of elite warriors.

As another option, berserkers might be members of a fanatical cult within a larger established religion. They could be flagellants, ascetics who whip themselves as a method of atoning for their sins. Inured to pain and driven by a relentless desire to purge their faults, these berserkers resemble a cross between psychotic warriors and paladins.

BERSERKER STRATEGY

The berserker is not a character class for timid players or for those afraid to spend their resources as quickly as they gain them. The key to handling a berserker lies in attracting as many attacks as possible to build up fury tokens. As soon as you can activate the berserker abilities that persist for more than 1 round, do so. In many cases, it is best to gain all three of them—berserk mind, berserk speed, and berserk strength—as quickly as possible and use them in response to the battlefield situation. You might use berserk mind to better resist an arcanist's magic, then berserk speed to close the gap to her hiding place, and finally berserk strength to send her to the pits of Hell.

You gain fury tokens based on the volume, rather than quality, of the attacks you face. Thus, berserkers tend to do better against large groups of weaker creatures rather than a single mighty opponent. If the party faces a villain guarded by a mob of goblins, leap into the monsters' midst while the weapon master or archer deals with the boss. Once the goblins are down, you should have a nice store of fury tokens to unleash upon their leader.

In any situation, if you are not at the front of the battle, you are probably doing something wrong. You must rely on your berserker damage reduction and high hit points to carry you to victory. The more attacks you soak up, the fewer that will target your friends and the more tokens you can spend to beat down your enemies.

BERSERKER STARTING PACKAGE

Ability Scores: Str 18, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10

Skill Groups: Athletics at 4 ranks.

Skills: Three more skills at 4 ranks each.

Feats: Cleave plus one more of player's choice.

Armor: None.

Weapons: Greatclub (1d10, ×3 critical).

Gear: Backpack, bedroll, 50 feet of hempen rope, torches (6), flint and steel, waterskin, crowbar, sledge. 5d4 gp.

Traits: Choose two and apply their modifications, if any.

EXECUTIONER

The assassin. The killer in the night. The cold-blooded slayer who sees death and bloodletting as an art. These are *executioners*, warriors who rely on their knowledge of anatomy and precise, vicious cuts to overcome their enemies. Executioners work best when they surprise opponents or when their allies distract them. These precise, deadly attacks require careful planning and exact aim to complete successfully.

The executioner defeats her foes by delivering just the right amount of force in the correct spot. A slash of an executioner's dagger can sever a tendon, pierce a bone, or destroy an eye. While other warriors rely on brute force, the executioner prefers an accurate strike.

Dexterity and Wisdom prove critical to executioners. Dexterity improves their ability to hide from foes, and they need it to land a killing blow. Wisdom gives them the insight and perception to locate the exact point of an enemy's weakness.

Hit Die: 1d4+4/level

SKILL GROUPS

Executioners gain access to the Athletics, Perception, and Stealth skill groups. Their training focuses on using skills to enter an opponent's lair from an unexpected direction while evading detection. The Perception group is critical, as executioners must be able to read their foes for clues to their vulnerabilities. Most executioners also delve into a variety of other areas, particularly skills such as Bluff and Diplomacy that let them talk their way past enemies.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (6 + Intelligence modifier) ×4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 6 + Intelligence modifier

FEATS

Executioners learn a variety of tricks and tactics with their weapons. They see swords, axes, and bows as the tools of their chosen form of artistry. Thus, they tend to gain comparatively high levels of mastery in fighting forms.

Executioners enjoy a special feat-related ability: They are the only class able to ignore the power weapon restriction on Power feats (see Chapter Five). They can use normal or finesse weapons to gain the benefits of Power feats. This rule reflects the executioner's focus on precision to deal tremendous damage with light, agile weapons.

EXECUTIONER CLASS FEATURES AND MASTERY

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Base Defense Bonus	Sneak Attack	Special Abilities	Finesse Feat Mastery	Lore Feat Mastery	Power Feat Mastery	Other Feat Mastery
1	+1	+1	1d6	Execution pool, executioner's eye, hindering cut	1	—	1	—
2	+2	+2	1d6	—	1	—	1	—
3	+3	+3	2d6	Armor-piercing strike	2	1	2	—
4	+4	+4	2d6	—	2	1	2	—
5	+5	+5	3d6	Create distraction	3	2	3	1
6	+6/+1	+5	3d6	—	3	2	3	1
7	+7/+2	+6	4d6	Bleeding cut	4	3	4	2
8	+8/+3	+7	4d6	—	4	3	4	2
9	+9/+4	+8	5d6	Improved hindering cut	5	4	5	3
10	+10/+5	+9	5d6	—	5	4	5	3
11	+11/+6/+1	+10	6d6	Crippling strike	6	5	6	4
12	+12/+7/+2	+10	6d6	—	6	5	6	4
13	+13/+8/+3	+11	7d6	Deathstroke	7	6	7	5
14	+14/+9/+4	+12	7d6	—	7	6	7	5
15	+15/+10/+5	+13	8d6	Improved bleeding cut	8	7	8	6
16	+16/+11/+6/+1	+14	8d6	—	8	7	8	6
17	+17/+12/+7/+2	+15	9d6	Hamstring	9	8	9	7
18	+18/+13/+8/+3	+15	9d6	—	9	8	9	7
19	+19/+14/+9/+4	+16	10d6	Improved crippling strike	9	8	9	7
20	+20/+15/+10/+5	+17	10d6	Execution blow	9	8	9	7

You gain this benefit only with Power feats that have a mastery rating at or below the mastery granted by your executioner class levels, not by your combined mastery from more than one class.

Executioners also have a knack for Lore feats, as they must study anatomy to learn the best killing techniques. Many of them also create poisons, useful for quickly overcoming powerful targets.

CLASS FEATURES

Executioners rely on stealth and their precise, deadly attacks. Their class abilities grant them the options they need to move into position for an attack.

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: Executioners train with a variety of weapons, though they focus on light, fast ones. They are proficient with all simple and martial weapons and light armor.

Sneak Attack: Executioners study anatomy and learn to hit opponents where it hurts. You gain the ability to inflict additional damage when you hit an opponent you flank or one who has lost his active bonus to defense. This bonus damage appears on the Executioner Class Features and Mastery table. You inflict +1d6 points of damage at 1st level and an additional 1d6 points at every odd executioner level after that.

Ranged attacks can count as sneak attacks only for targets within 30 feet of you. You do not multiply sneak attack damage on a critical hit.

You can deal nonlethal instead of lethal damage with a sneak attack if your weapon inflicts nonlethal damage, such as a sap or an unarmed strike. You cannot use a weapon that deals lethal damage to inflict nonlethal damage in a sneak attack—not even with the usual –4 penalty.

A creature immune to critical hits is not vulnerable to sneak attacks. You cannot sneak attack while striking a creature who has concealment or while hitting the limbs of a creature whose vitals are beyond reach.

Execution Pool: Executioners excel at gauging an enemy, picking out a weak spot, and delivering a deadly stroke that leaves the foe incapacitated. To represent these capabilities, members of the executioner class build up tokens they can spend to gain benefits to an attack or action.

As an executioner, you gain access to the execution token pool. Drawing on the lore you have already learned is the first way you earn these tokens. At the start of an encounter, you automatically gain a number of execution tokens based on your level (see table, next page). These tokens represent your accumulated knowledge of killing. An inexperienced executioner has little to draw upon, while a veteran can combine her practical knowledge with her understanding of anatomy and human tendencies—after a quick glance at the combatants in an encounter, she sees how they may fight or defend themselves.

You can use tokens earned in this manner against any opponent. However, not all creatures are vulnerable to the executioner's token-driven attacks (see next page).

Class Level	Tokens/Encounter
1–2	1
3–4	2
5–6	3
7–8	4
9–10	5
11–12	6
13–14	7
15–16	8
17–18	9
19–20	10

To use execution tokens, you must spend them before resolving an attack. If your attack hits, you gain additional benefits on top of the normal damage you inflict (as described for the specific class abilities below). To resist these extra effects, your opponent usually has to make a Fortitude save with a Difficulty Class based in part on the number of tokens you spent on the attack.

You can benefit from only one token-driven class ability on a given strike; you cannot combine them in a single attack.

Executioner's Eye: In addition to earning tokens as described above, you can earn them by studying a foe, gauging his combat strategies through observation. To do so, make a Sense Motive check as a free, move, standard, or full-round action—your check gains modifiers based on how long you spend on it (see table below). The target opposes your check with a base attack check or, if he knows you are studying him, a Bluff check or a base attack check, whichever is higher. On a successful check, you gain 2 execution tokens against him.

Action Type	Sense Motive Check Modifier
Free	−10
Move	−5
Standard	+0
Full-round	+5

You can accumulate tokens in this manner against only one opponent at a time. You must use the tokens you earn against the target of your Sense Motive check. Should you try to acquire tokens against a new target, you lose the ones you earned for the previous target.

Hindering Cut: You slice at an opponent's arms or legs, leaving him with an injury that makes it hard for him to attack or defend himself. Before you attack, you must spend at least 1 execution token and announce that you are using this ability. If your attack hits, your foe must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half your executioner level + your Wisdom modifier + number of tokens spent + any sneak attack dice of damage). Those who fail suffer a −1 penalty to attacks and defense *or* a −1 square (5-foot) penalty to speed. These penalties last for one minute and stack if a victim suffers multiple hindering cuts.

Armor-Piercing Strike: Starting at 3rd level, an executioner's ability to study opponents and find their weak points allows her to discover flaws in a target's armor.

Before you make an attack of any sort, including one tied to a class ability, you can spend execution tokens to reduce the target's damage reduction from armor. You cannot use this ability against damage reduction derived from other sources.

Activating this ability, which applies only to your next attack, requires the expenditure of 2 tokens. You can use armor-piercing strike once per round as a free action. The target's damage reduction penalty depends on your class level:

Class Level	DR Penalty
1–5	1
6–10	1d4
11–15	1d6
16–20	1d8

Create Distraction: Beginning at 5th level, you can make a flurry of attacks that distract your opponent, allowing you to slip into hiding. For instance, you slash at his eyes, deliver a dozen quick strikes to confuse his defenses, or stun him briefly with a blow to the head.

When you make a melee attack, you may spend 2 execution tokens to activate this ability. Resolve your attack as normal. If you hit, your opponent must make a Spot check (DC 10 + half your executioner level + your Wisdom modifier + number of additional tokens spent) or he loses track of you until the beginning of his next action. You gain this benefit in addition to damage from the successful attack. You do not need to choose to spend additional tokens until after you have made your attack roll.

Until the beginning of his next action, the foe does not threaten you. If you move at least three squares (15 feet) after your distracting attack, you can make a Hide check to evade the victim's notice, as if you were unobserved by him.

SNEAK ATTACKS WITH TOKEN USE

When you spend tokens on an executioner class ability attack, extra benefits may come into play if you inflict sneak attack damage along with the strike.

For most executioner class abilities described here, inflicting sneak attack damage in a token-driven strike increases the save DC for the class ability used in the attack. Add the dice of sneak attack damage to the save DC, if your attack gained them. Do not add the total result of the sneak attack damage dice, add only the number of dice used. For example, a 3rd-level executioner inflicts 2d6 points of sneak attack damage. She would add a +2 bonus to the save DC, not 2d6, if the ability added her sneak attack ability to the Difficulty Class.

Many token-driven attacks enjoy extra benefits when made along with sneak attack damage. These benefits differ with each ability; check the individual ability descriptions when you make your attack for the specific details.

Bleeding Cut: Starting at 7th level, a careful twist of your weapon allows you to leave a wound that bleeds freely and saps your foe's strength. Before you attack, spend at least 2 execution tokens and announce that you are using this ability. If your attack hits, the target must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half your executioner level + your Wisdom modifier + number of tokens spent + any sneak attack dice of damage). On a failed save, the target suffers 1d6 points of damage at the start of his action for 3 rounds. Hitting an opponent with this attack more than once increases the extra damage he suffers.

Targets immune to sneak attack damage are also immune to bleeding cuts.

Improved Hindering Cut: From 9th level forward, you inflict a greater penalty with a hindering cut attack. When you make an attack, you can spend additional tokens to improve the target's penalty to attacks and defense. For every 2 tokens spent beyond the first, increase the penalty by 1 point. You cannot improve the penalty to speed. Otherwise, this ability functions just like hindering cut.

Tokens spent to improve the penalty you inflict do not increase this ability's save Difficulty Class.

Crippling Strike: Starting at 11th level, you can drive your weapon into an opponent's joint, slice one of his muscles to shreds, or deliver a grievous wound that saps his vitality. Before you attack, spend at least 4 execution tokens and announce that you are using this ability. If your attack hits, the target must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half your executioner level + your Wisdom modifier + number of tokens spent + any sneak attack dice of damage). If he fails, he suffers 2 points of temporary ability damage to Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution (your choice).

Against a single target in a given encounter you can inflict up to your class level in damage to one ability score. For example, a 12th-level executioner could use crippling strike to damage a target's Strength six times, for a total of 12 points of temporary Strength damage. She could then begin to target the foe's Dexterity. As an executioner gains levels, she learns more ways to cripple an opponent.

Targets immune to sneak attack damage are also immune to this ability.

Deathstroke: Upon reaching 13th level, you can draw upon your executioner training to deliver a blow far deadlier than normal when you strike with a sneak attack. Before you make an attack that gains sneak attack damage, you can increase your sneak attack by 1d6 points for every 2 execution tokens you spend in the attempt. You cannot exceed your normal sneak attack damage value in bonus dice. For instance, an executioner with an 8d6 sneak attack could add up to 8d6 more dice of damage by spending 16 tokens. Your target gains no save against this ability, though it must be vulnerable to sneak attack damage for the deathstroke to have an effect.

Improved Bleeding Cut: Starting at 15th level, when you slice into an artery or other major blood vessel, you can leave an injury that bleeds even worse than usual. With a twist of your blade, you make an elegant incision that causes massive hemorrhaging. For every 2 additional tokens you spend on this ability, you increase the bleeding damage by 1 point. You can inflict, at most, bleeding damage equal to half your executioner level.

Tokens spent to improve bleeding damage do not increase this ability's save Difficulty Class.

Hamstring: Beginning at 17th level, you slash at an opponent's legs, wings, or similar limbs, leaving him unable to move and possibly rendering him vulnerable to additional attacks. When making a melee attack, announce that you are using this ability and spend 6 execution tokens. If your attack hits, the target must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half your executioner level + your Wisdom modifier + number of tokens spent). Should this save fail, you connect in a painful strike to the target's limbs that reduces his speed to zero for a number of rounds equal to 1 + your Wisdom modifier.

Improved Crippling Strike: From 19th level forward, your attacks to critical areas wreak more damage than normal. You increase the temporary ability score damage you inflict with crippling strike by 1 point for every 4 additional tokens you spend on this attack. You can cause a maximum amount of ability damage equal to your executioner level, with no cap on the ability damage inflicted per ability or per target.

Tokens spent to improve the ability damage you inflict do not increase the strike's save Difficulty Class.

Execution Blow: A 20th-level executioner can slash across a foe's neck, plant her weapon through his eye socket, or otherwise deliver a single deadly strike that kills an enemy with a single attack.

Using this ability requires you to spend at least 15 execution tokens and make an attack that allows you to gain sneak attack damage. If you hit, your target must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half your executioner level + your Wisdom modifier + additional tokens spent + any sneak attack dice of damage) or die instantly. The target drops to –10 hit points and is dead as if he failed his Fortitude save upon dropping to that hit point level.

PLAYING AN EXECUTIONER

The executioner, like the arcanist (see page 68), almost compels a reaction from the commoners she meets. A trained assassin and murderer, she wields deadly arts that are outlawed in many lands. The executioner might pose as a simple warrior to avoid drawing suspicion. Only in the presence of trusted comrades or in a dangerous situation does she allow her true skills to shine through.

Most executioners belong to a cult, organization, or guild of hired killers. Their talents are too esoteric for them to develop spontaneously. Rather, they require intensive study and training. Hidden, isolated dojos accept only the most promising students, and their combat training could include as much religious and mystical study as physical exercise. Of all the classes, the executioner is the most likely to be tied to a specific organization.

The executioner's training might color how she dresses, her outlook on life, and her attitude toward others. Some assassin cults place a tremendous weight on personal honor. This group's members must show the utmost obedience to tradition and to their superiors. When ordered to eliminate a target, they must set aside all else. Other executioner guilds might embrace a more freewheeling attitude, but this is unlikely unless the class is common in your game. In such a situation, the executioner's abilities might spread far and wide without strict control by the elder guild members.

CAMPAIGN MODELS

This section describes some ideas for how executioners can fit into your campaign.

Assassin Cults: Secretive, powerful, and rightly feared, assassin cults train their members from childhood to master the art of murder. These groups might be illegal, but a few could operate within the boundaries of the law. For example, an assassin cult attached to a prominent local religion might have free reign to kill enemies of the faith against whom the religious hierarchy has issued a writ of death.

Other cults take a mystical view of their abilities that ties to religious worship. For example, the Initiates of the 39 Sins believe they are the reincarnated forms of the first to commit murder. By killing criminals, tyrants, and other evil folk, they hope to atone for their ancient sins and win admittance to the afterlife. Until then, they face reincarnation and a return to their quest. They wear porcelain masks fashioned to resemble angelic children to represent the pure state they seek to achieve.

Brotherhood of Slayers: This model replaces the executioner's mystical origin with cold, hard economics. Warring noble families, competing religious cults, and rival kingdoms may hire members of an assassin's guild to eliminate rivals who have tarnished their honor, enemies who threaten their holdings, and anyone else who stands in their way. In this model, assassination is a common tool of the ruling class. Anyone who demonstrates the intellectual and physical tools to join an assassin's guild can gain admittance.

The guilds range from prestigious institutions to simple gangs of thugs that kill for a few silver coins. Shadowy wars erupt between the guilds as they compete for contracts. Over time, some guilds form an affinity for one power bloc or another, creating natural rivalries between groups. If a war or open struggle recently ended, the assassin guilds could face pressure to disband—because they represent a highly organized, deadly resource, the nobility might feel they pose too much of a threat in a time of peace.

EXECUTIONER STRATEGY

The executioner's primary strength lies in the tokens she earns. Unlike other classes, you start each encounter with a supply that you can use to hinder your enemies. You work best when

you team up with another warrior to flank an opponent. Since you lose your tokens without benefit if your attacks miss, you should try to hold off on spending them until you can flank an enemy. At that point, open up with your attacks.

Your key weakness lies in defense: You have an average progression, light armor, and few defensive abilities. Yet, you normally must move to flank an opponent to make the most of your abilities. On top of that, you can't select Defense feats until 5th level. Your best bet is to judge carefully when you can move ahead to attack.

Armigers are your best friends, since they can wade into the midst of the enemy and create flanking opportunities while you remain on the edge of the fray.

Your best bet is to focus on a single, powerful figure and use your talents to wear down his fighting ability. You don't fight well against large groups of monsters or enemies roughly equal in power, since your special abilities hinder only one creature. Think of it this way: The longer an opponent lasts during an encounter, the more benefit you gain from the penalties you place upon him. A goblin likely falls to a single blow, but a stone giant can pound on the party round after round. Thus, focus on the big, tough targets.

Against such foes, your winning strategy is to sneak up on them, launch a devastating attack, then move away using your create distraction ability to prepare another ambush.

EXECUTIONER STARTING PACKAGE

Ability Scores: Str 14, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 10

Skill Groups: Athletics, Perception, and Stealth at 4 ranks each.

Skills: Five more skills at 4 ranks each.

Feats: Weapon Finesse plus one more of player's choice.

Armor: Leather armor (DR 1d2).

Weapons: Greatsword (2d6 damage, 19–20, ×2 critical), dagger (1d4 damage, 19–20, ×2 critical).

Gear: Backpack, bedroll, 50 feet of silk rope, grappling hook, torches (6), flint and steel, waterskin.

Traits: Choose two and apply their modifications, if any.

HARRIER

Harriers are scouts, rangers, and bushwhackers who rely on speed and agility to overcome their enemies. A harrier is at her best when she is on the move. Unlike other warriors, who might stand in place to use full-attack actions, the harrier fights best when she dodges between opponents, slips into their ranks, and delivers attacks from multiple angles as she speeds by. She is the fastest warrior on the field and, while her attacks may lack the crushing force of a berserker's axe, she slips beyond a foe's grasp before he can counter-attack.

Harriers overcome their opponents by never giving them a chance to strike. They slip in, deliver attacks, and speed away from harm. They prefer open spaces lacking in difficult terrain, but even in tight situations they can excel.

Dexterity is critical to a harrier. Harriers rely on a variety of skills such as Tumble and Balance to evade attack, and to make use of these skills, they disdain heavy armor that might protect them from attacks. A good Strength score also helps a harrier, as it gives their attacks extra power.

Hit Die: 1d4+4/level

SKILL GROUPS

Harriers gain access to the Agility and Athletics skill groups. In addition, they commonly train in skills such as Hide and Move Silently to aid them in setting up ambushes. Many harriers wander the wilderness, as they feel most comfortable in open terrain. Thus, they often carry ranks in Ride, Survival, and similar skills.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (8 + Intelligence modifier) ×4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 8 + Intelligence modifier

FEATS

Harriers gain access to fewer feats than other character classes, as they tend to focus on the special abilities covered below. They have a talent for Finesse fighting and Defense and enjoy some ability with Projectile attacks. Otherwise, they tend to dabble in a variety of areas.

CLASS FEATURES

Harriers rely on mobility and maneuverability to overcome their enemies. They can move faster and slip past even the toughest defenses. In combat, they tend to swarm around a foe, landing attacks from a variety of angles as they move before retreating to safety.

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: Harriers learn to use a variety of weapons, from longbows to harass enemies at a distance to light scimitars that can cut them down at close range. They enjoy proficiency with all simple weapons and with all martial weapons that are either finesse or projectile arms. They also gain proficiency with light armor.

Combat Speed: You gain the bonus to your speed listed in the Harrier Class Features and Mastery table while in combat. It does not apply while traveling long distances but functions only during combat and similar situations where tactical movement matters. You cannot maintain this speed for more than 10 consecutive minutes, and you must move at your normal speed or slower for double the amount of time you used this ability.

You lose this bonus speed if you wear anything heavier than light armor or if you carry enough equipment to reduce your speed.

Combat Mobility: Harriers excel at avoiding blows in combat. Whenever you provoke an attack of opportunity due to movement, you gain a +4 bonus to defense. This bonus applies only against the attack of opportunity. In addition, you can move at normal speed while using the Tumble skill without penalty and you gain double your Dexterity bonus to Tumble checks.

You cannot use combat mobility if you wear anything heavier than light armor or if you carry enough equipment to reduce your speed.

HARRIER CLASS FEATURES AND MASTERY

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Base Defense Bonus	Combat Speed*	Special Abilities	Defense Feat Mastery	Finesse Feat Mastery	Projectile Feat Mastery	Other Feat Mastery
1	+1	+1	+2/10 feet	Combat mobility	1	1	—	—
2	+2	+2	+2/10 feet	—	1	1	—	—
3	+3	+3	+2/10 feet	Mobile assault	2	2	1	—
4	+4	+4	+2/10 feet	—	2	2	1	—
5	+5	+5	+2/10 feet	Mobile defense	3	3	2	1
6	+6/+1	+5	+4/20 feet	—	3	3	2	1
7	+7/+2	+6	+4/20 feet	Whirling attack	4	4	3	2
8	+8/+3	+7	+4/20 feet	Running assault	4	4	3	2
9	+9/+4	+8	+4/20 feet	Rapid assault	5	5	4	3
10	+10/+5	+9	+4/20 feet	—	5	5	4	3
11	+11/+6/+1	+10	+6/30 feet	Superior mobility	6	6	5	4
12	+12/+7/+2	+10	+6/30 feet	Steel dancer	6	6	5	4
13	+13/+8/+3	+11	+6/30 feet	Cross attack maneuver	7	7	6	5
14	+14/+9/+4	+12	+6/30 feet	—	7	7	6	5
15	+15/+10/+5	+13	+6/30 feet	Swooping assault	8	8	7	6
16	+16/+11/+6/+1	+14	+8/40 feet	—	8	8	7	6
17	+17/+12/+7/+2	+15	+8/40 feet	Superior running assault	9	9	8	7
18	+18/+13/+8/+3	+15	+8/40 feet	—	9	9	8	7
19	+19/+14/+9/+4	+16	+8/40 feet	Tumbling assault	9	9	8	7
20	+20/+15/+10/+5	+17	+8/40 feet	Superior rapid assault	9	9	8	7

* Speed in squares/feet.

Mobile Assault: The 3rd-level and higher harrier fights best while on the move. Your enemies have trouble defending themselves as you come at them from an unexpected angle or with the added momentum of your movement. When you use a move action to move and then a standard action to attack, you gain a bonus to your attack equal to the number of squares you moved. This bonus lasts until the start of your next action.

Note that your mobile assault bonus equals the number of squares you actually move, not the amount of movement you spend. For example, if you move across two squares of difficult terrain, you would spend four squares of movement and gain a +2 bonus on your attack.

You gain the bonus only for unique squares that you enter. The maximum bonus you can gain from this ability equals your harrier level. You cannot gain the benefits of any Power feats when you use mobile assault.

You cannot use this ability if you wear anything heavier than light armor or if you carry enough equipment to reduce your speed.

Mobile Defense: Starting at 5th level, you spin, dodge, and maneuver to avoid attacks as you move. When you move as part of your turn, you gain an active bonus to defense equal to half the number of squares you moved. This bonus lasts until the start of your next action. You gain the bonus regardless of your movement mode, provided you are not denied your active bonus to defense.

You gain the bonus only for unique squares that you enter.

As with mobile assault, your bonus equals the number of squares you physically move, not the amount of movement

HARRIERS AND THE MOBILITY FEAT

The benefits from the harrier's combat mobility and superior mobility class abilities stack with those of the mobility feat.

Possession of the combat mobility class ability does not qualify the harrier to take the mobility feat's expanded masteries. They must take the base Mobility feat mastery in order to take the expanded masteries.

you spend. If you climb three squares up a wall, spending six squares of movement to do so, you gain a +1 bonus to defense.

You cannot use mobile defense if you wear anything heavier than light armor or if you carry enough equipment to reduce your speed.

Whirling Attack: Beginning at 7th level, when you pounce upon an enemy, you twist, turn, and maneuver around him to confound his defenses. When you use the Tumble skill to move through an opponent's threatened area without provoking an attack of opportunity as part of a move action, and then attack him with your standard action, you gain a +2 bonus to your attack and deal +1d6 points of damage.

Running Assault: The 8th-level and higher harrier can move and attack as a single action. As a full-round action, you can move your normal speed. At any point during this movement, you can use a standard action to attack. You can move both before and after this attack. You gain the benefits of abilities such as mobile assault based on the squares you moved before your attack.

You cannot attempt a running assault if you wear anything heavier than light armor or if you carry enough equipment to reduce your speed.

Rapid Assault: Starting at 9th level, when you use a standard action to attack, you gain an additional attack in return for attacking with a penalty. You make your second attack at your best base attack bonus, but those attacks, and all other attacks you attempt until your next action, suffer a −4 penalty. In addition, you must carry a light or a finesse weapon to use this ability.

You cannot attempt a rapid assault if you wear anything heavier than light armor or if you carry enough equipment to reduce your speed.

Superior Mobility: Beginning at 11th level, you enjoy a +6 active bonus to defense when you provoke an attack of opportunity due to moving. This bonus counts only against attacks of opportunity.

In addition, you can move at full speed when using the Climb and Balance skills without penalty. You cannot use superior mobility if you wear anything heavier than light armor or if you carry enough equipment to reduce your speed.

Steel Dancer: Against lumbering creatures, harriers of 12th level and higher can take advantage of clumsy attacks. If an opponent attacks you with a weapon one size category larger than your own size, you can dash over him just as his attack is about to fall upon you. You might also tumble beneath him or dodge his weapon, allowing it to dig into the ground, then run up the haft to attack.

To use this ability, you must use the Tumble skill to move through the threatened area of an opponent with an appropriately sized weapon.

If he attempts to gain an attack of opportunity against you, make your Tumble check against his Base Attack Check as normal. If you beat your opponent by 5 points or more, you must spend movement to enter his space. This does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

You then attack him without his active bonus to defense, using a standard action. You may continue your move as normal after completing this attack.

Cross Attack Maneuver: Harriers of 13th level or higher who succeed by 5 points or more in a Tumble check to avoid an attack of opportunity can lure an opponent into striking at a different target. You can force your foe to resolve his attack against any target that both you and he threaten from your current square. You can use this ability once per round.

Swooping Assault: Starting at 15th level, when you maneuver on the field of battle, you can build up the momentum to crash into a foe with increased force. When you use an action to move before attacking, you gain a bonus to damage equal to the number of squares you just moved. However, this bonus replaces your Strength bonus to damage. You do not multiply it by 1.5 if you wield a two-handed weapon.

You gain the swooping assault bonus only if you use an action to move, then a second action to attack. As with mobile defense and mobile assault, the bonus equals the number of squares you physically move.

You cannot attempt a swooping assault if you wear anything heavier than light armor or if you carry enough equipment to reduce your speed.

Superior Running Assault: From 17th level forward, you can use your running assault ability to spread your attacks over several spaces. As a full-round action, you can use a full attack action while moving your full speed. If you gain multiple attacks, such as through the rapid assault ability, you can resolve each attack at different times along your movement. For instance, you can move two squares, attack, move three more squares, and attack again. Normally you would have to resolve both attacks together.

If you enjoy any benefits to your attacks based on the distance you moved, your bonus derives from the movement you took up until the current attack.

You cannot make a superior running assault if you wear anything heavier than light armor or if you carry enough equipment to reduce your speed.

Tumbling Assault: Starting at 19th level, you can slip past an opponent's defenses, moving with such speed that he unknowingly leaves himself open to a deadly attack. When you Tumble through an area occupied by a foe without provoking an attack of opportunity, you enjoy multiple benefits: You gain a +4 bonus to attacks and a +2d6 bonus to damage against the foe whose space you moved through. This benefit applies to an attack you make immediately after using an action to move through your foe's space. (Normally, you must use a move action to tumble, and then a standard action to attack.)

Superior Rapid Assault: At 20th level, when you make a rapid assault, you may take two bonus attacks in return for a −6 penalty to all three attacks, as well as on all subsequent attacks you attempt until your next action.

Playing a Harrier

The harrier is speed personified, making members of this class ideal scouts, skirmishers, and raiders. They strike fast and hit hard. Against their foes, harriers are best served by swooping in for repeated strikes, neutralizing their enemies' fighting talents by dancing beyond sword reach after each strike.

Compared to the other classes, the harrier's fighting style is one of the most likely to arise from a specialized set of cultural or training conditions. Some harriers might simply be barbarian warriors who have hardened themselves to days and nights of endless running. Their rigorous training forges their legs into iron pistons, allowing them to move with unmatched speed and agility.

Campaign Models

The harrier's fighting style differs enough from the other classes' that its origin bears some investigation.

Harrier's Debt: Deep in the wastelands there stands a solitary tower. It is said that only those who burn with vengeance for a crime committed against them or their loved ones can find this place, and even then only after they survive weeks in the wastes. A wizened crone lives here amid artifacts and relics from an age undreamed of. When petitioners arrive at her door, she demands their food, water,

clothes, and everything else they carry. For a week, they wait on her doorstep, shivering in the cold of the night and burning in the noonday sun. If they persevere, she takes them into her home. After months of training, rituals, and invocations that they are sworn to keep secret, the crone releases them into the world. Thus, new harriers seek to avenge the loss that sent them to the crone's tower. In return for the secrets of the harrier's fighting arts, the petitioners agree to perform one service for the crone. Whether this deed will be for good or ill, none can say.

What is known is that many harriers simply disappear when the time comes for them to pay this debt. Without a word of explanation or farewell to her comrades in arms, the harrier departs to fulfill the bargain. Some return after months away, but most are never seen again.

War Dancers: The harrier's fighting style is the product of a tradition passed down from generation to generation. Built upon an elaborate set of dances adapted into a martial art, the war dancers act out ancient battles from myth and legend. Each cut, parry, and riposte springs from legend. To a harrier, a battle is actually a performance of an elaborate epic that spans the ages. According to their lore, the dances tell of battles fought before the rise of mankind and the great struggles of humanity. This focus on the precise steps of the dance, along with their phenomenal physical conditioning, allows harriers to attain levels of speed and agility impossible for lesser mortals.

HARRIER STRATEGY

As should be obvious from the rules described above, harriers must keep moving to maximize their class abilities. It is imperative that you put ranks into Tumble so you can avoid your opponents' attacks of opportunity. If you cannot move, you become far less effective as a fighter.

Seek out areas that are relatively open and focus on keeping clear avenues for movement. If you allow an opponent to corner you, you either cannot move or you have to waste movement tumbling through a foe's space. You must pay close attention to the terrain, particularly anything that can block your progress.

Don't write off the benefits of using Balance and Climb to move at your normal movement rate. If you are cornered or need to escape a tight situation, you can scramble up a wall or move across a rope or similar narrow path.

HARRIER STARTING PACKAGE

Ability Scores: Str 14, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 10

Skill Groups: Agility and Athletics at 4 ranks each.

Skills: Six more skills at 4 ranks each.

Feats: Dodge plus one more of player's choice.

Armor: Padded armor (DR 1).

Weapons: Scimitar (1d6 damage, 18–20, ×2 critical), javelins (4) (1d6 damage, ×2 critical), dagger (1d4 damage, 19–20, ×2 critical).

Gear: Backpack, bedroll, 50 feet of silk rope, torches (6), flint and steel, waterskin, 5d4 gp.

Traits: Choose two and apply their modifications, if any.

HUNTER

Hunters are tough, independent warriors who use their strong grasp of tactics and clever stratagems to defeat their enemies. Many hunters wander the wilderness alone. When outnumbered or facing a single powerful beast, they make the most of the terrain and their talents to survive.

While hunters often work alone, they also make excellent leaders. A hunter may lack the social graces and winning smile of a thief, but he has the knowledge and battle lore to help others work together as a team. A hunter's timely advice can mean the difference between victory and defeat.

Wisdom and Intelligence are both important to a hunter. Intelligence helps him formulate good plans, while Wisdom is the key to anticipating an enemy's moves and countering them with a good plan. Of all the warriors in *Iron Heroes*, the hunter is the smartest, savviest, and most cunning.

Hit Die: 1d4+4/level

SKILL GROUPS

Hunters gain access to the Athletics, Perception, Stealth, and Wilderness Lore skill groups. Their broad range of experiences and their adaptability help them cultivate a wide variety of talents.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (6 + Intelligence modifier) ×4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 6 + Intelligence modifier

FEATS

Hunters excel at using their mind to overcome their enemies. They are the only class with advanced access to the Tactics feat category, and their mastery of Lore feats lets them create poisons or defeat specific creature types that they have studied. Hunters also can select one category of weapon feat that matches their preferred fighting style: either Power, Finesse, or Projectile. They gain a mastery progression in their chosen area as shown in the Hunter Class Features and Mastery table.

CLASS FEATURES

Hunters are the ultimate tacticians. They excel at turning difficult situations into an advantage. During a battle, they are at their best when they coordinate their allies' actions and use their knowledge to defeat their enemies. A hunter may lack a barbarian's strength and an executioner's deadly attacks, but he always seems to know when and where to strike.

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: Hunters focus on light weapons and armor. They prefer mobility to heavy protection and versatile weapons to massive axes and maces. Hunters gain proficiency with all simple and martial weapons and light armor.

Tactical Pool: Like many other classes, hunters build up a pool of tokens they can use to power special abilities. However, a hunter's tokens work slightly differently than those of other classes. Hunters have two main talents: They can use the terrain to their advantage, and they can help the party fight together as an effective team. The hunter's tactical tokens allow him to accomplish these goals.

You earn a pool of tactical tokens at the beginning of an encounter based on your hunter class level, as shown on the table, above and to the right. This represents the accumulation of hunter's lore you have gained through experience and can bring to bear on the battle at hand.

You may use tactical tokens against any opponent to power class abilities, as described below. At the end of the encounter, you lose any remaining tokens you have built up. Your pool of unspent tactical tokens cannot exceed 10 + your hunter level.

Level	Tokens/Encounter
1–2	1
3–4	2
5–6	3
7–8	4
9–10	5
11–12	6
13–14	7
15–16	8
17–18	9
19–20	10

Hunter's Eye: In addition to the tokens gained at the start of an encounter, hunters earn additional tactical tokens by studying the battlefield (see table below). Studying the battlefield is either a move action or a standard action, your choice.

Tactical Tokens

Action Used	Gained
Move	1
Standard	2

Terrain Advantage: A smart hunter uses the terrain to his advantage. During a battle, he sees where he should position himself to fire upon an enemy or spots a good place to take cover.

When you gain a cover bonus to defense due to terrain, you can spend 1 tactical token to increase that bonus by +1. You cannot increase the cover bonus to more than double its initial value. Any allies who gain a cover bonus from the same terrain feature also enjoy this benefit if you use a free action to advise them. For example, you might tell your allies to duck to the left or lean right to avoid enemy arrows.

If an opponent takes cover, you can reduce the defense bonus she gains from it by 1 point for each token spent. This reduction applies only to your attacks, unless you extend it to your allies by using a free action to tell them where or how to attack an enemy with cover.

When you enter a difficult square (see "Difficult Terrain" in Chapter Eight: Combat), you can spend 1 token as a free action to treat that square as normal terrain for movement purposes—in effect, you locate a clear path. The terrain still retains all its other features. For example, if you step into a pool of boiling water, you still suffer damage. If you use a free action to tell your allies about the clear path you found, they can treat the exact path you took as normal terrain as well.

The token-granted benefits last until the start of your next action; by that time, your opponents might fire from different angles, or a target under cover may shift to account for your tactics.

Tactical Insight: Starting at 3rd level, hunters can provide their allies with insightful counsel that helps them perform better in combat. They might advise an archer as to an opponent's weak points or speak carefully chosen words to fire a berserker's rage.

As a free action at any time during a round, you can give tactical tokens to an ally within 30 feet of you. These tokens become a type of the ally's choice, and she may spend them

HUNTER CLASS FEATURES AND MASTERY

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Base Defense Bonus	Special Abilities	Lore Feat Mastery	Tactics Feat Mastery	Weapon Feat Mastery	Other Feat Mastery
1	+1	+1	Tactical pool, hunter's eye, terrain advantage	1	2	—	—
2	+2	+2	—	1	2	—	—
3	+3	+3	Tactical insight	2	3	1	—
4	+4	+4	Assess opponent	2	3	1	—
5	+5	+5	Woodsman's senses	3	4	2	1
6	+6/+1	+5	—	3	4	2	1
7	+7/+2	+6	Fortuitous insight	4	5	3	2
8	+8/+3	+7	—	4	5	3	2
9	+9/+4	+8	Improved terrain advantage	5	6	4	3
10	+10/+5	+9	Wolf pack tactics	5	6	4	3
11	+11/+6/+1	+10	Improvised attack	6	7	5	4
12	+12/+7/+2	+10	—	6	7	5	4
13	+13/+8/+3	+11	Woodsman's reflexes	7	8	6	5
14	+14/+9/+4	+12	—	7	8	6	5
15	+15/+10/+5	+13	Improved tactical insight	8	9	7	6
16	+16/+11/+6/+1	+14	—	8	9	7	6
17	+17/+12/+7/+2	+15	Brilliant tactician	9	10	8	7
18	+18/+13/+8/+3	+15	—	9	10	8	7
19	+19/+14/+9/+4	+16	Swarm tactics	9	10	8	7
20	+20/+15/+10/+5	+17	Supreme terrain advantage	9	10	8	7

on any abilities she possesses that require tokens. She cannot violate the cap on unspent tokens. These tokens disappear at the end of the encounter.

When you use tactical insight, your ally gains 1 token for every 2 tokens you spend on it. You may make this free action at any time during a round, as long as you are neither flat footed nor incapacitated (paralyzed, asleep, etc.).

You can also use tactical insight on yourself, if you have access to token pools other than the tactical pool. This works exactly like granting tokens to an ally.

Assess Opponent: Beginning at 4th level, a hunter can use his keen senses to quickly determine the tendencies, tactics, and abilities of a monster he faces and to gain a key edge.

You study an opponent's demeanor, movements, and fighting style to create an appropriate counter. For every tactical token you spend against a foe, you gain a +1 active bonus to defense against her attacks and a +1 bonus to attacks against her, but the total bonus you gain cannot be greater than half your hunter level. These benefits last until the end of the encounter. The maximum total bonus you can gain equals half your class level.

Assessing an opponent is a standard action. You can assess a single foe multiple times, increasing your total bonus each time. If you attempt to assess an additional foe, you lose your benefits against the first one.

Woodsman's Senses: The 5th-level and higher hunter is well attuned to his environment. Little escapes his notice, from a minor detail in the pattern of a tapestry to the assassin lying in wait behind it.

Each round as a free action, you may make Spot and Listen checks as a free action to notice hidden enemies and other details detectable with those skills. Outside of combat, you always gain the benefits of taking 10 with Listen and Spot, even if you do not explicitly attempt to use those skills. For example, if an executioner hides in a nearby alley, you take 10 on a Spot check to see her, even if you do not explicitly look down the alley in search of an opponent.

Fortuitous Insight: From 7th level on, the hunter's keen mind, sharp senses, and combat experience shows him advantages on the battlefield that others would ignore. For instance, when an ally attempts to trip an opponent, the hunter might notice a root sticking out of the ground. A quick word of advice from the hunter allows the ally to take advantage of that otherwise minor aspect of the terrain.

You can spend 1 tactical token to grant yourself or an ally a +1 circumstance bonus to an attack, skill check, saving throw, or ability check. You can spend a maximum number of tokens at one time equal to half your class level. You can use fortuitous insight once per round as a free action on your turn or an ally's turn. For an ally to receive the bonus, you must be able to see and speak to her.

Outside of combat, your fortuitous insight grants yourself and your allies a +2 competence bonus to all Strength-, Dexterity-, and Wisdom-based ability checks. Your allies gain

these bonuses as long as: (1) they stay within 60 feet of you; (2) you can see them; and (3) they can hear you offer advice to help them with their tasks. In the chaos of combat, you cannot be so free with guidance while maintaining your wits. This use of fortuitous insight carries no token cost.

Improved Terrain Advantage: Starting at 9th level, a hunter can use his terrain advantage ability to increase or reduce the defense bonus provided by cover by 2 points for each token spent, rather than just 1 point. In addition, the hunter can increase the bonus provided by cover to up to triple its base value.

Wolf Pack Tactics: Beginning at 10th level, hunters cultivate an excellent sense for striking at just the right time.

While fighting alongside your allies, you can time an attack to take advantage of the momentary distractions they create. Once per round, if a foe you threaten suffers damage from any source other than yourself, you can make an attack of opportunity against him. This attack of opportunity is in addition to your normal attacks of opportunity for the round and does not count toward your limit on attacks of opportunity against that target. Using wolf pack tactics carries no token cost.

Improvised Attack: Drawing on his experience, keen senses, and knack for turning mundane conditions into tactical advantages, the 11th-level and higher hunter uses the terrain to confound and injure opponents.

As a full-round action, you can use an attack action that normally targets one creature against multiple opponents. You must spend 2 tokens for each additional target, and you also need some logical way to exploit the terrain to your desired end. You might pull on a rug to send two ruffians sprawling to the ground (a trip attack) or knock a sturdy branch from a tree to smash into the goblins beneath it.

You can trip opponents or damage them as normal in this way. For each token you spend on the improvised attack beyond the ones required to target foes, you gain an additional +1 bonus to attack rolls, checks, and damage made as part of the attack.

Some examples of improvised attacks include shooting loose stones from a wall, throwing a cask of cooking oil at an area to slip up your foes, and so forth.

You can use melee or ranged weapons to damage a group of enemies, but you can only trip the ones you threaten in melee.

Woodsman's Reflexes: From 13th level forward, hunters have an intuitive sense for trouble, one that keeps them from stumbling into danger.

During a surprise round, you may use the result of your Spot or Listen check in place of your initiative, provided that you are not surprised. On later rounds, use your normal initiative result.

Improved Tactical Insight: Starting at 15th level, hunters can use their tactical insight ability to grant an ally 1 token for each tactical token spent. In addition, the hunter may grant an ally more tokens than she normally can have unspent until the end of her next action. At that time, she loses any tokens above her maximum. As with tactical insight, the hunter can use this ability on himself, if he has access to token pools other than the tactical pool.

Brilliant Tactician: Beginning at 17th level, the hunter's grasp of small-unit tactics and his uncanny ability to read and react to a situation allow him to organize his allies quickly into an effective fighting force.

At the start of your action, you earn a bonus token that you can either keep or grant to a single ally within 30 feet. The token may be of any type of the recipient's choice.

Swarm Tactics: From 19th level forward, a hunter can lead his allies in a swarm attack against a chosen foe.

For each tactical token you spend as a free action, you grant yourself and all your allies a +2 bonus to attacks against a single target that you threaten. You must select this target when you use this ability, which you can do only once per round. The total bonus you grant cannot exceed your class level. If for any reason you no longer threaten the target, you and your allies no longer enjoy this bonus. The bonus lasts until the start of your next action.

Supreme Terrain Advantage: The 20th-level hunter's superior sense of terrain and uncanny ability to use it to his advantage helps him lure enemies into difficult situations.

By spending 4 tactical tokens, you gain one of the following advantages:

- An enemy who charges you must make a Reflex save (DC 10 + half your hunter level + your Wisdom modifier) or fall prone in a square of your choice along the path of her charge. You have positioned yourself so that an opponent must move across an area of dicey foothold. Even if the ground is clear, your position requires the foe to move across a barely noticeable pothole, an exposed root, or similar hazard.
- You or an ally of your choice gain an immediate attack of opportunity against an opponent of your choice who is currently taking their turn. You can use this ability at any time during an opponent's turn. This attack of opportunity counts towards the recipient's normal attack of opportunity limits.
- You immediately cancel an attack of opportunity against yourself or an ally within 30 feet. One foe of your choice loses the chance to use such an attack against the target of this ability. (His attack of opportunity does not count as used for that round, however.)

You can use your supreme terrain advantage once per round.

ROLEPLAYING A HUNTER

The hunter might seem like the class most likely to thrive at the edge of civilization, but his talents allow him to adapt to almost any environment. In an urban setting, the hunter tracks down lawbreakers, navigates the criminal underworld, and stalks the streets and alleys. Hunters serve as guides into almost any sort of terrain, from deep jungles to the areas of town that even the city guard are loath to enter. Their ability to lead, and their talent for combining lore with combat proficiency, make them ideal leaders or independent scouts.

While hunters resemble the other warrior classes in many

ways, their emphasis on mind over brawn makes them worthy of separate consideration. Hunters are likely to become powerful politically and socially, as they extend the same tactical and strategic lessons they learned in combat to other arenas.

CAMPAIGN MODELS

Here are some ideas for fitting hunters into your game setting.

Elite Organization: Hunters might belong an elite group of outriders, rangers, and scouts that works to turn back the tide of evil humanoids, demons, or other monsters. This secretive organization swears allegiance to no crown, nation, or god. Instead, it works across all borders to serve the greater good. While many members are hunters, characters of other classes are also welcomed—if they prove themselves. The hunter is a good match for such a group because of the class' ability to lead in combat and due to its self-sufficient nature.

Rugged Frontier Folk: In this model, hunters as a class arose only recently. Their unique blend of skills and talents emerged at the edge of civilization, where folk must rely on each other for survival. Not only are the hunter's talents new to the world, but they also represent a possible shift in power. As the borderlands stabilize on their own, they come to see the city folk and merchants as meddling fools. The hunters could lead a revolt against their rulers in a bid for independence, making any member of this class a potential revolutionary.

HUNTER STRATEGY

As a hunter, you are the group's expert tactician. Many of your class abilities have a 30-foot range, making it important that you stay near the middle of the group and maintain line of sight to your friends. That way, your allies have the best chance to benefit from your counsel.

Terrain of any sort is your friend. Seek out every opportunity to take cover against your enemies. You can either use your abilities to reduce your target's benefit from the cover or render yourself nearly untouchable by making the most of it. Always keep your abilities in mind, and try to maximize your benefits. Since you start each encounter with a pool of tokens, spend them freely. At low levels, you can use a move action to earn more tokens and a standard action to attack or move. At higher levels, you start with enough tokens that you can spend them throughout the battle.

The hunter is perhaps the most difficult class to play in *Iron Heroes*. As a leader, you sometimes must put the needs of others ahead of your own. The solo hunter rarely finds glory, but he excels at helping the group as a whole win difficult victories against long odds.

HUNTER STARTING PACKAGE

Ability Scores: Str 14, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 10

Skill Groups: Athletics, Perception, Stealth, and Wilderness Lore at 4 ranks each.

Skills: Five more skills at 4 ranks each.

Feats: Tactics of the Mind plus one more of player's choice.

Armor: Leather armor (DR 1d2).

Weapons: Longsword (1d8 damage, 19–20, ×2 critical), longbow (1d8 damage, ×3 critical), dagger (1d4 damage, ×2 critical).

Gear: Backpack, bedroll, 50 feet of silk rope, torches (6), flint and steel, waterskin, 5d4 gp.

Traits: Choose two and apply their modifications, if any.

MAN~AT~ARMS

The *man-at-arms* is fairly skilled in a variety of fighting techniques. He learns to use heavy axes, light rapiers, bows, and thrown weapons, but his ability to use them never matches that of an archer or a weapon master. Yet, the man-at-arms enjoys an important advantage over such specialists: He can alter his tactics to fit the situation at hand, thanks to his broad range of techniques.

The man-at-arms defeats his enemies by choosing the best weapon or fighting technique to quash them. If he faces a warrior armed with daggers, he pulls out a longspear and keeps his foe at bay. Against an archer, he readies a tower shield, draws his short sword, and advances across the field of fire. Whether he must ride a horse into battle or don light armor to sneak into an enemy fortress, he is ready to meet the challenge.

Strength is the man-at-arms' most important ability. It improves his chances of landing hits and dealing damage in melee, and it also allows him to carry a broad array of weapons and armor without worry.

Hit Die: 1d4+6/level

SKILL GROUPS

A man-at-arms learns a wide range of skills. This class grants access to any three skill groups of the player's choice. Some men-at-arms train as scouts and explorers, while others must learn to navigate the treacherous social waters of a royal court.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (6 + Intelligence modifier) ×4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 6 + Intelligence modifier

FEATS

Unlike other classes, the man-at-arms grants access to *all* of the feat categories. The Man-at-Arms Class Features and Mastery table lists the feat mastery that a man-at-arms uses for all of the feat types. Men-at-arms focus on a broad range of fighting styles, making this the most adaptable and customizable character class.

CLASS FEATURES

A man-at-arms practices many abilities. This class grants a number of bonus feats, allowing you to pick and choose abilities as you want them. In addition, the man-at-arms sometimes recalls a bit of training briefly, enough to fulfill a particular role for a short time.

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: You are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, all armor, and all shields.

Bonus Feats: At 1st, 3rd, 7th, 9th, 13th, 15th, 17th, and 19th levels, the man-at-arms gains a bonus feat that may come from any feat category. You can spend this selection on any feat of your choice, provided that you meet its mastery requirements. Bonus feats are in addition to the feat a character gets at every even-numbered level.

MAN-AT-ARMS CLASS FEATURES AND MASTERY

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Base Defense Bonus	Special Abilities	All Feat Mastery
1	+1	+1	Bonus feat	1
2	+2	+2	—	1
3	+3	+3	Bonus feat	2
4	+4	+4	—	2
5	+5	+5	Wild card feat	3
6	+6/+1	+5	—	3
7	+7/+2	+6	Bonus feat	4
8	+8/+3	+7	—	4
9	+9/+4	+8	Bonus feat	5
10	+10/+5	+9	—	5
11	+11/+6/+1	+10	Wild card feat	6
12	+12/+7/+2	+10	—	6
13	+13/+8/+3	+11	Bonus feat	7
14	+14/+9/+4	+12	—	7
15	+15/+10/+5	+13	Bonus feat	8
16	+16/+11/+6/+1	+14	—	8
17	+17/+12/+7/+2	+15	Bonus feat	9
18	+18/+13/+8/+3	+15	—	9
19	+19/+14/+9/+4	+16	Bonus feat	9
20	+20/+15/+10/+5	+17	Wild card feat	9

Wild Card Feats: At 5th, 11th, and 20th level, you gain access to a wild card feat, a feat that can change each day. This represents the broad range of training and fighting styles to which you have been exposed.

You can pick a feat to fill the "wild card" slot as a standard action. You retain this feat for the rest of the day. After you rest for eight hours, the wild card slot resets to empty, allowing you to choose a different feat to fill its place. The wild card feat represents the broad, varied nature of your training.

You may choose to retain the same feat already selected for a further day, rather than allowing the wild card feat slot to become empty. When you do this, you retain all benefits of your chosen wild card feat, including any accumulated tokens associated with that feat. When you allow a wild card feat slot to become empty, you lose all of these benefits, including any unused tokens.

You must make the choice whether to allow the wild card feat slot to become empty as soon as you wake from your 8 hours' rest.

A feat chosen in this manner can have a mastery equal to your current maximum mastery –2. If your feats (other than wild card feats) come from three different categories, your wild card feat can have a mastery equal to your maximum rating –1. If your feats come from six different categories, your wild card feat can have a mastery rating equal to your normal maximum.

For example, a group of orcs atop a castle wall pin down Thorsten the 12th-level man-at-arms with arrow fire. Thinking fast, Thorsten pulls out his bow and takes cover behind a large boulder. As a 12th-level man-at-arms, Thorsten has two wild card feats. He has not yet used either one. He spends 2 rounds to purchase Point Blank Shot at mastery 1 and 2, then returns fire. Thorsten retains those two feats until he rests for eight hours. After resting, his two wild card feats reset. He can now spend them on new feats.

Playing a Man-at-Arms
The backbone of any fighting force, the man-at-arms is a warrior's warrior. He learns to handle a wide variety of weapons, studies the tactics and lore needed to outthink a foe, and incorporates new stratagems to help him defeat his enemies. A true martial omnivore, the man-at-arms is the most flexible of all the classes.

In terms of the campaign, a man-at-arms is likely to arise from an individual's desire and potential rather than a focused school of the fighting arts. After all, the entire point of the man-at-arms is that he spurns the idea of a single mode of fighting. He prefers to use whatever tool grants him the best chance of winning the day.

Campaign Models
The man-at-arms concepts focus on the idea that the members of this class are self-taught or have an innate talent to master a wider range of talents than normal.

The Prodigy: A man-at-arms is born, not made. Occasionally among those who take up the study of arms there arises one student who instinctively understands the handling of a sword, the proper positioning in a duel, and the fundamentals of tactics. Each day, the sword masters watch this pupil excel in all areas. Sometimes, the student even surprises the master with a new maneuver never before

mastered by one so young. These prodigies are said to be reincarnations of warriors who refused entry into the after-life in favor of returning to the mortal world and its continu-al wars. In time, these students grow weary of the academy's slow pace. They leave, perhaps taking a weapon and a suit of armor, to seek their fortunes. The battlefield calls, promising to teach them secrets of blood and iron that their instructors can never impart. These men-at-arms travel the world, con-tinually seeking new challenges, new methods, and new foes.

The Veteran: Most soldiers are simple warriors. Trained to handle a few weapons, strap on a breastplate, and fight in formation, these dregs count on their numbers to defeat their foes. Compared to weapon masters, harriers, execution-ers, and other classes, they are poorly trained and utterly outmatched. Yet, sometimes one arises from their number who displays a knack for survival. His natural instincts and innate talent for fighting quickly distinguish him. Lacking any formal training, the veteran learns what tricks he can. In many cases, he invents abilities and tactics that took the established fighting traditions decades to learn. Once his term of service ends, the veteran cannot turn his back on this path. His future is written in battle, and his talents push him to master new methods of fighting. While he may not hail from a revered martial tradition, he has survived the toughest academy of all: the battlefield.

Man-at-Arms Strategy

Coming up with a single generic strategy for a man-at-arms is almost impossible. This class is far too flexible to fall into such an archetype. You should decide early on what sort of feats to take. Planning ahead when selecting feats lets you either specialize in one particular area or develop a wide range of talents.

Regardless of the path you take, Quick Draw is an excellent feat choice. It allows you to quickly reconfigure your weapon load to handle a new opponent.

The man-at-arms' key strength is the class' adaptability. You can fill a broad number of roles, from bowman to melee warrior to scout. You can afford to dabble in a wide number of areas, because some feats automatically improve as you gain levels. Such feats are doubly important for a man-at-arms, because they improve your ability in an area without costing you a feat choice that might grant you competence in a new category.

Generally speaking, it is best to hold off on allocating your wild card feats until the last possible moment. Such feats represent the ultimate in flexibility, as they can give you a talent critical to the success of an adventure or allow you to refine your abilities to fill a needed role.

Don't forget that you can dip into Social feats as needed. If you invest ranks in skills such as Diplomacy or Spellcraft, you can fill a critical role in the party with only a minor feat investment.

Man-at-Arms Starting Package

Ability Scores: Str 16, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 10

Skill Groups: Three groups of your choice, 4 ranks each.

Skills: Five more skills, 4 ranks each.

Feats: Power Attack, War Leader, and one of player's choice.

Armor: Chainmail (DR 1d4), heavy shield (Medium shield, +2 defense).

Weapons: Battleaxe (1d8 damage, ×3 critical), shortbow (1d6 damage, ×3 critical), dagger (1d4 damage, 19–20, ×2 critical).

Gear: Backpack, bedroll, 50 feet of silk rope, torches (6), flint and steel, waterskin, 5d4 gp.

Traits: Choose two and apply their modifications, if any.

THIEF

While many adventurers rely on a sharp blade and heavy armor to defeat their foes, the *thief* prefers to let others do the fighting. Instead, he relies on his golden tongue and sharp mind to get what he wants. The thief prefers to achieve victory through subtle methods. He might simply sneak past a guard to rob the treasury or knife an opponent in the back when she least expects it.

The thief is a master trickster. He can outwit almost any-one, and most warriors know to keep up their guard when battling him. The thief is at his best when his opponents underestimate him. He may lack a berserker's brawn, an armiger's heavy armor, or a weapon master's skills, but he is still deadly. With a deceptive word and a clever ploy, he can slip a dagger between even the toughest warrior's ribs.

Thieves rely on Dexterity and Charisma to survive. A good Dexterity allows them to dodge blows and evade detection with ease, while a good Charisma helps them trick their enemies.

Hit Die: 1d4+4/level

Skill Groups

Thieves gain access to the Agility, Athletics, Robbery, Social, Stealth, and Theatrics skill groups. In addition, they tend to master a broad variety of skills in other areas. A highly intelli-gent thief might be able to acquire competence in almost every available skill.

Thieves also can spend far more ranks in a skill than nor-mal. This skill expertise ability is described below.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (12 + Intelligence modifier) ×4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 12 + Intelligence modifier

Feats

A thief's approach to feats neatly outlines this class' attitude toward adventuring. A thief gains an excellent mastery rating in the Social feats, allowing him to talk his way out of almost any situation. While other adventurers might need to club opponents into submission, a thief can use a few well-chosen words to make them act as he wishes. If words fail a thief, the Defense feats allow him to escape relatively unscathed. Should that fail, he can always use the Finesse weapon feats to face his enemy with a dagger or short sword.

Class Features

Thieves are the ultimate confidence men. They can manipulate others with ease, while in battle they can trick foes into drop-

THIEF CLASS FEATURES AND MASTERY

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Base Defense Bonus	Sneak Attack	Special Abilities	Defense Feat Mastery	Finesse Feat Mastery	Social Feat Mastery	Other Feat Mastery
1	+0	+1	1d6	Alias, skill expertise	1	—	2	—
2	+1	+2	1d6	—	1	—	2	—
3	+2	+3	1d6	Honor of thieves	2	1	3	—
4	+3	+4	2d6	—	2	1	3	—
5	+3	+5	2d6	Beguiling flattery, alias	3	2	4	1
6	+4	+5	2d6	—	3	2	4	1
7	+5	+6	3d6	Uncanny dodge	4	3	5	2
8	+6/+1	+7	3d6	—	4	3	5	2
9	+6/+1	+8	3d6	Unassuming target	5	4	6	3
10	+7/+2	+9	4d6	Alias	5	4	6	3
11	+8/+3	+10	4d6	Hide in plain sight	6	5	7	4
12	+9/+4	+10	4d6	—	6	5	7	4
13	+9/+4	+11	5d6	Panache of the blade	7	6	8	5
14	+10/+5	+12	5d6	Improved uncanny dodge	7	6	8	5
15	+11/+6/+1	+13	5d6	Knife in the back, alias	8	7	9	6
16	+12/+7/+2	+14	6d6	—	8	7	9	6
17	+12/+7/+2	+15	6d6	Force of personality	9	8	10	7
18	+13/+8/+3	+15	6d6	—	9	8	10	7
19	+14/+9/+4	+16	7d6	Audacity of thieves	9	8	10	7
20	+15/+10/+5	+17	7d6	Lord of lies, alias	9	8	10	7

ping their defenses. In combat, a thief is rarely an adventuring party's main fighter. Instead, he helps others by distracting the enemy or landing a well-timed and carefully placed strike.

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: Thieves prefer to avoid fighting if they can, leaving them with little weapons training. They are proficient with all simple weapons and light armor.

Sneak Attack: Like executioners, thieves can hit opponents where it counts. However, most of them learn to do so through trial and error rather than a focused study of anatomy.

You can inflict additional damage when you hit an opponent you flank or one who has lost her active bonus to defense. This bonus damage appears on the class table above. You inflict +1d6 points of damage at 1st level and an additional 1d6 points at every third thief level after that.

Ranged attacks can count as sneak attacks only for targets within 30 feet of you. You do not multiply sneak attack damage on a critical hit.

You can deal nonlethal instead of lethal damage with a sneak attack if your weapon inflicts nonlethal damage, such as a sap or an unarmed strike. You cannot use a weapon that deals lethal damage to deal nonlethal damage in a sneak attack—not even with the usual –4 penalty.

A creature immune to critical hits is not vulnerable to sneak attacks. You cannot sneak attack while striking a creature who has concealment or while hitting the limbs of a creature whose vitals are beyond reach.

Alias: The best way to escape the law is to send it in pursuit of the wrong (or a nonexistent) person. Thieves develop aliases that allow them to move in society without revealing their true natures.

Create a specific identity—such as "Waldren the rug merchant"—with distinct mannerisms and appearance. When you disguise yourself as this identity, you gain various benefits. When making Disguise checks to use your alias, you gain a bonus to the check equal to your class level. While in your alias, you gain a +2 bonus to Bluff checks.

You gain a new alias at 5th, 10th, 15th, and 20th levels.

Skill Expertise: Thieves are experts in many areas, from picking lock to deciphering ancient texts.

As a thief, you have mastered different skills based on the tools you've needed over the years. Unlike members of other classes, you have achieved not only superior breadth but more depth of training. You can have a maximum number of ranks in a skill equal to your class level + 5, rather than your total character level + 3. If you have more than one class, you can have ranks equal to your character level + 3 or your thief level + 5, whichever is greater.

Honor of Thieves: Starting at 3rd level, many thieves learn the hard way that the best way to avoid being betrayed is to betray someone first. While not all thieves are honorless dogs, most learn to act before a difficult situation becomes hopeless.

If you can conceal a dagger or similar weapon on your body you can make a surprise attack against an opponent to start a battle. You can use this ability only when you and your target have line of sight and combat has not been initiated.

Make a Sleight of Hand check opposed by your target's choice of either a Spot or Base Attack Check. If you win, you immediately draw your dagger and make a single attack with it. Your opponent is denied their active defense against this attack. If your opponent wins, you fail to draw your weapon at this time.

Make a second Sleight of Hand check. Regardless of whether or not your attempt succeeded, all your allies and opponents (including your target) must make their choice of a Spot or Base Attack Check against this check. If they succeed, they are not surprised. If you forewarned your allies that you were going to use this ability, they gain a +2 circumstance bonus on their check.

You, and all characters who are not surprised, should now roll initiative. As normal during the surprise round, all other characters are limited to a single move or standard action. However, if your original Sleight of Hand check succeeded (that is, you have already drawn your weapon and attacked your opponent), then you may make your choice of either a full round action or a move action and a standard action, as if this was a normal round rather than the surprise round. If your original check failed, you may make only a single move or standard action.

As normal in combat, all characters (including yourself) are flat-footed until their first action.

Beguiling Flattery: Beginning at 5th level, thieves can distract enemies by heaping great praise upon their skill, wealth, talent, and looks. They can manipulate others with ease in this manner, distracting them while allies ready an attack or slip away unnoticed.

You can use this ability only outside of combat against a single creature of your choice. The target must be able to hear and understand you. When you begin talking, the target makes a Will save (DC 10 + half your thief level + your Charisma modifier). The target suffers a special size penalty to its save: For each category of size difference between you, the target's save suffers a –4 penalty. Smaller creatures feel mighty if large ones grovel before them, while huge ones expect tiny opponents to beg for mercy.

On a failed save, the target allows you to continue talking for a number of minutes equal to 1 + your Charisma bonus (minimum one minute). During this time, you must continue talking to the target. She takes no actions other than interacting with you and suffers a –2 penalty to all Sense Motive and Spot checks during this time. In addition to laying on the flattery, you can converse normally with the target. You gain a bonus to any Diplomacy checks you make against the creature equal to the number of minutes you spend flattering the creature. This bonus lasts for one hour or until you attack the creature, whichever comes first.

Uncanny Dodge: A thief must always be ready for trouble. From 7th level forward, you retain your active bonus to defense when you are caught flat footed, but not in other circumstances which deny you your active defense bonus. If you already have uncanny dodge from a different class, you instead gain improved uncanny dodge (see below).

Unassuming Target: The 9th-level and higher thief does a good job of making himself appear small and weak in a fight—not worth the bother of attacking. If an opponent threatens anyone in addition to you, you may attempt a Bluff check opposed by her Sense Motive as a free action on her turn. If you succeed, the opponent must target someone other than you.

Unassuming target does not work against those you have attacked or those under specific instructions to attack you. For example, a magistrate with orders to arrest you ignores the rest of your gang to put you in chains.

Hide in Plain Sight: Starting at 11th level, you can create a distraction using the Bluff skill as a free action. You then can use Hide as normal to take cover from your opponents. As a thief, you know the value in taking cover and escaping as quickly as possible.

Panache of the Blade: Others fight with talent gained through hours of practice, training, and hard experience. You, on the other hand, get by on pure chutzpah.

Beginning with 13th level, if you have a melee weapon out and ready to use, you may make a Bluff check as a move action, opposed by your enemy's base attack check. If you succeed, your foe mistakes your bluster for real talent. As long as you do not attack your opponent (and thus reveal your ineptitude) you gain a +2 active bonus to defense against the foe's attacks. She approaches you with cautious, unsteady strikes as she braces for your brilliant counterattack.

Note that using panache of the blade does not count as an attack. You still gain the benefits of an unassuming target. You can use this ability against only one foe at a time. Switching targets causes you to lose the benefit against the original one.

Improved Uncanny Dodge: From 14th level on, a thief's reflexes and awareness allow him to react to danger from all sides.

You cannot be flanked. Opponents who flank you do not gain the bonus to attack or any other flanking benefits, such as sneak attack damage. Improved uncanny dodge prevents the use of sneak attack and other precision-based attacks that require flanking, unless the attacker's base attack bonus is 5 or more points higher than your base defense bonus.

Knife in the Back: Beginning at 15th level, a thief with the time to ready an attack can plant his weapon right between a target's ribs, put a dagger in her eye socket, or otherwise make a devastating attack.

If you remain undetected by an opponent, you increase your sneak attack damage by +1d6 points and gain a +1 bonus to attacks against the foe for each round you spend observing her. You enjoy this bonus if you gain sneak attack damage against the target within 3 rounds after you stop watching her.

Your maximum bonus to attacks and total number of dice of sneak attack damage can equal no more than half your thief level.

Force of Personality: Thieves of 17th level and higher become unparalleled tricksters and experts at manipulating others. As a full-round action, you can attempt a skill check to compel an opponent to act as you wish through taunts, threats, and lies. Using force of personality in combat causes a foe to remain in place, taking no actions until she is attacked. Outside of combat, it gives you a limited form of control over the target.

The target of your control receives a Will save (DC = result of the skill check – 10). In combat, use the Intimidate skill. Outside of combat, use Diplomacy to determine the Difficulty Class.

In combat, the target of this ability loses all actions until you stop speaking or for a number of rounds equal to your Charisma bonus, whichever comes first. The target takes no action other than listening to you, but she gains her active bonus to defense as normal. She is considered shaken until the end of the encounter.

Outside of combat, you can dictate the target's actions as long as they do not put her in direct, clear danger. This includes any action that would prove harmful to her allies and friends. Otherwise, you exercise almost perfect control over her. This benefit remains in effect until you stop talking. At that point, the control stays in place for number of rounds equal to 1 + your Charisma modifier. You cannot give the target new orders at this point, but she carries out the ones you originally gave her. The target does not see your orders as threatening—you've simply talked her into obeying. Later, she simply believes that it seemed like a good idea at the time.

Audacity of Thieves: Starting at 19th level, thieves can bring a battle to a halt with a stirring oration. They might call for a truce, demand to speak to the enemy's leader, or offer to parley.

Using audacity of thieves requires you to make a Bluff check as a full-round action. It forces all opponents within 60 feet of you to make Will saves (DC = Bluff check result). Creatures who fail this save do nothing on their next action but listen to you, as long as they do not come under attack. While you continue to talk, those who are not attacked keep listening. Your opponents may attempt new saves each round, with a +1 bonus to their roll for each consecutive round that you have used this ability.

If the DM judges that during this period you or your allies commit a suspicious action, such as running away from the scene or readying weapons, your opponents may act as normal starting one round after the suspicious action. After this action, each of your opponents saves as normal. If they fail this save, they may act as normal on their next action but still lose their current one.

Lord of Lies: The 20th-level thief's deceptions have become so convincing, many folks simply fail to consider the fact that he might be lying.

When you attempt a Bluff check, your target cannot attempt a Sense Motive check to see through your lies until 1 round after your skill check. For that round, she automatically believes your deception. If your Bluff target succeeds in her Sense Motive check, you cannot use lord of lies against her for the rest of the day: She is now on her guard against you and suspect of everything you say. You can still trick her, but she no longer delays her Sense Motive check.

If you use Lord of Lies to feint, you automatically get one attack against your opponent with their active defense denied: they automatically believe your feint long enough for you to make that attack. Feinting always affects only one attack, so even if you can feint as a free action, you don't get a full round of attacks with active defense denied by using Lord of Lies.

You only gain the benefit of Lord of Lies once per opponent per encounter, but may feint normally against them (without the benefit of Lord of Lies) as often as you like through the rest of the encounter.

Playing a Thief

Whenever society develops economics, trade, and private ownership, criminals are sure to emerge. The question with the thief isn't whether such criminals exist. Instead, you must determine the level of influence they enjoy over society and their degree of organization.

Almost every civilization develops some form of organized crime, and fantasy realms are no different. The thieves' guild, a criminal organization similar to the real world Mafia or Yakuza, could strictly control who can practice the criminal arts and in which areas of a city. Merchants pay out protection money to the guild and, in return, can expect the thieves to pass them by. A freelance thief who violates the guild's directives, especially when it comes to robbing those who have turned over protection money, can expect a fierce and merciless response.

Consider the role that social class plays in the thief's position in a game. In rundown, lower-class areas, folks might see the thief as a respectable, admirable person. To laborers and serfs, the thief represents hope of escaping poverty. In contrast, the upper ranks of society see a thief as a threat to the established order. He flouts the law and steals riches from those who have earned them.

Campaign Models

Use the following ideas to help customize the thief class' background to your campaign world.

Criminal Cartel: Thieves form shadowy unions, societies, and even noble families that handle the criminal underworld in the same manner as their legitimate analogs. The thieves' guild sets rates and limits on the robberies a member can commit, while the crime families compete in illegal trades. A thief might have to find a guild or family willing to take him in. Otherwise, he is forced to work without protection and if he does anything to anger an existing power group, he has no means to defend himself. Unfortunately, membership has its price. A guild thief might have to take on missions he doesn't want or find himself caught between warring gangs, while a crime family may demand absolute obedience.

Merchant Prince: In this model, the thief represents more than a simple criminal. Cunning merchant princes compete with each other for access to markets, sales, and business relationships. Members of the thief class serve as diplomats and respected nobles. While common criminals plunder tombs and stage robberies, the real thieves arrange for the theft of entire nations and trade regions. A party's thief might be a trade guild member or an official diplomat working on behalf of the crown.

Thief Strategy

As a thief, you are at your best at the edge of a battle or outside of a fight altogether. The berserkers and weapon masters in the party might want to draw swords now and ask questions later, but you can help the group along by avoiding battles and turning enemies into allies or neutral parties.

Your higher maximum skill ranks provide you with a tremendous advantage, one critical to your success in and out of combat. Use Hide and Move Silently to move into position for a sneak attack. Skills such as Sleight of Hand let you grab items without alerting the enemy. Any skill that requires an opposed check, such as Tumble or Bluff, becomes far more effective in your hands. The few skill ranks you have on a character of the same level can prove decisive. Load up on skill challenges (see Chapter Four) to drive home this advantage.

Generally it is best for you to stay at the fringes of a fight. That way, you can sneak along without drawing attention to yourself. Slip around to the rear to attack a vulnerable foe, make a sneak attack, or even grab the objective of the fight without alerting the enemy. When you are caught in the open, head for cover as soon as possible. If you try to go head to head with a warrior, your poor attack bonus and few hit points may spell your doom.

Thief Starting Package

Ability Scores: Str 10, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 13

Skill Groups: Agility, Athletics, Robbery, Social, Stealth, and Theatrics at 6 ranks each.

Skills: 20 more ranks to spend on remaining skills.

Feats: Devious Manipulator plus one more of player's choice.

Armor: Leather armor (DR 1d2).

Weapons: Club (1d6 damage, ×2 critical), sling (1d4, ×2 critical), dagger (1d4 damage, 19–20, ×2 critical).

Gear: Backpack, bedroll, 50 feet of silk rope, grappling hook, torches (6), flint and steel, waterskin, 5d4 gp.

Traits: Choose two and apply their modifications, if any.

WEAPON MASTER

The *weapon master* picks one weapon and trains with it until it becomes an extension of his body. He learns complex methods of fighting that make other combatants look like simple brutes. In battle, he is an artisan of blood and carnage.

The weapon master is at his best with his chosen weapon in hand and an opponent before him. Compared to other warriors, such as the berserker or the armiger, he is the most consistent and reliable. His abilities stem from his training and actions, whereas an armiger or berserker relies on his opponents to behave in keeping with his fighting style. Sometimes, though, the weapon master's focus can prove a drawback. If the weapon master cannot use his favored armament, he suffers a tremendous disadvantage.

Strength is the weapon master's most important ability, as it improves his chances to strike an opponent and inflict damage with a melee weapon. Dexterity and Constitution also prove useful in battle.

Hit Die: 1d4+6/level

Skill Groups

Weapon masters gain access to the Athletics skill group. They focus so intensely on their chosen weapon that they rarely pursue interests beyond the fighting arts. The skills a weapon master does develop usually follow his interests or hobbies. Many weapon masters study the Craft skill to better tend their weapons and armor.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Intelligence modifier) ×4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Intelligence modifier

Feats

A weapon master gains unparalleled access to weapon feats, but his mastery of other areas is limited at best. The weapon master can choose two of the following feat categories as his primary and secondary areas of study: Armor, Defense, Finesse, or Power. He advances in those two categories using the mastery advancement on the Weapon Master Class Features and Mastery table. He advances in all other categories less quickly.

Class Features

Weapon masters are the unmatched kings of the battlefield, provided that they can make the most of their favored weapon.

WEAPON MASTER CLASS FEATURES AND MASTERY

Class Level	Favored Base Attack Bonus	Base Attack Bonus	Base Defense Bonus	Special Abilities	Primary Feat Mastery	Secondary Feat Mastery	Other Feat Mastery
1	+1	+1	+1	Favored weapon, weapon pool, weapon style	2	1	—
2	+2	+2	+2	—	2	1	—
3	+3	+3	+3	Weapon style	3	2	—
4	+5	+4	+4	—	3	2	—
5	+6/+1	+5	+5	Favored defense	4	3	1
6	+7/+2	+6/+1	+5	—	4	3	1
7	+8/+3	+7/+2	+6	Weapon style	5	4	2
8	+10/+5	+8/+3	+7	—	5	4	2
9	+11/+6/+1	+9/+4	+8	Weapon expertise	6	5	3
10	+12/+7/+2	+10/+5	+9	—	6	5	3
11	+13/+8/+3	+11/+6/+1	+10	Weapon of legend	7	6	4
12	+15/+10/+5	+12/+7/+2	+10	—	7	6	4
13	+16/+11/+6/+1	+13/+8/+3	+11	Weapon expertise	8	7	5
14	+17/+12/+7/+2	+14/+9/+4	+12	—	8	7	5
15	+18/+13/+8/+3	+15/+10/+5	+13	Weapon expertise	9	8	6
16	+20/+15/+10/+5	+16/+11/+6/+1	+14	—	9	8	6
17	+21/+16/+11/+6	+17/+12/+7/+2	+15	Weapon supremacy	10	9	7
18	+22/+17/+12/+7	+18/+13/+8/+3	+15	—	10	9	7
19	+23/+18/+13/+8	+19/+14/+9/+4	+16	Weapon supremacy	10	9	7
20	+25/+20/+15/+10	+20/+15/+10/+5	+17	Weapon supremacy	10	9	7

Each weapon master selects one particular weapon, such as the longsword or greataxe, and dedicates his life to becoming an unequalled expert in its use. Some weapon masters travel the land in search of other masters of their chosen weapon to challenge them to duels.

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: Weapon masters study a number of fighting styles before focusing on the single one of their choice. They gain proficiency with all simple and martial weapons, light and medium armor, and all shields.

Favored Weapon: At 1st level, you must select one specific weapon to become your weapon of choice. When fighting with it, you gain the use of this class' special abilities, described below. In addition, you use your favored base attack bonus with it (see the class table). With other weapons, you use the lower base attack bonus on that table.

Weapon Pool: Weapon masters are unparalleled experts with their favored weapon. When they fight with it, they can complete special attacks that others cannot even attempt. These attacks rely on their completing a combination of maneuvers to set up their specialized moves.

You can designate a single opponent as the target of your weapon token pool as a free action. When you attack that opponent with your favored weapon, you earn 1 weapon token each time your attack hits. You get this token even if the target's armor absorbs all the damage you inflict. The weapon master gains 2 tokens per hit from levels 7 to 14, and 3 tokens per hit for levels 15+.

You can change to a new target once per round as a free action, but you lose any tokens you have built up against the original target. Your number of unused weapon tokens cannot exceed your weapon master level + 10.

Weapon Style: At 1st, 3rd, and 7th level, you gain a new specialized fighting ability to use with your favored weapon. You activate these special abilities by spending weapon tokens—this represents the combination of maneuvers you must use to set up your special move. An intricate attack requires more tokens, as you must spend more time and effort on the combination of maneuvers needed to complete it.

You may have only one weapon style, weapon expertise or weapon supremacy ability active at any one time. Once per round on your turn, you may change your active weapon style, expertise or supremacy as a free action.

Each time you gain a new weapon style, select one of the following abilities:

Expert Strike: As you study the patterns of an opponent's defense, you ready yourself to make a single telling blow. You might slash low for a few rounds, then feint low and attack high to take advantage of a foe's lax parries. For each weapon token you spend, you gain a +1 bonus to either attack or damage on your next attack. If you make more than one attack per round, this benefit applies only to the next attack. Your bonus from expert strike cannot exceed your class level.

Mighty Blow: Your attacks strike with more force than normal as you learn to establish proper leverage with your weapon. Sometimes an attack that would inflict little damage from a lesser warrior deals a serious injury when you attempt it. After rolling damage, you may spend 3 weapon tokens to reroll all the damage dice used for the attack, including damage represented as bonus dice. Use the higher of the two damage results.

Critical Strike: You take aim at an opponent's vulnerable points, carefully lining up a deadly strike. As a standard action, make a single attack at your best base attack bonus and spend

up to 5 weapon tokens. If this attack hits, treat the die result as 1 point higher per token spent than the actual roll when determining whether you scored a critical threat. Resolve the threat as normal, without the benefit of this ability.

Steady Aim: With careful focus, you ensure that your attacks land with sufficient force. You might not score a devastating hit, but you are too accurate to make a glancing or weak blow. After rolling damage for your weapon, you can choose to spend 2 tokens and change the amount rolled to half the maximum damage possible on each die. This benefit does not apply to bonus damage represented as dice, such as with the sneak attack ability. The steady aim applies to one damage roll only.

Weapon Agility: You move your weapon with great speed and agility, allowing you to react to unexpected tactics with ease. For each weapon token you spend, you enjoy a +2 bonus to all base attack checks and ability checks made as part of an attack action or to defend yourself against an attack action. For example, you would gain this bonus on a Strength check to avoid being tripped, but you would not receive it for a Strength check made to kick down a door. This benefit lasts until the start of your next turn. Your bonus from weapon agility cannot exceed twice your class level.

Favored Defense: With his weapon in hand, the 5th-level and higher weapon master can defend himself with superior speed and agility.

You gain a higher base defense bonus when you fight with your weapon, depending on how you wield it. Carrying it in one hand with nothing in the other grants you the greatest benefit. Fighting with two of your favored weapons at once grants you a slightly lesser benefit. If your weapon is two handed, your benefit is lower still. You gain no benefit if you carry a shield.

See the Favored Defense table on the next page for details.

Weapon Expertise: As they progress in the mastery of their chosen arms, weapon masters learn increasingly complex maneuvers. Each time you gain this class ability (at 9th, 13th, and 15th level), select one of the abilities below. Using them requires the expenditure of weapon tokens, as with the weapon style ability above.

Flurry of Strikes: While gauging an opponent's defenses, the weapon master launches a quick flurry of attacks that lacks accuracy but provides an additional strike. Normally, the opponent could defend against such a move easily, but the weapon master spots gaps in her defenses.

You make an additional attack against your opponent at your highest base attack bonus, though this attack and all others you attempt until your next turn suffer a –4 penalty. This ability, usable once per round, costs 5 weapon tokens. You can launch a flurry of strikes only as part of a standard or full-round attack action. You cannot use it with an attack of opportunity.

Master's Accuracy: Luck plays less of a role in a weapon master's fighting ability than it does in others'. After rolling a d20 to make an attack, you may spend 5 weapon tokens to reroll it. Use the higher of the two results. If your reroll is a critical threat, check for a critical hit as normal.

Precise Strike: As a weapon master battles a foe, he learns to read her tendencies like an open book. When you make an attack, a base attack check, or a Strength or Dexterity check as part of an attack action, you may take 10 on the roll by spending 4 weapon tokens.

Penetrating Attack: Opponents in heavy armor sometimes rely on their protective gear to absorb a weapon master's attacks,
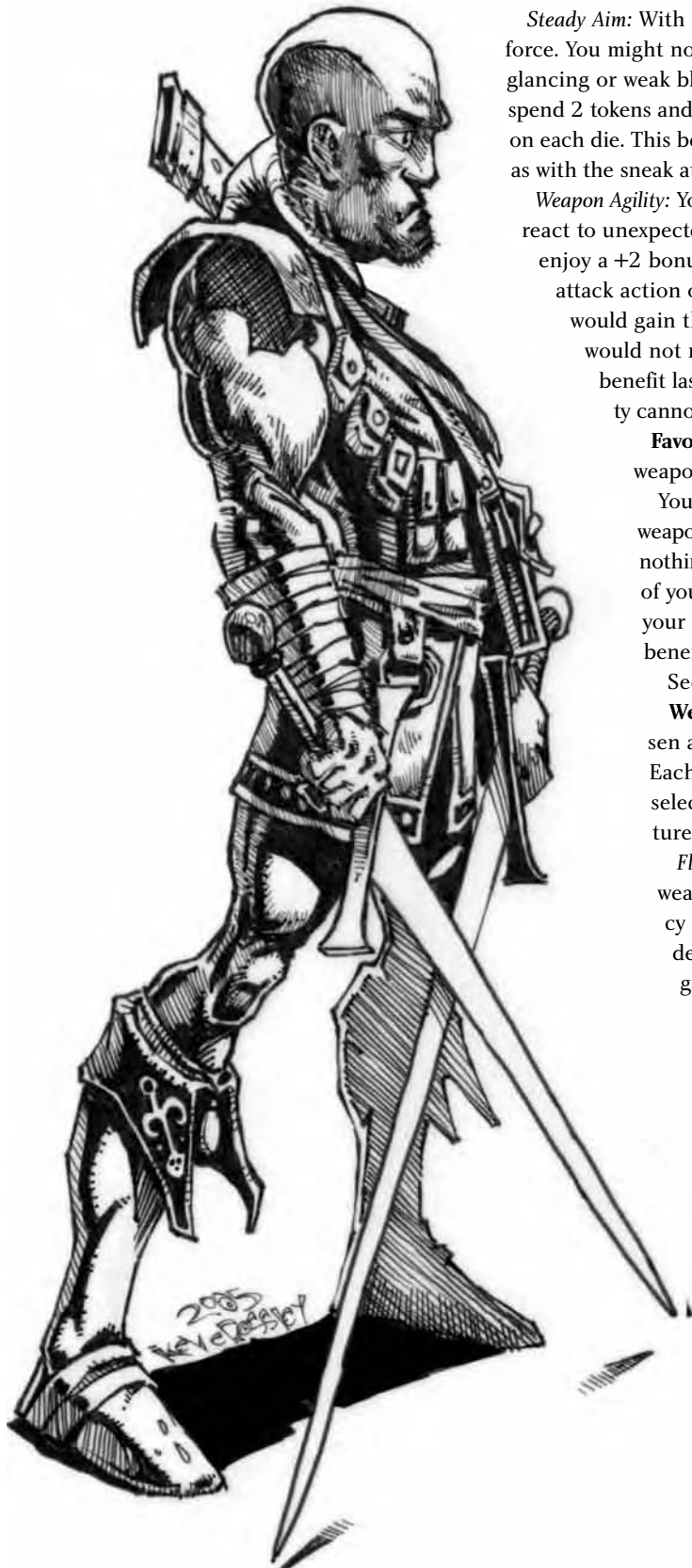
but his skill with his weapon helps him take advantage of gaps in their armored plates and lapses in their defense. As a free action, spend a up to half your weapon master level in weapon tokens. For each token spent in this way, your opponent suffers a –1 penalty to his damage reduction against your attacks until the start of your next action.

Quick Recovery: Even when he misses, a weapon master can turn his misfortune into an advantage. When you miss with an attack, you may spend 1 weapon token to gain a +1 bonus to defense against your opponent. This bonus lasts until the beginning of your next turn.

Weapon of Legend: At 11th level, your weapon comes to symbolize your growing mastery and fame. You must give it a name that symbolizes your fighting style or deeds, if you have not yet done so. As long as your weapon is visible, you gain a +2 bonus to all Diplomacy, Intimidate, and Gather Information checks. This bonus applies in any settlement that you have frequented in the past.

If you lose your weapon, you must grant your new one a different name.

When you enter a town or city for the first time, it takes a number of days equal to 1d3 – your Charisma bonus for your reputation to spread. If the result is 0, your reputation immediately grants you the benefits of this ability. Perhaps your reputation precedes you.

Weapon Supremacy: In time, weapon masters achieve near perfection with their chosen arms. Each time you gain this class ability (at 17th, 19th, and 20th level), select one of the following special abilities. Using them requires the expenditure of weapon tokens, as with the weapon style ability above.

Armed Feint: You can use an attack rather than a Bluff check to feint an opponent. Make a base attack check in place of one normal attack and spend 2 weapon tokens. Your foe opposes this check as normal for a feint (refer to the Bluff skill). If you succeed, your opponent loses her active bonus to defense against you for the rest of your current action.

Masterful Attack: You execute a brilliant series of blows that leaves your opponent reeling. By spending 10 weapon tokens, you may make a full attack using only a standard action rather than a full-round action. You gain your additional, iterative attacks as normal. However, you cannot combine this ability with a charge, as charging is a full-round action.

Mobile Attack: If you hit your opponent in an attack, you can use the short distraction to maneuver around her. You may spend 2 weapon tokens immediately after hitting a foe to move one square without provoking an attack of opportunity from her. You can use this ability multiple times to edge around an enemy.

Telling Blow: You can combine a special attack action with a normal attack. For example, you might slash at an opponent's hand to deliver normal damage and disarm her. When you use the disarm or trip attack actions, you may spend 5 weapon tokens on a normal attack that inflicts damage in addition to the trip or disarm.

Vicious Riposte: When an opponent does land a blow, you twist, turn, and position yourself to deal a deadly counter-attack. After your foe hits you in melee but before she determines damage, you may immediately spend 6 weapon tokens to gain a bonus to an attack against her. You may apply this bonus to any one attack you make before the end of your next action—you could apply it to an attack of opportunity, or you could use it on your third or fourth iterative attack. The bonus of the vicious riposte equals the highest amount of damage you received from your opponent in a single attack between the time you spent the tokens and the start of your next action.

PLAYING A WEAPON MASTER

The weapon master is the best at what he does. He hones himself into a living weapon, one that is complete only when it merges with the master's chosen armament. Only the archer approaches this character's level of dedication and expertise.

CAMPAIGN MODELS

Weapon masters cannot help but draw attention to themselves, thanks to their unparalleled skills. Their reputation precedes them, and wherever they go, others seek to bend their considerable talents to a useful end.

Ascetic: The ascetic lives only for his weapon. He devotes his entire life to improving his talent, honing his mind and body, and learning to push his abilities beyond their limits. The ascetic is a warrior-monk, a philosopher who deals in questions of blood and steel, war and death. Many of his seemingly mundane tactics are founded in deep philosophical precepts. The ascetic does not rely on his brawn or his blade's edge. Rather, his arm, mind, and weapon combine into one continuous whole. He relies on the sum of his talents, not such trifles as a sword's manufacture or the power of his physique. Many ascetics gather in isolated monasteries.

FAVORED DEFENSE

Level	One-Handed	Dual Wield	Two-Handed
5	+1	+0	+0
6	+1	+1	+0
7	+1	+1	+1
8	+1	+1	+1
9	+1	+1	+1
10	+2	+1	+1
11	+2	+2	+1
12	+2	+2	+2
13	+2	+2	+2
14	+2	+2	+2
15	+3	+2	+2
16	+3	+3	+2
17	+3	+3	+3
18	+3	+3	+3
19	+3	+3	+3
20	+3	+3	+3

Warlords may attempt to sway them to their sides, but most would-be tyrants fail to understand that ascetics fight not for glory, gold, or victory. They master the fighting arts to unlock the full potential of their minds and bodies. Some ascetics take to the road in hopes of pushing their abilities still further, but even these wanderers rarely fall into the life of a hired sword. Rather, they seek to answer nagging questions about their abilities or dedication. When they are happy with the answers they find, they return to their monasteries.

Duelist: Sometimes, a prosperous merchant or noble needs steel to back up his words or demand justice from an insolent rabble-rouser, an audacious business competitor, or a lover's rival. In such a situation, a noble seeks out a duelist to serve as his proxy. These mercenaries are unofficial enforcers of the land's social order. They rarely kill, as they are not assassins. A duelist might leave his master's foe with a scar or two, but in most cases the duelist faces his target's own champion instead. Most battles are conducted to first blood or similar nonlethal condition. In any case, the duelist must hone his skill to its utmost if he is to win. After all, victory brings great rewards, fame, and increased demands for one's skills. On the other hand, each defeat pushes a duelist closer to retirement or, even worse, death at an assassin's hand, should he fail the wrong client.

WEAPON MASTER STRATEGY

The key to success for a weapon master lies in making as many attacks as possible. Early in a fight, test your opponent by peppering her with blows. As you take her measure, you earn more weapon tokens to spend on special moves that you can use to finish her off.

Since so many of your abilities revolve around a single weapon, don't even try to become a generalist. Rather, focus on improving your ability with your favored weapon as much as possible. Pick up style feats for it and milk as many benefits from it as you can. Since you will use it in almost every battle, you make the most of such feat selections.

It might pay to carry a ranged weapon and perhaps a few different weapons that inflict different damage types, such as piercing, to contrast your chosen weapon. Even better, carry a spare weapon just in case your primary one suffers damage or is lost. The Craft skill can prove useful in some cases, as you might be able to repair a damaged weapon in the field.

WEAPON MASTER STARTING PACKAGE

Ability Scores: Str 17, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11

Skill Groups: Athletics at 4 ranks.

Skills: Three more skills at 4 ranks.

Feats: Weapon Focus plus one more of player's choice.

Armor: Studded leather armor (DR 1d3), heavy shield (Medium shield, +2 defense).

Weapons: Longsword (1d8 damage, 19–20, ×2 critical), dagger (1d4 damage, 19–20, ×2 critical).

Gear: Backpack, bedroll, 50 feet of silk rope, torches (6), flint and steel, waterskin, 5d4 gp.

Traits: Choose two and apply their modifications, if any.

SPECIAL SPELLCASTING CLASS: THE ARCANIST

Few men and women are willing to pursue magical training. The dangers in studying arcane lore are many, yet the allure of power remains an irresistible siren's call to enough seekers to keep the magical traditions alive. *Arcanists* see their spells as weapons of last resort. They focus on using complex, though limited, formulas to channel energy with relatively low risk.

Aside from their magic, arcanists possess many useful talents. For one, they excel in areas of lore. They must study various fields to master the theoretical and practical aspects of magic. They also learn to use their magic as a social tool, for the mere threat of unleashing a spell is often enough to compel obedience—or at least a friendly demeanor—from others.

Intelligence is the arcanist's most important ability. The more intelligent he is, the better he can manipulate spell energy, making it more difficult to resist his spells. It also serves as the key ability for many of his important skill and feats.

Hit Die: 1d4+2/level

SKILL GROUPS

Arcanists gain access to the Academia, Mysticism, Social, and Theatrics skill groups. In addition, they seek out skills that allow them to evade detection from their enemies, such as Hide or Move Silently. Arcanists lack the training to stand against their enemies in battle. Thus, when their magical energies run low, they must escape a battle or risk defeat.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (8 + Intelligence modifier) ×4

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 8 + Intelligence modifier

FEATS

Arcanists generally receive little instruction in the fighting arts, but their active minds and mastery of a wide range of lore grants them other equally useful talents. An arcanist gains access to the Lore, Tactics, and Social feat categories. Arcanists draw on their learning to aid their comrades and overcome puzzles, while their sinister reputation and insights into the human psyche prepare them for dealing with others.

CLASS FEATURES

The arcanist's spells are his main weapons, but the class abilities below prove that he can wield his magic in other ways as well. Sometimes, the mere suggestion of a deadly spell is enough to keep an enemy at bay: The arcanist's reputation for uncontrolled destruction and strange powers has traveled far and wide.

Weapon and Armor Proficiencies: Arcanists have little training in arms. They are proficient with simple weapons but lack proficiency with any sort of armor or shields.

Spellcasting: Arcanists can access the three schools of magic that they have studied at 1st level, while the rest come to them more slowly.

ARCANIST CLASS FEATURES AND MASTERY

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Base Defense Bonus	Mana Limit	Special Abilities	Lore Feat Mastery	Tactics Feat Mastery	Social Feat Mastery	Other Feat Mastery
1	+0	+0	12	Spellcasting, mana pool, aspect of power	2	1	1	—
2	+1	+1	15	—	2	1	1	—
3	+2	+2	18	Tertiary school of magic, bonus feat	3	2	2	—
4	+3	+3	21	—	3	2	2	—
5	+3	+3	24	All schools, aspect of power	4	3	3	1
6	+4	+4	27	—	4	3	3	1
7	+5	+5	30	Bonus feat	5	4	4	2
8	+6/+1	+6	33	—	5	4	4	2
9	+6/+1	+6	36	Arcane pact	6	5	5	3
10	+7/+2	+7	39	—	6	5	5	3
11	+8/+3	+8	42	Aspect of power	7	6	6	4
12	+9/+4	+9	45	—	7	6	6	4
13	+9/+4	+9	48	Bonus feat	8	7	7	5
14	+10/+5	+10	51	—	8	7	7	5
15	+11/+6/+1	+11	54	Greater aspect of power	9	8	8	6
16	+12/+7/+2	+12	57	—	9	8	8	6
17	+12/+7/+2	+12	60	Bonus feat	10	9	9	7
18	+13/+8/+3	+13	63	—	10	9	9	7
19	+14/+9/+4	+14	66	Greater aspect of power	10	9	9	7
20	+15/+10/+5	+15	70	Ultimate aspect of power	10	9	9	7

You cast spells as described in Chapter Ten: Magic. At 1st level in this class, you must choose a primary and secondary school of magic (see "Schools of Magic" in Chapter Ten). The primary school represents the main focus of your magical studies. The secondary school is another field that you have mastered to a lesser extent than your primary school. At 3rd level, you may select a tertiary school. Finally, at 5th level you gain access to all the schools of magic. The Arcanist Spell Mastery Ratings table on the next page shows your mastery rating in the schools you pick as primary, secondary, and tertiary, plus your mastery progression in all other schools.

If you have no talent with a school due to your low level (represented by a "—" on the spell mastery table), you cannot yet use spells from the applicable school.

Mana Limit: Mana is the basic building block of a magical effect. Arcanists gather and shape it to create their spell effects. The more mana you manipulate for a spell, the greater the effect—and the greater the danger of a magical mishap. Your level determines the limit to the amount of mana you can spend in one day, as shown on the class table above. This is referred to as your mana limit. The current amount of mana you have remaining is your mana pool.

Once expended, mana is lost until you receive eight hours of rest. After this rest, you recover all expended mana. You can recover mana only once per day.

See "The Mechanics of Magic" in Chapter Ten for more on mana.

Aspect of Power: As a result of channeling magical energy through their bodies and into the world, arcanists develop a variety of subtle, perhaps unnerving, magical abilities. These aspects of power reflect the slow alterations to the arcanist's body and soul over a lifetime of dabbling in the arcane arts.

All the aspects of power are supernatural abilities with a caster level equal to your total character level. Each time you gain an aspect of power (at 1st, 5th, and 11th level), select a new ability from those listed below.

You must have at least 1 point in your mana pool to use any aspect of power abilities. Use of many of these abilities requires a successful Concentration check; some of them generate unfortunate side effects on the roll of a natural 1 on this check, due to the vagaries of arcane power.

Bounding Step: You can soar on the wind created by an air elemental you have called. As a free action, you can make a Concentration check (DC 15) to pull an air elemental to you. If you succeed, your next Jump check gains a +20 bonus. If you roll a 1 on the d20, you immediately fall prone as the elemental's essence washes over you, uncontrolled. You must use this Jump bonus within one minute of your Concentration check.

Daunting Visage: Arcane power surges through you, causing you to seemingly grow taller and more menacing. After a successful Concentration check (DC 15) as a free action, you gain a +5 bonus to your next Intimidate check. You must use this bonus within one minute of your Concentration check.

Eldritch Dart: After a successful Concentration check (DC 15) as a free action, you create one or more bolts of force that strike a foe. You may make only one such check per round. This attack has a 50-foot range increment, and can be used up to a maximum distance of five range increments. It inflicts damage equal to 1d6 points + your Intelligence modifier for each dart that you conjure.

ARCANIST SPELL MASTERY RATINGS

Class Level	Primary School	Secondary School	Tertiary School	Other Schools
1	2	1	—	—
2	2	1	—	—
3	3	2	1	—
4	3	2	1	—
5	4	3	2	1
6	4	3	2	1
7	5	4	3	1
8	5	4	3	2
9	6	5	4	2
10	6	5	4	2
11	7	6	5	3
12	7	6	5	3
13	8	7	6	4
14	8	7	6	4
15	9	8	7	5
16	9	8	7	5
17	10	9	8	6
18	10	9	8	6
19	10	9	9	7
20	10	9	9	7

. You create enough darts for you to use one for each attack you make on your action. On a successful check, you can make ranged attacks using the darts for 1 round. If you have more than one attack, you can use all of your attacks to fire the darts. These darts are a force effect that disappear at the end of your turn if they go unused.

Eldritch darts are a normal ranged attack, not a touch attack. They count as a ranged weapon for the purposes of provoking attacks of opportunity and as a projectile (not thrown) weapon for the purposes of feats.

Master of Heat and Flame: You cause fire to spring from your forearm and palm like liquid flame. Treat the flame as a melee touch attack with which you are proficient. It deals 1d8 points of fire damage modified by your Intelligence rather than your Strength. The flame can set flammable materials alight, but you must hold them and concentrate as a full-round action; you cannot set something afire as part of a melee attack.

Activating this ability requires a Concentration check (DC 15) as a free action. The flame lasts for a number of minutes equal to 5 + your Intelligence modifier. If you roll a 1 on the Concentration check, you suffer 1d6 points of fire damage as your hands burn uncontrolled for a brief moment.

Wound Mending: You focus your gaze inward, seeking out injuries that hamper your body. After sleeping for eight hours, you may attempt a Concentration check; you heal a number of points of damage equal to your check result –15. A result of zero or lower means you heal no damage. If you roll a natural 1 on your Concentration check, you suffer 1d6 points of damage.

Bonus Feat: Arcanists learn new tricks and abilities by studying ancient lore, accounts of battles, and other texts. At 3rd, 7th, 13th, and 17th level, you gain a bonus feat, provided that you meet its mastery requirements. It may come from any feat category, reflecting an arcanist's research into a wide variety of areas. Bonus feats are in addition to the feat a character gets at every even-numbered level.

Arcane Pact: The realm from which an arcanist draws his magical energy is rife with strange creatures and bizarre, alien intellects. Generally these beings pay little mind to mortals. Other times, they manifest in the world as demons, elementals, and other outsiders. Once he reaches 9th level, an arcanist's spellcasting sometimes draws these creatures' attention, and he can request aid from the dimensional beings that respond.

This aid takes the form of a bonus to any d20 roll made for an attack, check, or save. You choose which die roll receives the bonus. You must declare that you want to use the bonus after rolling but before you learn whether you succeeded or failed. This bonus can range from +1 to +10.

To enter an arcane pact, you must spend 100 gp to create a pentagram, magic circle, or similar boundary to keep the dimensional being at bay, then meditate for one hour. When the creature appears at the end of this hour, you must offer it either wealth equal to the bonus desired × 250 gp or the sacrifice of one living, intelligent humanoid. If you fail to make this offer, you suffer double your desired bonus as a penalty to a d20 die roll of the DM's choice. This reflects the creature's vengeance against you for breaking the bargain.

You can make a pact once per week, but you cannot gain the benefits of more than one pact at a time. The maximum bonus you can gain equals your class level. When you declare your intent to use this bonus, you can spend from +1 to +10 of it on a single roll. Once you have committed to spending these bonus points, you cannot choose to spend more points (or less) after learning whether your roll succeeded or failed.

Greater Aspect of Power: Each time you gain this ability (at 15th and 19th level), you can either improve one of your aspects of power as described below or gain an aspect of power ability (see above) that you do not yet possess. Note that the effects of rolling a natural 1 stay the same as described above.

Bounding Step: The Jump check bonus from this ability applies to you for a number of rounds equal to your arcanist level.

Daunting Visage: After succeeding at your Concentration check, you now enjoy this benefit for one hour.

Eldritch Dart: Your darts now inflict damage equal to 2d6 points + your Intelligence modifier.

Master of Heat and Flame: Your fire touch now inflicts 2d6 points of damage.

Wound Mending: You now can use this ability once per hour.

Ultimate Aspect of Power: By 20th level you have attained total mastery of the magical arts—you gain double your mastery rating as a bonus to channeling checks. (For details on channeling checks, see "Step Three: Channel the Spell" in Chapter Ten.)

PLAYING THE ARCANIST

The position this class occupies in your world determines how the cultures you create view magic. Given that magic is a chaotic, dangerous force in *Iron Heroes*, chances are that most folk avoid arcanists. Some of their spells can have dire

consequences for those unlucky enough to live near them. A simple evocation spell can cause tremendous harm in a city if it touches off a fire, and a mighty warlord would fear any spellcaster who could bend and control his mind.

In a civilized realm, an arcanist could (literally!) face a witch-hunt if he openly practiced magic. Religious doctrine might preach that magic is a heresy against the natural order. Most arcanists travel in secret, and few use their magic where an outsider could see it.

While cities may see an arcanist only rarely, spellcasters might gather in small conclaves deep within the forbidding, unknown realms beyond civilization.

In other lands, arcanists could use their power to their advantage. A scheming lord bent on conquering his neighbors might welcome them with open arms. His desperation to find a weapon capable of delivering victory drives him to work with magic. In other lands, magic may be accepted as a risky, though respected, area of academic study. In either case, a magician can expect strangers in such a place to treat him with respect.

Regardless of how arcanists fit into your campaign, they should draw a reaction. Magic is too dangerous for arcanists to ever enjoy the casual acceptance of a swordsman or blacksmith.

CAMPAIGN MODELS

The following ideas exemplify how the arcanist might fit into a campaign.

Heresy: Spellcasting of any sort is a heresy. Any spellcaster caught practicing his art can expect imprisonment and possibly execution. Arcanists keep to the edge of society and rarely interact with others. When they meet strangers, they hide their talents. Scheming politicians use witch-hunts to excoriate and imprison their enemies.

Mysterious Powers: The common folk tend to avoid arcanists, while the nobility tolerates them as long as they remain useful. Deep down, most people fear arcanists. Their spells can strike a man dead, and they traffic with demons, elementals, and other strange beings. The typical city might have one or two arcanists bold enough to erect towers or other small citadels there. Few folk dare to live close to such structures, and the city's rulers might try to force the arcanist out of town. Despite this simmering hostility, no one would dare to challenge a spellcaster openly.

Scholars: Society as a whole distrusts magic, but arcanists can earn a prominent place by attaching themselves to powerful nobles, guilds, and other organizations. Magical research is seen as a promising field of study. Leading spellcasters have patrons to fund their research; magic is viewed as similar to science. With enough research or a critical breakthrough, arcanists are sure they can harness the power of magic.

ARCANIST STRATEGY

If you have played a spellcaster before, you should have a good idea of how to handle an arcanist in play. Your spells are versatile but dangerous. In many cases, it makes sense to hold back on them in favor of using Tactical and Social feats to support the party. Your aspect of power abilities also make good primary options, though you can use them only to aid yourself.
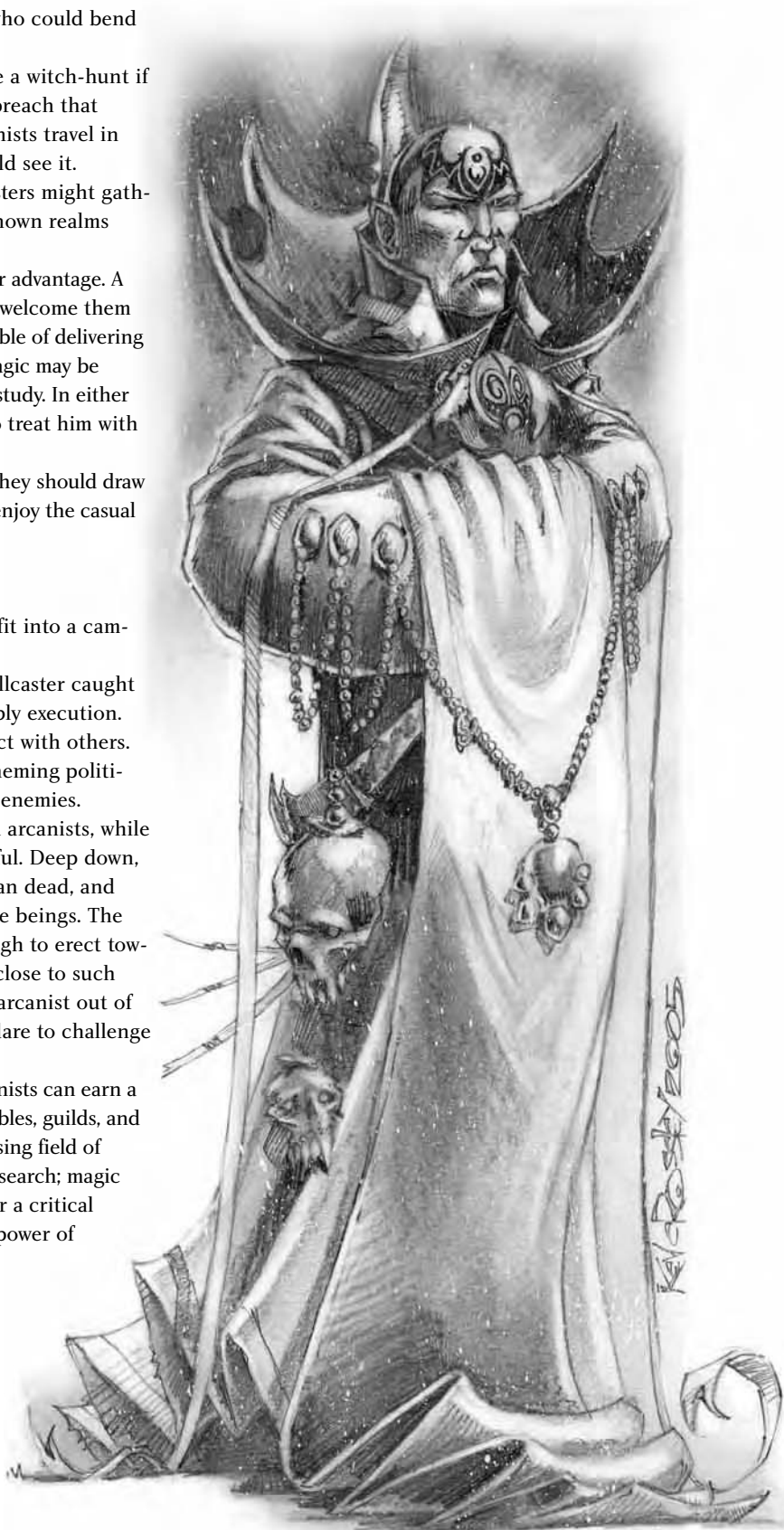
The key to playing a talented arcanist lies in managing the arcane pact class ability. Once you gain it, you can pour treasures into sacrifices that grant you the bonuses needed to use your spells without endangering your allies. Even then, you must be careful not to waste the bonus granted by the pact on trivial spells. In most cases, you are best off waiting until a critical moment to unleash the power of your magic.

ARCANIST STARTING PACKAGE

Ability Scores: Str 10, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 14

Skill Groups: Academia, Mysticism, Social, and Theatrics 4 ranks each.

Skills: Seven more skills with 4 ranks each.

Feats: Beast Lore plus one more of player's choice.

Armor: None.

Weapons: Longspear (1d8 damage, ×3 critical), dagger (1d4 damage, 19–20, ×2 critical).

Gear: Backpack, bedroll, 50 feet of silk rope, lantern, flasks of oil (6), flint and steel, waterskin, small steel mirror, wooden holy symbol, map case, 5d4 gp.

Traits: Choose two and apply their modifications, if any.

MULTICLASSING

As you gain levels, you can choose to advance within your current class or begin taking levels in a new class. In *Iron Heroes*, there is no restriction on how many classes you can take.

When you take more than one class, you gain flexibility at the cost of expertise. You master a second fighting style, but your abilities in both styles are weaker than those of a character advancing in only one class. The key to building an effective multiclassed character lies in finding class abilities that complement each other. For example, a berserker/archer combination might not prove a good fit. The berserker class works best when surrounded by enemies in close quarters, while an archer thrives away from melee.

Use the following guidelines to determine the various abilities and talents of a multiclassed character.

Level: "Character level" is a character's total number of levels, determined by adding all class levels together. Use it to determine when you gain the benefits outlined in the Skill, Feat, and Ability Improvements table on page 29 and to figure the maximum ranks you can have in a skill.

Your level in a particular class determines how some abilities work. If this is the case, the ability specifies that you must base its function off the "class level" rather than your overall character level.

WHY A BASE DEFENSE PENALTY?

The base defense penalty is an important balancing element. The average base defense bonus lags behind the excellent progression starting at 6th level. Thus, you could multiclass into several average defense classes, taking each to 5th level, and acquire the equivalent of an excellent defense progression. The penalties solve this problem.

Hit Points: Upon attaining a new level, you gain hit points according to the class you just advanced in. Add these new hit points to your total from previous levels.

Base Attack Bonus: Add the base attack bonuses acquired for each class to get your new base attack bonus. If the resulting value is +6 or higher, you get multiple attacks. Every time you can subtract 5 from the base attack bonus of the lowest attack and get a positive result, you get an additional attack. Thus, when a character has a base attack bonus of +6, she gets an additional attack with a +1 base attack bonus. (This is represented as "+6/+1" in class tables.) As the base attack bonus increases, the bonuses for all attacks increase as well. So when the base attack bonus rises to +7, the second attack becomes +2 (+7/+2). When her base attack bonus rises to +11/+6, she gets a third attack at +1 (+11/+6/+1), and so on. The maximum number of iterative attacks you can have is four.

If you have levels in archer or weapon master, add the attack bonus from your other classes to your special, weapon-specific bonuses.

Base Defense Bonus: Add the base defense bonuses provided by each of your classes together. If more than one of your classes has an average base defense progression, apply a –1 penalty to your total base defense if you are 6th level or higher, a –2 penalty if you are 12th level or higher, or a –3 penalty if you are 18th level or higher. Apply only the highest penalty. For example, an 18th-level multiclassed character with more than one class with an average base defense progression suffers a –3 modifier to his total base defense.

Saving Throws: Add together the base save bonuses for each class.

Skills: Regardless of the class that you advanced in with your new level, you can spend ranks on any of the skill groups available to your classes. Your total character level determines your maximum ranks.

If you have levels in the thief class, your maximum ranks equal either your thief class level + 5 or your character level + 3, whichever is greater.

Class Features: Multiclassed characters get all the class features of all their classes. If you have access to more than one type of token pool, you can accumulate tokens for different pools. All the pools that require you to pick a target must have the same target. You cannot divide your attention between multiple targets. Note that token pools from different classes must stay separate. If you are new to multiclassing, you might wish to have only one token-generating class until you're more comfortable with it.

Feats: A multiclassed character gains feats based on character level, regardless of individual class levels.

Feat Masteries: To calculate a multiclass character's mastery rating in each mastery type, add the full value of the mastery from the class with the highest value, and half the value of the masteries from other classes that get that mastery type, rounded down per class. For example, an Archer 4 / Man-at-Arms 3 has a projectile feat mastery of 4. He gets 3 from his Archer levels + 1 more (half his rating of 2) from his Man-at-Arms levels.

Ability Score Increases: A multiclassed character gains ability score increases based on character level, regardless of individual class levels.

SKILLS AND ABILITY CHECKS

Skills represent abilities that can improve with practice and training. In some cases, you need instruction to even attempt to use a skill. In others, you can use a skill, even if you've never tried it before.

Skills in *Iron Heroes* have a few distinct features that separate them from those in other games built on the core rules mechanics. *Iron Heroes* characters tend to rely on their skills quite heavily, so the skills are designed to be robust, useful, and easy to improve. In addition:

- *Skill groups* represent the close relationship between different skills. Your character class grants you access to one or more skill groups. Rather than train in a single skill, a skill group allows you to improve in many skills at once. In game terms, you can spend 1 skill point (see below) to improve in several skills at once.
- Most skills have direct applications in combat situations.
- Skills have explicit guidelines on what you can accomplish against Difficulty Classes above 20.
- *Skill challenges* allow you to gain additional benefits from a skill check. By voluntarily increasing a check's Difficulty Class or taking a penalty to the check, you gain an advantage on a successful check. For example, you might opt for a penalty to your Disguise check in order to change your appearance before an approaching guard rounds the corner.
- There are no class and cross-class skills. Instead, the skill groups grant you an advantage in purchasing abilities closely related to your class' talents.
- The Craft and Knowledge skills are simplified and both include canonical lists of the different areas they cover.

USING SKILLS

The classes in Chapter Three each list the number of skill points available at every level to a character of that class. You spend those points to buy ranks in skills in order to improve them. Your maximum rank in a skill is your character level + 3. (The one exception to this rule is the thief.) The more ranks you have in a skill, the better you are at using it.

Every skill is associated with one of your six abilities. For example, the Knowledge skill relies on Intelligence. When you attempt to use a skill, you make a skill check; this key ability contributes its modifier to the roll. If you have an ability penalty, you may have trouble using the skill. If you have an ability bonus, you have a superior natural talent with the skill.

In some cases, miscellaneous modifiers also apply to a skill check. These modifiers reflect the conditions, the environment, and other factors that make a skill easier or harder to use. For instance, it is much more difficult to sneak quietly across a creaky old floor than a smooth, clear stone bridge. The creaky floor might assess a penalty to your Move Silently skill check. On the other hand, if you wear soft, padded sandals, they may provide a bonus to your Move Silently check.

SKILL CHECKS

To make a skill check, roll 1d20 and add your skill modifier. Your skill modifier is the sum of the character's ranks in that skill + his key ability modifier for that skill + any miscellaneous modifiers.

As with all d20 checks, a higher result is better than a lower one in a skill check.

Below is a summary of the factors that go into a skill check.

SKILL RANKS

A character's number of ranks in a skill is based on how many skill points he has invested in it. Many skills can be used even if the character has no ranks in them; this is called making an untrained skill check. You can have a maximum number of ranks in a skill equal to your level + 3.

Each skill point you spend on an individual skill buys you 1 rank in that skill. Skill groups, described later in this chapter, allow you to spend 1 skill point to gain 1 rank in several skills at once.

KEY ABILITY MODIFIER

The ability modifier used in a skill check is the modifier for the skill's key ability: the ability associated with the skill's use. The key ability of each skill is noted after its name in its description.

MISCELLANEOUS MODIFIERS

Miscellaneous modifiers include trait bonuses, armor check penalties, and bonuses provided by feats, relevant environmental factors, and so forth.

MAKING THE SKILL CHECK

In *Iron Heroes*, you attempt a skill check in one of two basic ways: as a static check or an opposed check.

STATIC SKILL CHECKS

Static checks represent your effort against an inanimate obstacle. In this case, you make your skill check and must beat a Difficulty Class (DC) in order to succeed. The Difficulty Class is the number a character must score as the result of a skill check in order to succeed at a task he's attempting. The Difficulty Class is always the same for a given task. For example, the Climb skill DC needed to scale a crumbling wall is 10. Whether you or your friend attempts the check, the Difficulty Class remains the same. The wall is an inert obstacle. It doesn't make an active effort to foil you.

The table below offers some examples of static skill checks.

Difficulty (DC)	Example (Skill Used)
Very easy (0)	Notice something large in plain sight (Spot)
Easy (5)	Climb a knotted rope (Climb)
Average (10)	Hear an approaching guard (Listen)
Tough (15)	Rig a wagon wheel to fall off (Disable Device)
Challenging (20)	Swim in stormy water (Swim)
Formidable (25)	Open an average lock (Open Lock)
Heroic (30)	Leap across a 30-foot chasm (Jump)
Nearly impossible (40)	Track a werewolf across hard ground after 24 hours of rainfall (Survival)

SAMPLE OPPOSED CHECKS

Task	Skill (Key Ability)	Opposing Skill (Key Ability)
Con someone	Bluff (Cha)	Sense Motive (Wis)
Pretend to be someone else	Disguise (Cha)	Spot (Wis)
Create a false map	Forgery (Int)	Forgery (Int)
Hide from someone	Hide (Dex)	Spot (Wis)
Sneak up on someone	Move Silently (Dex)	Listen (Wis)
Steal a coin pouch	Sleight of Hand (Dex)	Spot (Wis)
Tie up a prisoner	Use Rope (Dex)	Escape Artist (Dex)

OPPOSED SKILL CHECKS

In an opposed check, you pit your skill against an opponent who tries to prevent you from succeeding in your task. In this case, the DM picks one person as the attacker and the other as the defender. The attacker is always the person who wants to gain something from a skill check. The defender tries to prevent his check from succeeding. Both the attacker and defender make skill checks. If the attacker's result is higher, he succeeds. If his result is lower than the defender's or if he ties it, he fails.

If it helps, think of the attacker's check result as the Difficulty Class for the defender's skill check.

In many opposed checks, the two sides use different skills. A thief might use Move Silently to approach a guard, who, in turn, tries to use Listen to hear him.

The table above shows some examples of opposed checks.

TRYING AGAIN

In general, you can try a skill check again if you fail, and you can keep trying indefinitely. Some skills, however, have consequences of failure that you must take into account. A few skills are virtually useless once a check has failed in an attempt to accomplish a particular task. If you fail to use Bluff to trick the duke into trusting you with the key to his treasury, you can't try to trick him again. He has already seen through your ruse. In most skills, when you have succeeded once at a given task, additional successes are meaningless.

UNTRAINED AND TRAINED SKILL CHECKS

Generally, if you attempt to use a skill in which you possess no ranks, you make a skill check as normal. The skill modifier doesn't have a skill rank added in, because you have zero ranks in the skill. Any other applicable modifiers, such as the skill's key ability modifier, apply to the check as normal.

Many skills require a minimal level of training before you can attempt to use them. In their descriptions, these skills are marked as "trained only." For such skills, no amount of natural aptitude can replace formal study. You cannot attempt a skill check with a "trained only" skill if you lack ranks in it.

FAVORABLE AND UNFAVORABLE CONDITIONS

Some situations may make a skill easier or harder than normal to use, resulting in a bonus or penalty to the skill modifier for the skill check or a change to the Difficulty Class of the skill check.

The DM can alter the chance of success in four ways to take into account exceptional circumstances.

1. A skill user gains a +2 circumstance bonus to the check to represent conditions that improve performance, such as having the perfect tool for the job, getting help from another character (see "Combining Skill Attempts," page 76), or possessing unusually accurate information. You may gain this benefit multiple times to represent a series of factors that make a check easier. If you have the perfect tools for the job, help from a friend, and accurate information, you would gain three +2 bonuses, for a total of +6.

   You can also gain this benefit if the DM rules that you have a good idea, a sound plan, or some other clever inspiration to make a skill check easier. If you decide to smear a sticky resin on your hands before trying to scale an arcanist's tower, your DM might give you a bonus to your Climb check.

   In many cases, your DM has the final say as to whether a bonus applies. In some cases, he might opt to increase the bonus above +2 to represent a particularly useful or cleverly realized advantage. You might gain a +2 bonus to a Bluff check to trick a guard into believing that someone dropped a bag of coins around a corner. The DM might increase this bonus to +4 if he knows that the guard is greedy or dishonest.

2. A skill user suffers a –2 circumstance penalty to represent conditions that hamper performance, such as being forced to use improvised tools or having misleading information. As with a circumstance bonus, your DM usually adjudicates this penalty based on conditions in the game. He might impose a penalty of more than –2 to represent a decisive obstacle or multiple factors that work against you.

3. Your DM might reduce the Difficulty Class of the skill check by 2 to represent circumstances that make the task easier, such as using Disable Device on a trap that someone has already partially disarmed. The extended skill check rules starting on page 76 give you the option of working slowly over time to make a difficult action easier.

4. Your DM may increase the skill check's Difficulty Class by 2 to represent circumstances that make the task harder, such as using Craft to create an item of higher than normal quality.

Conditions that affect your character's ability to perform the skill change the skill check modifier. Conditions that modify how well the character has to perform the skill to succeed change the Difficulty Class. A bonus to the skill modifier and a reduction in the check's DC have the same result—they create a better chance of success. But they represent different circumstances, and sometimes that difference becomes important. Generally speaking, it is much more likely that your DM assesses bonuses or penalties to a check rather than to a Difficulty Class.

TIME AND SKILL CHECKS

Using a skill might take 1 round, take no time, or take several rounds or even longer. Most skill uses are standard actions, move actions, or full-round actions. (See Chapter Eight: Combat for action descriptions.) Others require days or weeks of hard work, such as a Craft check to forge a sword or suit of armor. Unless otherwise noted, assume that a skill check is a standard action. The specific skill descriptions in this chapter note any exceptions to this rule.

CHECKS WITHOUT ROLLS

The typical skill check represents an attempt to accomplish a task while under some sort of time pressure or distraction. Sometimes you can use a skill under more favorable conditions and eliminate the luck factor. In these situations, you have the time needed to approach a skill attempt slowly and carefully.

Taking 10: When you are not threatened or distracted, you may choose to take 10 on a skill check. Instead of rolling 1d20 for the check, calculate your result as if you had rolled a 10. For many routine tasks, taking 10 makes them succeed automatically. Distractions or threats (such as combat) make it impossible to take 10. In most cases, taking 10 is purely a safety measure. You know (or expect) that an average roll will succeed but fear that a poor roll might fail. Taking 10 proves especially useful in situations where a particularly high roll wouldn't help.

Taking 20: When you have plenty of time, you operate under no threats or distractions, and you don't think you face any danger for a failed check, you can take 20. When you take 20, treat your d20 roll for your check as a 20. This attempt represents trial and error.

In order to take 20, you must spend the amount of time needed to make 20 skill checks. In addition, you must resolve the effects of a skill check with a d20 roll of 1. In most cases, this has no special effect. However, some skills cause you injury or drawbacks with a failed roll. In such cases, you suffer the drawbacks as normal and you cannot continue to take 20.

For example, you could not take 20 on a Climb check if a result of a 1 would cause you to fall to the ground.

Taking 10, Taking 20, and Challenges: Skill challenges (see page 76) allow you to increase a task's difficulty in return

for an added benefit for a successful check. You may use challenges when you take 10 or 20, but you might suffer failure if you take on too many of them and push the Difficulty Class above the level where you could succeed with a 10 or 20.

Ability Checks and Channeling Checks: The normal take 10 and take 20 rules apply for ability checks (described in greater detail on page 111). Neither rule applies to channeling checks (see Chapter Ten: Magic).

EXTENDED SKILL CHECKS

Sometimes, a task requires more effort than a single skill check represents. To decode a map written in a strange language, you may decipher one passage, then use that knowledge to improve your understanding of the rest of the document. In these cases, your early successes build up to the final result. Each step forward brings with it more information or some level of success that, while short of completion, could still prove useful. To draw upon the example of an indecipherable map, you might learn a few useful clues about the treasure it describes with a partial translation. Eventually, you can learn everything the map holds, but until then, a few clues and fragments might still prove useful.

An extended skill check covers this process of learning information slowly. This type of skill check requires that you succeed in a series of checks to represent a long, difficult task. With each success, you may or may not gain some partial benefit of completing the task. Your DM keeps track of your total number of successes. When you have accumulated a certain number of successes, he may either grant the benefits of partially completing the task or tell you that you've completed it.

For example, Gervaine the harrier wants to set up a series of pitons and ropes so her allies can quickly scale a wall that they may need to climb when they rob the home of Ultario the merchant. The DM rules that Gervaine must work for one hour and make a Climb check (DC 15) to reduce the wall's Climb DC for the group by 2. He also decides that Gervaine can reduce the group's DC by a maximum of 10. Thus, Gervaine can continue working on the wall until she either runs out of time or is happy with her work.

Nemarchus the arcanist wishes to decode a series of glyphs carved into a stone table that he and his companions found in the Howling Canyons. The DM secretly determines that Nemarchus can make a Decipher Script check (DC 20) each hour for this task. For every two successes he achieves, the arcanist learns one of four important facts that the glyphs describe. He uncovers the simplest information first, then uses his increasing mastery of the runes to unlock the subtler information.

Extended skill checks are a useful tool for handling tasks that would logically take hours to complete, yet for which the player characters can still make useful progress toward completion in a relatively short time. Each skill described in this chapter includes a short description of how and why you might use these rules with it.

COMBINING SKILL ATTEMPTS

When more than one character tries the same skill at the same time and for the same purpose, their efforts may overlap.

INDIVIDUAL EVENTS

Several characters may attempt the same action, and each succeeds or fails independently. The result of one character's Climb check does not influence the results of another character's Climb check.

AID ANOTHER

You can help another character achieve success on his skill check by making the same kind of skill check in a cooperative effort. If your skill check result is 10 or higher, the character you helped gains a +2 bonus to his check, per the rule for favorable conditions described on the previous page. You can't take 10 or 20 on a skill check to aid another. Your DM has the final say as to whether you can aid someone. There must be enough room to work for both you and the person you want to help. The DM also determines the maximum number of people who can aid in a single check.

You can use the aid another action to help others make ability checks (see page 111) if your DM deems it possible. For example, you could help an ally make a Strength check to push a boulder down a slope.

You must be capable of attempting the check you wish to aid. For instance, you cannot aid in a "trained only" skill check if you have no ranks in that skill. To attempt the aid another skill check, you do not need enough ranks to succeed in the task yourself, but you must have the abilities needed to make an attempt.

SKILL SYNERGY

A character might have two skills that work well together. In general, having 5 or more ranks in one skill gives the character a +2 synergy bonus on skill checks with each of its synergistic skills, as noted in the skill description. In some cases, this bonus applies only to specific uses of the skill in question, not to all checks. Some skills provide benefits to other checks made by a character, such as those skill checks required to use certain class features.

SKILL CHALLENGES

As your mastery of a skill improves, you can achieve more difficult feats with it. An expert climber can scale a sheer, slippery surface that a neophyte would find impossible. By the same token, a veteran learns to complete simple tasks with greater efficiency, skill, and panache. An inexperienced climber might take a while to clamber up a rocky cliff, but a skilled mountaineer can scramble up it faster.

Skill challenges reflect an expert's ability to perform routine tasks with superior grace and efficiency. They also allow you to attempt heroic deeds otherwise unavailable to you by making already difficult skill checks even harder. With a bit of luck, skill, and good planning, you can achieve the impossible.

The challenge system was designed to make skills more useful across all levels. Without challenges, your skills would become less important as you gain levels. The total result you need on a check might be low enough that, at some point, improving the skill makes no difference.

A skill challenge allows you to increase a skill's Difficulty Class by 5 or suffer a −5 penalty to your check. In return, you can achieve an extra benefit in addition to the standard benefits of a successful check. If you fail due to this penalty or increased DC, you fail the skill check as normal. Note that, if the skill imposes a drawback for failing by more than a certain margin, you suffer the drawback as normal if you fail to meet your newly increased Difficulty Class. For example, characters who miss a Disable Device check by 10 or more accidentally activate the trap they attempted to disarm. If a trap's standard DC is 20 and your challenge increases it to 25, you activate the trap on a skill check result of 15 or lower.

Skill challenges on static skill checks require you to increase a skill's Difficulty Class. The check penalty applies to opposed checks and in cases where the result of your check becomes the DC for an opposed check. For example, your Disguise check result becomes the Difficulty Class for the Spot checks other characters must make to notice your deception. Any challenges you accept on a Disguise check would lower your total result.

You can accept more than one challenge to a skill check. In some cases, you can take on a single challenge more than once to gain its benefits multiple times. Such challenges are noted in the skill descriptions.

Generally, skill challenges allow you to gain added benefits when you face a low Difficulty Class and you have a high total skill modifier. You can also use skill challenges to attempt heroic actions, even when faced with a high Difficulty Class. You might need to make a Balance check (DC 30) to move carefully across a thin wire. However, since the evil archduke is about to escape, you might need to take on a skill challenge to complete your Balance check faster than normal.

STANDARD CHALLENGES

The challenges below apply to any skill check, unless noted differently in the "Challenges" section of the skill description. Most of the skills in this chapter also include additional skill-specific challenges you can take when attempting a check. Your DM has the final say on whether a challenge applies to a specific situation. Remember, each challenge applies a +5 modifier to a check's DC or a −5 penalty to your check result.

Basic Challenges	Take Multiple Times? (Maximum)
Fast completion	Yes (twice)
Risky prospect	Yes (twice)
Simultaneous action	No (n/a)
Superior assist	Yes (unlimited)

Fast Completion: You reduce the time needed to complete the skill check. If the skill check is normally a full-round action, it becomes a standard one. A standard action becomes a move action, while a move action becomes a free action. For checks that require time expressed in rounds, minutes, or larger units, reduce the time needed to complete the check by 25 percent. You can apply this challenge's benefits twice to a single check. If you apply it twice to an action that takes an amount of time expressed as rounds, reduce the time needed by 50 percent. You cannot make a skill check as a free action if it normally requires a standard action or longer to complete.

Risky Prospect: Sometimes you can take a calculated risk on one action to make a later one easier to complete. For example, you could use Tumble to open yourself up to a cultist's attacks in order to avoid a giant's club. If you succeed at this skill challenge, you gain a bonus equal to the total penalty you accepted if you use the Tumble skill again your next action (to evade the giant). You gain this benefit only if both checks involve the same sort of circumstances. For example, you could not use a risky prospect to try to climb a small rock before tackling a daunting slope. The two skill checks must be somehow related, and the first, penalized check should carry some consequences for failure.

Simultaneous Action: You have such talent with a particular skill that you can use it while completing other tasks. To attempt simultaneous checks, first make the skill challenge check, then make a second skill check using the same or a different skill. Your secondary check suffers a −10 penalty or a +10 increase in Difficulty Class. Some skills work together without penalty, such Hide and Move Silently. The simultaneous action challenge normally applies only to skills that you would not normally attempt at the same time, such as using Open Lock and Disable Device at the same time to open a chest and defeat the trap that protects it.

Superior Assist: If you aid another with a skill check (see above), you can attempt to provide a greater than normal bonus to the other character's total skill check. This challenge reflects the fact that a highly trained person can render better help than an untrained or fumbling assistant. In return for increasing the aid another skill check Difficulty Class by 5 (to DC 15), you boost the bonus you provide the other character by +1. There is no limit to how high you can push the Difficulty Class and the bonus, but remember that a skill challenge is an all-or-nothing risk. If your check to aid another fails, you provide no bonus.

OTHER SKILL CHALLENGES

In addition to the sample skill challenges given here and the specific ones designed for each skill, you can create your own in the course of play. The challenge game mechanic is flexible enough to cover a wide variety of situations. In essence, you can propose a challenge to your DM and he can either accept it, reject it, or decide to increase the Difficulty Class by more than 5 to reflect a particularly daunting use of a skill.

Skill challenges show their true strength when you use them to handle actions that fall outside the bounds of the rules given in this book. DMs should think of challenges as another tool in your bag of tricks. If a player wants to gain an extra benefit from a skill check, make it a challenge, and you're ready to roll. Players should look at skill challenges as an opportunity to take actions that might not fall under the normal rules. They are an invitation to creativity and exciting game play.

The key to using skill challenges is to always keep in mind that they are flexible—but with that flexibility comes some responsibility. Don't use them as an excuse to make your skills overpowering.

Remember that the DM has final say on how the rules work. He might decide a challenge is simply impossible or nonsensical. He might also revise a previous ruling, especially if further play reveals that he has inadvertently opened a loophole in the rules. Challenges aren't an invitation to abuse the system. They are tools meant to handle actions not covered in the rules.

DMs, remember that challenges ought to make a skill check more useful. The following guidelines cover the typical benefits that a challenge can grant:

- A +2 bonus to attacks for the current round.
- A +2 bonus to damage for the current round.
- A bonus to a skill check equal to the challenge's penalty (often –5).
- The opportunity to complete a complex or unusually difficult action.
- The ability to combine two skill checks into one, such as using Tumble to avoid an attack of opportunity while springing over a wall.

When adjudicating challenges of your own, use these basic guidelines to inform your decisions. In general, a skill challenge is roughly equivalent to a feat with a mastery rating of 1 (see Chapter Five: Feats).

SKILL GROUPS

A skill group is a collection of skills that are closely related in terms of their use, the training needed to master them, or some other factor. If you spend 1 skill point on a skill group as a whole, you gain one rank in each skill it contains. You can gain access to a skill group via your character class (or classes, if you are multiclassed). The skill group illustrates your overall training and exposure to several different abilities. It provides an efficient, easy way for you to build a character who is trained in the core skills and abilities that your class normally studies.

A skill group does not allow you to circumvent the normal limit on skill ranks based on your level. It simply gives you a greater return on the investment of a single skill point. While you are under no compulsion to invest in your class' skill groups, doing so generally is a wise choice. The more skills you can use, the better your chances of surviving and flourishing in a wide variety of situations.

When you spend a skill point on a skill group, you gain one rank in each skill it contains. If you are already at your maximum number of ranks in one or more skills in the group, the skills that are not yet at that maximum improve. The skills that have reached their limit remain there.

Not all skill groups contain the same number of skills. Some skills are more useful in a wide range of situations, while others provide a single, but highly advantageous talent. Some skills appear in more than one group. Also, remember that you can still purchase ranks in any individual skill. Even if your class does not offer a group that includes a skill you want to use, you can still purchase ranks in it at a rate of one rank per skill point.

There are 10 skill groups in *Iron Heroes*:

Academia: Drawing on skills that focus on applied knowledge and a mastery of obscure lore, the Academia skill group is a useful boon for characters with a high Intelligence.

Skills: Appraise (Int), Concentration (Con), Decipher Script (Int), Heal (Wis), Knowledge (Int), and Speak Language (none).

SKILL GROUPS BY CLASS

	Ach	Arm*	Bkr	Exe	Har	Htr	MaA†	Thf	Wmr	Arc
Academia										•
Agility	•				•			•		
Athletics	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	
Mysticism										•
Perception	•			•		•				
Robbery								•		
Social								•		•
Stealth				•		•		•		
Theatrics								•		•
Wilderness Lore						•				

* Armigers also gain free ranks in the Craft skill as it applies to armorcrafting.
† A man-at-arms gains access to any three skill groups of the player's choice.

Agility: The Agility skill group represents training in flexibility and acrobatics. Classes that rely on speed and maneuver usually offer it.

Skills: Balance (Dex), Escape Artist (Dex), and Tumble (Dex).

Athletics: This skill group includes Strength-based skills. Athletics reflects a focus on physical fitness and strength.

Skills: Climb (Str), Jump (Str), and Swim (Str).

Mysticism: While Academia focuses on readily available knowledge, the Mysticism group provides access to talents that focus on rare lore and the study and use of magic.

Skills: Concentration (Con), Decipher Script (Int), Spellcraft (Int), and Use Magic Device (Cha).

Perception: A sharp eye can spot trouble before it befalls you, while a keen ear lets you sneak up on a concealed enemy. Classes that emphasize smart tactics and awareness grant access to this useful skill group.

Skills: Listen (Wis), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), and Spot (Wis).

Robbery: The Robbery skill group focuses on talents that require a fine hand for detailed work and a penchant for larceny.

Skills: Disable Device (Int), Forgery (Int), Open Lock (Dex), and Sleight of Hand (Dex).

Social: The Social skills focus on your ability to charm others, whether you wish to extract rumors from them, trick them, or just strike up a friendly relationship.

Skills: Bluff (Cha), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), and Intimidate (Cha).

Stealth: Classes that value hiding from an enemy, whether to flee an opponent or move to ambush him, give access to the Stealth skill group.

Skills: Hide (Dex) and Move Silently (Dex).

Theatrics: The art of entertaining others not only can earn you a passable living, it also helps develop a variety of useful skills.

Skills: Bluff (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Perform (Cha), and Sleight of Hand (Dex).

Wilderness Lore: Many adventurers come of age in the forbidding wilds, where one's knowledge of the land draws the line between survival and death.

Skills: Handle Animal (Cha), Ride (Dex), Survival (Wis), and Use Rope (Dex).

BASE ATTACK CHECKS

Your base attack bonus is essentially your "combat skill rating." Sometimes you must pit your fighting skills against someone's Jump or Tumble check. In these cases, use your base attack bonus like a skill to make a base attack check. A base attack check is resolved with the following formula:

1d20 + base attack bonus + Strength or Dexterity modifier*

Traits, feats, class abilities and situational modifiers that apply to attack rolls do not affect Base Attack Checks unless they specifically state that they do so, or they affect your actual Base Attack Bonus (for example, the Archer's Ranged Base Attack Bonus class ability).

* Player's choice.

Many combat stunts and maneuvers require base attack checks, as do several combat-specific skill uses. Details on stunts appear in Chapter Eight: Combat.

SKILL DESCRIPTIONS

This section describes each skill in the game, including common uses and typical modifiers. Characters can sometimes use skills for purposes other than those noted here.

Here is the format for the skill descriptions in this chapter.

SKILL NAME

In addition to the name of the skill, the skill name lines include the following information:

Key Ability: The ability whose modifier applies to the skill check. *Exception:* Speak Language lists "None" as its key ability because using this skill requires no check.

Trained Only: If this notation appears in the skill name line, you must have at least one rank in the skill to use it. If it is omitted, you can use the skill untrained (with a rank of 0). Any special notes regarding trained or untrained use are covered in the Untrained section (see below).

Armor Check Penalty: When this notation appears in the skill name lines, an armor check penalty applies (when appropriate) to checks using this skill. If this entry is absent, an armor check penalty does not apply.

The skill name lines are followed by other information:

Skill Group: Character classes grant access to various skill groups. A character can spend 1 skill point to improve all the skills in a given group by one rank. The names of the groups that the skill belongs to, if applicable, are listed here.

Check: This section describes what one can do with a successful skill check and lists the check's Difficulty Class. This section includes specific uses for the skill, many of which apply to combat situations.

Action: This section lists the type of action required to use the skill, or the amount of time in minutes, hours, or days that it takes to make a check.

Try Again: Any conditions that apply to successive attempts to use the skill successfully come next. If this paragraph is omitted, the skill can be retried with no inherent penalty, other than the additional time required.

Special: Any extra facts that apply to the skill, such as special effects deriving from its use, appear here.

Synergy: Some skills grant a bonus to the use of other skills because of a synergistic effect. This entry, when present, indicates what bonuses this skill may grant or receive because of such synergies. See the "Skill Synergy" section on page 76.

Untrained: This entry indicates what a character with no ranks in the skill can do with it. If this entry doesn't appear, it means that the skill functions normally for untrained characters (if it can be used untrained) or that an untrained character can't attempt checks with this skill (for skills that are designated as "Trained Only").

Take 10/20: Sometimes the rules for taking 10 and 20 confuse players and DMs. This section discusses whether

you can use those options with the skill and, if so, how they work.

Extended Skill Checks: This section advises you on using the skill with an extended check. If a skill is unsuited for such a check, this section discusses why.

Challenges: In some cases, you can willingly increase a skill check's Difficulty Class by 5 or take a –5 penalty to your check to gain an additional benefit on a successful check. This section lists specific challenges that apply to each skill. These examples supplement the standard challenges described in the "Skill Challenges" section starting on page 76.

Appraise
(Intelligence)

Skill Group: Academia

Check: You can appraise common or well-known objects with an Appraise check (DC 12). Failure means that you estimate the value at 50 percent to 150 percent (2d6+3 × 10 percent) of its actual value.

Appraising a rare or exotic item requires a successful check against DC 15, DC 20, or higher. If the check succeeds, you estimate the value correctly; failure means you cannot estimate the item's value.

A magnifying glass gives you a +2 circumstance bonus on Appraise checks involving any small or highly detailed item, such as a gem. A merchant's scale gives you a +2 circumstance bonus on Appraise checks involving items valued by weight, including anything made of precious metals. These bonuses stack.

Find Weak Point: You can make an Appraise check as a standard action to spot a gap in a foe's armor. Make an Appraise check opposed by your opponent's base attack check. If you succeed, your opponent suffers a –1 penalty to all armor damage reduction rolls made against you for the rest of the encounter. The target of this ability must be in your threat-ened area. Your allies gain this bonus if you use a standard action to describe the exact spot they must aim for to punch through your foe's armor.

Action: Appraising an item takes one minute.

Try Again: No. You cannot try again on the same object, regardless of success.

Synergy: If you have 5 ranks in any Craft skill, you enjoy a +2 bonus on Appraise checks related to items made with that Craft skill.

Untrained: For a common item, failure on an untrained check yields no estimate. For a rare item, success means an estimate of 50 percent to 150 percent (2d6+3 × 10 percent) of the item's actual value.

Take 10/20: You cannot take 20 on an Appraise check, since there is a penalty associated with failing a roll, and you cannot try again after a failure. You may take 10.

Extended Skill Check: Your DM may use an extended skill check for items that consist of several distinct parts or that have a variety of different features. In this case, to complete the entire appraisal you may have to gain a total number of successes before you reach a threshold of a certain number of failures.

Challenges: The Appraise skill has no specific challenges beyond the standard ones given earlier in this chapter (see page 77).

Balance
(Dexterity; Armor Check Penalty)

Skill Group: Agility

Check: You can walk on a precarious surface. A successful Balance check lets you move at half your speed along the surface for 1 round. A failure by 4 or less means you can't move at all for 1 round. A failure by 5 or more means you fall. The difficulty of the check varies with the surface, as follows:

Narrow Surface	Balance DC*
7–12 inches wide	10
2–6 inches wide	15
Less than 2 inches wide	20

Narrow Surface	DC Modifier**
Lightly obstructed	+2
Severely obstructed	+5
Slightly slippery	+2
Severely slippery	+5
Sloped or angled	+2

Difficult Surface	Balance DC*
Uneven flagstone	10†
Hewn stone floor	10†
Sloped or angled floor	10†

 * *Add modifiers from the narrow surface modifiers table here, as appropriate.*

 ** *Add the appropriate modifier to the Balance DC of a narrow surface.*

 † *Only if running or charging. Failure by 4 or less means the character can't run or charge, but otherwise may act normally.*

All the above modifiers stack.

Suffering Attacks While Balancing: You are considered flat footed while balancing, since you can't move to avoid a blow; thus you lose your active bonuses to defense (if any). If you take damage while balancing, you must attempt another Balance check against the same Difficulty Class to remain standing.

Action: None. A Balance check doesn't require an action; it is made as part of another action (moving, standing) or as a reaction to a situation.

Synergy: If you have 5 or more ranks in Tumble, you enjoy a +2 bonus on Balance checks.

Take 10/20: You cannot take 20 on Balance checks, since you suffer a penalty for failing your check if you miss it by a wide margin. You may take 10 if you are in a relaxed, calm environment.

Extended Skill Checks: You may have to walk a long, narrow path that requires multiple Balance checks to traverse its full length. Otherwise this skill does not normally factor into extended skill checks.

Challenges: You can accept a skill challenge to your Balance check in order to move faster than normal and other tricks.

Accelerated Movement: You can try to walk across a precarious surface more quickly than normal. If you increase the Difficulty Class by 5, you can move your full speed as a move action. Moving twice your speed in a round requires the penalty plus two Balance checks, one for each move action used. You may also accept this penalty in order to charge across a precarious surface; charging requires one Balance check for each multiple of your speed (or fraction thereof) that you charge.

Perfect Balance: In return for increasing the Balance DC by 5, you can move with such grace and agility that you main-

tain your active bonus to defense while balancing on a narrow surface.

Perilous Balance: If your DM judges it feasible, you can shake or disturb the object that you must balance upon. If your check succeeds after you increase the Balance Difficulty Class by 5, you keep your balance and inflict a +5 modifier to the Difficulty Classes of all Balance checks that others must make on this surface until your next turn. For example, you could bounce and sway on a tightrope to knock others off of it.

Bluff
(Charisma)

Skill Groups: Social, Theatrics

Check: A Bluff check is opposed by the target's Sense Motive check. See the accompanying table for examples of different kinds of bluffs and the modifier to the target's Sense Motive check for each one.

Sense Motive Circumstances	Check Modifier
The target wants to believe you.	−5
The bluff is believable and doesn't affect the target much.	+0
The bluff is a little hard to believe or puts the target at some risk.	+5
The bluff is hard to believe or puts the target at significant risk.	+10
The bluff is way out there, almost too incredible to consider.	+20

Favorable and unfavorable circumstances weigh heavily on the outcome of a Bluff check. Two circumstances can go against you: The bluff is hard to believe, or the action that you're asking the target to take goes against self-interest, nature, personality, orders, or the like. If it's important, you can distinguish between a bluff that fails because the target doesn't believe it and one that fails because it just asks too much of the target.

For instance, if the target gets a +10 bonus on the Sense Motive check because the bluff demands something risky, and the Sense Motive check succeeds by 10 or less, then the target didn't so much see through the bluff as prove reluctant to go along with it.

A target that succeeds by 11 or more has seen through the bluff. In essence, if the check would have succeeded without the modifier, your target believes you but declines to follow through on the belief due to other factors.

A successful Bluff check indicates that the target reacts as you wish, at least for a short time (usually 1 round or less) or believes something that you want the person to believe.

A Bluff check requires some degree of interaction between you and the target. Creatures unaware of you cannot be bluffed.

Creating a Diversion to Hide: You can use the Bluff skill to help you hide. A successful Bluff check gives you a momentary diversion to attempt a Hide check while people are aware of you. This use does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Delivering a Secret Message: You can attempt a Bluff check to get a message across to another character without others understanding it. The check is DC 15 for simple messages, or DC 20 for complex messages, especially those that rely on getting across new information. Failure by 4 points or less means you can't get the message across. Failure by 5 points or more means that some false information has been implied or inferred. Anyone listening to the exchange can try to intercept your message with a Sense Motive check opposed by the Bluff check you already made (see "Sense Motive" on page 103).

Feinting in Combat: You can also use Bluff to mislead an opponent in melee combat (so he can't dodge your next attack effectively). To feint, make a Bluff check opposed by your target's Sense Motive or base attack bonus check.

If your Bluff check succeeds, your target loses his active defense bonuses (if any) for the next melee attack you make against him. This attack must be made on or before your next turn. You gain this benefit to one attack only, not to all the attacks you can make.

Action: Varies. A Bluff check made as part of general interaction always takes at least 1 round (and is at least a full-round action), but it can take much longer if you try something elaborate. A Bluff check made to feint in combat or create a diversion to hide is a standard action. A Bluff check made to deliver a secret message doesn't take an action; it represents part of normal communication.

Try Again: Varies. Generally, a failed Bluff check in social interaction makes the target too suspicious for you to try again in the same circumstances, but you may freely retry Bluff checks made to feint in combat. Retries are also allowed when you try to send a message, but you may attempt such a retry only once per round. Each retry carries the same chance of miscommunication.

Special: Bluff proves particularly useful in conjunction with some Social feats, such as Devious Manipulator.

Synergy: If you have 5 or more ranks in Bluff, you enjoy a +2 bonus to Diplomacy, Intimidate, and Sleight of Hand checks, as well as to Disguise checks made when you know you're being observed and you try to act in character.

Take 10/20: You cannot use either of these options with a Bluff check, as trying to fool someone is a stressful, difficult situation.

Extended Skill Checks: Your DM may require you to make a number of successful Bluff checks to convince someone of a complicated or detailed lie. If you reach a target number of successes before hitting a certain number of failures, your target believes your story. Convincing a warlord that his brother plots to seize rulership, for example, would

EXTENDED BLUFF CHECKS

Description	Successes Needed	Maximum Failures
A long, involved lie	5	15
A complex conspiracy	10	10
An almost implausible tale	15	5

require an extended Bluff skill check. The table above summarizes the number of successes and failures you may need to feed the victim of a complex story. You can make one check each day, each of which requires at least 30 minutes of interaction.

Challenges: You can use Bluff challenges to make someone believe a lie for a longer period of time than normal or to simply confuse a listener with a bizarre, almost nonsensical claim.

Conversational Paralysis: In return for a −5 penalty to your Bluff check, a successful check dazes your target for 1 round. Your claims are so strange that he can do little more than sputter or reel in confusion. This skill challenge does not work in combat situations. For each additional −5 penalty you accept, you extend the duration of this effect by 1 round.

Durable Lie: In return for a −5 penalty on your check, your target believes your lies for a longer period than usual. He continues to act as you wish for 1 additional round. You can accept a second −5 penalty to extend this benefit by another round or attack. You cannot use this skill challenge with the feint use of Bluff.

CLIMB
(STRENGTH; ARMOR CHECK PENALTY)

Skill Group: Athletics

Check: With a successful Climb check, you can advance up, down, or across a slope, a wall, some other steep incline—even a ceiling with handholds—at one-quarter your normal speed (rounded down). A slope is considered to be any incline at an angle measuring less than 60 degrees. A wall is any incline at an angle measuring 60 degrees or more.

Failing a Climb check by 4 points or less indicates that you make no progress. Failing by 5 points or more means you fall from whatever height you have already attained.

A climber's kit gives you a +2 circumstance bonus on Climb checks (see Chapter Seven: Equipment).

The Difficulty Class of the check depends on the conditions of the climb. To determine an appropriate DC, compare the task at hand with those on the table opposite.

You need both hands free to climb, but you may cling to a wall with one hand while you attack or take some other action that requires only one hand. While climbing, you can't move to avoid a blow, so you lose your active bonus to defense (if any). You also can't use a shield while climbing.

DC	Example Surface or Activity
0	A slope too steep to walk up, or a knotted rope with a wall to brace against.
5	A rope with a wall to brace against, or a knotted rope.
10	A surface with ledges to hold onto and stand on, such as a very rough wall or a ship's rigging.
15	Any surface with adequate handholds and footholds (natural or artificial), such as a very rough natural rock surface or a tree, or an unknotted rope, or pulling yourself up when dangling by your hands.
20	An uneven surface with some narrow handholds and footholds, such as a typical wall in a dungeon or ruins.
25	A rough surface, such as a natural rock wall or a brick wall.
25	An overhang or ceiling with handholds but no footholds.
30	A perfectly smooth, flat, vertical surface.
–10*	Climbing a chimney (artificial or natural) or other location where you can brace against two opposite walls.
–5*	Climbing a corner where you can brace against perpendicular walls.
+5*	Surface is slippery.

* These DC modifiers are cumulative; use any that apply.

Any time you take damage while climbing, make a Climb check against the Difficulty Class of the slope or wall. Failure means you fall from your current height and sustain the appropriate falling damage (1d6 points of damage per 10 feet fallen).

Catching a Falling Character While Climbing: If someone climbing above you or adjacent to you falls, you can try to catch him if he is within your reach. Doing so requires a successful melee touch attack against the falling character (though he can voluntarily forego any active bonus to defense if desired). If you hit, immediately attempt a Climb check (DC 10 + the wall's Climb DC). Success indicates that you catch the falling character. However, his total weight including equipment cannot exceed your heavy load limit, or you automatically fall. Should you fail your Climb check by 4 points or less, you don't stop the character's fall but neither do you lose your grip on the wall. Failing by 5 points or more means you do not stop the character's fall and you begin falling as well.

Catching Yourself When Falling: It's practically impossible to catch yourself on a wall while falling. Make a Climb check (DC 20 + the wall's Climb Difficulty Class) to do so. It's much easier to catch yourself on a slope (DC 10 + slope's Climb Difficulty Class).

Making Your Own Handholds and Footholds: You can make your own handholds and footholds by pounding pitons into a wall. Doing so takes one minute per piton and a successful Climb check (DC 10) per piton; you need one piton per 3 feet of distance. As with any surface that offers handholds and footholds, a wall with pitons in it has a Climb DC of 15.

In this same way, a climber with a handaxe or similar implement can cut handholds in an ice wall. Failing this Climb check means you make a handhold that proves unsteady or too shallow to use.

Action: Climbing is part of movement, so it's generally part of a move action, and you may combine it with other types of movement in a move action. Each move action that includes any climbing requires a separate Climb check. Catching yourself or another falling character doesn't take an action.

Special: You can use a rope to haul a character upward (or lower a character) through sheer strength. You can lift double your maximum load in this manner.

A creature with a climb speed has a +8 racial bonus on all Climb checks. The creature must make a Climb check to scale any wall or slope with a Difficulty Class higher than 0, but it can always choose to take 10, even if rushed or threatened while climbing. If a creature with a climb speed chooses an accelerated climb (see below), it moves at double its climb speed (or at its land speed, whichever is slower) and makes a single Climb check at a –5 penalty. Such a creature retains its active bonus to defense (if any) while climbing, and opponents get no special bonus to their attacks against it. It cannot, however, use the run action while climbing.

Synergy: If you have 5 or more ranks in Use Rope, you get a +2 bonus to Climb checks made to climb a rope, a knotted rope, or a rope-and-wall combination.

Take 10/20: You can take 10 on Climb checks in relaxed, noncombat situations. You can never take 20, as failure on a Climb check carries a penalty.

Challenges: The skill challenges involved in a Climb check make it easier for you to fight while ascending a slope or allow you to move faster than normal.

Accelerated Climbing: You try to climb more quickly than normal. By accepting a +5 DC modifier to your check, you can move half your speed instead of one-quarter your speed while climbing. You can accept this challenge twice, for a total Difficulty Class modifier of +10, to move at your normal speed.

Fighting Climb: You can accept a +5 DC modifier to a Climb check to maintain your active bonus to defense, if any.

Secured Climb: If you take on a +5 DC modifier to your Climb check, you do not have to make Climb checks to maintain your position when you take damage. You climb in such a way as to brace yourself for any attacks.

CONCENTRATION
(CONSTITUTION)

Skill Groups: Academia, Mysticism

Check: Whenever you might become distracted (by taking damage, by harsh weather, and so on) while engaged in some action that requires your full attention, you must make a Concentration check. Relevant actions include making a focused attack that requires unwavering mental clarity, making use of some feats, and using a skill that would provoke an attack of opportunity. In general, if an action normally wouldn't provoke an attack of opportunity, you need not make a Concentration check to avoid distraction. Concentration also plays an important role in spellcasting. Arcanists use it to gather magical energy for many of their arcane feats.

If the Concentration check succeeds, you may continue with the original action as normal. Should the check fail, the action also fails and is wasted; a failed skill check may have other ramifications as well. A spell in progress automatically suffers a major disaster.

The table below summarizes various types of distractions that require you to make a Concentration check. When more than one type of distraction is present, make a check for each one; any failed Concentration check indicates that you do not complete the task.

Difficulty Class	Distraction
10 + damage dealt	Damaged during an action that requires focus.
10 + damage dealt + mana spent	Casting a spell without losing focus.
15 + mana spent	Casting a spell defensively.
10 + half of continuous damage	Taking continuous damage during an action that requires focus.
Distracting spell's save DC	Distracted by nondamaging spell.
10	Experiencing vigorous motion (on a moving mount, taking a bouncy wagon ride, in a small boat in rough water, belowdecks in a storm-tossed ship).
15	Experiencing violent motion (on a galloping horse, taking a very rough wagon ride, in a small boat in rapids, on the deck of a storm-tossed ship).
20	Experiencing extraordinarily violent motion (earthquake).
15	Entangled.
20	Grappling or pinned.
5	Weather is a high wind carrying blinding rain or sleet.
10	Weather is wind-driven hail, dust, or debris.

Cast a Spell: Casting a spell requires focus and mental clarity that a sword stroke or arrow can shatter. If an opponent readies an action to strike you as you cast, or if you otherwise suffer damage during your action while casting a spell, you must make a Concentration check (DC 10 + damage sustained + mana spent for the spell). Should this check succeed, you cast the spell as normal. Should the check fail, you lose the spell—you spend the mana as normal, but your spell collapses as you attempt to form it. It has no effect.

Cast Defensively: When you cast defensively, you try to maintain your protective posture while casting. If your check succeeds, you cast the spell as normal but do not provoke attacks of opportunity. Should your check fail, you lose the spell—you spend the mana as normal, but the spell fails to function. It has no effect.

Focused Determination: You can push pain and other distractions from your mind, allowing you to act while ignoring penalties that you may suffer from. As a standard action, make a Concentration check (DC 20 + twice the value of the penalty you wish to ignore). Success allows you to ignore the penalty on your next action.

Action: Standard or none. Often, making a Concentration check is either a free action (when attempted reactively) or doesn't require an action (when attempted actively as part of another action). Unless expressly noted otherwise, other uses of Concentration are standard actions.

Try Again: Yes, though a success doesn't cancel the effect of a previous failure, such as the disruption of a spell you attempted to cast.

Take 10/20: You can take 10 on a Concentration check during peaceful circumstances. You can take 20 on one as long as there is no penalty associated with failure on the check.

Challenges: The Concentration skill uses only the standard challenges given earlier in this chapter (see page 77).

CRAFT
(INTELLIGENCE)

Skill Group: None

Like Profession (see page 102), Craft is actually a number of separate skills. You could have several different Craft skills, each with its own ranks, each purchased as a separate skill.

A Craft skill must focus specifically on creating something. If an endeavor creates nothing, it probably falls under the heading of a Profession skill rather than Craft.

When you choose this skill, select a material to work with, such as wood, rock, or metals. Then select one of two size types: *trinkets/tools* or *objects/structures*. Trinkets and tools

CHANGES TO CRAFT

In *Iron Heroes*, the Craft skill is simpler than in some games—perhaps less realistic, but easier to judge.

include all items the size of a suit of armor and smaller. Objects and structures include everything larger than that. You can use your Craft skill to produce anything that is primarily composed of the material you work with and falls within the size category you choose. For example, if you selected Craft (metal trinkets/tools) you could forge anything from a horseshoe to a sword or tower shield. Someone with Craft (wood objects/structures) could build a cart or cottage.

Check: You can practice your trade and make a decent living, earning about half your check result in gold pieces per week of dedicated work. You know how to use the tools of your trade, perform the craft's daily tasks, supervise untrained helpers, and handle common problems.

The basic function of the Craft skill, however, is to allow you to make an item of the appropriate type. The skill check's Difficulty Class depends on the complexity of the item to be created. The DC, your check results, and the price of the item together determine how long it takes to make a particular item. The item's finished price also dictates the cost of raw materials.

Using artisan's tools in your Craft attempt gives you the best chance of success. If you use improvised tools, make your check with a –2 circumstance penalty. On the other hand, masterwork artisan's tools provide a +2 circumstance bonus on the skill check.

To determine how much time and money it takes to make an item, follow these steps.

1. Find the item's price in Chapter Seven: Equipment. Put the price in silver pieces (1 gp = 10 sp).
2. Select the appropriate Difficulty Class from the table on the next page.
3. Pay one-third of the item's price for the cost of raw materials.
4. Make an appropriate Craft check representing one week's work. If the check succeeds, multiply your check result by the Difficulty Class. If this result equals the price of the item in silver pieces, then you have completed the item. If the result multiplied by the Difficulty Class doesn't equal the price, then it represents the progress you've made this week. Record the result and make a new Craft check for the next week. Each week, you make more progress until your total reaches the price of the item in silver pieces.

If you fail a check by 4 points or less, you make no progress this week.

If you fail by 5 points or more, you ruin half the raw materials and have to pay half the original raw material cost again.

Progress by the Day: You can make checks by the day instead of by the week. In this case your progress (check result × DC) is in copper pieces instead of silver pieces (1 sp = 10 cp).

Repairing Items: Generally you can repair an item by making skill checks against the same Difficulty Class that it took to make the item in the first place. The cost of repairing an item is one-fifth of the item's price.

Item Type	DC
Simple item with no moving parts or complex pieces	10
Item with moving parts or joints	15
Intricate item with complex workings	20
Elegant or rare item	25
A masterpiece or one-of-a-kind item	30

Jury-Rigged Items: You can use this skill to create a temporary or crude item. Make a Craft check as described above, but attempt one check per hour to determine your progress in silver pieces. The final item has no cash value, and there is a 10 percent chance per hour of use that it breaks. You cannot jury-rig an item with a market price of more than 10 gp. You must provide raw materials and tools as normal.

Masterwork Items: Craft also allows you to make a masterwork item: an item that conveys a bonus to its user through its exceptional craftsmanship, not through being magical.

To craft a masterwork version of an item, create the masterwork component as if it were a separate item, in addition to the standard item. The masterwork component has its own price (see Chapter Seven: Equipment) and Difficulty Class. Once you have completed both the standard component and the masterwork component of the item, the masterwork item is finished. (*Note:* The price you pay for the masterwork component is one-third of the given amount, just as it is for the price in raw materials.)

Action: Does not apply. Craft checks are made by the day or week, but see below.

Try Again: Yes, but each time you miss by 5 or more, you ruin half the raw materials and have to pay half the original raw material cost again.

Synergy: If you have 5 ranks in a Craft skill, you enjoy a +2 synergy bonus to Appraise checks related to items made with that Craft skill.

Challenge: Since Craft works a bit differently than other skills, it uses a unique set of rules if you want to complete an item in less time than normal:

Fast Worker: You may voluntarily add +5 or +10 to the indicated Difficulty Class to craft an item. This increase allows you to create the item more quickly than normal (since you'll be multiplying this higher DC by your Craft check result to determine progress).

You must decide whether to increase the Difficulty Class before you make each weekly or daily check. Use this method when making a Craft check to determine the cash value of your check's efforts. Otherwise, use the standard challenge to shorten a check's length, as described earlier in this chapter.

DECIPHER SCRIPT
(INTELLIGENCE; TRAINED ONLY)

Skill Groups: Academia, Mysticism

Check: You can decipher writing in an unfamiliar language or a message written in an incomplete or archaic form. Make a check with DC 20 for the simplest messages, DC 25 for standard texts, and DC 30 or higher for intricate, exotic, or very old writing.

If the check succeeds, you understand the general content of a piece of writing about one page long (or the equivalent). On a failure, make a Wisdom check (DC 5) to see whether you draw a false conclusion about the text. Success means that you do not draw a false conclusion; another failure means that you do.

Both the Decipher Script check and (if necessary) the Wisdom check are made secretly, so you can't tell whether your conclusions are true or false.

Encode Message: You can create a simple cipher to hide a message's true meaning. Anyone reading the message must make a Decipher Script attempt to understand it. Anyone who knows the cipher can read it automatically, even without the Decipher Script skill.

Action: Deciphering the equivalent of a single page of script takes one minute (10 consecutive full-round actions).

Try Again: You may attempt a Decipher Script check on a page of text once per day. If the check fails, you must wait a day to try again.

Synergy: If you have 5 or more ranks in Decipher Script, you get a +2 bonus on Use Magic Device checks involving written items.

Take 10/20: You may take 10 on Decipher Script checks, but you cannot take 20 because a failed check carries a penalty (you cannot make another check to read the document for 24 hours).

Extended Skill Checks: Your DM may rule that complex, long, or intricate documents and inscriptions require an extended skill check. In this case, you may make one check per day to decode the text.

Document Complexity	Number of Successes
Long, rambling, incoherent	2
Highly technical, layered, symbolic	4
Multiple ciphers	6
Some sections must be translated before others, highly detailed, dense	8
Almost incomprehensible, lunatic ramblings or highly exotic system of encryption	10

Challenges: Decipher Script uses the standard challenges given earlier in this chapter (see page 77).

DIPLOMACY
(CHARISMA)

Skill Group: Social

Check: You can change others' attitudes with a successful Diplomacy check. See the "Influencing NPC Attitudes" table for basic Difficulty Classes. These DCs assume that the targets of this skill have no special reason to disregard an attempt at negotiation. In combat situations or in cases where the DM rules that the nonplayer character cannot be reasoned with, Diplomacy checks to alter the person's attitude automatically fail.

Combat Negotiation: Sometimes you can alter an opponent's attitude in combat. A villain's thugs might decide they're better off surrendering rather than fighting a hopeless battle. The sorcerer's henchman might ally with you if he realizes that you can pay him more or give him what he wants. You can attempt a Diplomacy check in combat, but the Difficulty Class increases by 10 to make the check a full-round action. Your DM must judge that you have made a reasonable or logical pitch to the NPC. An unfriendly foe attacks your allies but doesn't attack you unless you give him reason to do so. One with an indifferent or better attitude stops fighting. A helpful one attacks your foes, even if they are normally his allies.

Opposed Negotiations: In negotiations, participants roll a series of opposed Diplo-macy checks, and the first side to achieve five or more successes wins. Opposed checks also resolve situations when two advocates or diplomats plead opposite cases in a hearing before a third party. See "Extended Skill Checks," page 88.

Action: Changing others' attitudes with Diplomacy generally takes at least one full minute (10 consecutive full-round actions). In some situations, this time requirement may greatly increase at your DM's discretion. The party you speak with can take actions as normal while you attempt to complete the check; he does not automatically stop and patiently listen to you.

Try Again: You cannot retry a failed Diplomacy check unless the situation changes significantly. If you succeed in a check, you suffer a –10 penalty to additional Diplomacy checks to alter the subject's mood for the rest of the day unless the situation changes significantly. Once you have convinced someone of something, you are unlikely to push him any further.

Synergy: If you have 5 or more ranks in Bluff or Sense Motive, you enjoy a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks. You gain the bonus only once, not for both skills.

INFLUENCING NPC ATTITUDES

INITIAL ATTITUDE	NEW ATTITUDE (DC TO ACHIEVE)				
	Hostile	**Unfriendly**	**Indifferent**	**Friendly**	**Helpful**
Hostile	—	20	30	40	50
Unfriendly	Less than 15	—	20	30	40
Indifferent	—	Less than 5	Less than 15	20	30
Friendly	—	—	Less than 1	1	20
Helpful	—	—	—	Less than 1	1

Attitude	Means	Possible Actions
Hostile	Will take risks to hurt you	Attack, interfere, berate, flee
Unfriendly	Wishes you ill	Mislead, gossip, avoid, watch suspiciously, insult
Indifferent	Doesn't much care	Socially expected interaction
Friendly	Wishes you well	Chat, advise, offer limited help, advocate
Helpful	Will take risks to help you	Protect, back up, heal, aid

ROLEPLAYING AND DIPLOMACY CHECKS

A player who adopts an in-character voice to present his Diplomacy check should be rewarded, just as a player who creates a clever combat stunt can gain a bonus to attacks. Award a +2 bonus to a Diplomacy check for a player who presents an in-character oration, and an additional +2 bonus (to a maximum of +10) for each good, compelling point he makes, particularly those that cater to the non-player character's goals, hopes, fears, and ambitions. You can increase this bonus above +2 for points or proposals that seem particularly fitting. For example, an NPC who is surrounded by the party and on the edge of death will likely be open to an offer to accept his surrender. A DM may consider a particular oration enough to guarantee a successful check, but this should be the exception, not the rule.

On the other hand, the DM shouldn't impose penalties for poor oratory skills. Not everyone has the desire to act out their characters or the improvisational abilities to do it well. If the players prefer not to roleplay, the DM can simply ask them to summarize the important points they may stress as part of a Diplomacy check and award an appropriate bonus.

Take 10/20: You can take 10 on a Diplomacy check in a calm situation, but you cannot take 20, because failure carries a drawback.

Extended Skill Checks: In the case of a long, drawn-out negotiation, such as haggling over goods, your DM may have both sides keep a running total of their successes on opposed checks. The first side to reach 5, 10, or 15 successes wins, depending on the complexity of the negotiations and each side's demands. Sometimes, two sides may have different targets. For example, Alray the thief seeks to negotiate with his fence. He wants her to pay him 100 percent of a golden idol's market value, an outrageous sum for a stolen item. The fence offers her standard 50 percent. Since she has a reasonable position, she needs only 5 successes. Alray, with his exorbitant demands, must achieve 10 successes to win. Let the haggling commence!

In the event of a tie, the next side to succeed while the other fails wins. You might also have to accumulate multiple successes over the course of several days to finally push an NPC to the attitude you want him to have.

Challenges: The Diplomacy skill uses the standard skill challenges noted on page 77 with one exception. You can decrease the time needed to use this skill from 10 rounds to 1 round in exchange for a +10 DC modifier, as described under "Combat Negotiation," above.

CHANGES TO DIPLOMACY

The Diplomacy Difficulty Classes in *Iron Heroes* are higher than in most other d20 fantasy games. However, characters have access to several feats that make Diplomacy more powerful than normal.

DISABLE DEVICE
(INTELLIGENCE; TRAINED ONLY)

Skill Group: Robbery

Check: The Disable Device check is made secretly, so that you don't necessarily know whether you've succeeded.

The Difficulty Class depends on how tricky the device is. Disabling (or rigging or jamming) a fairly simple device is DC 10. More intricate and complex devices have higher Difficulty Classes.

A successful check means you disable the device. If it fails by 4 points or less, you have failed but can try again. Should you fail by 5 points or more, something goes wrong. If the device is a trap, you spring it. If you're attempting some sort of sabotage, you think you've disabled the device, but it still works normally.

You also can rig simple devices such as saddles or wagon wheels to work normally for a while, then fail or fall off sometime later, usually after 1d4 rounds or minutes of use.

Action: The amount of time needed to make a Disable Device check depends on the task, as noted on the table on the next page. Disabling a simple device takes 1 round and is a full-round action. A tricky or difficult device requires 1d4 or 2d4 rounds.

Try Again: Varies. You can retry if you have missed the check by 4 or less, though you must be aware that you have failed in order to try again.

Special: If you beat a trap's Difficulty Class by 10 or more on the check, you can study the trap, figure out how it works, and bypass it (along with your companions) without disarming it.

Note that any character with a sufficient total bonus in Disable Device can disarm a trap. Unlike some fantasy games, no special ability is required to defeat a trap with a Difficulty Class over 20.

Take 10/20: You can take 10 on a Disable Device check, and you may take 20 in situations where failure has no special ramifications, such as setting off a trap.

Extended Skill Checks: If you attempt to disable a device more complex than "simple" on the table above, your DM may require you to succeed in an extended skill check. You may have to accumulate anywhere from two to ten successes before fully disabling the device. If you make a number of failures equal to the target number of successes before you complete your work, you mistakenly believe that you have disabled the device.

Challenges: Using Disable Device, you can attempt to hide the damage you have inflicted on a device.

Disguise Tampering: If you attempt to leave behind no trace of your work, add 5 to the Difficulty Class. In this case, anyone who inspects the device that you disabled must make a Search or a relevant Craft, Knowledge, or Profession check, using your Disable Device result as the DC. On a success, they notice your tampering. Otherwise, the damage remains concealed.

Device	Time	DC	Example
Simple	1 round	10	Jam a lock
Tricky	1d4 rounds	15	Sabotage a wagon wheel
Difficult	2d4 rounds	20	Disarm a trap, reset a trap
Wicked	2d4 rounds	25	Disarm a complex trap, cleverly sabotage a clock-work device

DISGUISE
(CHARISMA)

Skill Group: Theatrics

Check: You use Disguise to mask your identity or adopt a persona. Your Disguise check result, opposed by others' Spot check results, determines how good the disguise is. If you don't draw any attention to yourself, others do not get to make Spot checks. Should you come to the attention of suspicious observers, such as a guard watching commoners walk through a city gate, assume they take 10 on their Spot checks.

You make one Disguise check per use of the skill, even if several people make Spot checks against it. Your DM makes the Disguise check in secret, so that you can't be sure of the result.

The effectiveness of your disguise depends in part on how much you attempt to change your appearance.

Disguise	Disguise Check Modifier
Minor details only	+5
Disguised as different gender*	−2
Disguised as different race*	−2
Disguised as different age category*	−2†

* These modifiers are cumulative; use any that apply.

† Apply this modifier for each category of difference between your actual age and your disguised age. The categories are young (not yet adult), adulthood, middle age, old, and venerable.

If you impersonate a particular individual, those who know what that person looks like enjoy a bonus on their Spot checks according to the table below. Furthermore, they are automatically considered suspicious of you, so opposed checks are always called for.

Familiarity	Viewer's Spot Check Bonus
Recognizes on sight	+4
Friends or associates	+6
Close friends	+8
Intimate	+10

Usually, an individual makes a Spot check to see through your disguise immediately upon meeting you and once each hour thereafter. If you casually meet many different creatures while in disguise, each for a short time, check once per day or hour, using an average Spot modifier for the group.

Action: Creating a disguise takes 1d3 × 10 minutes of work.

Try Again: You may try to redo a failed disguise, but once others know that you attempted to adopt a disguise, they'll be more suspicious.

Synergy: If you have 5 or more ranks in Bluff, you get a +2 bonus to Disguise checks when you know that you're being observed and you try to act in character.

Take 10/20: You may take 10 or 20 on a Disguise check, though remember that taking 20 requires 20 times the normal time for a skill check. In this case, it would by 1d3 × 200 minutes of work. Your disguise might be nearly flawless, but you must spend hours on it.

Challenges: You can take on the specific challenges below to improve the results of your Disguise check.

Face in the Crowd: With a −5 penalty to your check's result, you craft a disguise that is less likely than normal to attract attention. Only people who specifically single you out and try to notice your deception receive Spot checks. Guards and other passive observers make no special note of you unless you draw attention to yourself or interact directly with them.

Quick Change: You adopt a disguise as a full-round action. While this may keep others from noticing you from a distance, close inspection immediately reveals your ruse. You may resolve a Disguise check with a −5 penalty. However, anyone who moves within 10 feet of you automatically succeeds in their Spot checks to see through your disguise.

ESCAPE ARTIST
(DEXTERITY; ARMOR CHECK PENALTY)

Skill Group: Agility

Check: Escape Artist allows you to wriggle out of an opponent's grasp, squeeze through a tight opening, or free yourself from rope bindings. The table below gives the Difficulty Classes required to escape various forms of restraint.

Restraint	Escape Artist DC
Ropes	Binder's Use Rope check +10
Net	20
Chains, manacles	30
Tight space	30
Masterwork manacles	35
Grapple	Grappler's grapple check result

Ropes: Your Escape Artist check opposes the binder's Use Rope check. Since it's easier to tie someone up than to escape from being tied up, the binder gets a +10 bonus on his check.

Manacles and Masterwork Manacles: The Difficulty Class for manacles depends on their construction.

Tight Space: The Difficulty Class noted on the table represents an opening that your head fits through but your shoulders don't. If the space is long, you may need to make multiple checks. You can't get through a space that your head does not fit through. Make one check for every move action you spend traversing a tight space. You move at one-quarter your normal speed for each action. If you fail, you make no progress but may try again.

Grapple: You can make an Escape Artist check opposed by your enemy's grapple check to get out of a grapple or out of a pinned condition.

Action: Making an Escape Artist check to escape from rope bindings, manacles, or other restraints (except a grapple) requires one minute of work. Escaping from a net is a full-round action. Escaping from a grapple or pin is a standard action. The time needed to squeeze through a tight space depends on the length of the space as described above.

Try Again: Varies. You can make another check after a failure when squeezing your way through a tight space, making multiple checks. If the situation permits, you can make additional checks, or even take 20, as long as no one actively opposes you.

Synergy: If you have 5 or more ranks in Escape Artist, you enjoy a +2 bonus to Use Rope checks to bind someone. Those with 5 or more ranks in Use Rope get a +2 bonus to Escape Artist checks when attempting to escape from rope bonds.

Take 10/20: You can take 10 or 20 in most situations as long as you have the time and conditions needed to do so. Remember, taking 20 is the equivalent of using the time needed for 20 checks.

Extended Skill Checks: Your DM may rule that you must succeed in an extended skill check if you face several restraints at once. For example, if a villain ties your hands, wraps chains around your legs, and hangs you upside down by your feet, you may have to make three Escape Artist checks to earn your freedom.

Challenges: With an Escape Artist challenge, you can attempt to hide your efforts to escape.

Crafty Escape Artist: In exchange for increasing the check DC by 5, you can hide your efforts at escaping. Anyone who inspects your bindings must attempt a Spot check with a Difficulty Class equal to the result of your last Escape Artist check. If this Spot check fails, they do not notice the work you have done to escape. For example, you could untie the rope that binds you but leave it in place so a villain doesn't realize that you're free. Obviously if you free yourself and escape, the villain notices you are gone.

FORGERY
(INTELLIGENCE)

Skill Group: Robbery

Check: The Forgery skill allows you to create fake documents, counterfeit coins, and other false objects. Forgery requires writing materials appropriate to the document being forged, sufficient light or visual acuity to see the details of what you're writing, wax for seals (if appropriate), and some time. To forge a document on which the handwriting is not specific to a person (military orders, a government decree, a business ledger, or the like), you need to have seen a similar document before, and you enjoy a +8 bonus on your check. Forging a signature requires an autograph from that person to copy; you gain a +4 bonus on the check. To forge a longer document written in the hand of a particular person, you need a large sample of that person's handwriting.

The Forgery check is made secretly, so that you're not sure how your forgery turned out. As with Disguise, you don't even need to make a check until someone examines the work. Your Forgery check is opposed by the Forgery check of the person who examines the document or object to check its authenticity. The examiner gains modifiers on his check based on the conditions on the table below.

Forgery Condition	Examiner's Check Modifier
Type of document/object unknown to examiner	−2
Type of document/object somewhat known to examiner	+0
Type of document/object well known to examiner	+2
Handwriting not known to examiner	−2
Handwriting somewhat known to examiner	+0
Handwriting intimately known to examiner	+2
Examiner reviews document/object only casually	−2

A document that contradicts procedure, orders, or previous knowledge, or one that requires sacrifice on the part of the examiner, can increase his suspicion and create favorable circumstances for his opposing Forgery check.

Coin and art forgeries, especially those worth significant money, always arouse suspicion in the examiner unless you use Bluff, Diplomacy, or some other skill to win his trust.

As a rule of thumb, a suspicious person gains a +5 bonus to Forgery checks to notice fakery.

Forging Items: To use Forgery to create an item, such as a fake coin or a duplicate painting, sculpture, or similar object, you must use the relevant Craft skill to make the item as normal. It has a base cost equal to 25 percent of the item's original value. Use that reduced value to determine the raw materials and time needed to make the object. Once you are done, make a Forgery check as normal to determine the quality of your fakery.

Action: Forging a very short and simple document takes about one minute. A longer or more complex document takes 1d4 minutes per page. An object must be created with the Craft skill; see its description starting on page 84 to learn how long it takes to create an item.

Try Again: Usually, no. A retry is never possible after a particular examiner detects a given forgery, but the item still might fool someone else. The result of a Forgery check for a particular document must be used for every instance of a different reader examining the document. No reader can attempt to detect a particular forgery more than once. If that one opposed check goes in favor of the forger, the examiner can't try using his own skill again.

Restriction: To forge documents and detect forgeries, you must be able to read and write the language in question.

Take 10/20: You may take 10 or 20 on a Forgery check as normal.

Challenges: Using Forgery challenges, you can create objects that hide other, smaller items within them. For example, a smuggler might craft a vase that hides several small, valuable jewels within the clay used to shape it.

Hide Object: In exchange for a −5 penalty to your Forgery check, you can embed an item within the object you create. Your DM must rule that you could logically fit or hide the item within the forgery. Anyone who uncovers your deception also notes the presence of the hidden item. In addition, a Search check against your Forgery check result +5 uncovers the item.

GATHER INFORMATION
(CHARISMA)

Skill Group: Social

Check: You can scour a village, town, or district in a city for rumors and recent news. An evening's time, a few gold pieces for buying drinks and making friends, and a Gather Information check (DC 10) get you a general idea of a city's major news items, assuming there are no obvious reasons to withhold the information. The higher your check result, the better the information.

If you want to find out about a specific rumor, locate a particular item, obtain a map, or do something else along those lines, the check's Difficulty Class becomes 15 to 25 or even higher.

Information Wanted	DC
General news and rumors	10
News on a specific event or well-known person	15
News on a minor event or marginally known person	20
Rumors about a largely unknown event or person	25
News about an obscure person or an event that few know about	30
Information about an almost utterly unknown person or event	35

Plant Rumors: You spread stories throughout town, helping to sow false rumors or send your rivals on a wild goose chase. Make a Gather Information check with a −10 modifier. Those who attempt to use Gather Information in this area and fail to beat a Difficulty Class equal to the result of your check learn the information you planted in place of the news they seek. If the Gather Information check succeeds, your opponents learn that you spread the story.

Action: A typical Gather Information check takes 1d4+1 hours.

Try Again: Yes, but each check takes time. Furthermore, you may draw attention to yourself if you repeatedly pursue a certain type of information.

Synergy: Those with 5 or more ranks in Knowledge and access to the local area of study get a +2 bonus to Gather Information checks.

Take 10/20: You can use either of these options, though remember that taking 20 requires you to spend 20 times the normal time needed to make a check. In this case, you must spend 20d4+20 hours over the course of several days to take 20.

Extended Skill Checks: In the case of rare information or if you must find a single specific person with the information you need, your DM may require you to make an extended Gather Information check. This reflects the various stages of investigation you must engage in. If you seek a retired smuggler, you might first uncover the places where smugglers commonly meet clients, then find a thief who has contacts with the retired smuggler, then track down the smuggler's current location. This would require a Gather Information check for each of the investigation's three steps. Your DM also may decide that, if you fail a number of times equal to the number of successes you need, it becomes a common rumor that you are looking for someone.

Challenges: Gather Information has one unique challenge that allows you to cover your tracks while seeking information.

Discreet Seeker: While seeking out news and information, you keep a low profile. You focus on overhearing conversations, drawing inferences from peoples' behavior, and spying on others. You increase your Gather Information DC by +5, but you avoid leaving any clues about the information you seek. If your check fails, you may be detected as normal, but you still avoid spreading clues about what you seek.

HANDLE ANIMAL
(CHARISMA; TRAINED ONLY)

Skill Group: Wilderness Lore

Check: This skill allows you to train animals, raise them to become faithful servants, and otherwise manage and care for them. A Handle Animal check's Difficulty Class depends on how you use the skill.

Handle Animal Task	DC
Handle a domesticated animal	10
"Push" a domesticated animal	25
Teach a domesticated animal a trick	15 or 20*
Train a domesticated animal for a general purpose	15 or 20*
Rear a wild animal	15 + animal's HD

* See the specific trick or training purpose in the text below.

Handle a Domesticated Animal: This task involves commanding an animal to perform a task or trick that it already knows. If the animal is wounded or has taken any nonlethal damage or temporary ability score damage, the Difficulty Class increases by 2. Should your check succeed, the animal performs the task or trick on its next action.

"Push" a Domesticated Animal: To push an animal means to get it to perform a task or trick that it doesn't know but is physically capable of performing. This category also covers making an animal perform a forced march or forcing it to hustle for more than one hour between sleep cycles. If the animal is wounded or has taken any nonlethal damage or temporary ability score damage, the Difficulty Class increases by 2. Should your check succeed, the animal performs the task or trick on its next action.

Teach a Domesticated Animal a Trick: You can teach an animal a specific trick with one week of work and a successful Handle Animal check against the indicated Difficulty Class. An animal with an Intelligence score of 1 can learn up to three tricks,

while an animal with an Intelligence score of 2 can learn a maximum of six. Possible tricks (and their associated DCs) include, but are not limited to, the following.

- *Attack (DC 20):* The animal attacks apparent enemies. You may point to a particular creature that you wish the animal to attack, and it will comply if able. An animal normally attacks only humanoids, monstrous humanoids, giants, or other animals. Teaching an animal to attack all creatures (including such unnatural ones as undead and aberrations) counts as two tricks.
- *Come (DC 15):* The animal comes to you, even if it normally would not do so.
- *Defend (DC 20):* The animal defends you (or is ready to defend you if no threat is present), even without a command being given. Alternatively, you can command the animal to defend a specific other character.
- *Down (DC 15):* The animal breaks off from combat or otherwise backs down. An animal that doesn't know this trick continues to fight until it must flee (due to injury, a fear effect, or the like) or until its opponent is defeated.
- *Fetch (DC 15):* The animal goes and gets something and brings it back. If you do not point out a specific item, the animal fetches some random object.
- *Guard (DC 20):* The animal stays in place and prevents others from approaching.
- *Heel (DC 15):* The animal follows you closely, even to places where it normally wouldn't go.
- *Perform (DC 15):* The animal performs a variety of simple tricks, such as sitting up, rolling over, roaring or barking, and so on.
- *Seek (DC 15):* The animal moves into an area and looks around for anything that is obviously alive or animate.
- *Stay (DC 15):* The animal stays in place, waiting for you to return. It does not challenge other creatures that come by, though it still defends itself if needed.
- *Track (DC 20):* The animal tracks the scent presented to it. (This requires the animal to have the scent ability)
- *Work (DC 15):* The animal pulls or pushes a medium or heavy load.

Train a Domesticated Animal for a Purpose: Rather than teaching an animal individual tricks, you can simply train it for a general purpose. Essentially, an animal's purpose represents a preselected set of known tricks that fit into a common scheme, such as guarding or heavy labor. The animal must meet all the normal prerequisites for all tricks included in the training package. If the package includes more than three tricks, the animal must have an Intelligence score of at least 2.

An animal can be trained for only one general purpose, though if the creature is capable of learning additional tricks (above and beyond those included in its general purpose), it may do so. Training an animal for a purpose requires fewer checks than teaching individual tricks, but no less time.

- *Combat Riding (DC 20):* An animal trained to bear a rider into combat knows these tricks: attack, come, defend, down, guard, and heel. Training an animal for combat riding takes six weeks. You may also "upgrade" an animal trained for riding to this purpose by spending three weeks and making a successful Handle Animal check (DC 20). The new general purpose and tricks completely replace the animal's previous purpose and any tricks it once knew. Warhorses and riding

dogs are already trained to bear riders into combat, and they don't require any additional training for this purpose.

- *Fighting (DC 20):* An animal trained to engage in combat knows these tricks: attack, down, and stay. Training an animal for fighting takes three weeks.
- *Guarding (DC 20):* An animal trained to guard knows these tricks: attack, defend, down, and guard. Training an animal for guarding takes four weeks.
- *Heavy Labor (DC 15):* An animal trained for heavy labor knows these tricks: come and work. Training an animal for heavy labor takes two weeks.
- *Hunting (DC 20):* An animal trained for hunting knows these tricks: attack, down, fetch, heel, seek, and track. Training an animal for hunting takes six weeks.
- *Performance (DC 15):* An animal trained for performance knows these tricks: come, fetch, heel, perform, and stay. Training an animal for performance takes five weeks.
- *Riding (DC 15):* An animal trained to bear a rider knows these tricks: come, heel, and stay. Training an animal for riding takes three weeks.

Rear a Wild Animal: To rear an animal means to raise a wild creature from infancy so it becomes domesticated. A handler can rear as many as three creatures of the same kind at once.

A successfully domesticated animal can be taught tricks at the same time it's being raised, or it can learn them as a domesticated animal later.

Action: Varies. Handling an animal is a move action, while pushing an animal is a full-round action. For tasks with specific time frames noted above, you must spend half this time (at the rate of three hours per day per animal being handled) working toward completion of the task before you attempt the Handle Animal check. If the check fails, your attempt to teach, rear, or train the animal fails, and you need not complete the teaching, rearing, or training time. If the check succeeds, you must invest the remainder of the time to complete the teaching, rearing, or training. If something interrupts or if you can't follow the task through to completion, the attempt to teach, rear, or train the animal automatically fails.

Try Again: Yes, except for rearing a wild animal. Once an animal reaches adulthood, you cannot attempt to rear it again.

Special: You can use Handle Animal on a creature with an Intelligence score of 1 or 2 that is not an animal, but the Difficulty Class of any such check increases by 5. Such creatures have the same limit on tricks known as animals do.

Synergy: If you have 5 or more ranks in Handle Animal, you enjoy a +2 bonus on Ride checks.

Untrained: If you have no ranks in Handle Animal, you can use a Charisma check to handle and push domestic animals, but you can't teach, rear, or train animals.

Take 10/20: You can take 10 and 20 on Handle Animal checks, though you cannot take 20 when rearing an animal, due to the penalties associated with failure.

Extended Skill Checks: The Handle Animal skill does not normally use extended skill checks. A single check covers the amount of time and effort that other skills would resolve with an extended check.

Challenges: The standard skill challenges on page 77 apply to Handle Animal checks.

Heal
(Wisdom)

Skill Group: Academia

Check: The Heal skill allows you to help others recover from injuries. You can use this skill to prevent an ally from dying after he has been reduced to 0 or fewer hit points. You can also help an ally recover his reserve pool faster than normal. The skill check's Difficulty Class and effect depend on the task you attempt.

Heal Task	DC
First aid	15
Long-term care	15
Treat wounds	15
Treat wound from caltrop	15
Treat poison	Poison's save DC
Treat disease	Disease's save DC

For more on healing wounds, see "Healing and Reserve Points" in Chapter Eight: Combat.

First Aid: You usually use first aid to save a dying character. If a character has negative hit points and continues losing them (at the rate of 1 point per round, 1 point per hour, or 1 point per day), you can stabilize him. A stable character regains no hit points but stops losing them.

Treat Wounds: You can tend to a person's wounds, helping speed his normal rate of recovery. With a successful check, you restore a number of reserve points to his pool equal to your number of ranks in Heal. A person can receive this treatment only once per day whether it succeeds or fails, even if multiple healers attempt to treat him.

Long-Term Care: Providing long-term care means treating a wounded person for a day or more. If your Heal check succeeds, the patient recovers reserve points and ability score points lost to temporary ability damage at twice the normal rate:

- 4 reserve points per level + double Constitution score in reserve points for eight hours of rest in a day;
- 8 reserve points per level + quadruple Constitution score in reserve points for each full day of total rest;
- 2 ability score points for eight hours of rest in a day; or
- 4 ability score points for each full day of total rest.

You can tend as many as six patients at a time. You need a few supplies (bandages, salves, and so on) that are easy to come by in settled lands. Giving long-term care counts as light activity for the healer. You cannot give long-term care to yourself.

Treat Wound From Caltrop: A creature wounded by stepping on a caltrop moves at one-half normal speed. A successful Heal check removes this movement penalty.

Treat Poison: To treat poison means to tend a single character who has been poisoned and who is going to take more damage from the poison (or suffer some other effect). Every time the poisoned character makes a saving throw against the poison, you make a Heal check. The poisoned character uses the result of either your check or his saving throw, whichever is higher.

Treat Disease: To treat a disease means to tend a single diseased character. Every time he makes a saving throw against disease effects, you make a Heal check. The diseased character uses the result of either your check or his saving throw, whichever is higher.

Action: Providing first aid, treating a wound, or treating poison is a standard action. Treating a disease or tending a creature wounded by caltrops takes 10 minutes of work. Providing long-term care requires eight hours of light activity.

Try Again: Varies. Generally speaking, you can't try a Heal check again without proof of the original check's failure. You can always retry a check to provide first aid, assuming the target of the previous attempt is still alive.

Special: A healer's kit (see Chapter Seven: Equipment) gives you a +2 circumstance bonus on Heal checks.

Take 10/20: You can take 10 on a Heal check, but in most cases you simply don't have the time to take 20.

Challenges: You can attempt treatment to staunch a character's wounds, which provides a temporary reprieve at best.

Temporary Treatment: You bind a patient's wounds and provide him with herbs and elixirs that dull his pain, but his injuries remain. In exchange for a +5 increase to the Heal DC, you heal a patient's hit points rather than his reserve points. However, after 24 hours, the patient suffers the damage you healed. He suffers the full damage you healed to his reserve points and a total equal to half from his hit points. For example, if you restored 12 hit points to a character using a temporary treatment, he would later lose 12 reserve points and 6 hit points. Should this loss reduce a character to less than 0 reserve points, any additional damage reduces his hit points. A patient can receive the benefits of this use of Heal only once per day.

Hide
(Dexterity; Armor Check Penalty)

Skill Group: Stealth

Check: This skill allows you to stay out of sight by hiding behind a rock, slipping into the shadows, or otherwise blending into the environment. Your Hide check is opposed by the Spot check of anyone who might see you. You can move up to half your normal speed and hide at no penalty.

A creature larger or smaller than Medium gets a size bonus or penalty on Hide checks depending on its size category: Fine +16, Diminutive +12, Tiny +8, Small +4, Large –4, Huge –8, Gargantuan –12, and Colossal –16.

You need cover or concealment in order to attempt a Hide check. Total cover or total concealment usually obviates the need for a Hide check, since nothing can see you, anyway.

If people observe you, even casually, you can't hide unless you use the Bluff skill to create a distraction. You can run around a corner or behind cover so that you're out of sight and then hide, but the others know at least where you went.

If your observers are momentarily distracted, you can try to hide. While they turn their attention from you, you may attempt a Hide check if you can get to some kind of hiding place. As a general guideline, the hiding place has to be within a number of feet equal to your total number of Hide ranks. This check suffers a –10 penalty because you have to move fast.

Create a Diversion to Hide: You can use Bluff to help you hide. A successful Bluff check can give you the momentary diversion you need to attempt a Hide check while people are aware of you (see page 81).

Evade Extraordinary Senses: Some creatures can sense vibrations in the ground. Others have keen scent or a magical ability to detect their enemies. You can use Hide (and Move Silently) to evade such abilities with a penalty to your skill check. The penalty you suffer depends on the sense used to detect you.

Sense Type	Hide Check Penalty
Blindsense	–15
Scent	–5
Tremorsense	–10

Sniping and Ambushing: If you've already successfully hidden at least 10 feet from your target, you can make one ranged attack, then immediately hide again. You take a –20 penalty on your Hide check to conceal yourself after the shot. You can try a similar tactic with a melee attack, but you suffer a –30 penalty to your Hide check. Using Hide in this manner is a move action.

Action: Normally, you make a Hide check as part of movement, so it doesn't take a separate action. However, hiding immediately after an attack (see "Sniping and Ambushing," above) is a move action.

Take 10/20: In nonstressful situations, you can take 10 or 20 on a Hide check. For example, if you have sufficient time to gather camouflage and pick a good spot for an ambush, you could take 20 on a Hide check. You cannot take 10 or 20 if you move while hiding.

Challenges: You can use skill-specific challenges to move faster while hiding or to strike at an opponent from the shadows.

Fast Move: You can move up to your normal speed in exchange for a –5 penalty to your Hide check. In return for a –20 penalty to your check, you can move faster than your normal speed, such as by running or charging.

Shadow Strike: In return for a –5 penalty to your Hide check, you can make a Hide check as part of an attack action against an opponent who has lost his active defense bonuses against you. Your foe opposes this check with either a Spot or a base attack check. If you succeed, your opponent does not threaten you until the end of your next turn—you slash at him from hiding and move to confuse him, forcing him to waste precious moments to gain his bearings. Normally, your opponent threatens you after he becomes aware of your presence. The shadow strike challenge delays this for 1 round.

Intimidate
(Charisma)

Skill Group: Social

Check: You instill fear into your target, forcing him to take actions against his will or turning him into a nervous, clumsy wreck. You can use the Intimidate skill in one of two ways to intimidate one target at a time.

Browbeat Target: You can change another's behavior with a successful check. The result of your Intimidate check is the Difficulty Class that your target must achieve using his choice of a Will save, a base attack check, or an Intimidate check of his own. Before your target acts, he must make a check. If he fails, he does as you order him to do. You cannot compel a person to take a dangerous, self-destructive, or plainly foolish action. For example, you could browbeat a town guard into standing back while you carry off the crown jewels, but you could not force him to attack his allies or help you with your burden. In most cases, Intimidate can force a target to take no action or to stop interfering with you. The target makes a new save or check each round and continues to do so until 1d6 minutes after you have left his presence.

If the target succeeds in his check or saves against your intimidation attempt, he may act as normal, but you can try to intimidate him again. If he beats the DC by 5 points or more, you may not make another Intimidate check against him for the rest of the encounter.

Demoralize Opponent: You can also use Intimidate to weaken an opponent's resolve in combat. The result of your Intimidate check is the Difficulty Class that your target must achieve using his choice of a Will save, a base attack check, or an Intimidate check of his own. If you win, the target becomes shaken for a number of rounds equal to 1 + your Charisma modifier. A shaken character takes a –2 penalty on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws. You can intimi-date only an opponent that you threaten in melee combat and that can see you.

Action: Intimidating an opponent is a standard action.

Special: You gain a +4 bonus on your Intimidate check for every size category that you are larger than your target. Conversely, you take a –4 penalty on your Intimidate check for every size category that you are smaller than your target.

A character immune to fear can't be intimidated, nor can nonintelligent creatures.

Synergy: If you have 5 or more ranks in Bluff, you get a +2 bonus to Intimidate checks.

Take 10/20: Trying to intimidate someone is an inherently stressful situation. You cannot take 10 or 20 with this skill.

Extended Skill Checks: You can use an extended Intimidate check to force someone slowly into subservience. You must achieve a given number of Intimidate check successes before hitting a certain number of failures. Make one check each day on consecutive days; if you miss one or more days, you suffer one automatic failure for each day missed. You must reach a number of successes equal to 5 + your target's Charisma modifier, while getting five failures means that you cannot force him into service. You can intimidate only one person per day in this manner, spending at least four hours each day browbeating your unwilling servant.

The target of this use of Intimidate can have no more than half your Hit Dice. You can have a number of unwilling servants equal to 1 + your Charisma modifier. (If this total is 0 or less, you cannot have any.) A person forced into service in this manner obeys any nondangerous commands you give him. He never risks his life or property for you.

Challenges: While most skill challenges carry a –5 penalty (or +5 DC modifier), Intimidate works a little differently. Attempting to intimidate more than one person requires the mass intimidation challenge.

Mass Intimidation: You can attempt to intimidate more than one person at a time. In this case, one opponent of the DM's choice makes a single check to resist you. This result stands for everyone in the group. However, you suffer a –2 penalty to your check for each opponent beyond the first. Your DM may allow more than one person to make a check to resist you, with each checker representing a different subgroup of those you wish to intimidate. For example, while you attempt to steal the Rendergest Emerald, the town guard and a small group of thieves burst into Duke Rendergest's vault. You use Intimidate to freeze them in place and escape up a rope leading to the roof. The DM judges that the captain of the guard will resist your check on behalf of his men, while the outlaw Tyra Redblade resists on behalf of her cronies.

You can use mass intimidation with either use of Intimidate (demoralizing or browbeating a foe).

Power Intimidate: You make a spectacular claim of power, call out your opponent's courage, or take a risky gambit to find a foe's secret fear. A tough or determined enemy can see through your ploy, but a weak one quakes before your power. In return for a –5 penalty to your Intimidate check, you can increase the morale penalty you inflict by –1 or force an opponent to take an action that is against his interests (but not life threatening). For example, you could force a guard to help you carry the treasure he was supposed to protect. You can take this challenge multiple times to increase the morale penalty. In the case of compelling others to obey you, your DM may increase the penalty for particularly demanding commands. However, you can never use Intimidate to force someone to obey a life-threatening order.

JUMP
(STRENGTH; ARMOR CHECK PENALTY)

Skill Group: Athletics

Check: You use the Jump skill to leap into the air, vault over an obstacle, or dive over an opponent. The Difficulty Class and the distance you can cover vary according to the type of jump you attempt.

Your speed modifies your Jump check as follows:

Speed	Jump Check Modifier*
50 feet	+8
40 feet	+4
30 feet	+0
20 feet	–6
10 feet	–12

*   Take a –6 penalty for every 10 feet your speed is less than 30 feet or
    a +4 bonus for every 10 feet your speed is beyond 30 feet.

All Jump DCs given here assume that you get a running start, which requires that you move at least 20 feet in a straight line before attempting the jump. If you do not get a running start, double the jump's Difficulty Class.

Distance moved by jumping counts against your normal maximum movement in a round. Usually, you make a Jump check as part of a move action.

If you have ranks in Jump and succeed at a Jump check, you land on your feet (when appropriate). If you attempt a Jump check untrained, you land prone unless you beat the DC by 5 points or more.

Long Jump: A long jump is a horizontal jump, made across a gap like a chasm or stream. At the midpoint of the jump, you attain a vertical height equal to one-quarter of the horizontal distance. The jump's Difficulty Class is equal to the distance jumped (in feet).

If your check succeeds, you land on your feet at the far end. If you fail the check by less than 5 points, you don't clear the distance, but you can make a Reflex save (DC 15) to grab the far edge of the gap. You end your movement grasping the far edge. If that leaves you dangling over a chasm, getting up requires a move action and a Climb check (DC 15).

Long Jump Distance	Running Jump DC	Standing Jump DC
5 feet	5	10
10 feet	10	20
15 feet	15	30
20 feet	20	40
25 feet	25	50
30 feet	30	60

High Jump: A high jump is a vertical leap made to reach a ledge high above or to grasp something overhead. The Difficulty Class is equal to four times the distance to be cleared.

If you jumped up to grab something, a successful check indicates that you reached the desired height. If you wish to pull yourself up, you can do so with a move action and a Climb check (DC 15). Failing the Jump check means you do not reach the height and you land on your feet in the spot where you jumped. As with a long jump, the Difficulty Class doubles if you do not get a running start.

High Jump Distance*	Running Jump DC	Standing Jump DC
1 foot	4	8
2 feet	8	16
3 feet	12	24
4 feet	16	32
5 feet	20	40
6 feet	24	48
7 feet	28	56
8 feet	32	64

* Not including vertical reach; see below.

Obviously, the difficulty of reaching a given height varies according to the size of the jumper. The maximum vertical reach (height the creature can reach without jumping) for an average creature of a given size appears on the table below. As a Medium creature, a typical human can reach 8 feet without jumping. This assumes that you reach out with your arms and perhaps make a short hop to grab an object.

Quadrupedal creatures don't have the same vertical reach as bipedal creatures; treat them as one size category smaller.

Creature Size	Vertical Reach
Colossal	128 feet
Gargantuan	64 feet
Huge	32 feet
Large	16 feet
Medium	8 feet
Small	4 feet
Tiny	2 feet
Diminutive	1 foot
Fine	1/2 foot

Hop Up: You can jump up onto an object as tall as your waist, such as a table or small boulder, with a Jump check (DC 10). Doing so counts as 10 feet of movement, so if your speed is 30 feet, you could move 20 feet, then hop up onto a counter. You do not need to get a running start to hop up, so the Difficulty Class does not double if you do not get a running start.

Jumping Down: If you intentionally jump from a height, you take less damage than you would if you just fell. The Difficulty Class to jump down from a height is 15. You do not have to get a running start to jump down, so the Difficulty Class does not double if you do not get a running start.

If you succeed at the check, you take falling damage as if you had dropped 10 feet less than you actually did.

Kip Up: You can make a Jump check to stand from a prone position quickly. With a Jump check (DC 20), you stand as a free action. If you fail, you stand as a move action, as normal.

Leaping Strike: If you make a Jump check to leap at least half the distance you charge, you gain a +2 bonus to damage in addition to the standard +2 bonus to attacks when charging.

Vertical Strike: You can use a wall or other terrain feature to assist a jump you make as part of an attack. By taking to the air, you force an opponent to guard against an attack from an unexpected direction. Make a Jump check opposed by your foe's base attack check. If you succeed, your opponent loses his active bonus to defense against your attacks for the rest of your action. You must make a standing jump of at least 10 feet (DC 20) to gain this benefit; if you fail, you do not gain the benefits of the vertical strike, even if your Jump check beats your opponent's base attack check. You must move this distance as normal and may suffer attacks of opportunity.

Action: None. A Jump check is included in your movement, so it is part of a move action. If you run out of movement mid-jump, your next action (either on this turn or, if necessary, on your next one) must be a move action to complete the jump. The kip up action is a move action if you fail the Jump check.

Special: Effects that increase your movement also increase your jumping distance, since your check is modified by your speed.

Synergy: Those with 5 or more ranks in Tumble enjoy a +2 bonus on Jump checks. If you have 5 or more ranks in Jump, you get a +2 bonus to Tumble checks.

Take 10/20: You can take 10 on a Jump check outside of combat, but you cannot take 20, as you must suffer the conse-

quences of failure. (In the case of taking 20, you would have to take the jump again and again until you rolled a natural 20.)

Challenges: Jumping allows a strong, athletic warrior to outmaneuver his foe. After all, few expect an attack from above or an enemy who can jump over a defensive position.

Cunning Leap: You jump over an opponent or time a leap so that it catches an enemy off guard. In exchange for a +5 DC modifier per square, you treat any threatened squares that you jump through or over as unthreatened. If your check fails, they are threatened and you suffer attacks of opportunity as normal.

KNOWLEDGE
(INTELLIGENCE; TRAINED ONLY)

Skill Group: Academia

Knowledge is a skill that encompasses a number of different areas of study. You can expand the scope of your knowledge without taking wholly new skills by investing skill points in Knowledge to cover new areas—after all, few academics focus on one area to the exclusion of all others. For example, an expert on history also likely has knowledge of nobility and geography, as those areas play an important role in the context of history.

Below are the available fields of study. When you first spend ranks on this skill, you must choose an area of study. You may then gain additional areas of study for 1 skill point each. Resolving Knowledge checks in any of your chosen areas uses your Knowledge ranks and bonuses. Feats and other abilities that grant a benefit to Knowledge checks apply to all the fields that you have purchased.

- Arcana (ancient mysteries, magic traditions, arcane symbols, cryptic phrases, constructs, dragons, magical beasts)
- Architecture and engineering (buildings, aqueducts, bridges, fortifications)
- Dungeoneering (aberrations, caves, oozes, spelunking)
- Geography (lands, terrain, climate, people)
- History (royalty, wars, colonies, migrations, founding of cities)
- Local (legends, personalities, inhabitants, laws, customs, traditions, humanoids)
- Nature (animals, fey, giants, monstrous humanoids, plants, seasons and cycles, weather, vermin)
- Nobility and royalty (lineages, heraldry, family trees, mottoes, personalities)
- Religion (gods and goddesses, mythic history, ecclesiastic tradition, holy symbols, undead)
- The Planes (the inner planes, the outer planes, the astral plane, the ethereal plane, outsiders, elementals, magic related to the planes)

Check: Answering a question within your fields of study has a Difficulty Class of 10 (for really easy questions), 15 (for basic questions), or 20 to 30 (for really tough questions).

In many cases, you can use this skill to identify monsters

and their special powers or vulnerabilities (DC 10 + twice the monster's Hit Dice). A successful check allows you to remember a bit of useful information about that monster.

For every 5 points by which your check result exceeds the Difficulty Class, you recall another piece of useful information.

Action: In most cases, making a Knowledge check doesn't take an action. You simply know the answer or you don't.

Try Again: No. The check represents what you know, and thinking about a topic a second time doesn't let you know something that you never learned in the first place. You may make another check if you later spend one or more additional skill points to improve your Knowledge skill. This reflects newly acquired information and lore.

Synergy: If you have 5 or more ranks in Knowledge and access to the arcana area of study, you gain a +2 bonus on Spellcraft checks.

If you have 5 or more ranks in Knowledge and access to the architecture and engineering area of study, you get a +2 bonus on Search checks made to find secret doors or hidden compartments.

If you have 5 or more ranks in Knowledge and access to the geography field of study, you enjoy a +2 bonus on Survival checks made to keep from getting lost or to avoid natural hazards.

If you have 5 or more ranks in Knowledge and access to the local area of study, you gain a +2 bonus on Gather Information checks.

If you have 5 or more ranks in Knowledge and access to the nature field of study, you get a +2 bonus on Survival checks made in aboveground natural environments.

If you have 5 or more ranks in Knowledge and access to the nobility and royalty area of study, you enjoy a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks.

If you have 5 or more ranks in Knowledge and the planes as an area of study, you get a +2 bonus on Survival checks made while on other planes.

If you have 5 or more ranks in Knowledge and access to the dungeoneering area of study, you get a +2 bonus on Survival checks made while underground.

If you have 5 or more ranks in Survival, you get a +2 bonus on Knowledge checks that access the nature field of study.

Untrained: An untrained Knowledge check is simply an Intelligence check. Without actual training, you know only common knowledge (DC 10 or lower).

Take 10/20: You can take 10 on Knowledge checks, but you cannot take 20, as failure has a penalty: In this case, you cannot make another Knowledge check after a failed one.

Extended Skill Checks: Extended Knowledge checks come into play when you must research an obscure or strange subject. You might gain access to a library of the ancients, or you may need to visit several sages and uncover a few rare tomes to determine the demon Malbagaren's weakness. In this case, multiple Knowledge checks reflect the steady progress you make toward an answer. Usually, an extended skill check represents knowledge that you could not possibly possess or that exists in only a few rare places.

You normally need access to a library or similar resources to complete an extended Knowledge check.

Your DM might also structure your extended Knowledge check in such a way that, as you gain more successes, you learn about where you must go next to uncover information rather than the answer you seek. For instance, your research in a city's library (the equivalent of four successes) tells you that you must journey to a distant ruin and translate hieroglyphics found there. After reading that ancient script and racking up four more successes, you realize that the archmage Bondopherous holds the ancient tome you seek. You may have to fight him for it or steal it from his collection. In either case, you must make your final two successes while the book is in your hand.

A Knowledge check made as part of an extended skill check requires four hours of work. You can make one per day. How many successes you need depends on what sort of knowledge you're seeking:

Type of Knowledge	Successes Needed
Strange, obscure, rare	5
Limited in scope, known only to a small group	10
Found only in one place, recorded only once	15

Challenges: You can use the following skill-specific challenge to uncover useful information about a particular creature.

Uncover Weakness: When using Knowledge to recall information about a creature, you can choose to accept a +5 DC modifier. In return, a successful check grants you knowledge that provides you with a +1 bonus to attacks against that creature until the end of the encounter. You can take this skill challenge up to five times on a single check. If you fail your check, you cannot retry during this encounter.

LISTEN
(WISDOM)

Skill Group: Perception

Check: The Listen skill allows you to overhear a whispered conversation, detect the approach of a stealthy assassin, or wake up as a monster sneaks through your camp. A Listen check is made either against a Difficulty Class reflective of the volume of the noise or opposed by a target's Move Silently check.

Listen DC	Sound
−10	A battle
0	People talking*
5	A person in medium armor walking slowly (10 feet/round) trying not to make noise.
10	An unarmored person walking slowly (15 feet/round) trying not to make noise
15	People whispering*
30	An owl gliding in for a kill
+5	Through a door
+15	Through a stone wall
−1	Per 10 feet of distance
−5	Listener distracted

*   *If you beat the DC by 10 or more, you can make out what's being said, assuming you understand the language. This also assumes that the conversation occurs some distance away or that you are not able to clearly hear what is said in a normal fashion.*

In the case of people trying to be quiet, your Listen check opposes their Move Silently checks.

Battle Sense: Once per round as a move action, you can attempt a Listen check to gain a better sense of the situation on a battlefield. You hear the stomp of booted feet, the whistle of a sword drawn back to strike, or the creak of a readied bow. Anyone who gains the benefits of flanking against you must make a base attack check opposed by your Listen check result. If this base attack check fails, the attacker loses the benefits of the flank. They lose the +2 bonus to attacks, while foes with sneak attack do not gain that bonus damage. Note that creatures you are unaware of do not need to make this check, as you cannot account for them.

Action: Varies. Every time you have a chance to hear something in a reactive manner (such as when someone makes a noise or you move into a new area), you can make a Listen check without using an action. Trying to hear something you failed to hear previously is a move action.

Try Again: You can try to hear something that you failed to hear previously with no penalty.

Special: When several characters are listening to the same thing, a single d20 roll can be used for all the individuals' Listen checks.

A sleeping character may make Listen checks at a –10 penalty. A successful check awakens the sleeper.

Take 10/20: You can use both of these options in nonstressful circumstances. However, a Listen check made to detect an approaching enemy or to see if you are surprised is always a stressful situation.

Challenges: If your hearing is especially sharp, you can pinpoint a creature's location purely by the sound it makes.

Locate Noise: In return for a –5 penalty to your Listen check, you can attempt to pinpoint a creature's location. A successful check tells you the exact square (or squares) it occupies. The creature gains the benefits of concealment as normal, but you can attack it even if you cannot see it. In this case, the creature gains full concealment (50 percent miss chance). If your check fails, you become confused and cannot determine whether the sound you hear is a creature, background noise, or something else. In essence, you suffer the effects of failing a Listen check even though you might have heard something.

Move Silently
(Dexterity; Armor Check Penalty)

Skill Group: Stealth

Check: Your Move Silently check is opposed by a Listen check from anyone who might hear you. You can move up to half your normal speed at no penalty.

Noisy surfaces such as bogs or undergrowth are tough to move silently across. When you try to sneak across such a surface, you take a penalty on your Move Silently check as indicated below.

Surface	Check Modifier
Noisy (shallow or deep bog, undergrowth, loose gravel, dense rubble)	–2
Very noisy (dense undergrowth, deep snow, creaky floor)	–5

When you attack an opponent who does not hear you and remains unaware of your presence, your target usually loses his active defense bonus against you.

If you do not move, you do not have to make a Move Silently check to avoid detection if you remain quiet.
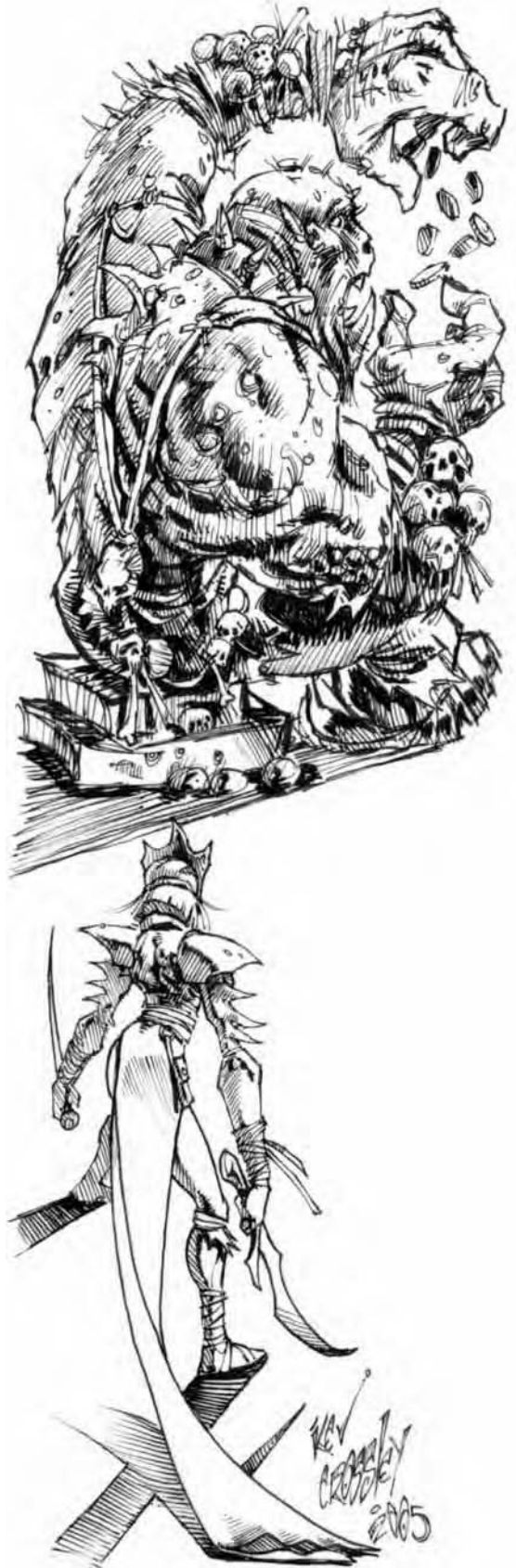
Evade Extraordinary Senses: Some creatures can sense vibrations in the ground. Others have keen scent or a magical ability to detect their enemies. You can use Move Silently (and Hide) to evade such abilities with a penalty to your check. The penalty you suffer depends on the sense used to detect you.

Sense Type	Check Penalty
Blindsense	−15
Scent	−5
Tremorsense	−10

Action: None. A Move Silently check is usually included in your movement or other activity, so it is part of another action.

Take 10/20: You cannot normally take 10 or 20 on a Move Silently check. Using this skill is always a stressful situation.

Challenges: You can use skill-specific challenges to gain additional benefits from Move Silently or to improve your use of it.

Rapid Stealth: In return for a −5 penalty to your Move Silently check, you can move up to your full speed. In return for a −20 penalty, you can attempt to move silently while running or charging.

Open Lock

(Dex; Trained Only)

Skill Group: Robbery

Open Lock allows you to pick a lock or a similar mechanism used to hold a door, chest, or gate shut. Attempting an Open Lock check without a set of thieves' tools imposes a −2 circumstance penalty on the check, even if you use a simple tool as a substitute. If you use masterwork thieves' tools, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus on the check.

Check: Depending on the quality of the lock, the Difficulty Class for opening a lock varies from 20 to 40, as given on the table below.

Lock	DC
Very simple lock	20
Average lock	25
Good lock	30
Amazing lock	40

Action: Opening a lock is a full-round action.

Untrained: You cannot pick a lock untrained, but you might successfully force it open with a Strength check to break it.

Take 10/20: In a calm situation where you have enough time, you can take 10 or 20 on an Open Lock check.

Extended Skill Check: A particularly complex or strange lock may require an extended skill check to open. Your DM keeps track of the successes you have accumulated, but if you make too many failures before opening the lock, your extended check fails. Usually, if your failures equal the number of successes needed to open the lock, you fail the extended check.

OPEN LOCK EXTENDED SKILL CHECKS

Lock Type	Successes Needed	Maximum Failures
Mechanical, strange, or magical lock	5	5
Ancient lock, combination lock	10	10
A unique, bizarre lock built with complex gears, springs, and other mechanisms	15	15

Perform

(Charisma)

Skill Group: Theatrics

Like Knowledge, Perform actually covers a number of separate areas. You can invest skill points into expanding this skill to cover as many of them as you like.

Each of the nine areas of the Perform skill includes a variety of methods, instruments, or techniques, a small list of which is provided for each category below.

- Acting (comedy, drama, mime)
- Comedy (buffoonery, limericks, joke-telling)
- Dance (ballet, waltz, jig)
- Keyboard instruments (harpsichord, piano, pipe organ)
- Oratory (epic, ode, storytelling)
- Percussion instruments (bells, chimes, drums, gong)
- String instruments (fiddle, harp, lute, mandolin)
- Wind instruments (flute, pan pipes, recorder, trumpet)
- Singing (ballad, chant, melody)

When you purchase ranks in Perform, you gain one of the above areas. You can purchase additional ones at the rate of one area per skill point spent. These skill points do not improve your Perform ability, they simply grant you additional areas of Perform. Use your Perform skill for all the areas that you have purchased. You do not keep track of separate ranks for each.

Purchasing a Perform area allows you to play or perform all the methods and instruments listed under it, along with any other instruments that the DM feels would logically fit into a category.

Check: You can impress audiences with your talent and skill as follows.

DC	Perform Task
10	Routine performance. Trying to earn money by playing in public is essentially begging. You can earn 1d10 cp/day.
15	Enjoyable performance. In a prosperous city, you can earn 1d10 sp/day.
20	Great performance. In a prosperous city, you can earn 3d10 sp/day. In time, you may be invited to join a professional troupe and may develop a regional reputation.
25	Memorable performance. In a prosperous city, you can earn 1d6 gp/day. In time, you may come to the attention of noble patrons and develop a national reputation.

30   Extraordinary performance. In a prosperous city, you can earn 3d6 gp/day. In time, you may draw attention from distant potential patrons, or even from extraplanar beings. Whether this is a good or bad thing is up to your DM to decide.

A masterwork musical instrument gives you a +2 circumstance bonus on Perform checks that involve its use.

Note that the following additional uses of Perform are available only to characters who are trained in this skill. They demand focus and ability that can come only with the formal training or extensive practice reflected by having ranks in this skill.

Countersong: You can use your musical abilities to disrupt magical attacks or abilities that rely on song. You must have a Perform area that involves music and, if necessary, an instrument. Any creature within 30 feet of you (including yourself) that is affected by a sonic or language-dependent magical attack may use your Perform check result in place of a saving throw if, after the saving throw is rolled, the Perform check result proves to be higher. Creatures within range of the countersong who are already under the effect of a noninstantaneous sonic or language-dependent magical attack gain another saving throw against the effect each round they hear the countersong, but they must use your Perform check result for the save. Countersong offers no benefit against effects that don't allow saves. You may start a countersong as a standard action and keep it up for a number of rounds equal to your ranks in Perform.

Distract: Your performance can distract creatures, drawing their attention away from your allies as they sneak past, ready weapons for an ambush, or take other actions. In a noncombat situation, you may make a Perform check opposed by your target's Will save. If any of the creatures you target succeed in this save, they all do. If the audience fails its save, its members suffer −5 penalties to all Listen and Spot checks while you continue to entertain them.

Inspire Courage: You can play a song or conduct a performance that inspires you and your allies to fight with greater determination and focus. To be affected, an ally must be able to hear you sing. The effect lasts for as long as your allies hear you and for 5 rounds thereafter. An affected ally receives a morale bonus to attacks, Will saves, and damage based on your Perform check result.

Perform Result	Morale Bonus to Attacks, Will Saves, and Damage
20	+1
30	+2
40	+3

You can attempt to use Perform in this manner once per encounter.

Inspire Doom: Just as you can use your performance to inspire courage, so too can you use it to cast a shadow across your foe's heart. Once per encounter, you may make a Perform check as a standard action to begin singing a song of doom. All enemies within 30 feet of your must make Will saves with a Difficulty Class equal to the result of your Perform check. Those who fail suffer a penalty to attacks and Will saves based on your check result. Your result must be at least 20 for your performance to have an effect. This penalty lasts for 10 rounds.

Perform Result	Penalty to Attacks and Will Saves
20	−1
30	−2
40	−3

Taunt: If you select the area of comedy performance, you may use Perform to disrupt an opponent's focus and concentration. As a full-round action, pick a single foe who can see and hear you and who shares a language with you. Then make a Perform check opposed by your target's Will save. If your check succeeds, your enemy suffers a −2 penalty to all attacks but gains a +1 bonus to melee damage. Your opponent moves to attack you if he can do so without provoking attacks of opportunity. Your allies can forgo these attacks in such a manner as to signal the target that they will let him pass. This effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to 1 + your Charisma bonus.

Action: Varies. Trying to earn money by playing in public requires anywhere from an evening's work to a full day's performance.

Try Again: Retries are allowed, but they don't negate previous failures. An audience that has been unimpressed in the past is likely to be prejudiced against future performances. (Increase the check's Difficulty Class by 2 points for each previous failure.)

Special: In addition to using the Perform skill, you can entertain people with Sleight of Hand, Tumble, Balance (tightrope walking), and similar skills. You can use these skills to earn money as a performer, but you do not gain access to the other uses for Perform.

Untrained: You can attempt an untrained Perform check to earn money, but you cannot attempt the other actions described under this skill.

Take 10/20: You can take 10 on a Perform check, but you cannot normally take 20 unless your audience is willing to sit through some awful performances as you warm up.

Challenges: You can attempt to improve the result of your inspire courage or inspire doom performances with skill-specific challenges.

Risky Performance: In return for a −5 penalty on your check, you increase by 1 the bonus or penalty provided by the inspire courage and inspire doom uses of Perform. You try a risky or subtle piece that may fire your allies' hearts or cloud your foes' hopes—but there is a chance that you may miss the mark. Your total result must still be at least 20 after accounting for the penalty. You can accept this challenge up to twice on a single check.

PROFESSION
(WISDOM; TRAINED ONLY)

Skill Group: None

Profession is a number of separate skills covered by this one ability. Like Craft, you could have several Profession skills, each with its own ranks, each purchased as a separate skill. There is too great a disparity between different professions for ranks in one area to transfer over to another. While a Craft skill represents ability in making items, a Profession skill represents aptitude in a vocation requiring a broader range of less specific knowledge.

Check: You can practice your trade and make a decent living, earning about half your Profession check result in gold pieces per week of dedicated work. You know how to use the tools of your trade, how to perform the profession's daily tasks, how to supervise helpers, and how to handle common problems.

Profession checks also determine how well you complete tasks relating to your profession. For example, you would use Profession (sailor) to steer a ship through a patch of icebergs without mishap.

The following professions represent the standard *Iron Heroes* canonical list. DMs may add new ones to account for professions in their own campaign worlds.

Note that, by definition, a Profession skill does not produce or make goods. Such activities are covered by the Craft skill.

- *Carter:* Used to control a wagon or similar vehicle, often in conjunction with Handle Animal.
- *Gambler:* Used to play games of chance.
- *Lawyer:* Used to argue legal cases.
- *Merchant:* Used to buy and sell goods; can substitute for Diplomacy when haggling.
- *Sailor:* Used to command, navigate, or pilot a ship.
- *Scribe:* Used to search libraries for specific tomes and maintain records.

As you can see, most jobs are covered by other skills. For example, a hunter or fisherman would use Survival to gather food in the wilderness. Blacksmiths use the Craft skill to create their goods, while an ambassador relies on Diplomacy. Your DM may, at his discretion, allow you to earn a weekly income from a different skill using the rules described here for Profession.

Action: A single check generally represents a week of work.

Try Again: An attempt to use Profession to earn an income cannot be retried—you are stuck with whatever weekly wage your check result brought you. Another check may be made after a week to determine a new income for the next period of time. An attempt to accomplish some specific task can usually be retried.

Untrained: Untrained laborers and assistants (that is, characters with no ranks in Profession) earn an average of 1 silver piece per day.

Take 10/20: You cannot take 10 or 20 on Profession checks to earn money, but you can take 10 on checks to complete a specific action or recall a fact related to your profession.

RIDE
(DEXTERITY)

Skill Group: Wilderness Lore

The Ride skill allows you to control a creature that serves as a mount, such as a horse, griffon, or similar creature.

Check: Typical riding actions don't require checks. You can saddle a creature, mount, ride, and dismount without a problem. If you attempt to ride a creature that is ill suited as a mount, you suffer a –5 penalty to Ride checks. Otherwise, your Ride skill applies to all animals that you could possibly ride; you do not need separate skills for each creature type.

The Ride skill is a key component to mounted combat. See "Mounted Combat" in Chapter Eight: Combat for more information.

Completing the following tasks requires Ride checks, as they are more demanding than the typical actions that a rider undertakes.

Ride Task	DC
Guide with knees	5
Stay in saddle	5
Fight with warhorse	10
Cover	15
Leap	15
Soft fall	15
Spur mount	15
Control mount in battle	20
Fast mount or dismount	20*

* Armor check penalty applies.

Guide With Knees: You can guide your mount with your knees so as to use both hands in combat. Make your Ride check at the start of your turn. If you fail, you can use only one hand to fight this round, because you need the other to control your mount.

Stay in Saddle: You can react instantly to try to avoid falling when you take damage or when your mount rears or bolts unexpectedly. This usage does not require an action.

Fight With Warhorse: If you direct your war-trained mount to attack in battle, you can still make your own attack(s) normally. This usage is a free action.

Cover: You can react instantly to drop down and hang alongside your mount, using it as cover. You can't attack or cast spells while using your mount as cover. If you fail your Ride check, you don't get the cover benefit. This usage does not require an action. Normally, you gain a +4 cover bonus to defense from this usage of the skill.

Soft Fall: You can react instantly to try to take no damage when you fall off a mount, such as when it dies or falls prone. If you fail your Ride check, you suffer 1d6 points of falling damage. This usage does not require an action.

Leap: You can get your mount to leap obstacles as part of its movement. Use your Ride modifier or the mount's Jump modifier, whichever is lower, to see how far the creature can jump. If you fail your Ride check, you fall off the mount when it leaps and suffer the appropriate falling damage (at least 1d6 points). This usage does not take an action but is part of the mount's movement.

Spur Mount: You can spur your mount to greater speed with a move action. A successful Ride check increases the mount's speed by 10 feet for 1 round but deals the creature 1 point of damage. You can use this ability every round, but each consecutive round of additional speed deals twice as much damage to the mount as the previous round (2 points, 4 points, 8 points, and so on).

Control Mount in Battle: As a move action, you can attempt to control a light horse, pony, heavy horse, or other mount not trained for combat riding while in battle. If you fail the Ride check, you can do nothing else in that round but control the animal. You do not need to roll for warhorses, warponies, or other creatures trained in combat, but you still must use a move action to guide them in battle.

Fast Mount or Dismount: You can attempt to mount or dismount from a creature of up to one size category larger than yourself as a free action, provided you still have a move action available that round.

If you fail the Ride check, mounting or dismounting becomes a move action. You can't use fast mount or dismount on a creature more than one size category larger than yourself.

Assist Skill Check: If your mount must make a Strength-, Dexterity-, or Constitution-based skill check, you can use your Ride skill to aid it. This applies only to skill checks in which a rider could logically aid his mount. If for some reason you ride a creature that has a skill such as Open Lock, your Ride check could not help it: This ability does not normally apply to Open Lock, Sleight of Hand, and Use Rope.

Action: Mounting or dismounting normally requires a move action. Other checks are a move action, a free action, or no action at all, as noted above.

Special: If you are riding bareback, you take a −5 penalty on Ride checks.

If your mount has a military saddle you get a +2 circumstance bonus on Ride checks related to staying in the saddle (see Chapter Seven: Equipment).

Synergy: Those with 5 or more ranks in Handle Animal enjoy a +2 bonus on Ride checks.

Take 10/20: You can take 10 on a Ride check in a calm situation, but you cannot take 20 unless you are willing to make 20 total attempts at the skill check.

Challenges: Only the standard challenges presented earlier in this chapter apply to the Ride skill (see page 77).

SEARCH
(INTELLIGENCE)

Skill Group: Perception

Check: Use the Search skill to find hidden objects and other items that remain out of view. (In contrast, Spot allows you to pick out details that are in plain view but difficult to notice.) Search functions against anything that requires an active effort to uncover. You generally must be within 10 feet of the object or surface to be searched. The table below gives Difficulty Classes for typical tasks involving the Search skill.

Search Task	DC
Ransack a chest full of junk to find a certain item	10
Notice a typical secret door or a simple trap	20
Find a difficult nonmagical trap	21+
Notice a well-hidden secret door	30
Find a footprint	Varies*

* *A successful Search check can locate a footprint or similar sign of a creature's passage, but it won't let you find or follow a trail. See the Survival skill's "track" usage for the appropriate Difficulty Class.*

Action: It takes a full-round action to search a 5-foot-square area or a volume of goods that measures 5 feet on a side.

Synergy: If you have 5 or more ranks in Search, you get a +2 bonus on Survival checks to find or follow tracks.

Those with 5 or more ranks of Knowledge in the architecture and engineering field of study get a +2 bonus on Search checks to find secret doors or hidden compartments.

Special: In *Iron Heroes*, any character can attempt to find a trap with a Search Difficulty Class of 20 or higher. No special class abilities are required to find traps with the Search skill.

Take 10/20: You can use both of these options with the Search skill.

Extended Skill Checks: Search does not normally use extended skill checks, but each check covers only a 5-foot-square area or a volume of goods 5 feet on a side as a full-round action. Thus, scouring an entire building or a large area may take quite a long time.

Challenges: There are no challenges specific to the Search skill beyond the standard ones given earlier in the chapter (see page 77).

SENSE MOTIVE
(WISDOM)

Skill Group: Perception

Check: The Sense Motive skill allows you to discern a target's emotional state. You ignore his words and actions to read the mood or mindset he betrays through unconscious signals. A successful check lets you avoid being bluffed (see the Bluff skill, page 81). You can also use this skill to determine when "something is up" (that is, something odd is going on) or to assess someone's trustworthiness.

Sense Motive Task	DC
Combat sense	Opposed by base attack check
Hunch	20
Read a person	10 or higher
Sense enchantment	25 or 15
Discern secret message	Varies

Combat Sense: As a full-round action, you study a single opponent to understand his fighting style, current disposition, and combat plans. This target must be within 30 feet of you. Make a Sense Motive check opposed by your target's base attack check. If you succeed, you gain a +1 bonus to attacks and a +1 bonus to defense against that target.

If you fail your check by 5 points or more, you read your foe incorrectly. For the rest of the encounter, you suffer a −1 penalty to attacks and defense against him.

Hunch: This use of the skill involves making a gut assessment of a social situation. You can get the feeling from another's behavior that something is wrong, such as when you're talking to an impostor. You might get the feeling that someone is trustworthy.

Read a Person: You can analyze a person's demeanor, dress, and attitude to learn about his background in a manner similar to a skilled detective. The base Difficulty Class for this check is 10. A person in disguise uses the result of his Disguise check to oppose your attempt. If you beat DC 10 but do not win the opposed check, you draw information based on the target's false identity. Otherwise, you see through the disguise and learn about his true nature, as described below.

Anyone not actually in disguise who attempts to mask his true nature replaces the base DC 10 with a Bluff check that opposes your Sense Motive attempt.

If your Sense Motive check succeeds, you learn a single fact about the target's background, history, or personality. Your DM judges what you could learn based on the situation and the NPC in question. You might learn that the duke was once a gladiator because of the scars on his cheek, but you might never realize that he consorts with demons. Such a deep secret would rarely, if ever, be immediately obvious unless the duke had made some gaffe in covering his tracks. In general, Sense Motive shows you information that is open rather than secret.

Sense Enchantment: You can tell that someone's behavior is being influenced by an enchantment (by definition, a mind-affecting effect), even if that person doesn't know it. The usual Difficulty Class is 25; if the target is dominated, the DC becomes only 15, because of the limited range of the target's activities.

Discern Secret Message: You may use Sense Motive to detect that a hidden message is being transmitted via the Bluff skill (see page 81). In this case, make a Sense Motive check opposed by the Bluff check of the character transmitting the message. For each piece of information relating to the message that you are missing, you take a −2 penalty on your

Sense Motive check. (For example, if the secret message is "grab the pouch," but you don't know which pouch is meant, you suffer the penalty.) If you succeed by 4 points or less, you know that something hidden is being communicated, but you can't learn anything specific about its content. If you beat the DC by 5 points or more, you intercept and understand the message. If you fail by 4 points or less, you don't detect any hidden communication. If you fail by 5 points or more, you infer some false information.

Action: Trying to gain information with Sense Motive generally takes at least one minute. You could spend a whole evening trying to get a sense of the people around you.

Try Again: Not usually, though you may make a Sense Motive check to oppose each Bluff check made against you. If you attempt to gain a hunch about a situation, you can use the read situation challenge below to learn more as long as you increase the check DC each time.

Synergy: If you have 5 or more ranks in Sense Motive, you enjoy a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks.

Challenges: The combat sense, hunch, and read a person uses of Sense Motive each have challenges that apply specifically to them.

Combat Clarity: In return for a −5 penalty to your skill check, you increase the bonuses provided by the combat sense use of Sense Motive by +1. You can take this challenge up to twice on a single check. The penalties you suffer for a check that fails by 5 points or more do not increase.

Read Situation: While a simple hunch gives you the basic gist of a social interaction, you can attempt to read deeper into the situation. For every 5 points by which you increase the Difficulty Class, you learn one fact germane to the situation at hand. Your DM may tell you things such as a person's basic goal in an interaction, the nature of the relationship between those involved, and so forth.

For the read person use of Sense Motive, you uncover an additional fact about the person. If your initial skill check succeeds, you can attempt another one to learn more information. In this case, you draw on your hunches to make further conclusions. You must increase the Difficulty Class for using this challenge with each subsequent check. While you learn more information, there is a greater chance that you make an incorrect assumption or simply exhaust what you can potentially learn.

Regardless of the challenge's Difficulty Class, you cannot learn information not normally available through the hunch or read person uses of Sense Motive. For instance, you cannot use a challenge to read minds or uncover secrets.

SLEIGHT OF HAND
(DEXTERITY; TRAINED ONLY; ARMOR CHECK PENALTY)

Skill Groups: Robbery, Theatrics

Check: Sleight of Hand allows you to manipulate small objects with superior dexterity and speed. You can use it to pick pockets, discreetly grab a small object, and complete similar actions. A Sleight of Hand check (DC 10) lets you

palm a coin-sized unattended object. Performing a minor feat of legerdemain, such as making a coin disappear, also has a DC of 10 unless an observer is determined to note where the item went.

When you use this skill under close observation, the observer's Spot check opposes your skill check. The observer's success doesn't prevent you from performing the action, just from doing so unnoticed.

You can hide a small object (including a light weapon or an easily concealed ranged weapon, such as a dart, sling, or hand crossbow) on your body. Your Sleight of Hand check is opposed by the Spot check of anyone observing you or the Search check of anyone frisking you. In the latter case, the searcher gains a +4 bonus on his check, since it's generally easier to find such an object than to hide it. Because a dagger is easier to hide than most light weapons, you enjoy a +2 bonus on your Sleight of Hand check to conceal one. Concealing a very small object, such as a coin or ring, grants a +4 bonus on Sleight of Hand checks, and heavy or baggy clothing (such as a cloak) grants a +2 bonus on the check.

Drawing a hidden weapon is a standard action and doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity.

If you try to take something from another creature, you must succeed at a Sleight of Hand check (DC 20) to obtain it. The foe makes a Spot check to detect the attempt, opposed by the same Sleight of Hand check result you achieved when you tried to grab the item. An opponent who succeeds at this check notices the attempt, regardless of whether you got the item.

You can also use Sleight of Hand to entertain an audience as though you were using the Perform skill. In such a case, your "act" encompasses elements of legerdemain, juggling, and the like. You can use Sleight of Hand in this manner to earn money, but you cannot gain the benefits of the other uses of Perform.

DC	Sleight of Hand Task
10	Palm a coin-sized object, make a coin disappear
20	Lift a small object from a person

Faster Than the Eye: You can use Sleight of Hand when fighting with a light weapon to weave a blurred, confusing pattern of slashes, cuts, and elaborate motions. When you are armed with a light weapon (or two, if you use an off-hand weapon) and no shield or other weapon types, you can attempt a Sleight of Hand check as a move action. Your foe opposes this check with his base attack check. Should you succeed, your target loses his active defense bonuses for the rest of your action against your attacks. If you fail, you make an ineffectual strike and suffer a –2 penalty to your attacks for the rest of your action.

Action: Sleight of Hand checks are normally standard actions.

Try Again: Yes, but after an initial failure, a second Sleight of Hand attempt against the same target (or while under scrutiny from the same observer who noticed your previous attempt) increases the task's Difficulty Class by 10.

Synergy: If you have 5 or more ranks in Bluff, you get a +2 bonus on Sleight of Hand checks.

Untrained: An untrained Sleight of Hand check is simply a Dexterity check. Without actual training, you can't succeed at any Sleight of Hand check with a Difficulty Class higher than 10, except for hiding an object on your body.

Take 10/20: You may take 10 in quiet, peaceful situations. You cannot take 20 on Sleight of Hand checks.

Challenges: Sleight of Hand uses only the standard challenges given earlier in this chapter (see page 77).

Speak Language
(None; Trained Only)

Skill Group: Academia

Speak Language functions in a manner unlike that of other skills. For each rank you purchase in it, you gain the ability to read and write a new language. Your DM may have a list of languages that apply to his campaign world. Listed below are many common languages of the known world (for example, see the suggested setting in Chapter Six):

Language	Description
Abyssal	The speech of demons, favored by spell-casters and demonologists.
Ancient Speech	Dead language found in many ruins.
First Speech	The language of magic, used in spellbooks and ancient runes.
Common	The most common language of the world, used by travelers and merchants.
Death Speech	Secret language of the 49 Blades, an ancient sect of executioners.
Draconic	The language of dragons and those who traffic with them.
Ferrish	Language of the savage Ferran barbarians of the north.
Kolorean	High tongue of the Kolore Empire, a lost civilization. Used by scribes, researchers, and mages.
Infernal	The speech of devils, used by many spell-casters.
Sea Speech	Language of the mariners, strange traders from unknown shores.

Languages work as follows: You start at 1st level knowing Common plus an additional number of languages equal to your starting Intelligence bonus. You can purchase Speak Language just like any other skill. However, when you buy a rank in it, you choose a new language that you can speak.

One doesn't make Speak Language checks: You either know a language or you don't. A literate character can read and write any language he speaks. Each language has an alphabet, though sometimes several spoken languages share a single alphabet.

SPELLCRAFT
(INTELLIGENCE; TRAINED ONLY)

Skill Group: Mysticism

Spellcraft measures your knowledge of practical arcane lore, your ability to put magical theory into practice, and your talent for spotting and identifying magical effects. While the arcana Knowledge field of study relates to your understanding of theory, Spellcraft applies when you put that theory into practice. Think of it as the divide between someone who learns to fix engines by tinkering with them (Spellcraft) and another person who studied engines but has never actually worked with one (Knowledge).

Check: With Spellcraft you can identify spells and magic effects. The Difficulty Classes for Spellcraft checks relating to various tasks are summarized on the table below.

DC	Spellcraft Task
Caster's Spellcraft check	Identify a spell being cast. (You must see or hear the character as he casts it.) No action required. No retry.
Caster's Spellcraft check + 10	Identify a spell that's already in place and in effect. You must be able to see or detect the effects of the spell. No action required. No retry.
Caster's Spellcraft check + 10	Identify materials created or shaped by magic. No action required. No retry.
Spell's save DC	After resolving a saving throw against a spell targeted on you or an ally, you determine what that spell was. No action required. No retry.
25	Identify a potion. Requires one minute. No retry.
20+	Understand a strange or unique magical effect. Time required varies. No retry.

Action: Varies, as noted above.

Try Again: See above.

Synergy: If you have 5 or more ranks in Knowledge and access to the arcana area of study, you get a +2 bonus on Spellcraft checks.

Take 10/20: You can use these options in quiet situations where failure bears no penalty or drawback.

Extended Skill Checks: Your DM may require an extended skill check to handle especially complicated or difficult situations. In this case, you must make a number of successes to complete a task. If your tally of failures equals your number of successes, your extended check fails.

SPOT
(WISDOM)

Skill Group: Perception

Check: The Spot skill is used primarily to detect characters or creatures who are hiding. Typically, your Spot check is opposed by the Hide check of the creature trying not to be seen. Sometimes a creature isn't hiding intentionally but is still difficult to see, so you need to make a successful Spot check to notice it. You also use Spot to notice details that are difficult to note though in plain sight.

Spot is also used to detect someone in disguise (see the Disguise skill, page 89) and to read lips when you can't hear or understand what someone is saying.

Condition	Spot Check Penalty
Per 10 feet of distance	−1
Spotter distracted	−5

Read Lips: To understand what someone is saying by reading lips, you must be within 30 feet of the speaker, be able to see him speak, and understand the speaker's language. (This use of the skill is language-dependent.) The base Difficulty Class is 15, but it increases for complex speech or an inarticulate speaker. You must maintain a line of sight to the lips being read.

If your Spot check succeeds, you can understand the general content of a minute's worth of speech, but you usually still miss certain details. If the check fails by 4 points or less, you can't read the speaker's lips. If the check fails by 5 points or more, you draw some incorrect conclusion about the speech. The DM rolls the check to read lips secretly, so that you don't know whether your character succeeded or missed by 5.

Action: Varies. Every time you have a chance to spot something in a reactive manner, you can make a Spot check without using an action. Trying to spot something you failed to see previously is a move action. To read lips, you must concentrate for a full minute before making a Spot check, and you can't perform any other action (other than moving at up to half speed) during this minute.

Try Again: You can try to spot something that you failed to see previously at no penalty. You can attempt to read lips once per minute.

Take 10/20: You can take 10 or 20 on a Spot check, provided that you are in a quiet situation and have the time to thoroughly inspect an area.

Challenges: The Spot check uses only the standard challenges given earlier in this chapter (see page 77).

SURVIVAL
(WISDOM)

Skill Group: Wilderness Lore

Check: You can keep yourself and others safe and fed in the wild. The table below gives the Difficulty Classes for various tasks that require Survival checks. You can also use this

skill in a variety of situations relating to the natural world. For instance, you can use it to determine which direction is north or to follow a creature's tracks.

DC	Survival Task
10	Get along in the wild. Move up to half your overland speed while hunting and foraging (no food or water supplies needed). You can provide food and water for one other person for every 2 points by which your check result exceeds 10.
15	Gain a +2 bonus on all Fortitude saves against severe weather while moving up to half your overland speed, or gain a +4 bonus if you remain stationary. You may grant the same bonus to one other character for every 1 point by which your Survival check result exceeds 15.
15	Keep from getting lost or avoid natural hazards such as quicksand.
15	Predict the weather up to 24 hours in advance. For every 5 points by which your Survival check result exceeds 15, you can predict the weather for one additional day in advance.
Varies	Follow tracks.

Track: You can use the Survival skill to follow a creature's tracks. To find tracks or to follow them for 1 mile requires a successful Survival check. You must attempt another one every time the tracks become difficult to follow.

While tracking, you move at half your normal speed (or at your normal speed with a −5 penalty on the check, or at up to twice your normal speed with a −20 penalty on the check). The Difficulty Class of the check depends on the surface and the prevailing conditions, as given on the table that follows:

Surface*	Survival DC
Very soft ground	5
Soft ground	10
Firm ground	15
Hard ground	20

* Types of surface defined on the next page.

Various modifiers may apply to a Survival check used for tracking, as given on the table below.

Survival Condition	DC Modifier
Every three creatures in the group being tracked	−1
Size of creature(s) being tracked*	
Fine	+8
Diminutive	+4
Tiny	+2
Small	+1
Medium	+0
Large	−1
Huge	−2
Gargantuan	−4
Colossal	−8
Every 24 hours since the trail was made	+1
Every hour of rain since the trail was made	+1
Fresh snow cover since the trail was made	+10
Poor visibility**	
Overcast or moonless night	+6
Moonlight	+3
Fog or precipitation	+3
Tracked party hides trail (and moves at half speed)	+5

* For a group of mixed sizes, apply only the modifier for the largest size category.

** Apply only the largest modifier from this category.

If you fail a Survival check to track a creature, you can retry after one hour (outdoors) or 10 minutes (indoors) of searching.

Very Soft Ground: Any surface (fresh snow, thick dust, wet mud) that holds deep, clear impressions of footprints.

Soft Ground: Any surface soft enough to yield to pressure—but firmer than wet mud or fresh snow—in which a creature leaves frequent but shallow footprints.

Firm Ground: Most normal outdoor surfaces (such as lawns, fields, woods, and the like) or exceptionally soft or dirty indoor surfaces (thick rugs and very dirty or dusty floors). A creature might leave some traces (broken branches or tufts of hair), but only occasional or partial footprints.

Hard Ground: Any surface that doesn't hold footprints at all, such as bare rock or an indoor floor. Most streambeds fall into this category, since any footprints left behind are obscured or washed away. A creature leaves only traces (scuff marks or displaced pebbles).

Action: Varies. A single Survival check may represent activity over the course of hours or a full day. A Survival check made to find tracks is at least a full-round action, and it may take even longer.

Try Again: Varies. For getting along in the wild or for gaining a Fortitude save bonus as noted in the tasks table above, you make a Survival check once every 24 hours. The result of that check applies until the next check is due. To avoid getting lost or to steer clear of natural hazards, make a Survival check whenever the situation calls for one. Retries to avoid getting lost in a specific situation or to avoid a specific natural hazard are not allowed. For finding tracks, you can retry a failed check after one hour (outdoors) or 10 minutes (indoors) of searching.

Special: If you have 5 or more ranks in Survival, you can automatically determine where true north lies in relation to yourself.

Synergy: Those with 5 or more ranks in Survival get a +2 bonus on Knowledge checks dealing with the nature field of study.

If you have 5 or more ranks in Knowledge and access to the dungeoneering area of study, you gain a +2 bonus to Survival checks made while underground.

Having 5 or more ranks in Knowledge and access to the nature area of study grants you a +2 bonus on Survival checks in aboveground natural environments (aquatic, desert, forest, hill, marsh, mountains, and plains).

If you have 5 or more ranks in Knowledge and access to the geography area of study, you get a +2 bonus on Survival checks made to keep from getting lost or to avoid natural hazards.

Those with 5 or more ranks in Knowledge and access to the planes area of study enjoy a +2 bonus on Survival checks made while on other planes.

If you have 5 or more ranks in Search, you gain a +2 bonus on Survival checks to find or follow tracks.

Take 10/20: You can either take 10 or take 20 with Survival checks as long as the situation is calm and there is no penalty associated with failure.

Challenges: Survival uses only the standard challenges given earlier in this chapter (see page 77).

SWIM
(STRENGTH; ARMOR CHECK PENALTY)

Skill Group: Athletics

Check: The Swim skill allows you to paddle through water with grace and speed. Make a Swim check once per round while in the water. Success means you may swim at up to half your speed (as a full-round action) or at one-quarter your speed (as a move action). If you fail by 4 points or less, you make no progress through the water. If you fail by 5 points or more, you go underwater.

If you are underwater, either due to a failed a Swim check or because you are swimming underwater intentionally, you must hold your breath. You can hold your breath for a number of rounds equal to your Constitution score, but only while you do nothing other than take move or free actions. If you take a standard or full-round action (such as making an attack), the remainder of the duration for which you can hold your breath is reduced by 1 round. (Effectively, a character in combat can hold his breath only half as long as normal.) After that period of time, you must make a Constitution check (DC 10) every round to continue holding your breath. Each round, the Difficulty Class for that check increases by 1. If you fail the Constitution check, you begin to drown.

The Difficulty Class for the Swim check depends on the water's condition, as given on the table below.

Condition	Swim DC
Calm water	10
Rough water	15
Stormy water	20*

* *You can't take 10 on a Swim check in stormy water, even if nothing is threatening or distracting you.*

Each hour you swim, you must succeed at a Swim check (DC 20) or suffer 1d6 points of nonlethal damage from fatigue.

Action: A successful Swim check allows you to swim one-quarter of your speed as a move action or half your speed as a full-round action.

Special: Swim checks are subject to double the normal armor check penalty and encumbrance penalty.

A creature with a swim speed can move through water at its indicated speed without making Swim checks. It gains a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform a special action or avoid a hazard. The creature always can choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered while swimming. Such a creature can use the run action while swimming, provided that it swims in a straight line.

Take 10/20: You can take 10 on a Swim check in calm waters. You cannot take 20, since a failed Swim check carries a drawback.

Extended Skill Checks: The Swim skill already includes the necessary rules for swimming long distances. This situation is the equivalent of a Swim extended skill check.

Challenges: You can attempt to swim faster than normal, but you increase the risk that you may drown or fail to make progress.

Speed Swim: In exchange for increasing the Swim check's Difficulty Class by 5, you increase your swimming speed by one-quarter of your base speed. You can increase your Swim speed to up to your normal speed in this manner. You suffer the normal drawbacks for failure.

Tumble
(Dexterity; Trained Only Armor Check Penalty)

Skill Group: Agility

Check: Tumble covers a variety of acrobatics and similar actions. You can land softly when you fall or tumble past opponents, allowing you to avoid attacks of opportunity, dodge past difficult terrain, or move by an opponent and strike in one fluid motion. You can also tumble to entertain an audience as though using the Perform skill to earn money, but you cannot use it to gain the other benefits offered by the Perform skill. You can't use this skill if your speed has been reduced by armor, excess equipment, or loot. In that case, your check automatically fails.

Break Fall: With a successful Tumble check (DC 15), treat a fall as if it were 10 feet shorter than it really is when determining damage. You curl your body to better absorb the impact or otherwise make a move to slow your fall.

Dodge Foes: You can tumble at half speed as part of normal movement, provoking no attacks of opportunity while doing so. Failure means you provoke attacks of opportunity normally. Check separately for each opponent you move past in the order in which you pass them, with your choice of order in case of a tie. Your foes oppose your Tumble checks with their base attack checks. Each additional enemy after the first in a single round adds +2 to his base attack check.

Tumbling Attack: As a move action, you can combine a Tumble check with an attack. Before attacking your target, you must use a move action to tumble into or out of his threatened area. Your Tumble check is opposed by his base attack check. Should his check fail, you can choose one of two effects: Either your opponent loses his active bonus to defense against your attacks for the rest of your action or he loses his active bonus against one ally of your choice until your next action. In the former case, you make an unexpected, dazzling move to launch an attack from an unexpected direction. In the latter, you distract the foe from the true threat. In either case, you must then make an attack against the target to gain the benefits of this action.

Tumbling Mobility: You can make a Tumble check to move through difficult terrain without penalty. The Difficulty Class for this check is 15, but each square of difficult terrain beyond the first increases the DC by 5. You make one Tumble check and compare the result to each square's Difficulty Class separately. If your result meets or beats the DC, you move through the square as if it were normal terrain. Your DM makes this check in secret, so that you cannot simply judge the results and move through squares that you know you can navigate with ease.

For example, the Difficulty Class for the first square of difficult terrain is 15, the second 20, the third 25, and so forth. If your total Tumble result was 22, you would move through the first and second squares at full speed. When you tried to enter the third square, you would find that your total check was lower than its Difficulty Class. Thus, you would have to pay two squares of movement to enter it, rather than one.

If you lack the movement to enter a square, your move action immediately ends. You must either use a standard action to continue moving or stop moving for this action.

Tumbling Move: You can tumble at half speed through an area occupied by an enemy (over, under, or around the opponent) as part of normal movement, provoking no attacks of opportunity while doing so. Failure means you stop before entering the enemy-occupied area and provoke an attack of opportunity from that enemy. Your foe(s) oppose your Tumble check with base attack checks; each gains a +5 bonus because of the difficulty of this maneuver. Check separately for each opponent. Each additional enemy after the first adds +2 to his base attack check in addition to the +5 bonus.

Obstructed or otherwise treacherous surfaces, such as natural cavern floors or undergrowth, are tough to tumble through. The Difficulty Class for any Tumble check made to tumble into such a square carries modifiers as indicated below.

Surface Is . . .	DC Modifier
Lightly obstructed (light rubble, shallow bog, undergrowth)	+2
Severely obstructed (natural cavern floor, dense undergrowth)	+5
Lightly slippery (wet floor)	+2
Severely slippery (ice sheet)	+5
Sloped or angled	+2

Action: Tumbling is part of movement, so a Tumble check is part of a move action.

Try Again: Usually no. An audience, once it has judged a tumbler as an uninteresting performer, is not receptive to repeat performances. You can try to reduce damage from a fall as an instant reaction only once per fall.

Special: If you have 5 or more ranks in Tumble, you gain an additional +1 active bonus to defense when using Combat Expertise or the Fight Defensively or Improved Fight Defensively attack challenges (see page 206).

Those with 5 or more ranks in Tumble gain an additional +2 active bonus to defense when executing the full defense action.

Those with 5 or more ranks in Tumble gain a +6 dodge bonus to defense when executing the full defense standard action, instead of the usual +4 dodge bonus to defense.

Synergy: If you have 5 or more ranks in Tumble, you enjoy a +2 bonus on Balance and Jump checks. If you have 5 or more ranks in Jump, you get a +2 bonus on Tumble checks.

Take 10/20: You cannot take 10 or 20 on most Tumble checks. You can take 10 in quiet, peaceful circumstances.

Challenges: You may move faster than normal while tumbling if you accept a penalty to your skill check.

Fast Tumble: You can move at your normal speed while tumbling if you accept a −10 penalty to your Tumble check. You can move at three-quarters of your normal speed in return for a −5 penalty.

Falling Tumble: If you increase by 5 the Difficulty Class needed to lessen the damage from a fall, you reduce your fall by 10 more feet when determining damage. For example, the base Difficulty Class to break a fall by 10 feet is DC 15. If you

wanted to reduce the distance you fell by 20 feet, you would need to make a Tumble check (DC 20). You can use this challenge to eliminate the damage you suffer from a fall entirely. There is no cap on how many times you can use this challenge on a single check, but remember that a skill challenge is an all-or-nothing proposition. If you fail your check, you take full damage for the fall, regardless of the total check result.

USE MAGIC DEVICE
(CHARISMA; TRAINED ONLY)

Skill Group: Mysticism

Check: You can use this skill to activate magic items. In *Iron Heroes*, magic items are complex, strange things custom built to meet a specific need or to contain rare, wondrous magical energy. Learning to use a new item is like mastering a completely new talent. The Use Magic Device skill measures your aptitude for puzzling out devices and unleashing their inner potential. It relies on the force of your personality, as you must not only manipulate an item physically but you must also control and channel the power that lies within it.

Make a Use Magic Device check each time you activate a device such as a wand. The check Difficulty Class needed to use the item depends on its characteristics, abilities, and complexity. You may attempt an extended Use Magic Device check to learn how to use an item. Once you complete the extended check, you can make a normal Use Magic Device check to activate the item. The time needed for this check and its Difficulty Class depends on the item.

The minimum Use Magic Device DC is 20, while most range from 25 to 35. You do not need any spellcasting ability to utilize this skill.

Action: The Use Magic Device check is made as part of the action (if any) required to activate the magic item.

Try Again: Yes, but if you ever roll a natural 1 while attempting to activate an item and you fail, then you can't try to activate it again for 24 hours. Some items carry other penalties for failures with this skill. For example, you might accidentally activate an item's abilities when trying to determine how to use it, or you may target the wrong person when you activate it.

Special: You can't aid another on Use Magic Device checks. Only the user of the item may attempt such a skill check.

Synergy: If you have 5 or more ranks in Spellcraft, you get a +2 bonus on Use Magic Device checks.

Take 10/20: You cannot take 10 or 20 with Use Magic Device.

Extended Skill Checks: You must complete an extended Use Magic Device check to learn how to use an item. The number of successes you need and the maximum number of failures you can suffer depend on the item's abilities and complexity.

Challenges: You may use only the standard challenges from the beginning of this chapter with Use Magic Device (see page 77).

USE ROPE
(DEXTERITY)

Skill Group: Wilderness Lore

Check: The Use Rope skill allows you to tie knots, bind a captive, and otherwise manipulate a length of rope. Most tasks with a rope are relatively simple. The table below summarizes the Difficulty Classes for various tasks utilizing this skill.

DC	Use Rope Task
10	Tie a firm knot
10*	Secure a grappling hook
15	Tie a special knot, such as one that slips, slides slowly, or loosens with a tug
15	Tie a rope around yourself one-handed
15	Splice two ropes together
Varies	Bind a character

* Add 2 to the DC for every 10 feet the hook is thrown; see below.

Secure a Grappling Hook: Securing a grappling hook requires a Use Rope check (DC 10 +2 for every 10 feet of distance the grappling hook is thrown, to a maximum of DC 20 at 50 feet). Failure by 4 points or less indicates that the hook fails to catch and falls, allowing you to try again. Failure by 5 points or more indicates that the grappling hook initially holds, but comes loose after 1d4 rounds of supporting weight. This check is made secretly, so that you don't know for sure whether the rope will hold your weight.

Bind a Character: When you bind another character with a rope, your Use Rope check opposes any Escape Artist check the bound character makes. You get a +10 bonus on this check, because it is easier to bind someone than to escape from bonds. You don't even make your Use Rope check until someone tries to escape.

Create a Lasso: You can fashion a lasso from a length of rope and use it to rope a creature or object. Make a Use Rope check (DC 20) and spend 10 minutes fashioning a 50-foot or longer length of rope into a lasso. If this check succeeds, your lasso is ready to use.

In combat, the lasso has a range of 25 feet, or half the rope's length. It is a ranged weapon. If you hit, make a Use Rope check opposed by your foe's Strength check or Escape Artist check (opponent's choice). If you succeed, your foe suffers a −2 penalty on attacks, checks, and Reflex saves. He can escape by making a Strength check or Escape Artist check as a move action opposed by your Strength check. He can move only if he succeeds at an opposed Strength check against you; he drags you along unless you drop the rope, at which point he springs free. Dropping the rope is a free action. While you have a foe lassoed, you must use a standard action each round to keep him tangled or he immediately breaks free.

Action: Throwing a grappling hook is a standard action that provokes an attack of opportunity. Tying a knot, tying a special knot, or tying a rope around yourself one-handed is a full-round action that provokes an attack of opportunity. Splicing two ropes together takes five minutes. Binding a character takes one minute.

Special: A silk rope gives you a +2 circumstance bonus on Use Rope checks.

Synergy: If you have 5 or more ranks in Use Rope, you get a +2 bonus on Climb checks made to climb a rope, a knotted rope, or a rope-and-wall combination.

Those with 5 or more ranks in Use Rope gain a +2 bonus on Escape Artist checks when escaping from rope bonds.

If you have 5 or more ranks in Escape Artist, you enjoy a +2 bonus on checks made to bind someone.

Take 10/20: You can use both of these options with this skill as normal.

Challenges: You can use only the standard skill challenges with Use Rope, as described on page 77.

ABILITY CHECKS

Sometimes in the game you might want to attempt something to which no specific skill really applies. In these cases, you make an *ability check*. An ability check is a roll of 1d20 plus the appropriate ability modifier. Essentially, you're making an untrained skill check.

Of course, in some cases, an action is a straight test of one's ability with no luck involved. Just as you wouldn't make a height check to see who is taller, you don't make a Strength check to see who is stronger.

Ability checks work a lot like skill checks. You can take challenges to them to gain added benefits. This section treats each of a character's six abilities like skills. It gives you some basic guidelines on how to use them, discusses challenges appropriate to each, and points out general areas where abilities come into play instead of skills.

Ability checks usually have lower Difficulty Classes than skill checks. Skills improve with a character's level progression, making it possible for a character to complete tasks with higher and higher DCs. In comparison, ability scores tend to remain static. Aside from a few points of improvement, a 1st-level character and a 20th-level character have similar scores. Characters rarely have ability modifiers above +5, making Difficulty Classes of 20 or above difficult, if not impossible.

Most ability score check Difficulty Classes should be around DC 10, with daunting challenges set at DC 15. Reserve ability checks of DC 20 or higher for truly epic or mighty challenges. For example, pushing a 15-foot-tall boulder off a mountain path would be a Strength check (DC 20 or 25). Only a titan or giant could complete it with ease.

Sample Ability Check	DC
Common, everyday task	0
Minor challenge, something you may have to do once per day	5
Difficult task, something the average person finds tough	10
Daunting challenge, rare for the common man and hard for a hero	15
Formidable challenge that even heroes find difficult	20
Almost impossible; none but the mightiest have a chance of success	25

STRAIN AND ABILITY CHECKS

Since ability score bonuses remain relatively static, it is difficult for players to find ways to improve them. Even if you limit yourself to a narrow range of Difficulty Classes, the players may fail ability checks more often than they succeed at them without many options to better their chances.

To solve this problem, each ability check type includes a new option called strain. In return for a persistent drawback of some sort, you can gain a bonus to an ability check. For example, you can push your body to the point of injury when attempting a Strength check. In this case, you gain a bonus to your check in return for suffering hit point damage. The ability score checks all have similar options that allow you to weigh drawbacks against the benefits of a bonus.

STRENGTH CHECKS

Check: Strength checks allow you to accomplish any physical feat that lies beyond the boundaries of the Strength-based skills. Most of them involve situations where you must use physical force to move an object, batter down a door, and so forth. To determine if a Strength check applies to a situation where none of the skills seem to fit, picture a character attempting the action. If you see him straining his muscles to complete it, then a Strength check probably applies.

Muscle Strain: A warrior pushes against a boulder, desperate to move it into a corridor to prevent an undead horror from escaping into the world. He heaves against the rock, tearing muscles and straining ligaments to complete his task.

When attempting a Strength check, you can accept hit points of damage in return for a bonus to your roll. In this case, you push your body beyond its normal limits to achieve a heroic act. You may opt to make a straining effort on any Strength check. It does not apply to untrained or Strength-based skill checks.

For every 5 points of damage you suffer, you gain a +2 bonus to your check. There is no theoretical upper limit to the Strength bonus you gain, but you must suffer the effects of the damage immediately after making your check. You cannot use this option again until you heal the damage suffered in the attempt.

Action: Most Strength checks are standard actions. Difficult activities might require full-round actions.

Try Again: Yes. You can continue to push an object or otherwise manipulate it.

Take 10/20: These options are both available for Strength checks. They reflect the concept of digging in and slowly working to complete a task.

Extended Ability Checks: An extended Strength check might represent a long, difficult task that requires multiple checks to complete fully. If you want to push a boulder up a hill and wedge it into a cave mouth, your DM may require you to make three or four successful Strength checks. Each check represents a different part of the process.

Challenges: Strength checks use the standard challenges given for skills on page 77.

DEXTERITY CHECKS

Check: Most Dexterity-related checks fall under existing skills such as Balance, Sleight of Hand, and so forth. Any test that relies on agility to avoid an effect uses a Reflex save (see "Saving Throws" in Chapter Eight: Combat), while a situation that relies on accuracy should use a character's base attack bonus. Most Dexterity checks cover situations that explicitly do not fall under these situations. For instance, if a valuable pearl rolled along a tabletop and off the edge, you would use Dexterity to snatch it from the air before it hit the floor.

Reflex Strain: In exchange for a +2 bonus to a Dexterity check, you suffer a –2 penalty to Dexterity for one hour. You can accept a penalty equal to half your Dexterity score in this manner and cannot use this option again until the ability penalty passes. You have pushed your reflexes beyond their limits, causing a mild muscle strain or similar injury.

Action: Most Dexterity checks are standard actions.

Try Again: Usually not. If you fail a Dexterity check, you are unable to catch an object or move fast enough to complete an action.

Take 10/20: You can use these options only in a calm situation. You may take 20 when there is no penalty associated with failure.

Challenges: Dexterity checks use the standard challenges given for skills on page 77.

CONSTITUTION CHECKS

Check: Constitution checks are relatively rare. They cover your ability to engage in strenuous work for long periods of time. In most cases, a Fortitude save does a better job of reflecting a character's ability to withstand an effect. A Constitution check applies when you face environmental factors that have no active internal effect on you. For example, extreme heat, starvation, and thirst require Constitution checks rather than Fortitude saves. In comparison, poisons and diseases attempt to break down or overcome your internal defenses.

Endurance Strain: You can steel yourself against an effect and resist it for a short time through a combination of mental willpower and physical endurance. However, if the effect continues, you might succumb to it quickly after the initial rush. You can gain a +1 bonus to your Constitution check at the cost of a –1 penalty to all Constitution checks for the next six hours. You can gain a maximum of a +5 bonus (and a –5 penalty) from this option. You cannot use it again until the penalty's duration expires.

Action: Constitution checks usually do not require an action. They take place in response to environmental conditions without any active effort from you.

Try Again: No. A Constitution check measures your durability; if you fail the check, the effect you tried to resist overcomes your defenses.

Take 10/20: You cannot take 10 or 20 on Constitution checks.

Challenges: Constitution checks do not use challenges.

INTELLIGENCE CHECKS

Check: An Intelligence check usually covers basic mental functions, such as memory, solving a math problem, and similar tasks. In general, Intelligence checks apply to situations that the Knowledge skill does not cover or address intellectual actions where training or learning play little role.

Intelligence Task	DC
Basic question, recall important or basic fact	0
Simple question, recall an important detail or component	5
Complex question, recall a minor or passing detail	10
Intricate, multiple-part question, recall a tiny detail	15
Challenging philosophical question, recall an exact detail with perfect clarity	20
Deep question that has confounded experts, recall a complete scene in photographic detail	25

Mental Strain: You focus your mind on a problem to the exclusion of all else. The strain leaves you mentally tired and unable to summon the energy needed to deal with other issues. You can gain a +1 bonus to an Intelligence check in return for a –1 penalty to all other Intelligence checks and Intelligence-based skill checks for four hours. You can take a bonus (and penalty) of up to +5 (or –5) in this manner.

Action: Intelligence checks, such as those made to think about something, are usually free actions. Particularly complex or intricate questions or problems may take more time, at your DM's option.

Try Again: You either remember something or you fail to come up with the correct answer. You can try again after resting for eight hours, as you give your mind time to clear.

Take 10/20: You cannot take 10 or 20 on Intelligence checks.

Challenges: Intelligence checks do not use challenges.

WISDOM CHECKS

Check: Wisdom checks cover your sixth sense, your intuition, and your strength of mind. Will saves function against active effects that try to wear you down—for example, a Will save allows you to resist an arcanist's mind control spell. A Wisdom check allows you to avoid eating too much at a feast. In the former case, you resist an outside entity. In the latter, you resist your own poor judgment. In general, Wisdom allows you to see the best course of action when dealing with situations that have no clear-cut right or wrong answer based on facts.

Keep in mind that any attempt to notice a detail or hear a noise is an untrained Listen or Spot check, not a Wisdom check.

Willpower Strain: You can dig down and exhaust your emotional reserves on a Wisdom check, leaving yourself vulnerable to future temptation at the cost of short-term success. You might avoid a rich meal, but your growling stomach pushes you to indulge later on.

You can choose to gain a +1 bonus to a Wisdom check in return for a –1 penalty to Wisdom and Wisdom-based skill checks for the next four hours. You cannot use this option again until this penalty disappears. You can gain a maximum bonus of +5 (and a –5 penalty) with this dogged determination.

Action: Wisdom checks are free actions.

Try Again: Once you have failed a Wisdom check, you either suffer the consequences, make a foolish action, or miss an important detail. You may not try again.

Take 10/20: You cannot take 10 or 20 on Wisdom checks.

Challenges: Wisdom checks do not use challenges.

CHARISMA CHECKS

Check: In most cases, a Charisma check is more appropriately an untrained Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check. A Charisma check might apply when you must deal with an utterly alien creature that only the raw power of your personality can influence. It also would apply in situations where you could not use your communication skills.

Personality Strain: You can attempt to present yourself in a specific manner, trading long-term relations for a short-term single impression. You might pander to someone's beliefs or prejudices or take a pratfall to win sympathy. In other cases, you simply burn your reservoir of social grace to exert your personality for a short time. You can gain a +1 bonus to a Charisma check in return for a –1 penalty to Charisma and Charisma-based skill checks for four hours. You can take a maximum bonus of +5 (and a –5 penalty) in this manner. You cannot use this risky presentation again until the penalty's duration expires.

Action: A Charisma check usually requires a free action. Since this check does not draw on your skill at negotiations or communications, you simply try to make an impression with your stature and bearing.

Try Again: You only have one chance to make an impression. You might win someone over with additional actions, but you must overcome or build on the results of the Charisma check.

Take 10/20: You cannot take 10 or 20 on Charisma checks.

Challenges: Charisma checks do not use challenges.

CHAPTER FIVE:

FEATS

Feats are special abilities that reflect your character's training, personal talents, and abilities. You can select them to customize your character and reflect her specialties, but your character class in part determines which feats you can select.

I n *Iron Heroes*, there are two types of feats: general feats and mastery feats. Mastery feats are broken down into categories and have strict guidelines as to who can take them. On the other hand, general feats are available to almost anyone who wants to select them.

GAINING FEATS

All characters start out with two feats at 1st level. These feats can be general feats, mastery feats, or one of each. When selecting feats, make sure to refer back to the feat suggestions for your class in Chapter Three.

Characters gain a new feat when they reach each new even-numbered level. Some classes also earn bonus feats. Choose these bonus feats according to the class' ability description in Chapter Three.

GENERAL FEATS

The *general feats* represent abilities that fall into one of two categories. Either they exist outside of one of the mastery feat categories described on page 118, or else they are simple and straightforward enough that almost anyone can master them.

Unlike the mastery feats, some general feats have prerequisites. A character must have the listed prerequisite minimum ability score, feat, skill, or base attack bonus in order to select or use that feat. Characters can gain a feat at the same level at which they gain the prerequisite. Unless otherwise noted, a prerequisite listed in this chapter is the minimum ability score, caster level, base attack bonus, etc., required to gain the feat. Characters can't use a feat if they have lost a prerequisite.

Most commoners have access only to the general feats, as do all of the NPC classes save the warrior.

The format used in the feat descriptions below includes the feat name and type, followed by any prerequisites it may require and details of the benefit it provides. Some feats also include a short note explaining the limits or restrictions facing a normal character (one without the feat). Any special notes about the feat's use round out the description. If the feat does not have a prerequisite, normal condition, or special notes, those sections are absent.

GENERAL FEAT DESCRIPTIONS

This section presents some two dozen feats for you to choose from. They are available to all characters who meet the prerequisites (if any).

ARMOR PROFICIENCY (HEAVY) [GENERAL]

Prerequisites: Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium)

Benefit: You gain proficiency with heavy armor. (See Armor Proficiency [Light]).

Normal: See Armor Proficiency (Light).

ARMOR PROFICIENCY (LIGHT) [GENERAL]

Benefit: You gain proficiency with light armor. When you wear a type of armor with which you are proficient, the armor check penalty for that armor applies only to Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Sleight of Hand, and Tumble checks.

Normal: A character wearing armor with which she is not proficient applies its armor check penalty to attack rolls, defense, and to all skill checks that involve moving, including Ride.

GENERAL FEATS

Feat Name	Prerequisites	Benefit
Armor Proficiency (Heavy)	Armor Proficiency (Light), Armor Proficiency (Medium)	Suffer no armor check penalty on attack rolls
Armor Proficiency (Light)	—	Suffer no armor check penalty on attack rolls
Armor Proficiency (Medium)	Armor Proficiency (Light)	Suffer no armor check penalty on attack rolls
Diehard	Endurance	Automatically stabilize at negative hit points and may act as disabled
Endurance	—	+4 bonus to various checks and saves, may sleep in armor with no fatigue
Exotic Weapon Proficiency*	Base attack bonus +1	Suffer no penalty from use of exotic weapon
Great Fortitude	—	+2 bonus to Fortitude saves
Improved Grapple	Dexterity 13, Improved Unarmed Strike	+4 bonus on grapple checks and suffer no attack of opportunity when starting a grapple
Improved Initiative	—	+4 bonus to initiative checks
Improved Unarmed Strike	—	Unarmed character is considered armed and provokes no attacks of opportunity from armed foes; can deal normal or nonlethal damage
Iron Will	—	+2 bonus to Will saves
Lightning Reflexes	—	+2 bonus to Reflex saves
Martial Weapon Proficiency*	—	Suffer no penalty on attack rolls
Quick Draw	Base attack bonus +1	Draw weapon as a free action or hidden weapon as a move action
Run	—	Move at speed ×4 or ×5 while running; +4 bonus to running jumps; retain active defense bonus while running
Skill Affinity*	—	Gain a +2 bonus to any two skills of your choice
Shield Proficiency	—	Suffer only standard penalties while using a shield
Simple Weapon Proficiency	—	Suffer no penalty on attack rolls with simple weapons
Skill Focus*	—	+3 bonus to checks involving selected skill
Toughness*	—	Gain +3 hit points
Tower Shield Proficiency	Shield Proficiency	Suffer only standard penalties while using a tower shield

* Characters may gain this feat multiple times.

ARMOR PROFICIENCY (MEDIUM) [GENERAL]

Prerequisite: Armor Proficiency (Light)

Benefit: You gain proficiency with medium armor. (See Armor Proficiency [Light]).

Normal: See Armor Proficiency (Light).

DIEHARD [GENERAL]

Prerequisite: Endurance

Benefit: You have the physical and mental toughness needed to continue struggling even on the edge of death. When reduced to between –1 and –9 hit points, you automatically stabilize. If you reach -10 hit points, make a Fortitude save equal to your negative damage as normal.

When reduced to negative hit points, you may choose to act as if you were disabled, rather than dying. You must make this decision as soon as you fall to negative hit points (even if it isn't your turn). If you do not choose to act as though disabled, you immediately fall unconscious.

When using this feat, you can take either a single move or a standard action each turn, but not both, and you cannot take a full-round action. You can take a move action without further injuring yourself, but if you perform any standard action (or any other action deemed as strenuous, including some free actions, such as using Quick Draw to draw a weapon) you take 1 point of damage after completing the act. If you reach -10 hit points, make a Fortitude save equal to your negative damage as normal.

Normal: A character without this feat who falls to between –1 and –9 hit points is unconscious and dying, as described in Chapter Eight: Combat.

Special: You may activate Resilient Toughness while disabled as a standard action.

ENDURANCE [GENERAL]

Benefit: You can withstand extreme conditions with ease, and hours of hard work and struggle do not faze you. You gain a +4 bonus on the following checks and saves: Swim checks made to resist nonlethal damage, Constitution checks made to continue running, Constitution checks made to avoid nonlethal damage from a forced march, Constitution checks made to hold your breath, Constitution checks made to avoid nonlethal damage from starvation or thirst, Fortitude saves made to avoid nonlethal damage from hot or cold environments, and Fortitude saves made to resist

damage from suffocation. Also, you may sleep in light or medium armor without becoming fatigued.

Normal: A character without this feat who sleeps in medium or heavier armor becomes automatically fatigued the next day.

EXOTIC WEAPON PROFICIENCY [GENERAL]

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +1

Benefit: Choose a type of exotic weapon from Chapter Seven: Equipment. You understand how to use that type of exotic weapon in combat and make attack rolls with it normally.

Normal: A character who uses a weapon with which she is not proficient takes a −4 penalty on attack rolls.

Special: You can gain Exotic Weapon Proficiency multiple times. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new type of exotic weapon.

GREAT FORTITUDE [GENERAL]

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Fortitude saving throws.

IMPROVED GRAPPLE [GENERAL]

Prerequisites: Dexterity 13, Improved Unarmed Strike

Benefit: You are an expert wrestler. You do not provoke an attack of opportunity when you make a touch attack to start a grapple. You also gain a +4 bonus on all grapple checks, regardless of whether you started the grapple.

Normal: Without this feat, you provoke an attack of opportunity when you make a touch attack to start a grapple.

IMPROVED INITIATIVE [GENERAL]

Benefit: You react to dangerous situations much faster than normal. You enjoy a +4 bonus on initiative checks.

IMPROVED UNARMED STRIKE [GENERAL]

Benefit: You have trained to fight with punches and kicks, which allows you to engage an armed opponent on equal terms. You are considered armed even when unarmed. You do not provoke attacks of opportunity from armed opponents when you attack them while unarmed. However, you still get an attack of opportunity against any opponent who makes an unarmed attack on you.

Also, your unarmed strikes can deal lethal or nonlethal damage, at your option.

Normal: Without this feat, you are considered unarmed when attacking with an unarmed strike, and you can deal only nonlethal damage with such an attack.

IRON WILL [GENERAL]

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus on all Will saving throws.

LIGHTNING REFLEXES [GENERAL]

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Reflex saving throws.

MARTIAL WEAPON PROFICIENCY [GENERAL]

Benefit: Choose a martial weapon identifying descriptor, as defined in Chapter Seven: Equipment. You understand how to use that type of martial weapon in combat and make attack rolls with it normally. You gain this benefit with all weapons that share the selected identifying descriptor. The eligible descriptors are axe, cudgel, dagger, flail, pick, polearm, projectile, spear, and sword.

Normal: When using a weapon with which you are not proficient, you take a −4 penalty on attack rolls.

Special: You can gain Martial Weapon Proficiency multiple times. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new weapon descriptor.

Quick Draw [General]

Prerequisite: Base attack bonus +1

Benefit: You can ready a weapon much faster than normal. You may draw a weapon as a free action instead of as a move action. You can draw a hidden weapon (see "Sleight of Hand" in Chapter Four) as a move action.

A character who has selected this feat may throw weapons at her full normal rate of attacks (much like a character with a bow).

Normal: Without this feat, you may draw a weapon as a move action and draw a hidden weapon as a standard action.

Run [General]

Benefit: Through practice, training, or natural aptitude, you are a much faster runner than most. Even in heavy armor, you move with excellent speed. When running, you move at five times your normal speed (if wearing light or no armor and carrying no more than a light load) or at four times your speed (if wearing medium or heavy armor or carrying a medium or heavy load). If you make a jump after a running start (see "Jump" in Chapter Four), you gain a +4 bonus on your Jump check. While running, you retain your active bonus to defense.

Normal: You move at four times your speed while running (if wearing light or no armor and carrying no more than a light load) or at three times your speed (if wearing medium or heavy armor or carrying a medium or heavy load), and you lose your active bonus to defense.

Shield Proficiency [General]

Benefit: You have the training needed to use a shield without hindering your fighting efforts. You can use any shield other than a tower shield and take only the standard penalties.

Normal: When using a shield with which you are not proficient, you suffer the shield's armor check penalty on attack rolls and on all skill checks that involve moving, including Ride checks.

Simple Weapon Proficiency [General]

Benefit: You are trained in the use of weapons such as daggers and crossbows. You gain proficiency with all simple weapons and make attack rolls with them normally.

Normal: When using a weapon with which you are not proficient, you take a –4 penalty on attack rolls.

Skill Affinity [General]

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to any two skills of your choice.

CONVERTED FEATS

If you have played other games based on the d20 System mechanics, you might be familiar with some feats not listed in *Iron Heroes*. Most of them have been converted into expanded mastery abilities of feats in this book. For ease of reference, they are listed in the table below.

Old Feat	New Feat/Mastery Ability
Great Cleave	Cleave Expanded Mastery 3
Greater Two-Weapon Fighting	Two-Weapon Fighting Expanded Mastery 7
Greater Weapon Focus	Weapon Focus Expanded Mastery 4
Greater Weapon Specialization	Weapon Focus Expanded Mastery 7
Improved Precise Shot	Precise Shot Expanded Mastery 6
Improved Two-Weapon Fighting	Two-Weapon Fighting Expanded Mastery 4
Ride-By Attack	Mounted Combat Expanded Mastery 3
Snatch Arrows	Deflect Missiles Expanded Mastery 6
Spring Attack	Mobility Expanded Mastery 3
Spirited Charge	Mounted Combat Expanded Mastery 4
Stunning Fist	Stunning Strike
Trample	Mounted Combat Expanded Mastery 1
Two-Weapon Defense	Two-Weapon Fighting Expanded Mastery 2
Weapon Specialization	Weapon Focus Expanded Mastery 2

Special: You can choose this feat multiple times, but a single skill cannot gain its benefits more than once.

Skill Focus [General]

Benefit: You have advanced training in a single skill. You enjoy a +3 bonus on all checks involving that skill.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new skill.

Toughness [General]

Benefit: You gain +3 hit points.

Special: A character may gain this feat multiple times. Its effects stack.

Tower Shield Proficiency [General]

Prerequisite: Shield Proficiency

Benefit: You have the specialized training needed to handle a tower shield and suffer only the standard penalties while using one.

Normal: A character using a shield with which she is not proficient suffers the shield's armor check penalty on attack rolls and on all skill checks that involve moving, including Ride.

MASTERY FEATS

The *mastery feats* represent advanced training and adherence to a particular school or method of fighting. Only truly dedicated, elite adventurers can master them.

Feats in *Iron Heroes* are designed to offer characters a wide range of choices. Many mastery feats include up to nine expanded options that improve the feat's basic benefit. As you progress in level, you can spend your feat selections on new feats or master the ones you already have by taking more expanded abilities. This rule makes it possible for you to focus on one specific talent or spread your training over a wide range of areas. Once you take a base mastery feat, its expansion options become available automatically as you gain levels.

MASTERY FEAT CATEGORIES

Iron Heroes' mastery feats break down into the eight categories listed below. Characters gain access to feat categories through their classes; see the class descriptions in Chapter Three. A feat can belong to more than one category.

Armor: These feats cover the use of armor and other protective gear. They allow you to improve the benefits you gain from armor and shields.

Defense: Defense feats develop your speed, agility, and ability to avoid attacks.

Finesse: This fighting style emphasizes speed over power. A finesse fighter knows that she can land a hit if she is too quick for her opponent to make an effective parry or block. These warriors tend to value precision over brute force.

Lore: Lore feats represent intricate, complex training that few master. The ability to create poisons is covered by a Lore feat.

Power: This fighting style places raw hitting power over all other concerns. A power fighter would rather land one devastating blow than a dozen light ones.

Projectile: Archers, snipers, and others who prefer ranged weapons favor these feats. They enhance your talents with ranged fighting.

Social: The Social feats allow you to influence others, bending them to your will through your power of personality.

Tactics: The Tactics feats allow you to take advantage of your surroundings, coordinate your allies' efforts, or lure your enemies into making a mistake.

MASTERY RATINGS

In order to take a feat, you must meet the base *mastery rating* requirement listed in its description. Characters gain mastery ratings in various feat categories based on their class. You can find your mastery ratings for the various categories open to you in your class table in Chapter Three.

EXPANDED MASTERY ABILITIES

The mastery feats list *expanded mastery abilities* and the mastery ratings required to select them. Instead of taking a new feat, you can spend a feat selection to gain one of your established feat's listed mastery abilities, as long as you have the required mastery rating or higher (according to your class table). You must have the base feat before you can take its expanded mastery abilities. Unless otherwise noted, you do not have to take the expanded mastery abilities in order. You could take a higher-rated mastery ability before taking a lower one—or not take the lower one at all. You *cannot* take a given expanded mastery ability more than once, unless otherwise noted.

FEATS AND TOKEN ABILITIES

Some feats or their expanded mastery features grant you the ability to gain and spend *tokens*, just like certain class abilities. This way, even characters whose classes do not grant them tokens have a way to earn them to enjoy the flexibility of the benefits they can grant. As with class-granted token pools, characters accumulate feat-granted token pools by following the tactics epitomized by a given feat. They can then spend these tokens to activate some of the feat's expanded mastery abilities.

NEW EXPANDED MASTERY ABILITIES

As a word of advice, if you decide to create new expanded mastery abilities for the existing feats, you should give them unique names. That way, you can differentiate them from the existing abilities in your notes.

MASTERY FEAT DESCRIPTIONS

The mastery feats are presented using the same format as the general feats, save for the following differences:

- They start with some introductory text to explain the feat's effect.
- They list the mastery rating required to gain the base feat.
- Their prerequisites (if any) are based on equipment and expanded mastery abilities. The prerequisite entry lists the sort of weapons you must wield to gain the feat's benefits.
- They feature a section on expanded mastery abilities. You can spend additional feat selections as you gain levels to improve your feats, as described above. If you are wielding two weapons and only one of them meets the feat prerequisites, you may use the feat. You suffer the penalties of the feat with both weapons, but the benefits only with the weapon that meets the prerequisites. For example, if you are armed with a longsword (a non-power weapon) and a punch dagger (a power weapon) and you use the Power Attack feat, you suffer the attack penalty with both weapons, but only gain the damage bonus with the punch dagger.

ARMOR MASTERY [ARMOR]

You have trained for endless hours to make the most of wearing your armor. Others simply expect it to absorb attacks. You know that you must move with your protective gear to maximize its effectiveness.

Base Mastery: 1

Benefit: When rolling to determine your damage reduction against an attack, you gain a +1 bonus to the result.

Expanded Mastery: 2. You excel at protecting your vitals. When an opponent scores a critical threat or precision-based damage (such as sneak attack) against you, there is a flat 25 percent chance that the attack is not a critical hit. Make this check before rolling to confirm or applying any rules that affect the critical threat.

Expanded Mastery: 3. You gain an additional +1 bonus to all rolls for your armor's damage reduction.

Expanded Mastery: 4. You feel comfortable wearing armor, to the point where a suit that restricts someone else's agility has little effect on yours. You reduce your armor's check penalty by 2 and increase its maximum Dexterity by 1. These benefits stack with those granted by the armiger's armor mastery class ability.

Expanded Mastery: 5. You gain an additional +1 bonus to all rolls for your armor's damage reduction.

Expanded Mastery: 6. You can move with surprising speed while wearing armor. Treat your armor as one category lighter than its actual weight when determining your speed. These benefits stack with those granted by the armiger's armor mastery class ability.

Expanded Mastery: 7. You gain an additional +1 bonus to all rolls for your armor's damage reduction.

Expanded Mastery: 8. If an opponent lands a critical threat or precision-based damage (such as sneak attack) against you, there is a flat 50 percent chance that the attack is not a critical hit. Make this check before rolling to confirm or applying any rules that affect the critical threat.

Expanded Mastery: 9. You gain an additional +1 bonus to all rolls for your armor's damage reduction.

Expanded Mastery: 10. While wearing armor of any sort, you are immune to critical hits and precision-based damage.

BEAST LORE [LORE]

You have studied a wide variety of beasts and monsters. Even when you encounter a creature you have never seen before, your knowledge helps you guess at its strengths and weaknesses.

Base Mastery: 1

Benefit: In combat, you can use a move action to make an Intelligence check to study a single nonhumanoid monster. Divide your check by 5, rounding down. You gain lore tokens equal to the result.

You can spend 1 lore token to grant you and all allies who can see and hear you a +1 bonus to attacks and damage against the creature for 1 round. This benefit reflects your insights into the creature's tactics, biology, and movement. Using your tokens in this manner is a free action. You may spend only one token on this ability per round.

If the result of your Intelligence check is less than 5, you lose 1 token. If you have no tokens, you and all your allies suffer a –1 penalty to attacks and damage against the creature for 1 round as you offer them faulty or incorrect advice. Allies must be within 60 feet and able to see and hear you.

The benefits you grant with this feat apply to the targeted creature and all other monsters of the same species. For example, if you target a Huge spider, the bonuses you grant with your lore tokens apply to any or all Huge spiders.

You can build up tokens against one type of opponent at a time. If you switch targets, you lose the tokens that you have already built up for this ability, unless the new target is the same species as the original one. You can build up a lore token pool equal to your level + 10. Tokens beyond this maximum go to waste. The tokens last only until the end of the encounter.

Expanded Mastery: 2. You watch the monster's tactics and attack forms, using the information you gather to grant you or an ally advice for defending against it. You can spend 1 lore token to grant a single ally a +1 active bonus to defense against the creature for 1 round. Using your tokens this way is a free action. You can spend a number of tokens equal to your Intelligence bonus in this manner each round.

Expanded Mastery: 3. You watch the monster's special attacks, gaining an insight into how they work that could save your life. You can spend 1 lore token to grant you or a single ally a +1 bonus to all saves against the creature's

MASTERY FEATS BY CATEGORY

Feat Name	Mastery	Category	Base Feat	Prerequisites	Benefit
Armor Mastery	1	Armor	—	—	+1 bonus to DR checks
—	2	Armor	Armor Mastery	—	25% of threats are not critical hits
—	3	Armor	Armor Mastery	—	Extra +1 bonus to rolls for your armor's DR
—	4	Armor	Armor Mastery	—	Reduce armor's check penalty by 2; increase its max. Dexterity by 1
—	5	Armor	Armor Mastery	—	Extra +1 bonus to rolls for your armor's DR
—	6	Armor	Armor Mastery	—	Armor is one category lighter than normal for speed purposes
—	7	Armor	Armor Mastery	—	Extra +1 bonus to rolls for your armor's DR
—	8	Armor	Armor Mastery	—	50% of threats are not critical hits
—	9	Armor	Armor Mastery	—	Extra +1 bonus to rolls for your armor's DR
—	10	Armor	Armor Mastery	—	Immunity to critical hits and precision-based damage while in armor
Improved Shield Bash	1	Armor	—	—	Retain shield bonus to defense with bash
—	3	Armor	Improved Shield Bash	—	Foe gets −2 attack penalty after shield hit
—	5	Armor	Improved Shield Bash	—	Wield two shields
—	7	Armor	Improved Shield Bash	—	Trade shield bonus points for attack bonus points
—	9	Armor	Improved Shield Bash	—	Make second shield attack on full attacks
Shield Mastery	1	Armor	—	Shield proficiency	+1 defense bonus from shield
—	2	Armor	Shield Mastery	—	+1 bonus to attacks against foe who strikes your shield
—	3	Armor	Shield Mastery	—	Extra +1 defense bonus from shield
—	4	Armor	Shield Mastery	—	Foe who strikes your shield provokes attack of opportunity
—	5	Armor	Shield Mastery	—	Extra +1 defense bonus from shield
—	6	Armor	Shield Mastery	—	Extra +4 defense bonus on standard-action shield defense
—	7	Armor	Shield Mastery	—	Extra +1 defense bonus from shield
—	8	Armor	Shield Mastery	—	Extra +2 defense bonus on move-action shield defense
—	9	Armor	Shield Mastery	—	Extra +1 defense bonus from shield
—	10	Armor	Shield Mastery	—	Foe who strikes your shield must win Strength check or drop weapon
Deflect Missiles	2	Defense	—	—	Deflect a ranged hit for 0 damage
—	4	Defense	Deflect Missiles	—	Gain extra Deflect Missiles use/round
—	6	Defense	Deflect Missiles	—	Attack foe whose thrown weapon you deflected
—	8	Defense	Deflect Missiles	—	Deflect 1 + Dexterity bonus in extra missiles/round
Dodge	1	Defense	—	—	Dodge token pool; +1 defense bonus against target; tokens increase bonus
—	2	Defense	Dodge	—	+2 defense bonus against target; tokens increase bonus
—	3	Defense	Dodge	—	Extra target for defense bonus and token pool
—	4	Defense	Dodge	—	Tokens cause target to hit flanking partner, not you
—	5	Defense	Dodge	—	Extra target for defense bonus and token pool
—	6	Defense	Dodge	—	Tokens grant Tumble bonus against target
—	7	Defense	Dodge	—	Tokens grant one-square move after target's attack misses
—	8	Defense	Dodge	—	Tokens grant attack bonus against target
—	9	Defense	Dodge	—	Target suffers −2 attack penalty after missing you
—	10	Defense	Dodge	—	All foes are targets for defense bonus and token pool
Mobility	1	Defense	—	—	+4 defense bonus against attacks of opportunity due to moving
—	2	Defense	Mobility	—	+6 defense bonus against attacks of opportunity due to moving from chosen target
—	3	Defense	Mobility	No heavy armor	Can move before and after attack
—	4	Defense	Mobility	—	Extra +2 defense bonus against attacks of opportunity due to moving after missed attack of opportunity
—	5	Defense	Mobility	—	Foe must save or fall prone after attack of opportunity due to moving
—	6	Defense	Mobility	—	Attack at any point along a charge
—	7	Defense	Mobility	—	Free attack of opportunity after foe's misses you
—	8	Defense	Mobility	—	Attempt a trip after missed attack of opportunity due to moving
—	9	Defense	Mobility	—	Tumble check opposes attack of opportunity due to moving
—	10	Defense	Mobility	—	Never provoke attacks of opportunity due to moving
Combat Expertise	1	Finesse	—	Can't use with power weapon	Gain attack roll penalty (up to −5) as active defense bonus
—	2	Finesse	Combat Expertise	—	Gain active defense penalty (up to −5) as attack roll bonus
—	3	Finesse	—	—	Parry token pool; token grants +1 bonus to melee attacks against foe
—	4	Finesse	Combat Expertise	—	Parry token pool; token grants you or ally +1 defense bonus against target
—	5	Finesse	Combat Expertise	—	Gain attack roll penalty (up to base attack bonus) as active defense bonus
—	6	Finesse	Combat Expertise	—	Parry token pool; tokens let you make attack of opportunity against melee target who misses you
—	7	Finesse	Combat Expertise	—	Parry token pool; tokens make target lose active defense bonus against you after missing you
—	8	Finesse	Combat Expertise	—	Parry token pool; token use inflicts weapon damage on target after attack
—	9	Finesse	Combat Expertise	—	Tokens may affect any foe
—	9	Finesse	Combat Expertise	—	Gain tokens from all foes
Improved Critical*†	4	Finesse	—	Specific weapon	Double weapon's normal threat range
—	6	Finesse	Improved Critical	—	+4 bonus to attacks to confirm criticals

*You can gain this feat multiple times.
† Feats offered in more than one feat category appear in the table in all applicable categories.

MASTERY FEATS BY CATEGORY (CONT'D)

Feat Name	Mastery	Category	Base Feat	Prerequisites	Benefit
—	8	Finesse	Improved Critical	—	Triple weapon's normal threat range
—	10	Finesse	Improved Critical	—	Automatically confirm critical threats
Improved Disarm	2	Finesse	—	Finesse weapon	Disarm attempts provoke no attack of opportunity; foe cannot disarm you
—	3	Finesse	Improved Disarm	—	+2 bonus to disarm attempts
—	4	Finesse	Improved Disarm	—	Disarm foe is one size smaller
—	6	Finesse	Improved Disarm	—	+2 bonus to disarm attempts
—	8	Finesse	Improved Disarm	—	Flip disarmed weapon into new square
Improved Feint	2	Finesse	—	Finesse weapon	Bluff check to feint is move action with no penalty
—	5	Finesse	Improved Feint	—	Confer feint benefits upon ally
—	9	Finesse	Improved Feint	—	Bluff check to feint is free action with no penalty
Improved Trip*†	2	Finesse	—	Finesse or power weapon	No attack of opportunity on unarmed trip attempts
	2	Finesse	Improved Trip	Finesse weapon	Use Dexterity check for trip attacks
—	3	Finesse	Improved Trip	—	+4 bonus to ability check in trip attempts
—	4	Finesse	Improved Trip	—	Free attack after melee trip
—	6	Finesse	Improved Trip	—	Foe falls prone in adjacent square
—	8	Finesse	Improved Trip	—	Foe must save or fall stunned
Mounted Combat†	1	Finesse	—	—	Ride check negates hit to mount
—	1	Finesse	Mounted Combat	—	Foe cannot avoid your overrun; mount gets hoof attack against prone foe
—	2	Finesse	Mounted Combat	—	+2 defense bonus if mount double moves; +4 bonus if it runs
—	3	Finesse	Mounted Combat	—	Extra move after a mounted charge
—	4	Finesse	Mounted Combat	—	Double damage after a mounted charge
Razor Fiend	1	Finesse	—	Dagger proficiency	Gain Quick Draw with dagger; full attacks gain extra dagger attack
—	4	Finesse	Razor Fiend	—	Full attacks gain two extra dagger attacks
—	6	Finesse	Razor Fiend	—	+1 damage bonus with dagger for every previous dagger attack that hit
—	8	Finesse	Razor Fiend	—	Full attacks gain extra dagger attack
Two-Weapon Fighting†	1	Finesse	—	—	Reduce two-weapon fighting attack penalties by 2 (primary hand) and 6 (off hand)
—	2	Finesse	Two-Weapon Fighting	—	+1 shield defense bonus while wielding two weapons or double weapon
—	3	Finesse	Two-Weapon Fighting	—	+2 attack bonus against threatened foe with unused weapon on full attack action
—	4	Finesse	Two-Weapon Fighting	—	Second extra attack with off-hand weapon at −5 penalty
—	5	Finesse	Two-Weapon Fighting	—	Critical threat range for weapon goes up by 1 after critical hit with the other
—	6	Finesse	Two-Weapon Fighting	—	Cannot be flanked when wielding two weapons or double weapon
—	7	Finesse	Two-Weapon Fighting	Expanded mastery 4	Third extra attack with off-hand weapon at −10 penalty
—	8	Finesse	Two-Weapon Fighting	—	Inflict rending damage (primary weapon damage + double Strength bonus) when you hit foe with both weapons
—	9	Finesse	Two-Weapon Fighting	—	Gain all off-hand attacks with your second weapon when charging or making standard attack
—	10	Finesse	Two-Weapon Fighting	—	For each attack that hits on a full attack, gain +1 bonus to remaining attacks
Weapon Finesse	1	Finesse	—	Finesse or light weapon	Apply Dexterity modifier instead of Strength modifier to attacks
—	2	Finesse	Weapon Finesse	—	No armor check penalty to attacks with shield smaller than you
—	3	Finesse	Weapon Finesse	—	+1d6 sneak attack damage in melee
—	4	Finesse	Weapon Finesse	—	Apply Dexterity modifier instead of Strength modifier to damage
—	5	Finesse	Weapon Finesse	—	+1d6 sneak attack damage in melee
—	6	Finesse	Weapon Finesse	—	Foe suffers −1 penalty to DR from armor against your attacks
—	7	Finesse	Weapon Finesse	—	+1d6 sneak attack damage in melee
—	8	Finesse	Weapon Finesse	—	On a critical threat choose extra attack instead of critical hit roll
—	9	Finesse	Weapon Finesse	—	+1d6 sneak attack damage in melee
—	10	Finesse	Weapon Finesse	—	Attack ignores foe's defense bonuses (1/round)
Weapon Focus*†	1	Finesse	—	Chosen weapon	+1 attack bonus
—	2	Finesse	Weapon Focus	—	+2 damage bonus
—	4	Finesse	Weapon Focus	—	Extra +1 attack bonus
—	7	Finesse	Weapon Focus	—	Extra +2 damage bonus
—	8	Finesse	Weapon Focus	—	Extra +1 attack bonus
—	9	Finesse	Weapon Focus	—	Extra +2 damage bonus
—	10	Finesse	Weapon Focus	—	Extra +1 attack bonus
Whirlwind Attack	3	Finesse	—	—	Attack each foe within reach on a full attack action
—	5	Finesse	Whirlwind Attack	—	Each miss grants +1 bonus on remaining attacks
—	10	Finesse	Whirlwind Attack	—	Gain your full spread of attacks
Beast Lore	1	Lore	—	—	Lore token pool; tokens grant bonus to attacks and damage against monster
—	2	Lore	Beast Lore	—	Token grants you or ally +1 active bonus to defense against monster
—	3	Lore	Beast Lore	—	Token grants you or ally +1 bonus to saves against monster's special attacks
—	4	Lore	Beast Lore	—	Tokens double threat range of your or ally's weapon
—	5	Lore	Beast Lore	—	Tokens grant you or ally +1d6 sneak attack damage

*You can gain this feat multiple times. † Feats offered in more than one feat category appear in the table in all applicable categories.

MASTERY FEATS BY CATEGORY (CONT'D)

Feat Name	Mastery	Category	Base Feat	Prerequisites	Benefit
Healing Lore	1	Lore	—	—	+4 bonus on Heal checks and +2 bonus to restored reserve points
—	2	Lore	Healing Lore	—	Use Heal to restore ability score damage
—	3	Lore	Healing Lore	—	Restore additional +4 reserve points
—	4	Lore	Healing Lore	—	Use Heal to remove poison damage
—	5	Lore	Healing Lore	—	Restore additional +4 reserve points
—	6	Lore	Healing Lore	—	Use Heal to restore extra ability score damage
—	7	Lore	Healing Lore	—	Restore additional +4 reserve points
—	8	Lore	Healing Lore	—	Resuscitate a dead ally
—	9	Lore	Healing Lore	—	Restore additional +4 reserve points
—	10	Lore	Healing Lore	—	Restore hit points as reserve points
Venom Mastery	1	Lore	—	—	Venom token pool; tokens help you create poisons; safely apply poison to weapons and use them
—	2	Lore	Venom Mastery	—	Tokens increase poison's save DC
—	3	Lore	Venom Mastery	—	Tokens make poison inflict hit point damage
—	4	Lore	Venom Mastery	—	Token increases poison's ability damage (1d4)
—	5	Lore	Venom Mastery	—	Tokens make poison cause paralysis
—	6	Lore	Venom Mastery	—	Your poisons now can damage Constitution
—	7	Lore	Venom Mastery	—	Tokens increase poison's ability damage (1d6)
—	8	Lore	Venom Mastery	—	Tokens increase poison's save DC
—	9	Lore	Venom Mastery	—	Tokens increase poison's ability damage (+1 or +2)
—	10	Lore	Venom Mastery	—	Tokens increase poison's ability damage (2d6)
Cleave	1	Power	—	—	Gain extra melee attack after dropping target
—	2	Power	Cleave	—	+2 bonus to Cleave attack rolls
—	3	Power	Cleave	—	Unlimited Cleave attacks per round
—	4	Power	Cleave	—	Gain extra melee attack after critical hit
—	5	Power	Cleave	—	Move 5 feet as a free action with Cleave attack
—	6	Power	Cleave	—	Gain 2 fury tokens with Cleave attack
—	7	Power	Cleave	—	Foes adjacent to enemy you just dropped suffer a −1 penalty to defense
—	8	Power	Cleave	—	Cleave token pool; token grants +2 bonus to damage on a melee attack
—	9	Power	Cleave	—	Gain extra melee attack after critical threat
—	10	Power	Cleave	—	Gain extra melee attack after dealing 15+ points of damage in one attack
Foe Hammer	1	Power	—	Cudgel use and weapon proficiency	Hit foe must save or take −2 penalty to attacks
—	2	Power	Foe Hammer	—	Hit foe must save or move at half speed
—	4	Power	Foe Hammer	—	When shield saves foe from a hit, he still takes half damage
—	6	Power	Foe Hammer	—	Foe can become sickened instead of critical hit
—	8	Power	Foe Hammer	—	Use this feat's attacks as standard/full-round action
Hafted Weapon Mastery	1	Power	—	Spear or polearm	Shift weapon's reach to attack adjacent foes or gain a threatened square
—	2	Power	Hafted Weapon Mastery	—	Use two-handed spear or polearm as double weapon
—	3	Power	Hafted Weapon Mastery	—	Weapon grants +4 Jump bonus or allows unarmed strike
—	4	Power	Hafted Weapon Mastery	—	Weapon grants +1 square (5-foot) bonus to reach
—	6	Power	Hafted Weapon Mastery	—	Multiple hits cause a foe to save or step back
Improved Bull Rush	1	Power	—	—	Bull rushes provoke no attacks of opportunity; +4 bonus to Strength check
—	3	Power	Improved Bull Rush	—	−4 penalty to Strength check; target falls prone
—	5	Power	Improved Bull Rush	—	Make an attack as part of bull rush
—	7	Power	Improved Bull Rush	—	Bull rush target drops what he holds
Improved Critical*	4	Power	—	Specific weapon	Double weapon's normal threat range
—	6	Power	Improved Critical	—	+4 bonus to attacks to confirm criticals
—	8	Power	Improved Critical	—	Triple weapon's normal threat range
—	10	Power	Improved Critical	—	Automatically confirm critical threats
Improved Overrun	3	Power	—	—	Overrun target can't avoid you; +4 bonus to Strength check
—	5	Power	Improved Overrun	—	Gain attack of opportunity against prone overrun target
—	7	Power	Improved Overrun	—	Inflict damage to prone overrun target
Improved Sunder	2	Power	—	—	No attack of opportunity on sunder attempts
—	3	Power	Improved Sunder	—	+4 bonus on any attack roll to sunder
—	5	Power	Improved Sunder	—	−1 DR penalty to foe's armor after inflicting 10 points of damage
—	7	Power	Improved Sunder	—	Foe gets no sunder bonus for larger weapon
—	9	Power	Improved Sunder	—	Double Strength bonus to sunder damage
Improved Trip*	2	Power	—	Finesse or power weapon	No attack of opportunity on unarmed trip attempts
—	2	Power	Improved Trip	Power weapon	Use power weapon for trip attacks
—	3	Power	Improved Trip	—	+4 bonus to ability check in trip attempts
—	4	Power	Improved Trip	—	Free attack after melee trip
—	6	Power	Improved Trip	—	Foe falls prone in adjacent square
—	8	Power	Improved Trip	—	Foe must save or fall stunned
Mounted Combat	1	Power	—	—	Ride check negates hit to mount
—	1	Power	Mounted Combat	—	Foe cannot avoid your overrun; mount gets hoof attack against prone foe
—	2	Power	Mounted Combat	—	+2 defense bonus if mount double moves; +4 bonus if it runs
—	3	Power	Mounted Combat	—	Extra move after a mounted charge
—	4	Power	Mounted Combat	—	Double damage after a mounted charge

You can gain this feat multiple times.

MASTERY FEATS BY CATEGORY (CONT'D)

Feat Name	Mastery	Category	Base Feat	Prerequisites	Benefit
Power Attack	1	Power	—	Power weapon	Trade attack penalty for damage bonus
—	2	Power	Power Attack	—	Foe must save or suffer −1 injury penalty to attacks
—	3	Power	Power Attack	—	Foe must save or fall prone
—	4	Power	Power Attack	—	Inflict double your attack penalty as bonus damage
—	5	Power	Power Attack	—	Foe must save or be dazed for 1 round
—	6	Power	Power Attack	—	Foe must save or be stunned for 1 round
—	7	Power	Power Attack	—	When your attack misses, it may hit a random target
—	8	Power	Power Attack	—	Adjust attack penalty by up to +/−3
—	9	Power	Power Attack	—	Foe must save or die
—	10	Power	Power Attack	—	Increase DC of foe's massive damage save
Stunning Strike	6	Power	—	Power weapon	Stun token pool; tokens stun foe
—	8	Power	Stunning Strike	—	Tokens increase save DC of stun attack
—	10	Power	Stunning Strike	—	Foe suffers penalty after stun attack even if he saves
Trident Mastery	1	Power	—	Trident proficiency	Catch and hold foe immobile; 1d4 points of damage; −2 penalty to attacks, defense, Reflex saves
—	2	Power	Trident Mastery	—	No penalty for fighting with two weapons (net and trident); +2 attack bonus when net targets immobile foe
—	3	Power	Trident Mastery	—	Immobile foe suffers −4 penalty to attacks, defense, Reflex saves, and must save or lose active defense bonus.
—	4	Power	Trident Mastery	—	+4 bonus to opposed disarm attack rolls; no attack of opportunity
—	6	Power	Trident Mastery	—	Count as one category larger than actual size in opposed Strength checks against caught foes
—	7	Power	Trident Mastery	—	Use trident to trip charging foe; foe loses attack
—	8	Power	Trident Mastery	—	Catch and hold foe immobile as a standard action
Two-Weapon Fighting	1	Power	—	—	Reduce two-weapon fighting attack penalties by 2 (primary hand) and 6 (off hand)
—	2	Power	Two-Weapon Fighting	—	+1 shield defense bonus while wielding two weapons or double weapon
—	3	Power	Two-Weapon Fighting	—	+2 attack bonus against threatened foe with unused weapon on full attack action
—	4	Power	Two-Weapon Fighting	—	Second extra attack with off-hand weapon at −5 penalty
—	5	Power	Two-Weapon Fighting	—	Critical threat range for weapon goes up 1 after critical with the other
—	6	Power	Two-Weapon Fighting	—	Cannot be flanked when wielding two weapons or double weapon
—	7	Power	Two-Weapon Fighting	Expanded mastery 4	Third extra attack with off-hand weapon at −10 penalty
—	8	Power	Two-Weapon Fighting	—	Inflict rending damage (primary weapon damage + double Strength bonus) when you it foe with both weapons
—	9	Power	Two-Weapon Fighting	—	Gain all off-hand attacks with your second weapon when charging or making standard attack
—	10	Power	Two-Weapon Fighting	—	For each attack that hits on a full attack gain +1 bonus to other attacks
Vorpal Hurricane	3	Power	—	Power weapon	Free attack on adjacent or threatened foes
—	6	Power	Vorpal Hurricane	—	Feat use becomes standard action
—	9	Power	Vorpal Hurricane	—	Feat use becomes free action
Weapon Focus*	1	Power	—	Chosen weapon	+1 attack bonus
—	2	Power	Weapon Focus	—	+2 damage bonus
—	4	Power	Weapon Focus	—	Extra +1 attack bonus
—	7	Power	Weapon Focus	—	Extra +2 damage bonus
—	8	Power	Weapon Focus	—	Extra +1 attack bonus
—	9	Power	Weapon Focus	—	Extra +2 damage bonus
—	10	Power	Weapon Focus	—	Extra +1 attack bonus
Far Shot	2	Projectile	—	Projectile or thrown weapon	Weapon's range increment increases
—	4	Projectile	Far Shot	—	Attacks suffer half the normal range penalty
—	6	Projectile	Far Shot	—	Gain sneak attacks with ranged weapons at double normal range
—	8	Projectile	Far Shot	—	Ignore range penalty for first range increment
—	10	Projectile	Far Shot	—	Ignore range penalty for first three range increments
Improved Critical*	4	Projectile	—	Specific weapon	Double weapon's normal threat range
—	6	Projectile	Improved Critical	—	+4 bonus to attacks to confirm criticals
—	8	Projectile	Improved Critical	—	Triple weapon's normal threat range
—	10	Projectile	Improved Critical	—	Automatically confirm critical threats
Manyshot	4	Projectile	—	No slow-loading weapons	Fire/throw two projectile weapons in one attack
—	6	Projectile	Manyshot	—	Fire/throw extra projectile weapon with penalty
—	8	Projectile	Manyshot	—	Fire/throw extra projectile weapon with penalty
—	10	Projectile	Manyshot	—	Critical may apply to all projectiles
Mounted Archery	1	Projectile	—	—	Half penalty for mounted ranged weapon use
—	2	Projectile	Mounted Archery	—	No penalty for mounted ranged weapon use
—	4	Projectile	Mounted Archery	—	Make full attack as a standard action
—	6	Projectile	Mounted Archery	—	Can attack and move, attack and move while mounted
—	8	Projectile	Mounted Archery	—	+2 attack bonus if mount double moves; +4 bonus if it runs
Point Blank Shot	1	Projectile	—	—	+1 bonus on attack and damage
—	2	Projectile	Point Blank Shot	—	Treat ranged weapon as melee weapon
—	3	Projectile	Point Blank Shot	—	Apply Dexterity bonus to damage on ranged attacks
—	4	Projectile	Point Blank Shot	—	Bluff check to feint avoids attack of opportunity

* You can gain this feat multiple times.

MASTERY FEATS BY CATEGORY (CONT'D)

Feat Name	Mastery	Category	Base Feat	Prerequisites	Benefit
Precise Shot	2	Projectile	—	—	Ignore penalty for shooting into melee
—	3	Projectile	Precise Shot	—	+1d6 sneak attack damage to ranged attacks
—	4	Projectile	Precise Shot	—	Increase projectile or thrown weapon's critical damage multiplier by 1
—	5	Projectile	Precise Shot	—	Extra +1d6 sneak attack damage to ranged attacks
—	6	Projectile	Precise Shot	—	Ignore effects of most cover and concealment; automatically hit a grappling foe
—	7	Projectile	Precise Shot	—	Extra +1d6 sneak attack damage to ranged attacks
—	8	Projectile	Precise Shot	—	Automatically confirm all critical threats
—	9	Projectile	Precise Shot	—	Extra +1d6 sneak attack damage to ranged attacks
—	10	Projectile	Precise Shot	—	Make *coup de grace* with projectile or thrown weapon
Rapid Reload	1	Projectile	—	—	Reload slow-loading projectile weapons as free action
—	3	Projectile	Rapid Reload	—	Attack on surprise round with loaded ready-loading projectile weapon
—	5	Projectile	Rapid Reload	—	Make attacks of opportunity with ready-loading projectile weapon
Rapid Shot	2	Projectile	—	Non-slow-loading projectile weapon	Extra attack/round at −2 penalty
—	4	Projectile	Rapid Shot	—	Target of all your attacks must save or take −2 defense penalty
—	6	Projectile	Rapid Shot	—	Two extra attacks/round at −6 penalty
—	8	Projectile	Rapid Shot	—	Three extra attacks/round at −10 penalty
—	10	Projectile	Rapid Shot	—	Take only half penalty from extra attacks
Shot on the Run	4	Projectile	—	—	Move both before and after attacking
—	6	Projectile	Shot on the Run	—	Can shoot, move, then hide
—	8	Projectile	Shot on the Run	—	Foe loses defense bonus against your attack after you Tumble
—	10	Projectile	Shot on the Run	—	Take full attack with ranged weapon as a standard action
Weapon Focus*	1	Projectile	—	Chosen weapon	+1 attack bonus
—	2	Projectile	Weapon Focus	—	+2 damage bonus
—	4	Projectile	Weapon Focus	—	Extra +1 attack bonus
—	7	Projectile	Weapon Focus	—	Extra +2 damage bonus
—	8	Projectile	Weapon Focus	—	Extra +1 attack bonus
—	9	Projectile	Weapon Focus	—	Extra +2 damage bonus
—	10	Projectile	Weapon Focus	—	Extra +1 attack bonus
Devious Manipulator	1	Social	—	Bluff ranks recommended	Deception token pool; tokens grant bonus to attacks against target, penalty to attacks against you, Bluff bonus, or Bluff effect extension
—	2	Social	Devious Manipulator	—	Tokens extend Bluff effect
—	3	Social	Devious Manipulator	—	Force foe to lose defense bonus against ally
—	4	Social	Devious Manipulator	—	Tokens give target Sense Motive penalty
—	6	Social	Devious Manipulator	—	Target does as you order
Overwhelming Presence	1	Social	—	Intimidate recommended	Apply Charisma bonus as defense bonus
—	2	Social	Overwhelming Presence	—	Browbeat target as free action
—	3	Social	Overwhelming Presence	—	Use Intimidate as move action
—	5	Social	Overwhelming Presence	—	Foes must save or suffer your Charisma bonus as attack penalty
—	7	Social	Overwhelming Presence	—	Target must save or become frightened
—	8	Social	Overwhelming Presence	—	Use Intimidate as free action
—	10	Social	Overwhelming Presence	—	Target must save or become panicked
Political Mastermind	1	Social	—	Diplomacy recommended	Manipulation token pool; tokens improve target's attitude or lead him to take certain actions
—	2	Social	Political Mastermind	—	Popularity tokens; token improves attitude
—	3	Social	Political Mastermind	—	Diplomacy check alters attitude, incites crowd
—	4	Social	Political Mastermind	—	Tokens allow you to dictate another's actions as a puppet
—	7	Social	Political Mastermind	—	Tokens and Diplomacy impart contrary attitude to puppet; can render him a thrall
—	10	Social	Political Mastermind	—	Exercise complete control over thrall
Blind-Fight	1	Tactics	—	—	Reroll miss chance due to concealment in melee; invisible attacker gets no advantages to hit you in melee; suffer half normal penalty to speed when unable to see
—	3	Tactics	Blind-Fight	—	Gain base feat abilities in ranged combat
—	4	Tactics	Blind-Fight	—	Listen for invisible foes; locate invisible foes within 5 feet; reroll checks to Spot foes
—	6	Tactics	Blind-Fight	—	Ignore up to 20% concealment
—	8	Tactics	Blind-Fight	—	Take 20 on Listen and Spot to find foes as a full-round action
—	10	Tactics	Blind-Fight	—	Foe you hit loses concealment miss chance against your melee attacks
Combat Reflexes	1	Tactics	—	—	Extra attacks of opportunity
—	2	Tactics	Combat Reflexes	—	Spend extra attack of opportunity for +2 attack bonus
—	3	Tactics	Combat Reflexes	—	Foes provoke extra attacks of opportunity
—	4	Tactics	Combat Reflexes	—	Grant ally attack of opportunity
—	5	Tactics	Combat Reflexes	—	Spaces you threaten are difficult terrain for foes
—	6	Tactics	Combat Reflexes	—	Spend attack of opportunity for +8 defense bonus against one foe
—	7	Tactics	Combat Reflexes	—	Take multiple attacks of opportunity against foes that provoke them
—	8	Tactics	Combat Reflexes	—	Reduce foe's speed by 10 after your successful attack of opportunity
—	9	Tactics	Combat Reflexes	—	Take attack of opportunity as part of a full attack action
—	10	Tactics	Combat Reflexes	—	Foe cannot complete action after your successful attack of opportunity

* You can gain this feat multiple times.

Feat Name	Mastery	Category	Base Feat	Prerequisites	Benefit
Tactics of the Mind	1	Tactics	—	—	Use Intelligence instead of your attack key ability
—	2	Tactics	Tactics of the Mind	—	Strategy token pool; token lets you act on opponent's turn after delay
—	3	Tactics	Tactics of the Mind	—	Strategy token pool; token makes your square unthreatened
—	4	Tactics	Tactics of the Mind	—	Strategy token pool; tokens force foe to save or attack as you direct
—	5	Tactics	Tactics of the Mind	—	Add Intelligence bonus as defense bonus
—	6	Tactics	Tactics of the Mind	—	Strategy token pool; gain tokens as move action
—	7	Tactics	Tactics of the Mind	—	Apply Intelligence modifier + key ability to attacks
—	8	Tactics	Tactics of the Mind	—	Apply Intelligence modifier as damage bonus
—	9	Tactics	Tactics of the Mind	—	Strategy token pool; gain tokens as free action
War Leader	1	Tactics	—	—	Strategy token pool; token grants allies +4 flanking bonus
—	2	Tactics	War Leader	—	Token grants ally extra attack of opportunity
—	3	Tactics	War Leader	—	Gain strategy tokens as move action
—	4	Tactics	War Leader	—	Token removes flat-footedness from ally
—	5	Tactics	War Leader	—	Tokens grant allies attack bonus of +2 per attacker on chosen foe
—	6	Tactics	War Leader	—	Tokens grant allies defense bonus of +1 per adjacent ally
—	7	Tactics	War Leader	—	Gain strategy tokens as free action
—	8	Tactics	War Leader	—	Tokens grant allies +1d6 bonus to damage against chosen foe
—	9	Tactics	War Leader	—	Tokens grant ally immediate extra standard action
—	10	Tactics	War Leader	—	Tokens grant allies attack bonus

special attacks for 1 round. Using tokens this way is a free action. You can spend a number of tokens equal to your Intelligence bonus in this manner each round.

Expanded Mastery: 4. You study the monster's anatomy, seeking a weakness you can exploit. If you spend 4 lore tokens, you can double the threat range of your weapon or the weapon of an ally who can see or hear you. This benefit applies against the target of your lore pool and lasts for 1 round.

Expanded Mastery: 5. Your knowledge of the monster's anatomy allows you to direct your allies to make deadly attacks against it. For every 2 tokens you spend, you grant yourself or an ally +1d6 points of sneak attack damage against it. This damage is in addition to any sneak attack

damage the recipient may already have. It lasts for 1 round. You can grant a maximum number of sneak attack dice equal to your Intelligence bonus (so, someone with an Intelligence bonus of +3 could grant +3d6 points of sneak attack damage).

Blind-Fight [Tactics]

Through a combination of your keen senses and awareness of your tactical environment, you can strike enemies hidden in thick fog or other obscuring conditions with greater accuracy than most.

Base Mastery: 1

Benefit: In melee, every time you miss because of concealment, you can reroll your miss chance percentile roll once to see whether you actually hit.

In addition, an invisible attacker gets no advantages related to hitting you in melee. That is, you don't lose your active bonus to defense, and the attacker doesn't get the usual +2 bonus for being invisible. The invisible attacker's bonuses still apply for ranged attacks, however.

You take only half the usual penalty to speed for being unable to see. Darkness and poor visibility in general reduces your speed to three-quarters normal, instead of one-half.

Normal: Invisible attackers incur their regular attack roll modifiers when trying to hit you in melee, and you lose your

active bonus to defense. The speed reduction for darkness and poor visibility also applies.

Expanded Mastery: 3. You gain the benefits of this feat on ranged attacks made against opponents within 30 feet of you. This includes benefits you gain from expanded mastery abilities.

Expanded Mastery: 4. You can use Listen as a free action each round to locate an invisible opponent. In addition, you automatically locate an invisible person within 5 feet of you. Finally, you may reroll any Spot checks made to notice an opponent, but you must choose to reroll before you learn whether your check succeeded.

Expanded Mastery: 6. Your senses are so keen that you ignore any concealment of 20 percent or less. Concealment with a higher miss chance functions without change.

Expanded Mastery: 8. If you spend a full-round action doing nothing but watching an area and listening for signs of an opponent or a hidden object, you may take 20 on both a Listen and Spot check. You gain the benefits of these checks immediately.

Expanded Mastery: 10. Your senses of position and tactical movement are so precise that you can doggedly follow an opponent. Once you hit an enemy who gains concealment, he loses all concealment miss chance against your melee attacks. You anticipate your foe's every move and relentlessly attack him, even if the concealment blocks line of sight. However, you gain no special knowledge of the terrain. For example, if a foe with concealment moves behind a wall that you cannot see, you may waste arrows trying to shoot him through the full cover.

Cleave [Power]

You make vicious, lethal attacks that use the weight of your weapon to cleave through the enemy's ranks. As foes fall before you, your weapon slams into additional opponents.

Base Mastery: 1

Benefit: If you deal a creature enough damage to make it fall (typically by dropping it to below 0 hit points or killing
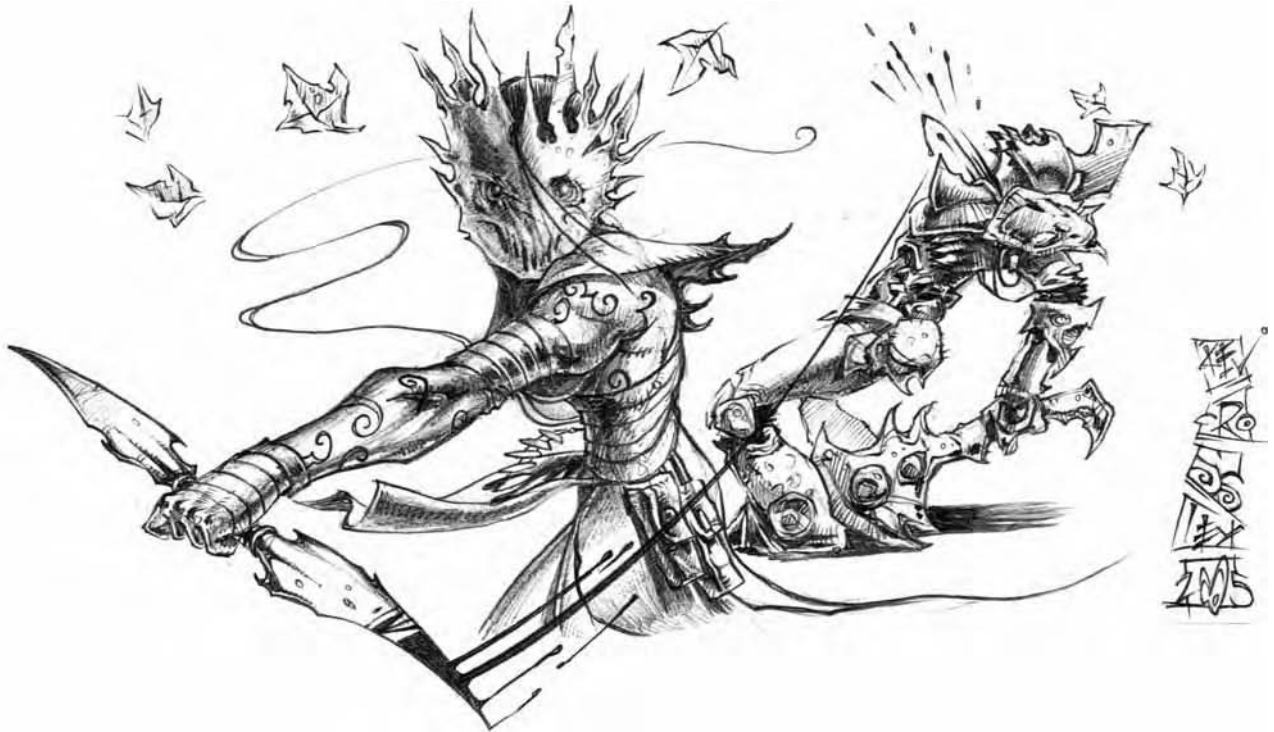
it), you get an immediate, extra melee attack against another creature within reach. You cannot take a 5-foot step before making this extra attack, and you must make it with the same weapon and at the same bonus as the attack that dropped the previous creature. You can use this ability once per round.

Expanded Mastery: 2. You gain a +2 bonus to your Cleave attack rolls.

Expanded Mastery: 3. There is no limit to the number of Cleave attacks you can make in a round.

Expanded Mastery: 4. You gain Cleave attacks when you score a critical hit in addition to when you drop an opponent. You can use this Cleave attack against any foe in range (including but not limited to the one you critically hit). If you score a critical hit *and* drop a foe, however, you gain only one Cleave attack.

Expanded Mastery: 5. Each time you make a Cleave attack, you can move 5 feet as a free action. You cannot move more than your normal speed in this manner. This movement does not provoke attacks of opportunity, as the flying bodies and gore you leave in your wake prove too distracting.

Expanded Mastery: 6. You thrive on the destruction you wreak, and your blood thirst reaches a boil as you chop through the enemy ranks. Each time you make a Cleave attack, whether or not it hits, you gain 2 fury tokens. Normally, only characters with levels in the berserker class can spend these tokens; nonberserkers gain no benefit from these tokens. (See the description of the fury token pool under the berserker's Class Features in Chapter Three.)

Expanded Mastery: 7. You slam into your enemies with enough force to send their corpses hurtling through the air. Whenever you gain a Cleave attack, all opponents adjacent to the enemy you dropped to gain the attack suffer a –1 penalty to defense as the corpse of their fallen ally slams into them. Apply this penalty before resolving your Cleave attack.

Expanded Mastery: 8. Each time you make a Cleave attack, you gain 1 cleave token that you may spend to gain a +2 bonus to damage on a melee attack. You must spend these tokens before the end of your current action. If you gain them when attacking during someone else's action, such as due to an attack of opportunity, you must spend them before the end of your attacks. Spend the tokens before resolving your attack; you can put as many of them as you wish into the attack. Should your attack miss, you lose any tokens spent.

Expanded Mastery: 9. You gain a Cleave attack when you score a critical threat (but not necessarily a critical hit) in addition to when you drop an opponent. You may make this Cleave attack against any foe in range (including but not limited to the one you critically threatened). If you score a critical threat *and* drop a foe, you gain only one Cleave attack.

Expanded Mastery: 10. Every time you inflict at least 15 points of damage with a melee attack, you gain one cleave token. You can spend 3 such tokens in order to gain an additional melee attack. You make this additional attack at the same attack bonus as the last attack you made before spending the tokens. You may attack any creature in range (not just the one you attacked). You lose all accumulated tokens at the end of your action.

Note: if you also have Cleave Expanded Mastery 8, the tokens you earn from that feat can also be spent to generate more cleave attacks. Likewise, the tokens gained from this feat can be spent to gain additional damage.

COMBAT EXPERTISE [FINESSE]

You handle your weapon with the elegant speed, agility, and skill of a true master. You can step back and bat aside your foe's attacks with ease or press forward on the attack.

Base Mastery: 1

Prerequisite: You cannot use this feat with a power weapon.

Benefit: When you use the attack action or the full attack action in melee, you can take a penalty of as much as −5 on your attack roll and add the same number (+5 or less) as an active bonus to your defense. This number may not exceed your base attack bonus. The changes to attack rolls and defense last until your next action.

Normal: A character without the Combat Expertise feat can fight defensively while using the attack or full attack action to take a −4 penalty on attack rolls and gain a +2 dodge bonus to defense.

Expanded Mastery: 2. When you use the attack action or the full attack action in melee, you can take a penalty of up to −5 on your defense and add the same number (+5 or less) to your attacks. This number may not exceed your base defense bonus. The changes to attack rolls and defense last until your next action.

Expanded Mastery: 3. You earn a parry token pool as described in the sidebar on this page. You may spend 1 parry token to gain a +1 bonus on melee attacks against the target of your pool. You enjoy this bonus until the end of your current turn. You may only spend tokens in this manner when it is your turn.

Expanded Mastery: 4. You earn a parry token pool as described in the sidebar on this page. You can spend 1 parry token to grant you or an ally within your threatened area a +1 bonus to defense against attacks made by the target of your pool. This benefit lasts until the start of your next action. You can spend these tokens as a free action.

Expanded Mastery: 5. When using Combat Expertise, you may take a penalty to attacks of up to your base attack bonus and gain the same number as a bonus to defense. Otherwise, the feat functions as normal.

Expanded Mastery: 6. You earn a parry token pool as described in the sidebar on this page. You may spend 2 parry tokens to make an attack of opportunity against the pool's target if he attacks you in melee and misses.

Expanded Mastery: 7. You earn a parry token pool as described in the sidebar on this page. If you increase your defense using Combat Expertise, you may spend 4 tokens at the start of your pool target's action. Should your opponent attack you and miss, he loses his active bonus to defense against any attacks you make during his action.

Expanded Mastery: 8. You earn a parry token pool as described in the sidebar on this page. As a foe attacks, you use a stinging, painful parry to slash back. Every time the target of your parry pool attacks you, you may spend 1 parry token to inflict your weapon's base, unmodified damage upon him whether he hits or misses. Spending a token in this fashion is not considered an action (you can do it on another's turn).

PARRY TOKEN POOL

Granted by: Combat Expertise feat expanded mastery abilities (3, 4, 6, 7, 8)

You gain a parry token pool. As a free action you may select an opponent as the target of this pool. When using Combat Expertise to increase your defense, you gain 1 parry token each time the targeted opponent attacks you in melee and misses. You can change the pool's target as a free action, but in doing so you lose all tokens accumulated against your old target. You can build up tokens in your parry pool in addition to accumulating other token types.

See the descriptions of the expanded mastery abilities listed above for the uses of parry tokens.

Expanded Mastery: 9. If you have a parry token pool, you may spend parry tokens on special effects against any foe, not just your chosen target. You keep the parry tokens you have built up when you change pool targets (until combat ends).

Expanded Mastery: 10. If you have a parry token pool, you gain tokens when anyone—not just the target of your pool—attacks you and misses while you use Combat Expertise.

COMBAT REFLEXES [TACTICS]

You keep a sharp eye out for the opportunity to skewer an opponent at the first sign of a gap in his defenses. Your feel for the tactical situation and the battlefield allows you to take advantage of an enemy's mistakes.

Base Mastery: 1

Benefit: You may make a number of additional attacks of opportunity each round equal to your Dexterity bonus or your Intelligence bonus. Choose one of these abilities when you gain this feat; you may not change your selection afterward. You also may make attacks of opportunity while flat footed.

Normal: A character without this feat can make only one attack of opportunity per round and can't make any while flat footed.

Expanded Mastery: 2. When you make an attack of opportunity, you can expend more than one attack to gain a +2 bonus to your attack. There is no limit to the number of attacks of opportunity you may expend in this way, though obviously you cannot spend more attacks than you can normally make.

Expanded Mastery: 3. Opponents provoke an attack of opportunity if they attempt to exit a square you threaten, even if their movement does not normally provoke such an attack.

Expanded Mastery: 4. As a move action, you can grant an ally within 30 feet of you one of your extra attacks of opportunity. Your ally must be able to see and hear you as you order to him to attack at the appropriate moment. Your ally retains this additional attack of opportunity until the start of his next action.

Expanded Mastery: 5. Any space you threaten counts as difficult terrain for opponents. They can attempt to move through them as if such spaces were not difficult, but in that

case they suffer a −4 penalty to their Tumble checks and you gain a +4 bonus on attacks of opportunity against them.

Expanded Mastery: 6. When you provoke an attack of opportunity, you can spend one of your own attacks of opportunity to gain a +8 bonus to defense against it. If you suffer multiple attacks, you must select one to benefit from this bonus. You can spend multiple attacks against different attackers, but you cannot spend more than one against a single attack.

Expanded Mastery: 7. If an opponent takes multiple actions that provoke attacks of opportunity, you can attack him for each one. You are no longer restricted to one attack of opportunity per round against a given foe.

Expanded Mastery: 8. If you make an attack of opportunity against an opponent and your attack hits, you reduce his speed by 10. You slash at his legs, tripping him up and forcing him to slow down. This penalty lasts until the start of the target's next action.

Expanded Mastery: 9. When your foe provokes an attack of opportunity from you, you may make an attack of opportunity yourself, using your full spread of attacks (normally considered a full attack action) if you have not yet made your attack of opportunity. You lose all of your attacks of opportunity until the start of your next action.

Expanded Mastery: 10. If an opponent provokes an attack of opportunity, he cannot complete his action after you hit him with your attack. The target's action is not wasted, unless receiving damage somehow disrupts it (such as if he were trying to begin a grapple). He can attempt the action again (if your attack does not waste it) unless his action was an attempt to move. In that case, he spends part of his movement allowance as if he entered the square but does not actually move.

For example, an opponent attempts to leave a square you threaten, provoking an attack of opportunity. Before he leaves the square, you make an attack of opportunity. If you hit, he cannot leave the square, but he still spends the appropriate amount of movement.

If you can attack the same target with more than one attack of opportunity, you may continue to strike him until you run out of attacks of opportunity or until you miss and he completes his action.

DEFLECT MISSILES [DEFENSE]
You can parry ranged attacks with the same skill and agility that you use to turn aside melee attacks.

Base Mastery: 2

Benefit: You must have at least one hand free (holding nothing) to use this feat. Once per round, when you would normally be hit with a ranged weapon, you may deflect it so as to take no damage from it. You must be aware of the attack and not flat footed.

Attempting to deflect a ranged weapon doesn't count as an action. You cannot deflect unusually massive ranged weapons and ranged attacks generated by spell effects.

Expanded Mastery: 4. You can use your Deflect Missiles feat one additional time per round. As with all expanded masteries, you can take this ability only once, to gain the ability to deflect two ranged attacks per round.

Expanded Mastery: 6. You can catch a thrown weapon you just deflected and immediately use it to attack the foe who threw it at you. This attack uses one of your attacks of opportunity for the round. Resolve it as a normal ranged attack against your opponent.

Expanded Mastery: 8. You can deflect an additional number of missiles per round equal to 1 + your Dexterity bonus (minimum 1).

DEVIOUS MANIPULATOR [SOCIAL]
You excel at deceiving others. You craft your lies with such expert attention to detail that even the sharpest minds have trouble telling your deceptions from truth. Whether in com-

bat or in a refined social situation, your talent for lies serves you well.

Base Mastery: 1

Prerequisite: This feat relies on the Bluff skill. You do not need ranks in Bluff to use Devious Manipulator, but it is far more effective with them.

Benefit: You gain access to deception tokens you can use to force others to take actions based on your lies. You gain 1 deception token against a specific target by making a successful Bluff check opposed by his Sense Motive. You may have a total number of unspent tokens equal to your level + 10, but you must accumulate tokens against only one target at a time. If you switch to a different target, you lose your built-up tokens.

You can accept a skill challenge (see Chapter Four) to increase the tokens you gain. For every –5 penalty you take on the check, you gain 1 additional deception token on a success.

In combat, you can spend deception tokens to interfere with your target's efforts. You use your Bluff skill to trick him into misreading your attacks and defense. On your action, you can spend 1 token to gain a +1 bonus to attacks against your target or impose a –1 penalty to his attacks against you. These benefits apply only to attacks from or against your chosen target. They last until the start of your next turn, and you can choose a mixture of bonuses and penalties. You may spend up to 5 tokens per round in this manner.

Outside of combat, you can spend deception tokens to enhance a Bluff check. For each token you spend, you gain a +2 bonus to a single Bluff check. You can also increase the amount of time a target believes your lies by 1 round per token spent. You may spend up to 5 tokens as part of a single Bluff check.

Expanded Mastery: 2. In noncombat situations you can craft lies so compelling and plausible that others have trouble discerning the truth behind them. If you succeed in a Bluff check against a single person, you can spend 1 deception token per round to force him to continue believing your bluff. You can keep spending tokens as long as you remain in the target's presence and can speak to him. If the target finds compelling evidence to contradict your story, you can attempt another Bluff check as a standard action to prevent him from believing it.

Expanded Mastery: 3. In combat you can use your Bluff skill to confuse an opponent. When you use Bluff to feint, you may force a foe to lose his active bonus to defense against an ally of your choice. In this case, your target retains his active bonus against you.

Expanded Mastery: 4. You can plant lies and cover stories in a target's mind, to the advantage of you and your allies. You create a seemingly trusting relationship built on lies and deception. When you succeed at a Bluff check against an opponent, you can invest the deception tokens you would normally gain from him in a special fund linked to that target. This fund remains available for future use even if you change the target of your deception pool. When you or an ally attempts a Bluff check against the target, you or your ally can spend the invested tokens. Each token spent causes a –1 penalty to the target's Sense Motive check.

A single target's fund can include a number of invested tokens equal to your level. When you first use this ability, you must designate a maximum number of allies equal to 1 + your Charisma modifier who can take advantage of it—these allies are the ones you work into your lies, giving them an easy cover story to draw upon.

Expanded Mastery: 6. In a noncombat situation you can use Bluff to gain temporary control of a target's actions. Make a Bluff check as normal. As part of this bluff, give the target an order of one sentence (no more than 20 words). This command cannot be dangerous, suicidal, or harmful to the target or his allies. Should your Bluff check succeed, the target obeys this command for a number of rounds equal to your Charisma bonus + 1. You can increase this duration by 1 round per 2 deception tokens spent. If the target encounters any violent resistance to his actions, your control over him immediately ends.

DODGE [DEFENSE]

You are quick on your feet, allowing you to evade attacks as long as you are aware of them. While other warriors hide behind armor, you duck and weave around attacks.

Base Mastery: 1

Benefit: During your action, you designate an opponent and receive a +1 active bonus to defense against attacks from him. You can select a new opponent on any action.

Each time your designated opponent attacks you and misses, you gain 1 dodge token you may use to evade his attacks. Each time your chosen target attacks you, you can immediately spend 1 dodge token to increase the defense bonus you gain from this feat by +1. Such an expenditure is not considered an action. This increase to your bonus applies only to one attack made by your target.

You can maintain a total number of unspent dodge tokens in your token pool equal to your character level + 10. Tokens beyond this maximum go to waste. Your pool lasts until the end of the encounter. You can build up tokens against one opponent at a time. If you switch targets, you lose the tokens that you have already built up for this ability.

Expanded Mastery: 2. The Dodge feat now grants you a +2 bonus to defense instead of just +1. You still gain a +1 increase to this bonus when you spend a dodge token against your foe.

Expanded Mastery: 3. You may select two opponents, rather than one, against whom you gain your defense bonus. You also build up dodge tokens against both targets and can spend tokens against either or both of them as you wish. If you change one of your pool's two targets, you retain all your tokens. If you change both at the same time, you lose your tokens. You use one pool of tokens against both foes.

Expanded Mastery: 4. Should one of your dodge pool targets attack you while he flanks you, you may be able to turn the attack against his flanking partner. If his attack against you misses, you can spend 4 tokens to dodge out of the way successfully. This tactic causes him to skewer the ally who helps him create the flank, imposing its result against the ally who creates the flank. You gain no bonus to defense for the

4 dodge tokens spent for this ability, but you can pay additional tokens to increase your defense as normal.

Your foe does not reroll his attack. Use the result of his attack against the flanking target. Note that you decide to spend the tokens after seeing the attack's results, allowing you to gauge whether the strike has a chance to hit your enemy.

If the two opponents who create the flank are both targets of your dodge pool, you only have to spend 2 tokens to use this ability.

Expanded Mastery: 5. You may select three opponents against whom you gain your defense bonus from this feat. You also build up dodge tokens against all three targets and can spend tokens against any or all of them as you wish.

Expanded Mastery: 6. When you make a Tumble check opposed by a target of your dodge pool, you gain a +2 bonus to your Tumble check for every token you spend. You can spend as many dodge tokens as you wish in this manner.

Expanded Mastery: 7. When a target of your dodge pool attacks and misses you, you may spend 4 dodge tokens on an immediate one-square move. You can use this ability only once per round. If you move out of an opponent's threatened area, he must either move to keep up with you or choose a different target for the rest of his attacks.

Expanded Mastery: 8. As you weave around your opponent's clumsy attacks, you set him up for your own devastating counter; dodge to the right to induce him to expose his side, then roll back to the left to score a decisive hit. You may spend dodge tokens to gain a bonus to one attack you make against a target of your dodge pool—you gain a +1 bonus for every token spent. Spend these tokens immediately before resolving your attack, but they count toward only that one strike, not toward others you may have as part of your action. You can spend tokens on other attacks separately if you wish to gain a bonus to each attack.

Expanded Mastery: 9. As you leap and tumble to avoid your opponent's attacks, you intentionally time your moves to let him come close to hitting. Then, at the last moment, you duck away from harm. If a target of your dodge pool attacks and misses you during his action, he suffers a –2 penalty to the rest of the attacks he makes against you till the end of his current action. These bonuses stack with each missed attack. (No tokens are needed for this ability.)

Expanded Mastery: 10. You gain the benefits of your Dodge feat and the dodge pool against all enemies that you are aware of and can react to.

FAR SHOT [PROJECTILE]

You are an expert at hitting targets at long range. You can take aim at a distant target and strike it with unerring accuracy.

Base Mastery: 2

Prerequisite: Projectile or thrown weapon

Benefit: When you use a projectile weapon such as a bow, its range increment increases by one-half (multiply by 1.5). When you use a thrown weapon such as a throwing axe, its range increment doubles.

Expanded Mastery: 4. Your steady hand and pinpoint ranged accuracy allow you to hit an opponent at almost any range. You suffer half the penalty to attacks due to range, –1 rather than –2 per range increment.

Expanded Mastery: 6. If you have the sneak attack ability or access to other precision-based bonuses to attacks or damage, you gain them with ranged weapons at double the normal range. For example, you now gain the benefits of Point Blank Shot on targets up to 60 feet away.

Expanded Mastery: 8. You ignore the range penalty for the first range increment.

Expanded Mastery: 10. You ignore the range penalty for the first, second, and third range increments.

FOE HAMMER [POWER]

In your hands, a bludgeoning weapon is far more than a simple, brutish tool used to pound foes into submission. You know how to deliver attacks that maximize the raw force a bludgeon delivers.

Base Mastery: 1

Prerequisite: You gain the benefits of this feat only when fighting with a weapon that has the cudgel identifying descriptor and that you are proficient with.

Benefit: While you rely on brute force to maximize the sheer power of a cudgel—such as a mace, warhammer, or club—your skill allows you to deliver that force with surprising precision. You may slam a foe in the gut or crack his skull to impair his fighting ability.

You may use a full-round action to make a single attack with a cudgel at your best base attack bonus. If you hit and inflict damage, your foe must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half damage inflicted) or suffer a –2 injury penalty to attacks until the end of his next turn. This ability does not affect creatures immune to pain.

Expanded Mastery: 2. You land a crushing blow to your foe's legs or knees, immobilizing him for a brief moment. As a full-round action, you may make a single attack with a cudgel at your best base attack bonus. If you hit and inflict damage, your opponent must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half damage inflicted) or move at half speed on his next action. This ability does not affect creatures immune to critical hits.

Expanded Mastery: 4. Your leaden mace or steel warhammer slams through your foe's shield, splintering bones despite the protection. If you miss your opponent but would have hit him if he did not carry a shield, you inflict half your normal damage with the attack (determine damage as normal, then divide by two). You cannot combine this ability with the others granted by this feat.

Expanded Mastery: 6. You hammer your opponent in the gut, leaving him wracked with terrible pain. When you score a critical hit with a cudgel, you may choose to give up your bonus (critical) damage to cause him instead to be sickened for a number of rounds equal to your Strength bonus. This ability does not affect creatures immune to critical hits.

Expanded Mastery: 8. You may use any of the special attacks granted as part of this feat once per round with a single attack you make as part of a standard or full attack action.

HAFTED WEAPON MASTERY [POWER]

In your capable hands, a spear or polearm becomes the instrument of a maestro of battle. You use your weapon's long haft to deflect attacks, reach out and strike an opponent before he can close with you, or defend yourself against a foe who steps within your reach.

Base Mastery: 1

Prerequisite: Spear or polearm proficiency

Benefit: Select a single square adjacent to the area you normally threaten with your spear or polearm: You now threaten that square. You must have line of sight and line of effect to the square you choose. You can pick a square or change your current square to a new target once per round as a free action.

Expanded Mastery: 2. You can use your two-handed spear or polearm as a double weapon. You lose the benefits and drawbacks of the weapon's reach, and the spear or polearm's second head inflicts damage as a club of the same size. You gain the benefits of the Two-Weapon Fighting feat's base benefit with your weapon when you use it this way. You can spend feat selections to gain Two-Weapon Fighting's expanded mastery abilities for this use of your spear or polearm. You can change to wield your spear or polearm as a double weapon or go back to using it normally as a free action once per round.

Expanded Mastery: 3. If you wear light or no armor, you can vault forward using your spear or polearm, gaining a +4 bonus to Jump checks on stable ground.

In addition, as a full attack action you can make a single unarmed strike that does not provoke an opportunity. To do so, plant your spear in the ground and vault forward to deliver a driving kick. There must be one square (and only one square) between you and your target; when you end this attack, you land in that empty square. You inflict damage equal to twice your unarmed damage, with double all the normal bonuses you gain to unarmed attacks.

Expanded Mastery: 4. You can extend your spear's reach by making a powerful, lunging attack at your opponent. When you use a full attack action with a spear or polearm, you gain a +1 square (5-foot) bonus to your reach. If your spear or polearm has the reach descriptor, apply this bonus after doubling your normal reach, not before.

You keep this extra reach until the end of your current turn.

Expanded Mastery: 6. With a punishing flurry of jabs, you attempt to force a foe backward. If you hit him with more than one attack during your action, you can force him to make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half your level + your Strength modifier). If this save fails, he moves one square away from you. You choose the square your opponent enters; however, he never enters a space that would inflict damage to him due to obvious environmental effects, such as a raging fire or a deep pit. The chosen square must land your foe farther away from you than he was when he started.

HEALING LORE [LORE]

You are a trained healer, capable of setting broken bones, binding injuries, and preparing herbal remedies that help your allies recover their strength after a difficult battle.

Base Mastery: 1

Benefit: You can treat injuries with greater than normal efficiency and speed. You enjoy a +4 bonus on Heal checks. In addition, when you restore a character's reserve points, you grant a +2 bonus to the total points restored.

Expanded Mastery: 2. You can use the Heal skill to restore temporary ability score damage. You administer herbs and other drugs to help your patient, set an injured limb, or bind a wound in such a way that the injury no longer inhibits motion.

Make a Heal check (DC 20) that takes one hour to complete. On a success, you heal 1 point of ability score damage, regardless of how the damage was inflicted. A patient can receive only one Heal check per day to treat ability score damage. This healing is in addition to the patient's natural healing.

Expanded Mastery: 3. When you restore a patient's reserve points with your Heal skill, you restore an additional +4 points. This stacks with any other bonuses to the total amount healed, including bonuses from this feat.

Expanded Mastery: 4. You can try to purge the venom from a creature's system to immediately heal any damage the creature has suffered. You must attempt to treat the victim within 3 rounds after he suffered damage from the poison. Make a Heal check as full-round action (DC 5 + poison's save DC). Your patient suffers 1d4 points of damage as you open up a vein to draw out the poison. If your check succeeds, you eliminate the damage she has suffered from one successful poisoning attempt. In addition, the victim avoids the poison's secondary effects; she need not attempt a save against them.

Expanded Mastery: 5. When you restore a patient's reserve points with your Heal skill, you restore an additional +4 points. This stacks with any other bonuses to the total healed, including bonuses from this feat.

Expanded Mastery: 6. You can use the Heal skill to repair ability score damage as described for the expanded mastery 2 ability. In addition, you can increase the Difficulty Class of the skill check by 5 to heal 1 additional point of ability score damage. You can also now cure ability drain or permanent loss using your Heal skill. There is no limit to the maximum DC you can set for yourself, but a patient still can only receive one attempt per day. If you heal multiple points of damage, you can distribute them among the six ability scores as you wish.

Expanded Mastery: 7. When you restore a patient's reserve points with your Heal skill, you restore an additional +4 points. This stacks with any other bonuses to the total healed, including bonuses from this feat.

Expanded Mastery: 8. You can try to resuscitate a dead ally if you make a Heal check within 2 rounds of her death. You may attempt this procedure only if your patient died after entering the dying state and subsequently failing a Fortitude save to survive the loss of 1 hit point per round (see "Damage, Injuries, and Death" in Chapter Eight: Combat). Allies slain in any other manner are beyond your help.

You must make a Heal check (DC 20 + character's negative hit point total [treat the negative value as positive when adding]) to bring your patient back from the brink. A success means you increase her hit points to −9 and stabilize her. Using Heal in this manner is a full-round action.

Expanded Mastery: 9. When you restore a patient's reserve points with your Heal skill, you restore an additional +4 points. This stacks with any other bonuses to the total healed, including bonuses from this feat.

Expanded Mastery: 10. When you use your Heal skill to restore a patient's reserve points, you can instead choose to heal hit points of damage. You restore the same number of hit points as you would reserve points. Your mastery of the healing arts allows you to bind wounds and soothe your patient's ills in a much shorter time than normal.

IMPROVED BULL RUSH [POWER]
You are adept at using your bulk and strength to drive an opponent backward.

Base Mastery: 1

Benefit: When you perform a bull rush, you do not provoke an attack of opportunity from the defender. You also gain a +4 bonus on the opposed Strength check you make to push him back.

Expanded Mastery: 3. When you make a bull rush attack, you can choose to accept a −4 penalty to the opposed Strength check—in most cases, this merely negates the bonus provided by this feat's base benefit. In return, the target of your bull rush falls prone after you successfully move him.

Expanded Mastery: 5. When you attempt a bull rush, you can make a single attack at your best base attack bonus in addition to the normal benefits of a bull rush and this feat. You can use either your Strength bonus and the bonus from the base Improved Bull Rush feat or the damage you inflict with your attack as a modifier to the opposed Strength check.

Expanded Mastery: 7. You slam into your opponent with such tremendous force that, regardless of the result of the bull rush, he must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half your level + your Strength modifier) or drop whatever he is holding in the square he occupied before you made your rush. If the target holds a two-handed weapon or an item in both hands, he gains a +4 bonus to this save. Items he has strapped or secured to his arm, such as a shield, go unaffected by this ability.

IMPROVED CRITICAL [FINESSE, POWER, PROJECTILE]
You are adept at scoring deadly blows with a specific weapon. You inflict critical hits with it more often than other warriors do.

Base Mastery: 4

Prerequisite: When you choose this feat, your selected weapon must be tagged as either a finesse, power, or projectile weapon, depending on the mastery rating you use to gain access to this feat. Otherwise, it must lack any of those three descriptors. For example, let's say you have mastery 4 in Power feats. The weapon you choose for Improved Critical could have the power descriptor. If it doesn't, it can't have the finesse or projectile descriptors, either.

For this feat you choose a specific weapon, such as a longsword, rather than an identifying or style descriptor, such as "sword" or "reach."

Benefit: When using the weapon you selected, double its threat range.

Special: You can gain Improved Critical multiple times. The effects do not stack, however. Each time you take the feat, it applies to a new weapon.

Expanded Mastery: 6. When you attempt to confirm a critical threat with your chosen weapon, you gain a +4 bonus to the attack. When you have the opportunity to strike an opponent in a vulnerable area, you seize the chance with deadly accuracy.

Expanded Mastery: 8. You are a master of your chosen weapon and wield it with the deadly majesty of a true expert. You now triple, rather than double, its threat range.

Expanded Mastery: 10. You no longer need to roll to confirm critical threats. If your attack has any chance of piercing a vital area, you infallibly drive it home.

Improved Disarm [Finesse]

As a master fencer, you can take advantage of small gaps in an opponent's defense or turn a slightly off-balance attack into a deadly advantage. Rather than target your foe, you have learned to slice at his hands and weapon to leave him unarmed.

Base Mastery: 2

Prerequisite: Finesse or Disarm weapon

Benefit: You provoke no attack of opportunity when you attempt to disarm an opponent, nor does he have a chance to disarm you.

Expanded Mastery: 3. You enjoy a +2 bonus to opposed attack rolls to disarm opponents.

Expanded Mastery: 4. When attempting to disarm an opponent larger than you, he counts as one size category smaller than normal. You use your foe's size against him to cut between his fingers or otherwise loosen his grip.

Expanded Mastery: 6. You gain an additional +2 bonus to the opposed attack roll made to disarm a foe. If you have the expanded mastery 3 ability, you now have a +4 bonus total.

Expanded Mastery: 8. If you disarm an opponent, you send his weapon flying through the air with a quick flick of your wrist. You can place his weapon in any square within 10 feet of you. If you have a hand free and can use his weapon in one hand, you may flip it to yourself. You can use the weapon as normal at the end of your current turn.

Improved Feint [Finesse]

You are a master at using misdirection to wreck an opponent's defenses. Your jabs and fakes leave him blocking a false attack while your real strike hits home.

Base Mastery: 2

Prerequisite: Finesse weapon

Benefit: You can make a Bluff check to feint in combat as a move action without suffering the challenge penalty for using a skill faster than normal.

Expanded Mastery: 5. You can confer the benefits of a successful feint upon an ally of your choice. This ally must also threaten the target of your feint when you attempt the action. This benefit lasts until the start of your next action or the end of your ally's next action, whichever comes first.

Expanded Mastery: 9. You can make a Bluff check to feint as a free action without penalty once per round.

Improved Overrun [Power]

You smash through the enemy's ranks, knocking aside your foes as you drive toward your target in an implacable wave of steel.

Base Mastery: 3

Benefit: When you attempt to overrun an opponent, the target may not choose to avoid you. You also gain a +4 bonus on your Strength check to knock down your opponent.

Expanded Mastery: 5. When you knock someone prone as part of an overrun, you gain an immediate attack of opportunity against him. As you charge forward, you use your weapon to batter aside your enemies.

Expanded Mastery: 7. You crush your enemies beneath your feet, stomping on them as you move past. If you knock an opponent prone as part of an overrun, you automatically inflict damage upon him based on your size. You gain your Strength modifier to the listed damage.

Size	Damage
Tiny	1d2
Small	1d3
Medium	1d4
Large	1d6
Huge	1d8
Gargantuan	2d6
Colossal	3d6

Improved Shield Bash [Armor]

You can use your shield as a weapon without losing its protective benefits. Even as you slam the shield into a foe, you keep it positioned to deflect attacks.

Base Mastery: 1

Benefit: When you perform a shield bash, you may still apply the shield's passive bonus to your defense. You must be proficient with the shield you carry to gain this benefit.

Normal: Without this feat, a character who performs a shield bash loses the shield's shield bonus to defense until her next turn.

Expanded Mastery: 3. When an opponent attempts to strike you, you can push your shield forward as his attack hits to knock him off balance and ruin his attacks. Note your total defense with and without your shield. If an attack misses you but would have hit your shieldless defense, you catch the strike on your shield. You may use one of your attacks of opportunity to grant your opponent a −2 penalty on all attacks he makes against you until the start of your next action.

Expanded Mastery: 5. You may carry two shields in battle. You gain the defense benefits from both and may use this feat to attack with them as normal. You can wield both shields as you would two weapons or fight with one and defend with the other. Your skill and agility allows you to carry your shields in the same way that other warriors might wield a pair of swords.

Expanded Mastery: 7. You can use your shield to actively aid your attacks. You feint at your opponent with your shield or use it to hide your weapon as you ready an attack. You can

reduce the total defense bonus you gain from your shield, including bonuses granted by the Shield Mastery feat (page 141), to improve your attacks. For every point by which you reduce your shield bonus, you gain a +1 bonus to all attacks until the start of your next action. The reduction in your shield bonus also lasts until that time.

Expanded Mastery: 9. When you use the full attack action, you may gain a second attack with your shield at a –5 penalty. This penalty applies only to the shield's second attack.

IMPROVED SUNDER [POWER]

While others aim for the enemy, you have learned that destroying a foe's weapons leaves him at your mercy. You excel at finding weak spots in a blade and exploiting them for your benefit.

Base Mastery: 2

Benefit: When you strike at an object held or carried by an opponent (such as a weapon or shield), you provoke no attack of opportunity.

Normal: Without this feat, you provoke an attack of opportunity when you strike at an object that another character holds or carries.

Expanded Mastery: 3. Your attempts to sunder a weapon strike with superior accuracy, as you can judge how your opponent attempts to defend against this attack. You gain a +4 bonus on any attack roll made to attack an object held or carried by another character.

Expanded Mastery: 5. You can attempt to destroy an opponent's armor by smashing its plates, severing straps, and cutting apart leather padding. Make a sunder attempt as normal. If you cause 10 points of damage after accounting for the armor's hardness, you inflict a –1 penalty to its damage reduction. You can inflict this penalty again on your next attack, and the penalties stack. To remove this penalty, the foe must succeed at a relevant Craft check to do work with a gold-piece value equal to 10 percent of the armor's cost per penalty point.

Expanded Mastery: 7. When attempting to sunder an item, you can cleave through large objects with relative ease due to your expertise in spotting manufacturing flaws. Your opponent does not receive the normal bonus for wielding a weapon that is larger than yours.

Expanded Mastery: 9. When you try to sunder a weapon, you strike a spot you recognize as particularly brittle, weak, or perhaps already damaged. You gain double your Strength bonus to damage when using a one-handed weapon and triple your bonus when using a two-handed one. You cannot use this ability with Tactics of the Mind, Weapon Finesse, or other feats that allow you to use key abilities other than Strength in melee attacks.

IMPROVED TRIP [FINESSE, POWER]

You slam your foes with such strength and power that you knock them from their feet, or you make a subtle, dexterous attack that leaves them sprawling. Your approach to this ability depends on whether you take it as a Finesse or Power feat.

Base Mastery: 2

Prerequisite: If you take Improved Trip as a Power feat, you can use it with trip weapons, power weapons and weapons that lack the finesse keyword. If you take it as a Finesse feat, you can use it with trip weapons, finesse weapons and weapons that lack the power keyword.

Benefit: You do not provoke an attack of opportunity when you attempt to trip an opponent. If your trip attack fails, your opponent does not have the chance to trip you in return.

Normal: Without this feat, you can only make trip attacks with an unarmed attack, in which case you provoke an attack of opportunity, or with a trip weapon.

Special: You can take this feat twice, once as a Power feat and again as a Finesse feat, in order to use it with more weapons.

Expanded Mastery: 2 (Finesse only). Rather than use a Strength check to topple an opponent, you can opt to make a Dexterity check.

Expanded Mastery: 2 (Power only). You gain a +4 bonus to your ability check to trip an opponent when you use a two-handed weapon to make the trip attempt. This stacks with the normal +4 bonus for using a two-handed weapon to make a trip attempt.

Expanded Mastery: 3. You gain a +4 bonus on your ability check to trip your opponent.

Expanded Mastery: 4. If you trip an opponent in melee combat, you immediately get a melee attack against that foe as if you hadn't used your attack for the trip attempt.

Expanded Mastery: 6. When you trip an opponent, you send him hurtling backward with the force of your attack or by masterfully redirecting his momentum. You may force him to fall prone in a square adjacent to his current position—in essence moving him one square.

If he enters an occupied square, the targets within it must make Reflex saves (DC 10 + tripping character's special size modifier; see the table below) or also be knocked prone. Creatures who must make this save also apply the size modifiers from the table to their Reflex save results. Your target then moves back to his initial position.

If the squares are unoccupied, the tripped creature comes to a stop where you placed him. You must resolve this movement before gaining any additional attacks against him. See the table below for size modifiers to trip saves:

Size	DC/Save Modifier
Fine	−12
Tiny	−8
Small	−4
Medium	+0
Large	+4
Huge	+8
Gargantuan	+12
Colossal	+16

Expanded Mastery: 8. You trip your opponent with such savage force that he must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half your level + Dexterity modifier [Finesse] or Strength modifier [Power]). On a failure he hits the ground, stunned for 1 round, with the wind knocked out of him.

Manyshot [Projectile]

You can nock two arrows together, throw a pair of axes at once, or otherwise combine multiple ranged weapons into one attack.

Base Mastery: 4

Prerequisite: You cannot use a slow-loading projectile weapon with this feat.

Benefit: As a standard action, you may fire two projectiles at a single opponent within 30 feet. Both weapons or missiles use the same attack roll (with a −4 penalty) to determine success, but each inflicts damage separately (see "Special").

Damage reduction and other resistances apply separately against each arrow fired.

Special: Regardless of the number of projectiles you fire or throw, apply precision-based damage, such as sneak attacks, only once. If you score a critical hit, only the first shot deals critical damage, while all others deal regular damage.

Expanded Mastery: 6. You may fire an additional arrow or throw an extra weapon as part of a Manyshot attack. However, you suffer an additional −4 penalty to your attack for each one beyond the first.

Expanded Mastery: 8. You may fire an additional arrow or throw an extra weapon as part of a Manyshot attack. However, you suffer an additional −4 penalty to your attack for each one beyond the first.

Expanded Mastery: 10. You gain precision-based damage with all the missiles you fire or throw. On a critical threat, you check to confirm the critical separately for each projectile, perhaps allowing you to inflict more than one critical hit.

Mobility [Defense]

You prove difficult to hit while moving.

Base Mastery: 1

Benefit: You get a +4 active bonus to defense against attacks of opportunity caused when you move out of or within a threatened area.

Expanded Mastery: 2. At the start of your action, you may select one opponent as your Mobility target. You gain a +6, rather than +4, bonus to defense against his attacks of opportunity this round.

Expanded Mastery: 3. As a full attack action, you can make a single attack with a melee weapon at your best base attack bonus and move.

You can move both before and after the attack, provided that your total distance does not exceed your speed. Moving in this way does not provoke an attack of opportunity from the defender you attack, though it might provoke them from other creatures. You can't use this feat while wearing heavy armor.

To utilize the benefits of this ability, you must move at least one square (5 feet) both before and after you attack.

Expanded Mastery: 4. If an opponent makes an attack of opportunity against you because of your movement and misses, you gain an additional +2 bonus to defense against any subsequent attacks of opportunity you provoke for moving through that square. You swerve between your enemies, causing their attacks to interfere with each other.

Expanded Mastery: 5. If you provoke an attack of opportunity due to movement from an opponent at least one size category larger than you, you may attempt to weave between his feet to throw him off balance.

If the attack misses and you use Tumble to enter the attacker's square at any point during the rest of your movement, he must make a Reflex save (DC 10 + half your level + your Dexterity modifier) or fall prone in his current space. You can use this ability against one opponent per round.

Expanded Mastery: 6. When using the charge action, you can make your charge attack at any point along the distance you move; further, you do not have to move directly at your target. After you attack, you may continue moving as normal. Your target must be within your threatened area at some point during your movement.

Expanded Mastery: 7. If you provoke an attack of opportunity for moving and your foe misses, you immediately gain an attack of opportunity against him—you dart around him and cause him to expose his defenses as he makes a clumsy attack against you.

Expanded Mastery: 8. If you provoke an attack of opportunity for moving and your opponent misses, you can make a trip attack against him as an attack of opportunity. You lure him off balance as you move, setting yourself up to make a trip attack that takes advantage of his defensive lapse.

If your attack fails and you fall prone, your movement ends in your current space.

Expanded Mastery: 9. If you provoke an attack of opportunity because of your movement, you may make a Tumble check (DC = total result of each attempted attack of opportunity).

If your Tumble check succeeds, that attack automatically misses and your foe cannot make another attack of opportunity for 1 round—your agile maneuver causes him to lose his balance. While he recovers, he cannot take advantage of any other gaps in his opponents' defenses.

Expanded Mastery: 10. You never provoke attacks of opportunity for moving unless you explicitly choose to. Even then, you may pick and choose which opponents may attempt to attack you.

Mounted Archery [Projectile]

You skillfully wield ranged weapons while in the saddle. You have learned to anticipate your mount's movements, allowing you to make accurate shots while on the move.

Base Mastery: 1

Benefit: Halve your penalty for using a ranged weapon while mounted: −2 instead of −4 if your mount takes a double move, and −4 instead of −8 while your mount runs.

Expanded Mastery: 2. You suffer no penalty when using a ranged weapon if your mount takes a double move; a −2 penalty applies when your mount runs.

Expanded Mastery: 4. While mounted, you can use a full-round action to make a full attack with a ranged weapon while completing a move action to control your mount.

Expanded Mastery: 6. If you make a full attack while mounted, you can make each of your attacks at any point along your mount's movement: either all together, all in different squares, or a combination of the two.

Expanded Mastery: 8. You can use your mount's speed to confuse your opponent's defenses—you force your foe to pivot to defend himself. You gain a +2 bonus to ranged attacks if your mount double moves. If your mount runs you gain a +4 bonus. If you suffer any penalties for using a ranged attack while mounted, apply those as normal in addition to these bonuses.

Mounted Combat [Finesse or Power]

You excel at fighting from horseback or when astride any other sort of mount. You and your mount form a potent combat team when you combine your efforts.

Base Mastery: 1

Benefit: Once per round when your mount is hit in combat, you may attempt a Ride check to negate the hit. You negate it if your Ride check result exceeds the opponent's attack roll.

Expanded Mastery: 1. When you attempt to overrun a foe while mounted, he may not choose to avoid you. Your mount may make one hoof attack against any target you knock down, gaining the standard +4 bonus on attack rolls against prone targets.

Expanded Mastery: 2. While mounted, you can guide your horse to better evade enemy attacks. You and your mount enjoy a +2 bonus to defense when your mount double moves and a +4 bonus when it runs.

Expanded Mastery: 3. When charging while mounted, you may move and attack as if with a standard charge and then move again (continuing the straight line of the charge). Your total movement for the round can't exceed double your mounted speed. You and your mount do not provoke an attack of opportunity from the foe you attack.

Expanded Mastery: 4. When charging while mounted, you deal double damage with a melee weapon (or triple damage with a lance).

Overwhelming Presence [Social]

With a single glare, you strike terror into others. Your mere presence is enough to make the timid recoil. While others use gilded words and clever stratagems to manipulate others, your personality strikes with the raw force of an avalanche.

Base Mastery: 1

Prerequisite: Overwhelming Presence relies on the Intimidate skill. You do not need ranks in Intimidate to use it, but the feat proves far more effective with them.

Benefit: At the start of an encounter, you may use a move action to adopt a menacing demeanor. Doing so grants you your Charisma bonus as an active bonus to defense. You do not gain this bonus against creatures that are immune to fear. The bonus stops at the end of the encounter.

Expanded Mastery: 2. You can use the "browbeat target" form of Intimidate as a free action against one opponent. However, the effects of a successful use of Intimidate last only until the end of your next action. You cannot attempt to use Intimidate in this manner against the same target more than once per encounter. (This applies whether your check succeeds or fails.)

Expanded Mastery: 3. Your mere presence strikes terror into your foes. You can use the Intimidate skill as a move action whenever you could normally do so as a standard action. Other aspects of the skill remain unchanged. For example, if an ability requires you to use Intimidate as a full-round action, it still takes that long to use.

Expanded Mastery: 5. Your intimidating presence causes others to grow tentative and nervous when they face you in battle. Any opponent in your threatened area must attempt a Will save (DC 10 + half your level + your Charisma modifier). Those who fail suffer a penalty to attacks against you equal to your Charisma bonus. A foe must save against this ability only once per combat. Its effects last until the end of the encounter. To keep the game flowing, it's usually best to make a save before the creature attacks.

Expanded Mastery: 7. Your terrifying presence can strike stark fear into your enemies. Make an Intimidate check against a shaken opponent with fewer Hit Dice or levels than you. The target opposes this check with a Will save, base attack check, or Intimidate check. If he fails, he becomes frightened.

Expanded Mastery: 8. You can use the Intimidate skill as a free action once per round rather than as a move or standard action. Other aspects of the skill remain unchanged.

Expanded Mastery: 10. Your terrifying presence terrorizes your foes. You may make an Intimidate check against a shaken opponent with fewer Hit Dice or levels than you. The target opposes this check with a Will save, base attack check, or Intimidate check. If he fails, he becomes panicked.

Point Blank Shot [Projectile]

You excel at using ranged weapons in close-quarters situations. You can make deadly shots at close range, as long as you have a clear view of your opponent. You also learn to handle your weapon even when pressed from all sides.

Base Mastery: 1

Benefit: You get a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls with ranged weapons at ranges of up to 30 feet.

Expanded Mastery: 2. As a free action once per round, you can treat your ranged weapon as a melee weapon or go back to treating it as a ranged weapon. When you use your ranged weapon as a melee one, you reduce the range of your weapon to your normal reach. However, you now threaten spaces within this area and may make attacks of opportunity or flank opponents as if using a melee weapon, and you do not provoke attacks of opportunity with your attacks. Your weapon itself remains a ranged weapon, and retains its normal descriptors. You're still able to use your ranged feats (such as rapid shot) with it. You can't use melee-specific feats.

Expanded Mastery: 3. You gain your Dexterity bonus to damage on all ranged attacks you make against targets within 30 feet. Your shots hit with deadly precision, as your steady hands and nerves allow you to take aim at vital points on a foe's body. This benefit stacks with Point Blank Shot's base bonus damage.

Expanded Mastery: 4. At close quarters you can make a quick feint that causes your opponent to rear back in fear. When you pull back an arrow and aim at your foe's face, you cause him to flinch, throw up his shield in defense, or dive for cover. As a free action once per round, you can make a Bluff check to feint against each foe from whom you would provoke an attack of opportunity for making a ranged attack. If your check succeeds, your foe cannot make an attack of opportunity against you.

Political Mastermind [Social]

With your personality and cunning, you can manipulate others to your will. Not only can you win their favor, you can dictate their actions, influence their attitudes and beliefs, and slowly turn them into your puppets.

Base Mastery: 1

Prerequisite: Political Mastermind relies on the Diplomacy skill. You do not need ranks in Diplomacy to use it, but the feat proves far more effective with them.

Benefit: When making a Diplomacy check to influence a creature, you gain 2 manipulation tokens if you improve the creature's attitude to friendly or helpful. Thereafter, you gain 2 additional manipulation tokens against him for each day that you interact with the target for more than an hour and succeed at a Diplomacy check (DC 10 + creature's Will save modifier). Spending 1 manipulation token decreases this Difficulty Class by 5. You can spend more than one token, though obviously spending 2 tokens to gain 2 tokens makes little sense.

If the target of this ability changes his attitude for any reason, you can immediately spend manipulation tokens to improve it by one category per token spent. The target's attitude might drop again if you take further actions. You do not have to be present to spend these tokens. For example, you can designate a standing effort to immediately improve the target's attitude to friendly if he should ever drop below it. In this case, you work to buffer your influence with the target through promises and flattery. Otherwise, you must be able to see and speak with the target to improve his attitude.

You can spend manipulation tokens to force the target of this ability to take certain actions. The token cost depends on the nature of the action.

1 token: A favor or action that requires some effort on the target's part but does not go against his nature, interests, or goals. For example, asking a warlord to give you shelter and food in his fortress.

3 tokens: A favor or action that demands intense focus, work, and resources, but one that does not violate his nature, interests, or goals. For example, asking the warlord to fund an expedition to the unexplored forests to the north.

5 tokens: A minor favor or action that works against the target's ideals, interests, or goals. For example, asking the

warlord to fund an expedition while his realm teeters on the edge of bankruptcy.

10 tokens: An important and critical decision or favor that directly opposes the target's morals, goals, or ideals. For example, convincing the warlord to do nothing while his hated enemy launches attacks into his land.

As with any token pool, you can accumulate a maximum number of unspent tokens equal to your level + 10. These tokens do not expire, allowing you to build up your influence with another over a long period.

Special: You can build up token pools against different targets at the same time with this feat. Track your available tokens against each target. Someone attempting to counter one of your manipulations must make an opposed Diplomacy check against you to succeed. For example, say you convince the warlord to fund your treasure-seeking expedition by spending manipulation tokens. His wife opposes your plans by spending an equal number of tokens. To succeed, she must make a Diplomacy check opposed by one from you.

Needless to say, almost every politician and aristocrat of any political acumen chooses this feat.

Expanded Mastery: 2. You can designate an entire city or district as the target of this feat. In this case, you work to create a broad range of contacts among common folk, merchants, and so forth. Each day you may attempt a Diplomacy check after spending four hours of work. The Difficulty Class derives from the city's size. Reduce the Difficulty Class by 5 if you target only one district in town. See the table below for Diplomacy DC by city size:

Size	DC
Tiny (village)	15
Small (town)	20
Medium (city)	25
Large (metropolis)	30

Each day that your check succeeds, you gain 1 popularity token. While you remain within the city or district, you can spend 1 popularity token to change an indifferent person to helpful. This benefit lasts for one hour and conveys the idea that the subject is someone you met at a bar, an old friend from your childhood, or someone else that you interacted with and won over while canvassing the city.

Expanded Mastery: 3. You can control large groups of people with a carefully composed oration. You might incite fear, anger, or calm. You may make a Diplomacy check as a full-round action, provided that the crowd is not hostile to you. The Difficulty Class of this check equals the number of people in the crowd divided by 5. On a success you alter the group's attitude toward you by one category. If the members of the group become helpful, you can coax them into one of the states described below.

Anger: The crowd grows ugly. They may attack a single person or group of your choice, though they stop attacking if the target slays or drops more than 10 percent of the crowd. In this case, the crowd reacts according to the fear response below. Otherwise, they riot and smash windows, loot, start fires, and otherwise spread destruction. Once a crowd is

angry, you can only attempt to calm it.

Calm: The crowd peacefully disperses. Once calmed, all Diplomacy attempts to incite it to further action face a +10 modifier to the Difficulty Class.

Fear: The crowd panics and flees. It is now impossible to use Diplomacy to change the crowd's attitude unless escape is impossible. In that case, the people in the crowd try to find cover and hide. Otherwise, the crowd disperses.

Motivated: The crowd takes a course of action of your choice. You could motivate the group to help repair a leaky dam, douse a fire, man the walls against attackers, and so forth. The crowd takes any action you request, provided that it is not obviously suicidal.

Anyone in the crowd with Hit Dice that exceed half your level proves immune to this effect.

Expanded Mastery: 4. You can now spend manipulation tokens to gain virtual control of someone. For every 5 tokens you spend, you dictate a basic course of action or an attitude toward a subject or person. This attitude persists for a number of weeks equal to 1 + your Charisma modifier. It may last longer if you spend 2 manipulation tokens against the target each additional week. You must be present with the target to extend the duration, and can do so only within two days of the end of this effect's duration.

You cannot impart suicidal, obviously ruinous, or foolish attitudes to your target. The idea must be reasonable given his position, attitude, and goals.

A person you control in this way is considered a puppet. This is a special state that other Political Mastermind abilities utilize (see below).

Expanded Mastery: 7. You exercise increasing control on a person over whom you have slowly gained a powerful social and emotional hold. Against a target who has become your puppet (see above), you may spend 5 manipulation tokens and make a Diplomacy check opposed by your target's Will save. A success causes your target to develop a single attitude that violates his normal beliefs and goals. For example, you could turn a warlord against one of his allies.

This belief lasts one week, though its consequences could linger far longer. You can spend another 2 tokens each week and make another Diplomacy check opposed by the target's Will save. If you manage this for 5 weeks in a row, the idea you implanted becomes permanent, and you can try to introduce another. In addition, the target is now considered your thrall. This state opens up additional options to you with a higher mastery ability.

Expanded Mastery: 10. You can exercise greater control over a single person. You may spend 5 manipulation tokens per week to direct the actions of a target who has become your thrall. You must spend at least two hours per day with the target. There are no limits to the control you exercise—it is near complete. However, your target may attempt a Will save once per week, opposed by your Diplomacy check. If this save succeeds, the target regains his own mind but remains subject to your other abilities. In addition, he does not become suspicious or angry toward you unless you give

him an obvious reason to do so. Your attempts at control are not enough to rouse his ire.

Others can attempt to break your control once per week with an opposed Diplomacy check. You cannot have more than one thrall at any given time.

POWER ATTACK [POWER]

You know how to trade accuracy for raw, devastating power. Your weapon draws a savage path of blood and destruction across the battlefield, but your attacks are sometimes rushed, telegraphed, or otherwise easy to avoid.

Base Mastery: 1

Prerequisite: Power weapon

Benefit: On your action, before making attack rolls for a round, you may choose to subtract a number from all melee attack rolls and add the same number to all melee damage rolls. This number may not exceed your base attack bonus. Once you set the penalty to attacks and bonus on damage, you may not change it until your next action.

Special: If you attack with a two-handed weapon or with a one-handed weapon wielded in two hands you may add twice the number subtracted from your attack rolls to damage.

Note: When using the Power Attack expanded mastery abilities, you can only gain the benefits of one ability derived from taking a high Power Attack penalty at a time. You cannot use the expanded mastery 2, 3, 5, 6, or 9 abilities at the same time. You can use only one of them on a given strike.

Expanded Mastery: 2. If you embrace at least a −3 penalty to increase your damage via this feat's base benefit, any opponent you hit must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half your level + your Strength modifier) or suffer a −1 injury penalty to attacks for 1 round. Your powerful attack leaves your foe in terrible, distracting pain. A specific target need make only one Fortitude saving throw per round to ignore this effect, even if you hit him more than once.

Expanded Mastery: 3. If you take a −5 or worse penalty to increase your damage via this feat's base benefit, any opponent you hit must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 10 + half your level + your Strength modifier) or be knocked prone. A specific target need make only one Reflex saving throw per round to ignore this effect, even if you hit him more than once.

Expanded Mastery: 4. Using Power Attack, you inflict double your attack penalty as bonus damage when you fight with a one-handed or light weapon. If you fight with a two-handed weapon, you inflict bonus damage equal to 2.5 times the penalty.

Expanded Mastery: 5. If you take at least a −9 penalty to increase your damage via this feat's base benefit, any opponent you hit must succeed at a Will save (DC 10 + half your level + your Strength modifier) or be dazed for 1 round. The savage impact of your attack knocks your opponent senseless. A specific target need make only one Will saving throw per round to ignore this effect, even if you hit him more than once.

Expanded Mastery: 6. If you take a −11 or worse penalty to increase your damage via this feat's base benefit, any opponent you hit must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half your level + your Strength modifier) or be stunned for 1 round. You slam your foe with a vicious, overpowering attack that almost knocks him out. A specific target need make only one Fortitude saving throw per round to ignore this effect, even if you hit him more than once.

Expanded Mastery: 7. You make wide, deadly attacks with the Power Attack feat. Even if you miss, you may hit another target. When an attack misses, compare the attack result to the defense of a randomly selected person (either friend or foe) within your threatened area. If your attack result bests the random target's defense, resolve the damage against him. Choose whether or not to use this ability before resolving your attack. You also should make it clear to the DM whether you default to using it or not. If the attack against the second target misses, you do not check to see if you hit anyone else.

Expanded Mastery: 8. Once per round, you can choose to adjust the penalty you take due to this feat's base benefit by up to +/−3 (but it still may not exceed your base attack bonus). You can reduce your penalty (and thus the bonus damage you gain) or increase it for a deadlier, if wilder, attack. Once you change your penalty, the new value remains in place until the start of your next action.

Expanded Mastery: 9. If you choose to take a −15 or worse penalty to your attack in exchange for bonus damage via this feat's base benefit, anyone you hit must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or immediately die.

Expanded Mastery: 10. Should you force an opponent to make a massive damage save due to your attack that gained bonus damage from Power Attack, the target's save DC equals 10 + half your level + your Strength modifier (rather than the standard DC of 15).

PRECISE SHOT [PROJECTILE]

With your steady hand and pinpoint aim, you can send a shot into melee that hits only the target you want to injure. The scuffle and chaos of melee has no effect on your aim.

Base Mastery: 2

Benefit: You can shoot or throw ranged weapons at an opponent engaged in melee without taking the standard −4 penalty on your attack roll.

Special: Note that the benefits for expanded mastery levels 3, 5, 7, and 9 are all identical, listed as separate mastery abilities because you can't take the same ability more than once. However, their effects all stack.

Expanded Mastery: 3. Your precision with ranged attacks allows you to inflict additional damage by targeting vulnerable areas. You gain +1d6 points of sneak attack damage to ranged attacks (per the executioner and thief class abilities; see Chapter Three). If you already have sneak attack, increase the damage you inflict by one die.

Expanded Mastery: 4. Your accurate aim allows you to hit a target in the most sensitive areas. When using a projectile or thrown weapon, you increase its critical damage multiplier by 1.

Expanded Mastery: 5. Your precision with ranged attacks allows you to inflict additional damage by targeting vulner-able areas. You gain +1d6 points of sneak attack damage to ranged attacks (per the executioner and thief class abilities; see Chapter Three). If you already have sneak attack, increase the damage you inflict by one die.

This damage stacks with any other bonus sneak attack damage you gain from the Precise Shot feat.

Expanded Mastery: 6. Your ranged attacks ignore the defense bonus granted to targets by anything less than total cover and the miss chance

granted to targets by anything less than total concealment.

In addition, when you shoot or throw ranged weapons at a grappling opponent and hit, you automatically strike at the opponent you have chosen (you have no chance of hitting another grappler).

Expanded Mastery: 7. Your precision with ranged attacks allows you to inflict additional damage by targeting vulnerable areas. You gain +1d6 points of sneak attack damage to ranged attacks (per the executioner and thief class abilities; see Chapter Three). If you already have sneak attack, increase the damage you inflict by one die.

This damage stacks with any other bonus sneak attack damage you gain from the Precise Shot feat.

Expanded Mastery: 8. You make unerringly deadly strikes with your ranged weapons. When your shot threatens a critical hit, you automatically confirm it thanks to this expanded mastery ability.

Expanded Mastery: 9. Your precision with ranged attacks allows you to inflict additional damage by targeting vulnerable areas. You gain +1d6 points of sneak attack damage to ranged attacks (per the executioner and thief class abilities; see Chapter Three). If you already have sneak attack, increase the damage you inflict by one die.

This damage stacks with any other bonus sneak attack damage you gain from the Precise Shot feat.

Expanded Mastery: 10. Your unsurpassed accuracy allows you to take careful aim at vulnerable targets to slay them in a single shot. You may use a projectile or thrown weapon to make a *coup de grace* attack on any helpless target in range.

Rapid Reload [Projectile]

You are adept at reloading weapons that normally take precious moments to ready.

Base Mastery: 1

Benefit: Reduce the time required to reload a slow-loading projectile weapon to a free action. While you use the weapon, it loses the slow-loading descriptor, allowing you to take advantage of special abilities and feats normally disallowed for slow-loading weapons.

Normal: Characters without this feat spend at least a move action to reload slow-loading projectile weapons.

Expanded Mastery: 3. If you are surprised while have a ready-loading projectile weapon loaded and readied, you can attack with it during the surprise round. You roll your initiative as if you had not been surprised and fire when your turn comes up. You cannot take any other action during the surprise round (not even free actions).

Expanded Mastery: 5. You can make attacks of opportunity with a ready-loading projectile weapon. You threaten an area covered by your natural reach while you have the weapon out and ready to fire.

Rapid Shot [Projectile]

In battle, you are a blur as you pump a furious volley of thrown weapons, bolts, or arrows into your opponent.

Base Mastery: 2

Prerequisite: You can use this feat only while armed with a projectile weapon that lacks the slow-loading descriptor. You can use it with thrown weapons if you have Quick Draw.

Benefit: You get one extra attack per round with a ranged weapon. Make the attack at your highest base attack bonus. However, each attack you make that round (the extra one and the normal ones) takes a −2 penalty. You must use the full attack action to use this feat.

Expanded Mastery: 4. You fire a volley of projectiles at a foe in such a way that he has little chance to dodge them all. When you make all your ranged attacks against a single target in a full attack action, your target must attempt a Reflex

save (DC 10 + half your level + your Dexterity modifier + shots fired). Failure means he suffers a −2 penalty to defense against your attacks until the end of his action. Resolve this save before taking any attacks. You must commit to a full attack action and resolve it against that target regardless of the save's result. If the target drops before you finish your attacks, you still must continue to fire at him.

Expanded Mastery: 6. You gain two extra attacks per round with a ranged weapon when you use the full attack action. These shots, and all others you make until the start of your next action, suffer a −6 penalty.

You cannot use this ability and Rapid Shot's base benefit to gain three extra attacks. You either gain extra one attack for a −2 penalty or two extra attacks for a −6 penalty.

Expanded Mastery: 8. You gain three extra attacks per round with a ranged weapon when you use the full attack action. These shots, and all others you make until the start of your next action, suffer a −10 penalty.

You cannot use this ability and Rapid Shot's base benefit to gain four extra attacks. You either gain extra one attack for a −2 penalty, two extra attacks for −6 (see above), or three extra attacks at −10.

Expanded Mastery: 10. When you take extra attacks using this feat, divide the penalty you suffer to your attacks in half.

Razor Fiend [Finesse]

You wield daggers with lethal speed and precision. You deliver a storm of metal with your throwing daggers, while in close combat you slash your opponents into bloody ribbons.

Base Mastery: 1

Prerequisite: Dagger. To gain this feat's benefits, you must be proficient with the dagger you wield.

Benefit: In your hands, a dagger becomes a blur of lethal metal. You gain the benefits of the Quick Draw general feat (see page 117) with all daggers.

In combat, you may take an additional attack when you use a full attack action while armed only with one or two daggers. You gain this benefit when using a dagger in a ranged or melee attack. However, these attacks trade speed for hitting power. You make the bonus attack at your highest base attack bonus, but all of your attacks (including the bonus attack) suffer a −2 penalty. You gain only half your Strength bonus to damage when you fight in this manner. These penalties last until the beginning of your next action.

Special: When using Razor Fiend to gain additional attacks, you receive only half the normal bonus damage from any Power feats you use.

Expanded Mastery: 4. As the Razor Fiend feat's base ability, save that you may now take two additional attacks at your highest base attack bonus in exchange for a −4 penalty to all attacks until the start of your next action. In addition, you gain only half your Strength bonus to damage.

Expanded Mastery: 6. Each cut you inflict upon an opponent builds upon previous ones. After you slash into a foe's flesh with one attack, you widen the injury with your next.

During your action, you gain a +1 bonus to damage with each dagger attack for every previous dagger attack that hit your opponent. You gain this bonus damage based only on attacks that hit during your current action.

Expanded Mastery: 8. You gain an additional dagger attack when you use the full attack action, as described in this feat's base benefit. You suffer a −2 penalty to this attack and all other attacks you make until the start of your next action. Add this penalty to any other penalties you take for making multiple dagger attacks. For example, if you have the expanded mastery 4 ability you can make three additional dagger attacks in return for a −6 penalty, two additional attacks for a −4 penalty, or one additional attack for a −2 penalty. In addition, you gain only half your Strength bonus to damage.

Shield Mastery [Armor]

While others use a shield simply as a hunk of metal or wood to deflect attacks, you have mastered advanced techniques to actively deflect attacks.

Base Mastery: 1

Prerequisite: You must be proficient with your shield.

Benefits: You gain a +1 active bonus to defense when you gain a defense bonus from a shield.

Special: Note that the benefits for expanded mastery levels 3, 5, 7, and 9 are all identical. They are listed as separate mastery abilities because you can't take the same ability more than once. However, their effects all stack.

Expanded Mastery: 2. Determine your defense with and without your shield. If an opponent attacks and misses you but would have hit your shieldless defense, he strikes your shield. When this happens, you can deflect his attack to the side, leaving him vulnerable to your next attack. You gain a +1 bonus to attacks against this opponent until the end of your next action.

Expanded Mastery: 3. The active bonus you gain from the Shield Mastery base feat increases by +1.

Expanded Mastery: 4. Determine your defense with and without your shield. If an opponent attacks and misses you but would have hit your shieldless defense, he strikes your shield. Each time this happens, your opponent provokes an attack of opportunity from you.

Expanded Mastery: 5. The active bonus you gain from the Shield Mastery feat increases by +1.

Expanded Mastery: 6. If you use a standard action to defend yourself with your shield, you gain a +4 active bonus to defense in addition to the benefits you gain from this feat.

Expanded Mastery: 7. The active bonus you gain from the Shield Mastery feat increases by +1.

Expanded Mastery: 8. If you use a move action to defend yourself with your shield, you gain a +2 active bonus to defense in addition to the benefits you gain from this feat.

Expanded Mastery: 9. The active bonus you gain from the Shield Mastery feat increases by +1.

Expanded Mastery: 10. Determine your defense with and without your shield. If an opponent attacks and misses you

but would have hit your shieldless defense, he strikes your shield. When this happens, you can catch your foe's weapon and pin it to the ground. He must defeat you in an opposed Strength check or immediately drop his weapon in his square.

SHOT ON THE RUN [PROJECTILE]
You have the training and accuracy needed to hit the target even while moving. As you scramble and dodge, you can still take aim and fire with full skill.

Base Mastery: 4

Benefit: You can use a full attack action to take a single shot with a ranged weapon while moving. You can move both before and after the attack, provided that your total distance moved is not greater than your speed.

Expanded Mastery: 6. If you make a ranged attack from hiding and then move, you can immediately attempt another Hide check with a –5 penalty to stay hidden from your enemies.

Expanded Mastery: 8. If you enter an opponent's square and make your ranged attack, attempt a Tumble check opposed by your foe's base attack check. If you succeed, he loses his active bonus to defense against your attack—you dodge and weave past him to deliver a deadly shot at close range.

Expanded Mastery: 10. If you move at half your speed or slower, take a full attack with a ranged weapon as a standard action. You cannot move between individual attacks that you resolve as part of the full attack action.

STUNNING STRIKE [POWER]
You strike your opponent with such force that you leave him reeling and unable to defend himself. With your training and brute strength, you wear away at his mental focus and batter him into insensibility.

Base Mastery: 6

Prerequisite: Power weapon

Benefit: You gain access to a pool of stun tokens. Select a single opponent as the target of this pool. Each time you hit that opponent for 10 or more points of damage with a power weapon, you gain 1 stun token. When you hit a foe, you can immediately spend 2 stun tokens in an attempt to stun him.

Stunning Strike forces a foe damaged by your attack to make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 10 + half your level + your Strength modifier) in addition to taking damage normally. A defender who fails this saving throw is stunned for 1 round.

You can build up a maximum number of stun tokens equal to your level + 10. You can change the target of your stun pool, but in doing so you lose all tokens that you built up against the previous target.

Expanded Mastery: 8. You can spend 2 stun tokens to increase the save DC of your stunning attack by 1. There is no limit to the total number of tokens you can spend in this manner.

Expanded Mastery: 10. If the target of your stunning attack makes his save, he still suffers a –2 injury penalty to attacks and defense until the end of his next action.

TACTICS OF THE MIND [TACTICS]
While others rely on brawn and speed to defeat their foes, you know that a clever plan or an intelligent use of power can overcome almost anyone. You use your mind to win battles by picking out weaknesses in an enemy's defenses or turning his own plans against him

Base Mastery: 1

Benefit: You may use Intelligence instead of your key ability for attack rolls with ranged (Dexterity) and melee weapons (Strength). You apply your tactical mastery and cunning rather than raw physical talent to land telling blows.

Expanded Mastery: 2. You earn a strategy token pool as described in the sidebar on this page. You can spend strategy tokens with the delay action. When you delay, you can use your action during an opponent's turn by spending 1 strategy

token. Your opponent announces his move, standard, or full-round action, as appropriate. You may then choose to act either before or after he completes that action. He then takes his remaining action, if applicable, as normal. From this point on, you go immediately after him in the initiative order. You can always choose to continue to delay.

Expanded Mastery: 3. You earn a strategy token pool as described in the sidebar on this page. Your deceptions are so cunning that your enemies fall for them regardless of their level of alertness. As you move, you can spend 1 strategy token to make the square you are about to enter non-threatened by any foe. Spending a token in this manner is a free action. The effects last until the end of your turn.

If during your turn you use this ability to move at least 10 feet through an individual foe's threatened area without provoking any attacks of opportunity from him, that foe must make a base attack check opposed by your own. Should you succeed, he loses his active bonus to defense against you. You outmaneuver your enemy, slipping beneath his defenses or making a move just as his attack pulls him off balance.

Expanded Mastery: 4. You earn a strategy token pool as described in the sidebar on this page. You may spend these tokens to lure your opponents into making poor decisions in battle—either leave yourself open to attack or draw on your opponent's grasp of the tactical situation to manipulate his actions. As a standard action, you can spend 4 strategy tokens against a single foe to whom you have line of sight. Your opponent must also be able to see you. Your foe attempts a Will save (DC 10 + half your level + your Intelligence modifier). If this save fails, choose one of the following effects:

- Your opponent must charge you on his next action if there is a clear path to you.
- Pick which of your allies the opponent targets with his next attack. Your foe may have to move in order to attack the designated ally. The ally you choose must be either the closest ally or within 30 feet of the opponent.
- Your foe suffers a –5 penalty to all Spot and Listen checks against a single ally of your choice.
- You can force an enemy to suffer attacks of opportunity, but otherwise you can never compel him to move into damaging or deadly terrain.

Expanded Mastery: 5. Your knowledge of combat conditions and the current tactical situation allow you to better defend yourself. You gain your Intelligence bonus as an active bonus to defense. This applies in addition to your Dexterity and other active bonuses to defense.

Expanded Mastery: 6. You earn a strategy token pool as described in the sidebar on this page; however, your Intelligence check to gain strategy tokens counts as a move action rather than a standard one.

Expanded Mastery: 7. You may now use your intellect and physical skills in equal measure when fighting. Apply your Intelligence modifier and your Strength or Dexterity modifier, as appropriate, to melee and ranged attack rolls.

STRATEGY TOKEN POOL

Granted by: Tactics of the Mind feat expanded mastery abilities (2, 3, 4, 6, 9)

You gain a strategy token pool. Each round as a standard action, you may make an Intelligence check. On a result of less than 10, you gain 0 tokens; a result of 10 or more grants you 1 token; and 20 or higher yields 2 tokens. You can accumulate a maximum number of strategy tokens equal to 10 + your level. These tokens reflect the advantage you gain by scanning the battlefield and watching your enemies as you formulate a viable plan of attack. You can build up tokens in your strategy pool in addition to accumulating other token types. You lose your accumulated strategy tokens at the end of the encounter.

If you already have access to strategy tokens, you gain a +5 bonus on your Intelligence check to gather tokens. You gain this +5 bonus only if you gained strategy tokens from a different feat, such as War Leader

See the descriptions of the expanded mastery abilities listed above for the uses of strategy tokens.

Expanded Mastery: 8. Your keen wit allows you to spot the best places to aim an attack, and your sword-strikes invariably land at points your foe cannot defend. You may apply your Intelligence modifier as a bonus to damage with melee and ranged attacks. You gain the bonus to ranged attacks even if your weapon does not normally grant a Strength bonus to damage.

Expanded Mastery: 9. You earn a strategy token pool as described in the sidebar above; however, your Intelligence check to gain the tokens counts as a free action you may use once per round rather than a move or standard one, as appropriate.

TRIDENT MASTERY [POWER]
You are a master of the trident, an unusual weapon normally utilized by warriors who hail from coastal areas. In your hands, this three-pronged weapon achieves its true potential.

Base Mastery: 1

Prerequisite: You must be proficient with the trident.

Benefit: When you fight with a trident, you can catch an opponent on the vicious barbed tines. As a full attack action, make an attack at your best base attack bonus. If you hit, you may attempt to catch your foe on your weapon. The barbs dig into his flesh, holding him fast. On the start of your foe's next turn, he must make a Strength check opposed by your Strength check as a move action. If you and your opponent are different sizes, the larger character gains a +4 bonus to this check for each size category difference.

If your foe succeeds, he may act as normal but suffers 1d4 points of damage as the trident tears loose. Should he fail, he may not move from his current space—you hold him in place with your trident. To keep him pinned, you must remain in place and hold onto your trident without using it to attack. If you drop the trident or take any action that prevents you from holding it fast, your foe breaks free. You may twist the trident in place, inflicting 1d4 points of damage (plus your normal damage modifiers with the trident) in place of an attack.

If you continue to hold him in place each round, he may attempt another opposed Strength check as a move action to break free.

An opponent held immobile on your trident suffers a –2 penalty to attacks, defense, and Reflex saves.

Expanded Mastery: 2. If you fight with a trident in one hand and a net in the other, ignore the penalties for fighting with two weapons and gain a +2 bonus on your attack when you throw the net at an opponent held immobile on your trident. When you use your net against such a target, you provoke no attack of opportunity from him.

Expanded Mastery: 3. An opponent held immobile on your trident now suffers a –4 penalty to attacks, defense, and Reflex saves. As a standard action, you can make an opposed Strength check to deny him his active bonus to defense until the start of your next turn or he gets free of your trident, whichever comes first. If you and your victim differ in size, the larger character gains a +4 bonus for each size category difference.

Expanded Mastery: 4. You have learned to disarm your opponents with a well-timed twist of the trident. If you ready an action to disarm an opponent when he attacks you, you immediately attempt your disarm attack before he completes his own strike. You gain a +4 bonus to the opposed attack roll and provoke no attack of opportunity. You still suffer a chance that your opponent might disarm you on a failed check.

Expanded Mastery: 6. When you make an opposed Strength check against a foe caught on your trident, you count as one category larger than your actual size.

Expanded Mastery: 7. When you set your trident against an opponent's charge, you twist it as he slams into you. With just the right amount of force, you can send him toppling to the ground as the trident digs into him, catches his flesh on its wicked barbs, and twists him over. When you set your trident against a charge, make an opposed Strength check to trip your foe if you hit and inflict damage. Resolve this as a standard trip attack as if your touch attack hit, but you provoke no attack of opportunity. Your opponent may attempt to trip you on a failed check.

A tripped opponent falls immediately and loses the attack he normally would gain as part of a charge.

Expanded Mastery: 8. You can now catch and hold an opponent in place as part of an attack made with a standard action or full attack action. Once you decide to catch a foe on your trident's barbs, you must stop using the trident to attack.

Two-Weapon Fighting [Finesse, Power]

You can fight with a weapon in each hand, making one extra attack each round with the second weapon.

Base Mastery: 1

Prerequisite: If you take Two-Weapon Fighting as a Power feat, you can use it with power weapons and weapons that lack the finesse keyword. If you take it as a Finesse feat, you can use it with finesse weapons and weapons that lack the power keyword.

Benefit: You reduce your penalties to attack rolls for fighting with two weapons; the penalty for your primary hand lessens by 2, and the one for your off hand lessens by 6.

Normal: If you wield a second weapon in your off hand, you get one extra attack per round with that weapon. When fighting this way, you suffer a –6 penalty to your regular attack(s) with your primary hand and a –10 penalty to the attack with your off hand. Using a light off-hand weapon reduces the penalties by 2 each; an unarmed strike is always considered light.

Expanded Mastery: 2. When wielding a double weapon or two weapons (not including natural weapons or unarmed strikes), you enjoy a +1 shield (passive) bonus to your defense.

When you are using the fight defensively or improved fight defensively challenges, using combat expertise, or using the standard defense or full defense action, this shield bonus increases to +2.

Expanded Mastery: 3. You can distract an opponent with your off-hand weapon or one end of your double weapon. If you use a full attack action but do not use that weapon or end of your double weapon to attack, you gain a +2 bonus to attacks against one opponent you threaten. You gain this benefit until the end of your current action.

Expanded Mastery: 4. In addition to the standard single extra attack you get with an off-hand weapon, you get a second attack with it, albeit at a –5 penalty.

Expanded Mastery: 5. If you score a critical hit with one of your weapons, you increase the critical threat range for your other weapon by 1. As your first attack drives into your foe, you use the leverage of the impact to yank him into a precarious position.

Expanded Mastery: 6. When you fight with two weapons or with a double weapon, you cannot be flanked. You use both ends of your weapon, or your two weapons, to ward off attacks from multiple directions.

Expanded Mastery: 7. You get a third attack with your off-hand weapon, albeit at a –10 penalty. You must also have the expanded mastery 4 ability to select this expanded feat option.

Expanded Mastery: 8. You can make a special rend attack with your two weapons. If you strike an opponent at least once with both weapons, or with both ends of a double weapon, you inflict additional rending damage equal to your primary weapon's damage plus double your Strength bonus. When you hit your opponent with both attacks, you rip him apart with both weapons at once.

Expanded Mastery: 9. When you use the charge action or a standard attack, you gain all of your off-hand attacks with your second weapon or the second end of your double weapon.

Expanded Mastery: 10. When you use a full attack action, you confuse your opponent with a flurry of attacks from your weapon. For each one that hits, you gain a +1 bonus to your remaining attacks. This bonus, which stacks with each successful hit, lasts until the end of your current action.

Venom Mastery [Lore]

You are a trained expert in poison use. Given enough time and the proper ingredients, you can brew poisons and apply them to weapons without risk of exposing yourself to toxins.

Base Mastery: 1

Benefit: You do not risk poisoning yourself when applying a poison to a weapon or using a poisoned weapon.

You also gain access to a venom token pool. This pool represents your ability to make poisons in your free time during or between adventures. If you spend four hours during a day seeking out ingredients for a poison and working to create a toxin, you gain 1 venom token. In addition, when you slay a creature that has a poison special attack, you gain 1 venom token after you make a successful Heal check (DC 15) to extract the poison from it. You can gain only 1 token from a creature in this manner, and you must collect it within one hour of its death.

You can spend one hour and 2 venom tokens to create a poison that inflicts 1d2 points of temporary Strength, Dexterity, Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma damage (pick one) as its initial and secondary damage. The Fortitude DC for this poison is 10 + your Intelligence modifier. You can apply the toxin to a weapon or place it in a victim's food.

Creating poisons carries no gold-piece cost; the tokens reflect the time you've spent gathering raw materials for your brews.

You must use a standard action to apply poison to a weapon or piece of ammunition. It remains fresh and usable for one hour. After that time, it dries out and loses all effectiveness.

You need to have vials or other containers for your poisons. A newly created venom remains fresh for a number of days equal to 1 + half your level. After that, it spoils and loses all effectiveness.

You can have a total number of venom tokens equal to your level + 10. Once you reach this limit, you cannot gain additional venom tokens for one day.

As you gain levels, you can spend feat selections on the expanded mastery abilities below to create a wider variety of stronger poisons.

Normal: You have a 5 percent chance of exposing yourself to a poison whenever you apply it to a weapon or otherwise ready it for use. Additionally, if you roll a natural 1 on an attack roll with a poisoned weapon, you must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 15) or accidentally poison yourself with the weapon.

Expanded Mastery: 2. When you create a poison, you can spend additional venom tokens to make it more potent than normal. For each token you spend in this manner, you increase the poison's save DC by 1.

Expanded Mastery: 3. Your poisons not only wear down a creature's physical and mental abilities but some cause severe injuries and agonizing pain. In place of causing temporary ability score damage, your poison can inflict hit point damage. For every venom token spent, to a maximum equal to your level, the poison inflicts 1d6 points of damage. On a successful save, the victim of your poison suffers half damage. This form of poison has no secondary effect.

Expanded Mastery: 4. If you spend 1 additional venom token when creating a poison, you increase its temporary ability score damage to 1d4.

Expanded Mastery: 5. When you spend an additional 2 venom tokens in its creation, your poison causes paralysis for 1d10 rounds instead of causing ability score damage. This poison has no secondary effect.

Expanded Mastery: 6. You can now create poisons that damage a target's Constitution.

Expanded Mastery: 7. Spending 2 additional venom tokens when creating a poison increases its temporary ability score damage to 1d6 points.

Expanded Mastery: 8. You become more efficient at increasing your poison's strength. For every venom token you spend, you now increase its save DC by 2 rather than 1. You must have the expanded mastery 2 ability already to take this one, and their benefits do not stack.

Expanded Mastery: 9. For every 2 additional venom tokens you spend in a poison's creation, you grant it a +1 bonus to its ability score damage. You can spend up to 4 tokens to gain a +2 bonus.

Expanded Mastery: 10. Spending 4 additional venom tokens when creating a poison increases its ability score damage to 2d6.

Vorpal Hurricane [Power]

You swing your mighty weapon in a deadly pattern, surrounding yourself with flashing steel. Anyone who draws close to you shall feel the bitter sting of your weapon.

Base Mastery: 3

Prerequisite: Power weapons only

Benefit: As a full-round action, you whirl your heavy weapon about you in a deadly pattern that lasts until the beginning of your next turn. If an opponent begins or ends his turn in an area you threaten or in a square adjacent to you, you gain an immediate attack against him at your highest base attack bonus. You may attack a given opponent in this manner only once per round. Resolve these attacks at the beginning or end of your foe's turn, as appropriate.

Note that if you do not threaten a foe, you can still attack him with this feat, but you do not gain the normal benefits for flanking a foe. You do gain these benefits if you threaten your enemy as normal.

Expanded Mastery: 6. You may now activate this ability as a standard action, allowing you to move before or after you use it. Remember that you resolve your attacks on your foes' turns, not during your own.

Expanded Mastery: 9. You may now activate this ability as a free action. While others rely on armor and shields to ward off attacks, you use your maul, greatsword, or other power weapon to hack down foes before they can strike.

War Leader [Tactics]

You have an uncanny grasp for coordinating your allies' efforts in battle. As the enemy surges around you, you bark orders, organize your friends, and forge order from the chaos of war.

Base Mastery: 1

Benefit: You gain access to a pool of strategy tokens (see sidebar, page 143). Each round as a standard action, you may make an Intelligence check. On a result of 10 or less, you gain 0 tokens; a result of 10 or more grants you 1 token; and 20 or higher yields 2 tokens. You can accumulate a maximum number of strategy tokens equal to 10 + your level. These tokens reflect the advantage you gain by scanning the battlefield and watching your enemies as you formulate a viable plan of attack.

If you already have access to strategy tokens, you gain a +5 bonus on the Intelligence check to earn them. You gain this +5 bonus only if you gained strategy tokens from a different feat, such as Tactics of the Mind.

You can spend 1 strategy token to grant two allies who flank an opponent a +4 bonus to attacks rather than the normal +2 flanking bonus. The two allies you select must, on their own, form a flank. They also need to be within 30 feet of you, and you must see and speak to them. They do not gain this bonus on flanks that they form with other allies. The benefit lasts until the start of your next turn.

Expanded Mastery: 2. You may spend 1 strategy token to grant an ally an immediate extra attack of opportunity against a foe that provoked one from him. Your ally must threaten the target as normal. He gains this attack in addition to any he normally makes. Your ally can make another attack of opportunity against the target, but that attack must be provoked by a different action, not the one that provoked the attack that you granted. You can use this ability as often as you wish during a round, as long as you have enough tokens, but a given ally can only receive its benefits once per round.

Expanded Mastery: 3. You may make an Intelligence check to earn strategy tokens as a move action rather than as a standard action.

Expanded Mastery: 4. You keep your allies alert and ready to fight. As a free action during a surprise round, you may allow an ally to lose the flat-footed condition by spending 1 strategy token. Normally, you must use a standard action to gain strategy tokens. Thus, on the surprise round you make an Intelligence check to earn tokens, then spend them to help your allies. Your allies do not get to act on the surprise round; they simply lose their flat-footed state. They may make attacks of opportunity, enjoy their active bonuses to defense, and so forth.

Expanded Mastery: 5. As a standard action, you can spend 2 strategy tokens to coordinate your allies' attacks against a particular opponent. Until the start of your next action, each ally gains a separate +2 bonus to attacks against your chosen foe for each ally that attacked him since you activated this ability. For example, after you use this ability, the next ally to attack your chosen target gains +0, the sec-ond one gains +2, the third gains +4, and so forth. This bonus disappears at the start of your next action.

Expanded Mastery: 6. You coordinate your allies' defenses, allowing them to deflect attacks meant for their comrades or shout warnings that give them time to dodge. Spending 2 strategy tokens as a free action grants each ally within 60 feet of you a separate +1 active bonus to defense for each adjacent ally. This bonus lasts until the start of your next action.

Expanded Mastery: 7. You may make an Intelligence check to earn strategy tokens as a free action rather than as a move or standard action, as appropriate.

Expanded Mastery: 8. You coordinate your allies to strike at a specific point on an opponent. With each hit, you widen or deepen an existing injury. You may spend 2 strategy tokens against a single foe. You and your allies gain a +1d6 bonus to damage against this foe. This benefit lasts until the end of the encounter. You cannot increase this damage above 1d6 by using this ability multiple times, even if others with this ability attempt to use it.

Expanded Mastery: 9. On your action, you may spend 4 strategy tokens as a full-round action to grant a single ally within 60 feet an immediate standard action. You shout instructions and orders or otherwise spur your ally into action.

Expanded Mastery: 10. Under your direction, your allies fight together as a deadly machine. If you spend 4 strategy tokens on this ability at any time during a battle, your allies gain a bonus to attacks equal to the number of active allies taking part in the battle within 60 feet of their locations. The maximum bonus they can gain equals double your Intelligence modifier.

For example, if there are four allies fighting within 60 feet of you (including yourself), and you have an Intelligence of 15 (+2 bonus), each ally gains a +4 bonus to attacks.

This bonus affects allies within 60 feet of you who can see or hear you. It lasts for a number of rounds equal to your Intelligence bonus.

Weapon Finesse [Finesse]

You use speed and agility rather brute force when handling your weapon.

Base Mastery: 1

Prerequisite: Finesse or light weapon

Benefit: You may apply your Dexterity modifier instead of your Strength modifier on attack rolls. If you carry a shield, its armor check penalty applies to your attack rolls.

Natural weapons are always considered light weapons.

Special: Note that the benefits for expanded mastery levels 3, 5, 7, and 9 are all identical. They are listed as separate mastery abilities because you can't take the same ability more than once. However, their effects all stack.

Expanded Mastery: 2. You learn to handle a finesse weapon and a shield at the same time. You no longer suffer the armor check penalty to attacks when wielding a shield that is smaller than you.

Expanded Mastery: 3. Your exacting precision, accuracy, and control allow you to make deadly attacks against foes who are not ready for you. You gain +1d6 points of sneak attack damage when using a light or finesse weapon in melee. If you already have sneak attack damage, this damage stacks with it.

Expanded Mastery: 4. Wielding your weapon like a scalpel, you use your elegance and speed to make exacting, deadly cuts on your opponents. Apply your Dexterity modifier to damage, rather than your Strength modifier.

Expanded Mastery: 5. Your exacting precision, accuracy, and control allow you to make deadly attacks against foes who are not ready for you. You gain +1d6 points of sneak attack damage when using a light or finesse weapon in melee. If you already have sneak attack damage, this damage stacks with it.

Expanded Mastery: 6. Your speed, precision, and agility allow you to find the gaps in an opponent's armor. In combat, your foe suffers a –1 penalty to damage reduction derived from armor against your attacks.

Expanded Mastery: 7. Your exacting precision, accuracy, and control allow you to make deadly attacks against foes who are not ready for you. You gain +1d6 points of sneak attack damage when using a light or finesse weapon in melee. If you already have sneak attack damage, this damage stacks with it.

Expanded Mastery: 8. When you gain a critical threat against an opponent, you can either attempt to confirm or gain an additional attack at the same base attack bonus you used to score your threat. You gain the benefits of precision-based damage, such as sneak attack, on this attack. You can use this ability once per round.

Expanded Mastery: 9. Your exacting precision, accuracy, and control allow you to make deadly attacks against foes who are not ready for you. You gain +1d6 points of sneak attack damage when using a light or finesse weapon in melee. If you already have sneak attack damage, this damage stacks with it.

Expanded Mastery: 10. Once per round, you can make an attack that ignores all your opponent's active bonuses to defense. You clear your mind, take aim, and match your phenomenal speed against your opponent's. You gain sneak attack damage against your foe if he is not immune to it or does not have a special ability that cancels it.

Weapon Focus [Finesse, Power, or Projectile]

You study a single weapon with intense focus, allowing you to achieve a higher level of talent and ability with it than other warriors.

Base Mastery: 1

Prerequisites: Choose one specific weapon, such as longspear or sling. For the purposes of this feat you can also choose unarmed strike or grapple (or ray, if you are an arcanist) as your weapon.

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus on all attack rolls you make using the selected weapon.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take Weapon Focus, it applies to a new weapon.

Expanded Mastery: 2. You gain a +2 bonus on all damage rolls you make using the selected weapon.

Expanded Mastery: 4. You gain a +1 bonus on all attack rolls you make using the selected weapon. This bonus stacks with other bonuses to attack rolls, including the one from Weapon Focus' base benefit.

Expanded Mastery: 7. You gain a +2 bonus on all damage rolls you make using the selected weapon. This bonus stacks with other bonuses on damage rolls, including the one from Weapon Focus' expanded mastery 2 ability.

Expanded Mastery: 8. You gain a +1 bonus on all attack rolls you make using the selected weapon. This bonus stacks with other bonuses on attack rolls, including the ones from Weapon Focus' base benefit and its expanded mastery 4 ability.

Expanded Mastery: 9. You gain a +2 bonus on all damage rolls you make using the selected weapon. This bonus stacks with other bonuses on damage rolls, including the ones from Weapon Focus' expanded mastery 2 and 7 abilities.

Expanded Mastery: 10. You gain a +1 bonus on all attack rolls you make using the selected weapon. This bonus stacks with other bonuses on attack rolls, including the one from Weapon Focus' base benefit and its expanded mastery 4 and 8 abilities.

Whirlwind Attack [Finesse]

You attack in a deadly arc, slashing through the horde of enemies that surround you.

Base Mastery: 3

Benefit: On a full attack action, you can give up your regular attacks and instead make one melee attack at your full base attack bonus against each opponent within reach.

When you use Whirlwind Attack, you forfeit any bonus or extra attacks granted by other feats, spells, or abilities.

Expanded Mastery: 5. You generate a tremendous amount of power as you swing. Should you miss with one whirlwind attack, you gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls on the rest of them. This benefit stacks with each miss. You lose this benefit after you have resolved all the attacks you gain from this feat.

Expanded Mastery: 10. You may use Whirlwind Attack as a full attack action to make your full spread of attacks against each opponent in reach; rather than making simply one melee attack against each foe, you may attempt each attack normally available to you on a full attack action (due to a high base attack bonus, feats, and special abilities). You transform into a hurricane of steel, tearing into the enemies' ranks with deadly abandon.

CHAPTER SIX:

ROLEPLAYING IRON HEROES

A character in Iron Heroes *is far more than a simple collection of numbers, modifiers, and abilities. He truly comes to life when you invest him with a distinct personality, grant him a visual flair and a few signature actions, and make him an essential part of the game setting.*

This chapter covers important topics that go beyond the rules of the game. It includes notes on creating your character's personality, background, and various qualities that make him interesting. It also discusses the basics of a typical *Iron Heroes* campaign setting where he might live and adventure.

COMBAT WITH PERSONALITY

Iron Heroes roleplaying can be a tricky thing. Players can get so caught up in the game's exciting combat and action that they forget to stress other key aspects of their characters, such as personality and background. If you don't take the time to consider these non-rules aspects of your character, your harrier may not seem too different from another player's harrier. Without unique character foundations and motivations, those exciting combat sequences will prove a lot less memorable.

With all that in mind, this section shows you how to create a personality for your character that matches the tone and feel of *Iron Heroes*. Think of it as a good place to turn if you aren't sure what to do with your player character once you have the numbers all lined up.

THE ROOT OF THE ACTION

Characters in *Iron Heroes* are vivid, active, and larger than life. They aren't defined by their past or their inner thoughts. They're defined by what they do.

A character should always have a reason for what he does. In *Iron Heroes* games, these reasons generally spring from his personality characteristics. If you think of a movie with a large ensemble cast, most of the characters have at least one important trait that sets them apart from the others. If one character is immensely strong, no one else in the cast will trample that image by being equally muscled. The strong character takes center stage in any scene that calls for physical might. Since he's strong, he might not be very smart, or he may want to approach every problem with straightforward physical solutions. If a gate is barred, the strong guy wants to knock it down. If the count has been kidnapped, he wants to smack down the criminals.

You can use the same basic method to create a memorable personality that drives your character's actions and makes him stand out. As you create your character, think of three personality characteristics that define him. Without these characteristics, he wouldn't be who he is. The character might not be fully aware of them, but they motivate his actions nonetheless. For example, an arrogant duelist might not realize that he can be a pompous braggart, but his boasting still manages to lead him to pick fights with others.

To get the ball rolling, select some adjectives or descriptors for your character. Even words like "strong" or "smart," qualities that describe your character's abilities, work well. A smart character might prefer complex, clever plans to outsmart his enemies. He doesn't want to just win, he wants to win by making his enemy look foolish. A strong character might enjoy demonstrating his physical might. He's ready to face a monster head to head and prefers direct engagements. When it comes time to plan an attack, both the strong and

the smart character might argue in favor of their preferred tactics. They might butt heads sometimes, but at other times they use their talents to aid each other.

When pondering your character's defining qualities, keep in mind the skills and feats you have already selected for him. The combat style reflected in his feat choices and the number of ranks you have allotted to various skills speaks volumes about what is really important to your emerging player character.

It usually helps to keep a short checklist of your character's important personality characteristics. Refer to it from time to time during the game if you aren't sure how your character would act in a given situation. The sidebar on this page offers some suggestions for a PC's defining characteristics.

Actions, Not Words!

Once you have your defining characteristics, you need to decide how they might show up during the game. Since *Iron Heroes* characters are defined by what they do, consider how your character's personality causes him to behave.

In a game, you making choices of action through the filter of your character's personality rather than your own. When it comes time to make a decision, think about your PC's characteristics. With those qualities driving him, how would he act?

As a mental exercise, try to take at least one action during each game session that demonstrates one of your character's defining qualities. If you show the other players that your character's actions stem directly from his personality, you accomplish two goals: You demonstrate that your character's personality has an effect on the game, and you show his motivations for his behavior and decisions. The more you play a character, the easier it becomes to depict his personality in action.

When Good Roleplaying Goes Bad

While creating a vivid and well-defined character is fun and makes for an interesting game, keep one key rule in mind at all times:

The game is supposed to be fun for all the participants.

The DM and the players have an equal stake in ensuring that everyone is having a good time. One player who decides to disrupt things hurts everyone else's fun. Think of a roleplaying session as a team exercise in playing a game. Everyone has to pull together or things fall apart.

This point is particularly critical when thinking about roleplaying a personality. There aren't any rules for personality "actions" in *Iron Heroes*, thus removing the balancing factor of game mechanics introduced in previous chapters. An impetuous character can do something that might make the game boring for everyone, such as attacking the king when he tries to give you a quest, and there are no rules against it.

How do you know if your in-character roleplaying is not fun for everyone? If you find yourself saying, "But that's what my character would do," then your actions may be fun for you but disruptive for the game as a whole. Be sensitive to

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DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

Here are some sample qualities to get you thinking about your *Iron Heroes* character's personality:

Aggressive	Mysterious
Arrogant	Optimistic
Brave	Overconfident
Clever	Pessimistic
Curious	Pious
Debonair	Relentless
Dedicated	Reckless
Driven	Sarcastic
Energetic	Scheming
Greedy	Seductive
Gritty	Superstitious
Haughty	Valiant
Intellectual	Vengeful
Jovial	Virtuous
Mischievous	Worldly

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the other players and the DM. Create a character who does not cause needless headaches for anyone.

Yes, *Iron Heroes* centers around combat, but unless everyone in the game is enthusiastic about intra-party conflict, don't pick fights with other characters. Don't design a player character bent on betraying the party. And don't create a character whose personality is completely at odds with everyone else's.

This advice doesn't mean that conflict between characters is bad. You can make a joke about someone or argue about things without wrecking a friendship. A running disagreement or competition between two characters can spice up the game and make things more memorable. Just remember that there's a line where things stop being fun for others. Stay on your side of the line, and you won't trample over anyone else's good time.

BACKGROUND AND GOALS: THE TIES THAT BIND

When starting a new campaign or adding a new player character to the group, think about the relationship between your character and everyone else's. It isn't often that complete strangers gather together, depart into dangerous territory, and trust each other with their lives. A party of adventurers in *Iron Heroes* should be familiar companions, if not friends. There should be a good reason for their decision to team up.

The obvious explanation is that the party members are friends, though the details of their friendship are up to you. Perhaps the characters served together as mercenaries. Maybe they grew up together and had to flee from home in the face of an invasion. Or they might all share the same fighting master or instructor. It's easiest to start with the assumption that the characters are all friends and create a

A CHARACTER QUESTIONNAIRE

To get you started creating a suitable personality for your *Iron Heroes* character, here are a few basic questions you can ask yourself about your PC. Think of how your character would react to the following questions. Each answer should illustrate one of his defining characteristics in some way.

Don't worry if you can't answer every question easily. The process of thinking of an answer is enough to get the ball rolling. This isn't a test, just an exercise to get your creativity pumping.

1. You've just returned to civilization after a long expedition into the wilds. Where in town do you go first and why?

2. You're sitting in a bar with a few friends when someone armed with a knife bursts in. What do you do?

3. An ogre guards a door that you need to get through. How do you deal with the ogre?

4. You have uncovered information that reveals that your sworn enemy is in town. He's staying at an inn in a rough area. What do you do?

5. What's one thing about other people that never fails to annoy you?

background together, rather than try to glue together everyone's individual player character.

This process can be tricky. Some members of the group may want to play characters incompatible with someone else's ideas. Be flexible, but always remember that gaming is a collaborative effort. No one has the right to veto another player's character concept, but everyone should make a good-faith effort to make their characters fit into the group as a whole.

Try to avoid making a character who has no good reason to adventure with the others. If your character is a loner who would prefer to travel on his own, then why is he with the group in the first place? It may feel artificial, but the entire point of roleplaying with others is to work as a group and experience the game together. That doesn't mean you can't play a gruff, hardened warrior. But if your character always seeks an excuse to abandon the group, then you need to change his personality.

As a creative exercise, the group as a whole should come up with the single most important reason why the characters adventure together. This reason doesn't have to be anything too complex. In most cases, a direct reason works best, since it can fit in with everyone's character concepts. It provides a convenient, flexible foundation for every player character. This reason might encompass the traits of the various characters (see Chapter Two) as part of their background.

In addition, try to come up with a reason that doesn't necessarily have an end point. For example, if the party bands together for revenge against an evil battle-queen, what happens when they defeat her? The campaign might be forced to end if vengeance is the group's only motivation. On the other hand, the DM may have another story arc in mind that keeps the party together after her defeat. Sometimes, a short-term shared goal simply brings the party together. With the

friendship forged in their early adventures, the characters can develop a lifelong alliance.

The DM should have at least a little input into the creation of the group's shared background. He should give you an idea of what the campaign is like, what sorts of adventures he has planned, and any important recent events in the setting that could push the group together. This input proves useful, because events in the game reinforce the bonds between the characters.

Here are some ideas for why the party members might adventure together:

- The characters have all sworn revenge against a bandit lord for the reign of terror he has brought to the region.
- The characters are all related. As brothers, sisters, and cousins, they fight for their family's honor or have deep ties.
- The characters grew up together and, after a few years on the road alone, have returned to find a new threat to their hometown.
- The characters served in the military together, or perhaps even on opposite sides. With the war over, they have few options to make a living other than adventuring.
- Each of the characters has one part of a treasure map. By working together, they can find the treasure while building a close bond.
- The characters are thrown into a situation and forced to come together. They might be unjustly imprisoned, shipwrecked on an island, or caught in a besieged city.
- The characters are members of a secret society, a religious order, or a guild. They have come together for a mission because of their specific talents.
- The characters share a mystery in their past and must work together to solve it. Perhaps they all wake up in a room with little knowledge of the past year.

THE FINAL DETAILS

Between your character's ability scores, traits, skills, feats, personality, and background, you have almost everything you need to know about him. At this point, all that's left are the details.

For instance, add a few extra touches to your character by defining his physical appearance. In addition to the standard stuff (hair color, eye color, weight, height, etc.), think about a unique feature that makes him stand out. A veteran warrior might walk with a slight limp from an old injury, while an arcanist's tattoos could shift and move thanks to the magical energy within them. An executioner's assassin cult might mandate ritual scarring.

Clothing provides you with another chance to craft a unique character. Does your player character wear a signature cloak? A character named Drago the Red might be known for his crimson leather armor. If your PC hails from a distant land, his clothes might set him apart. A warrior from

an Asian-style culture wears different styles than a European-style knight. Clothing is a quick and easy way to illustrate your character's origin.

Your character's weapons and armor play an important role in his life, and you can customize them as you wish. A weapon master might name his sword. An armiger's armor might have been passed down from one generation to the next, with the names and dates of every battle it has seen engraved upon it. Since magical items are rare and dangerous in *Iron Heroes* games, you can afford to become attached to your equipment. As you gain levels, chances are it isn't going anywhere unless it's lost or stolen.

Your character's possessions also illustrate his personality. A bookish, scholarly arcanist might carry a sack bulging with ancient tomes. When the party camps, he spends his free time reading. If the party enters an ancient ruin, the treasure trove of gold and gems has little effect on him compared to the ancient library he uncovers. A thief might value gems over everything else, perhaps embedding diamonds in his weapon's hilt or wearing gaudy jewelry to flaunt his wealth. A weapon master might own little aside from her blade, a suit of light armor, and some campaign gear. To this character, nothing is as important as the bond between her and her weapon.

A single noteworthy possession can help make your character memorable to other players. If your arcanist insists on wearing a classic conical wizard's hat, he sticks out in a crowd and gives the other players an easy hook to help them imagine scenes. A berserker may collect bones from the strange monsters he defeats in order to fashion a talisman to his bravery. As this gruesome trophy grows, it provides a recognizable trait for the character while also serving as a reminder of the party's past adventures.

YOUR CHARACTER'S WORLD

Once you have your character nailed down, it's time to think about the world he lives in. This section describes what a world that operates within the framework of the *Iron Heroes* rules might look like. It also gives you an overview of one such sample setting, a realm called the Swordlands.

THE ROLE OF RELIGION

There are no clerics in *Iron Heroes*, nor do any of the classes manifest power of an obviously divine nature—the gods never directly intercede in human affairs. Miracles and similar events might be explained by arcane effects, or perhaps not. Just as in the real world, faith is a major component of religion.

Most religious figures maintain their positions through political power. Priests cannot simply cast powerful divine spells to demonstrate their gods' favor. Instead, they either work within the religious hierarchy or compete with each other for the support of the faithful. A faith may curry favor among the populace by supporting a certain warlord. If a ruler gains the priesthood's support, by extension he earns the fealty of its followers. In other cases, a cult might attempt to form its own domain. Theocracies arise to compete with monarchies as omens foreshadow a great doom and the commoners flock to the priests who provide the most comforting answers.

The people in the world of an *Iron Heroes* game know nothing of divine magic. Arcanists can act as priests, demonstrating the power of the gods they serve with their magical abilities. Worshippers may flock to their altars, eager to receive magical cures. The nature of an arcanist's spells makes it difficult for a priest to rely upon them, however. After all, a simple mistake in a spell might signal that the gods are displeased with their priests.

Thus, the leaders of some such cults may take pains to shroud themselves in secrecy. So long as the truth of their magical abilities remains hidden, they can win converts and gain power. These sects might exist solely to line the priests' pockets, or they might have even more sinister aims. A cult might seek to overthrow the governments in a particular region and establish an empire. It could serve otherworldly creatures that care nothing for humanity, but merely hunger for sacrifices.

On the other hand, you might want your arcanist's claims about his powers coming from a god to be true—such decisions are the DM's to make. In either case, new cults arise all the time in the world of *Iron Heroes* and, while most wither and die, some attain great power.

Your character's religion could range from informal ancestor worship to membership in a faith that spans a continent. She may have prayed in a small cave near her tribe's winter camp, or she could worship at a great cathedral. Whether her beliefs encompass an elaborate code of conduct or a set of simple principles, she sees little direct evidence of her god's existence. Faith, hunches, and cultural preferences, rather than the direct intervention of divine beings, determine how and why people worship.

You can exercise the same level of creativity in your character's religion as in the rest of the character's makeup. Your DM may have a variety of sects for you to choose from or allow you to create a minor religion that your character follows. Your character might even disdain the gods, standing out as an atheist in a world of magic and terrible monsters.

CIVILIZATION

The development of civilization brings with it stability, order, and tradition, three factors that do little to introduce opportunities for high adventure. In the typical *Iron Heroes* campaign setting, governments are small, scattered, and ineffectual. The rule of force reigns supreme, rather than rights derived from traditional government structures. The ruler is much more likely to be a self-interested conqueror than a kind-hearted paladin who happens to wear a crown. Since magic is unreliable and the gods mysterious and remote, civilizations develop along lines similar to those of historical Earth. Mankind clings to small, heavily defended tracts, beyond which lurk terrible monsters, ruthless bandits, and untamed barbarian hordes. A dragon may see a growing city as a nest of victims. Unless heroes such as the player characters rally to defeat it, the city guard stands little chance to defeat the wyrm. There is no powerful NPC spellcaster waiting in the wings to wave his magic wand and make everything better.

Most organized governments are suspicious of powerful individuals. A smart ruler sees a skilled, charismatic warrior as a threat. If the crown cannot turn such an individual into a useful tool, it might have to lock him in irons or keep careful watch over him. The civilized realms rely on force of numbers to keep the peace, not squadrons of high-level heroes and magical spells. There are no spells such as *raise dead* to return a slain monarch to life.

In many areas, civilization exists on the rough edge between small pockets of tamed territory and dangerous borderlands. A small town might emerge in a forested area. Over the years, it grows prosperous by exporting fresh-cut timber to a large city. After a particularly tough winter, the flow of wood stops. An expedition reveals that the town is destroyed, its inhabitants slain, its buildings burned to the ground. Perhaps a barbarian tribe sacked the place, or a terrible monster assaulted it. Either way, civilization is fragile. Again, a wizard could not simply *teleport* to the town and report on it, nor could the priests in the local temples use divine magic to throw back the attackers. With the wide range of deadly monsters, outsiders, and other threats at hand, the civilized realms remain under almost continual pressure to beat back the persistent tide of destruction.

This does not mean that the world faces impending doom; it simply highlights the fact that civilization represents mankind's attempt to impose order on chaos. This struggle is difficult at best. If you consider human history, it took thousands of years for mankind to progress from caves to cities, and from there thousands more to establish large-scale persistent kingdoms. History is littered with civilizations that dawned, peaked, and fell, leaving behind little more than ruins. *Iron Heroes* does add some advanced technology to the mix—primarily in weapons, armor, and metallurgy—but the basic point stands. Civilization has not yet established itself as the dominant order. Barbarians and primitivism still thrive, and humanity remains only a few disasters away from once again losing all that society has achieved.

The Unknown

The world of *Iron Heroes* is rife with mysteries and danger. No one knows what lurks beyond the horizon. Rumors and stories substitute for exhaustive studies of local monsters. Written records go back only a few centuries and, in many places, have been lost to fire and conquest. In historical Earth, sailors told stories of mermaids, great serpents, and strange creatures they had sighted. Imagine a world where those bizarre monsters actually existed, then think of the myths and tales that would develop around them! Humanity has a natural tendency to embellish the truth. If manatees can spawn mermaids, imagine the stories that a real mermaid would inspire.

In *Iron Heroes*, you can expect to encounter creatures with bizarre, unpredictable abilities. You might discover cultures with strange traditions and laws. Few may know what lurks in the great forests, sprawling deserts, and forbidding peaks. When your characters enter a ruined city, you might be among the first people to visit it in hundreds of years. If you venture into a jungle or forest, you may have to hack your own pathway. In *Iron Heroes* games, there are no convenient roads or pathways blazed by previous generations of explorers. The unknown corners of the world remain pristine, just over the horizon or around the bend.

This sense of the unknown reflects back on civilization. Few folks seem willing to leave the safety of their immediate environs. Merchant caravans to distant lands are rare at best. Sea travel remains perilous, and few captains take their ships out of sight of land. Citizens might build a city upon the ruins of a much older settlement, yet no one can say who or what lived within that elder town.

Sample Setting: The Swordlands

To give you a concrete sense of the world surrounding *Iron Heroes*, this section introduces a sample setting called the Swordlands. Your DM may or may not decide to draw upon this setting in your campaign, so check with him before you use this information to build your character's background.

HOW IS AN *IRON HEROES* SETTING DIFFERENT?

If you have played other fantasy games, you may have formed some basic assumptions about how a world of magic, heroes, and monsters ought to function. *Iron Heroes* adds some twists to the typical formula, and these changes are reflected in the setting implied by these rules.

For example, in some games magic is common and easy to use—if you have enough money, you can purchase a magical sword from a local smith who has some skill with magic. In *Iron Heroes*, such casual use of magic is unheard of. A magical sword is not only rare, but few are willing to trust it as a primary weapon.

Humans are the only civilized race in *Iron Heroes*—nonhumans are alien and not to be trusted. People live in a world that feels like a wild frontier: Unexplored opportunities and unexpected dangers await everywhere, and folks safeguard their existence with strength at arms.

Some History

Many centuries ago, humanity was a slave race created by an ancient group of powerful beings who crafted untold magical wonders. These beings, known as the Masters, lived in cities that floated in the sky and in massive citadels that stood upon the ocean's floor. Even the least among them could craft spells far beyond the abilities of a human arcanist today.

In time, the Masters turned against each other. Whether it was boredom, simmering rivalries, or some other cause, none can say. A tremendous war tore across the world. Magical energy seared the land, turning verdant forests into death zones now known as Ghostlands. Even today, hundreds of years later, few living things survive there.

About a century ago the war ended, as such struggles eventually do, but the mighty race that waged it was gone. Perhaps one among them fashioned a deadly spell that killed not only his rivals, but all the Masters. They might have taken the war to another plane of existence, or maybe the survivors progressed to such levels of arcane mastery that they transcended their material forms. Only the most isolated structures of this ancient race survived, and they provide few clues.

Humanity, once enslaved to this race, was now free. Many humans died in the conflict, but here and there tribes of primitive escaped slaves survived. A few humans who served the Masters emerged, and they brought with them knowledge of metalworking, architecture, and similar fields—though no purely human man or woman knew the secrets of magic. Those mysteries rest in the hands of modified humans known as the First.

While the Masters relied on humanity for slave labor, some of them needed assistants who could at least approach their arcane and intellectual power. A few trusted slaves received magical treatments to enhance their bodies and minds. Unlike other humans, they could bend and shape magic to their will. The ravages of time barely left a mark upon their bodies, allowing them to live for centuries. Today some are masters of magic, while others boast fighting talents and

COMBAT AND HIGH ADVENTURE

Previous chapters present the fighting techniques of *Iron Heroes* characters as detailed in their class abilities, skills, and feats. Considering the wealth of combat options available in this game, it's fair to say that *Iron Heroes* settings offer characters lots of opportunities to get into a good fight.

And not just any fight. Combat in *Iron Heroes* games can become the stuff of legend. Steel and pure courage replace magical talismans and spells. Daring action and clever tactics win battles. Anything is possible in these heroic bouts between skilled combatants.

Thus, quests for adventure are vital to the world of this game. Political drama and courtly intrigue have their place in some worlds, but *Iron Heroes* settings center around opportunities for larger-than-life characters to cross swords with their foes. Characters don't spend a lot of time in palaces or the quiet countryside. Job opportunities abound for sellswords with courage and convictions, and constant travel is the lifestyle such heroes choose in pursuit of adventure. The untamed world around *Iron Heroes* characters teems with immediate physical threats requiring skilled application of strength and steel.

physical strength worth the might of 100 men. The Masters called them the First, perhaps because they were the initial generation of a new slave race, or perhaps because they ranked above all slaves.

In the aftermath of the Masters' War, the First lived up to their name. Slowly but surely, humanity began to develop its own civilization. The former slaves used their knowledge to build small settlements. The First splintered into two groups. Those among them with a talent for magic sought isolation to continue their arcane pursuits. The First who excelled in warfare called together mighty armies that carved out kingdoms from the scarred wastelands. Even in areas free of the First, ex-slaves slowly used their talents to build small settlements. Unfortunately, the survivors were spread widely across the globe. Even worse, tribes of human barbarians, as well as strange monsters bred for the Masters' War, and other horrors spawned by the terrible energies of the Ghostlands appeared on the scene to threaten these nascent civilizations. Few of the new cultures survived, but the ones that did emerged with the martial power and social structures needed for a stable society.

The first century after the Masters' War saw petty kingdoms rise and fall. Patches of civilization persist across the world, but they remain too scattered to have any meaningful contact. The Masters' ancient citadels and secret hiding places remain undisturbed. Some hold magic potent beyond dreaming, but many are storehouses of horrid weapons, monsters, and other terrors readied for the war but never used. The magical energies released during the fighting twisted and transformed many creatures, spawning horrific beasts that stalk the land. Humanity was only one race crafted by the Masters—ogres, giants, golems, undead, and other

horrors scratch out a life for themselves, eager to seize the world for their own ends. Some are still fighting a war that ended 100 years ago.

BASIC CONCEPT

The idea behind the Swordlands is simple. The characters live in a world whose civilization teeters on the edge of destruction. Terrible monsters and savage barbarians lurk just on the other side of a kingdom's borders, ready to tear down everything that mankind has built. Humanity remains cloaked in ignorance, as few know what lurks beyond the horizon.

The First and the humans with the knowledge needed to found and sustain civilization have only recently turned their eyes away from simple survival as a goal. The settlements that sustained themselves through the past century are now growing into cities. Humanity stands on the verge of claiming this world as its own. Rumors swirl of older civilizations, groups of men or humanoids who built strange cities at the feet of the Masters. Borderland villages disappear overnight. Explorers return to the young cities with bizarre tales of monsters, ancient ruins, and strange folk. The world is at the brink of a new era. The champions who emerge at this time will carve their names into the history of the land, though whether for good or ill none can say.

Characters in the Swordlands number among the first adventurers to journey into the unknown. When you enter a dungeon buried deep within the mountains, chances are good that no one has been there before you. Asking around town about the strange monster in the forest might prove less than useful—there's a good chance that no one has fought it and lived to tell the tale. You might leave your home city's most distant outpost and uncover a strange civilization just over the mountain range. The maps you purchase in town have little other than blank space and guesses marked beyond the known trails and roads. Forget everything you

CREATING THE FIRST

To create the First as either adversaries or patrons of the player characters, start out just as you would create a PC, then apply the following modifiers.

Abilities: The First receive a +4 bonus to one score of your choice and +2 bonus to two others. Many of them were bred or engineered to excel in certain areas.

Feats: The First receive two bonus feats at 1st level. They trained long and hard for the Masters, and these bonus feats reflect their studies.

Mastery: The First gain a +1 bonus to all their mastery ratings, save those marked with a dash (–). Again, this bonus reflects their advanced training.

Magic: The First are infused with the essence of magic. They gain a +10 bonus on all channeling checks to cast spells.

know about fantasy gaming. In the Swordlands, almost anything can lurk around the corner. Once you leave civilization, all bets are off.

The Swordlands are also marked by change. New cults arise almost overnight as humanity seeks the comforting answers of the divine powers. The First warlord who rules a region may slowly shift from benevolent monarch to a cruel despot. As his lands grow in size, he must resort to brute force to maintain his grip. A great fire within a city is not only a catastrophe in terms of lives lost, it might threaten the stability and security of an entire kingdom. There are no archmages and clerics ready to heal the injured and repair the damage with spells. Instead, a horde of monsters may see the smoke and recognize an opportunity in humanity's disaster.

Above all else, the characters have a tremendous impact on the world. If there is to be change, they have the power and talents to influence its course. When invaders breach the walls, the weapon master is the one who, standing alone, beats back the attackers. The executioner slips into the First's bedchamber and slays him in single combat, winning freedom for the commoners. The thief creates a criminal cartel that allows a burgeoning middle class to emerge on the profits of smuggling and illegal trade. The hunter roams the land, mapping the unknown and discovering new kingdoms and ruined cities. In the Swordlands, the characters' actions have a significant influence: They are the important movers and shakers, the ambitious mercenaries who overthrow a warlord, the mighty warriors who slay the terrible beasts that remain from the Masters' War.

VISTAS OF ADVENTURE
In terms of adventures, the Swordlands offers several types of regions that commonly serve as dangerous, forbidding areas—but also with the potential for exciting discovery and lucrative rewards.

Ghostlands: Forbidding and rife with mutants and strange creatures, the Ghostlands are an almost impenetrable wasteland. Few explorers venture into them, yet the ruins they hold promise vast wealth in ancient arcana, jewels, and gold. Rumors abound of treasures that lie unguarded within these ancient sites, but no one who has ventured into the Ghostlands has lived to tell the tale. Bizarre monsters such as ettins, undead, and worse, regularly venture from the Ghostlands to raid settlements.

Ruins: The Masters left a multitude of ruins behind, many of which still hold countless valuables and strange artifacts. Unfortunately for adventurers, these sites are guarded by a variety of threats. Undead creatures, bound elementals, and deadly constructs patrol most undisturbed ruins. Furthermore, many of the Masters' intact ruins served as bases and military depots during their war. Entire legions of constructs remain ready to fight a war that has long since passed them by. In some regions, entering ruins is an offense punishable by execution, as intrepid adventurers sometimes unleash strange death machines that rampage across the countryside.

Swordlands: The setting's namesake, the Swordlands are the areas just beyond civilization's grip. So named because those who travel there must carry swords and don armor if they want to come out again alive, the Swordlands are home to terrible monsters, mysterious ruins, and dense tracts of forbidding terrain. If the cities of humanity survive, they might one day tame these wilderness regions. Until then, these lands are fit only for clever adventurers, prospectors, explorers, and others brave enough to face the beasts that thrive here for the chance of the riches awaiting in the long-forgotten outposts of the Masters.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

EQUIPMENT

It's true that a warrior can't lean on a shiny suit of armor and a magic blade to ensure his victory. Instead, he needs to use smart tactics and his proven fighting techniques to win. But that doesn't mean that one's equipment is any less important in Iron Heroes *than in other roleplaying games. If anything, it's more important.*

An adventurer's weapons and armor are the tools of his trade. A character can have all the talent in the world but, just as a painter needs a brush, a warrior needs a trusty weapon at his side. This chapter covers the basics of money, weapons, armor, and other gear.

COINS

The *Iron Heroes* core rules use a generic set of currencies based on the various precious metals. (Your DMs may have specific currencies for their own campaign worlds.)

The most common coin is the *gold piece (gp)*. A gold piece is worth 10 *silver pieces (sp)*. Each silver piece is worth 10 *copper pieces (cp)*. In addition to copper, silver, and gold coins, there are also *platinum pieces (pp)*, which are each worth 10 gp.

The standard coin weighs about a third of an ounce (50 to the pound).

To determine your initial available funds when creating a new character, roll 5d4 and multiply the result by 10. This is the starting amount of gold that you can use to buy equipment.

WEAPONS

Characters in *Iron Heroes* have a wide variety of weapons to choose from, ranging from a trusty sword to a menacing mace and beyond. The type of weapon you choose helps determine your fighting style (described in Chapter Three: Character Classes). A massive axe can smash through armor and is useful for warriors who rely on strength, while a character who depends on speed and agility would prefer a rapier or a dagger.

WEAPON DESCRIPTORS

Iron Heroes adds a new layer of rules to weapons. Every weapon has a set of *descriptors* that describe how it works. These descriptors work a bit like the traditional weapon type classifications (simple, martial, and exotic). However, rather than describe the difficulty of learning to use a weapon, *Iron Heroes'* expanded descriptors flesh out how a weapon functions. Some feats and special abilities function only when you use a weapon with a certain descriptor.

The various weapon descriptors are explained below. Most weapons have two main descriptors: one to express the weapon's basic form and one to describe how it is used. When you use a feat or a special ability, you might gain added benefits if you wield a weapon with a particular descriptor.

The first group of descriptors assigns a weapon a term such as "sword," "club," "thrown weapon," and so forth. These *identifying descriptors* reflect the weapon's physical design. All sword weapons have the same basic manufacture, though they might be different sizes.

COIN VALUES				
Coin Type	**CP**	**SP**	**GP**	**PP**
Copper piece (cp)	1	1/10	1/100	1/1,000
Silver piece (sp)	10	1	1/10	1/100
Gold piece (gp)	100	10	1	1/10
Platinum piece (pp)	1,000	100	10	1

Style descriptors indicate how you use a weapon. A short-sword and a greatsword are both swords, but the shortsword is a fast, stabbing weapon while the greatsword is a massive, hacking one. Their shape is similar, but the methods used to wield them differ.

Finally, a third overall descriptor type, *proficiency descriptors* (the classifications mentioned above), identifies the difficulty inherent in learning to use a particular weapon.

IDENTIFYING DESCRIPTORS

The identifying descriptors merely detail the basics of a weapon's design. They generally interact with feats, and they also dictate the weapon's basic attributes.

Ammunition: Projectile weapons use ammunition: arrows (for bows), bolts (for crossbows), or sling bullets (for slings). Pulling ammunition from a pouch or quiver is a free action, though loading a weapon might require a move action. Generally speaking, ammunition that hits its target is destroyed or rendered useless, while ammunition that misses has a 50 percent chance of being destroyed or lost.

Axe: Any weapon with a heavy, cutting head set on a mid-length haft qualifies as an axe weapon. Most axe weapons inflict slashing damage.

Cudgel: This category includes any sort of weapon that relies on the weight of its head to inflict damage. Due to the subtle differences between the various cudgels, this descriptor has three subtypes, described below.

Cudgel (Club): A wooden club is so easy to find and fashion that it has no cost.

Cudgel (Hammer): A hammer's head consists of a flat, crushing surface opposite a forked or pointed end. Examples include sledges and warhammers.

Cudgel (Mace): These metal clubs have massive iron heads.

Dagger: Small slashing weapons fall into this category. Daggers resemble swords, but they are much smaller than even the shortest sword.

Flail: Flails consist of a handle or haft with a chain connected to it. The chain usually ends with a heavy bludgeon. Flails are useful for tripping or disarming opponents.

Pick: While similar to an axe, a pick relies on a narrow, piercing head. Picks tend to inflict less damage than similarly sized weapons, but on a critical hit they inflict grievous wounds.

Polearm: A polearm is any weapon with a long haft and a bladed edge. Polearms are similar to spears, but they tend to be longer with slashing edges. Some polearms are designed to disarm or trip opponents.

Projectile: A projectile weapon is any ranged armament that fires ammunition. A sling, bow, or crossbow falls into this category. In addition, three projectile weapon subtypes appear below. You cannot normally wield a projectile weapon in melee, since it is useful only for ranged attacks.

You do not gain your Strength bonus to damage when using most projectile weapons, though the strength subtype does grant that benefit.
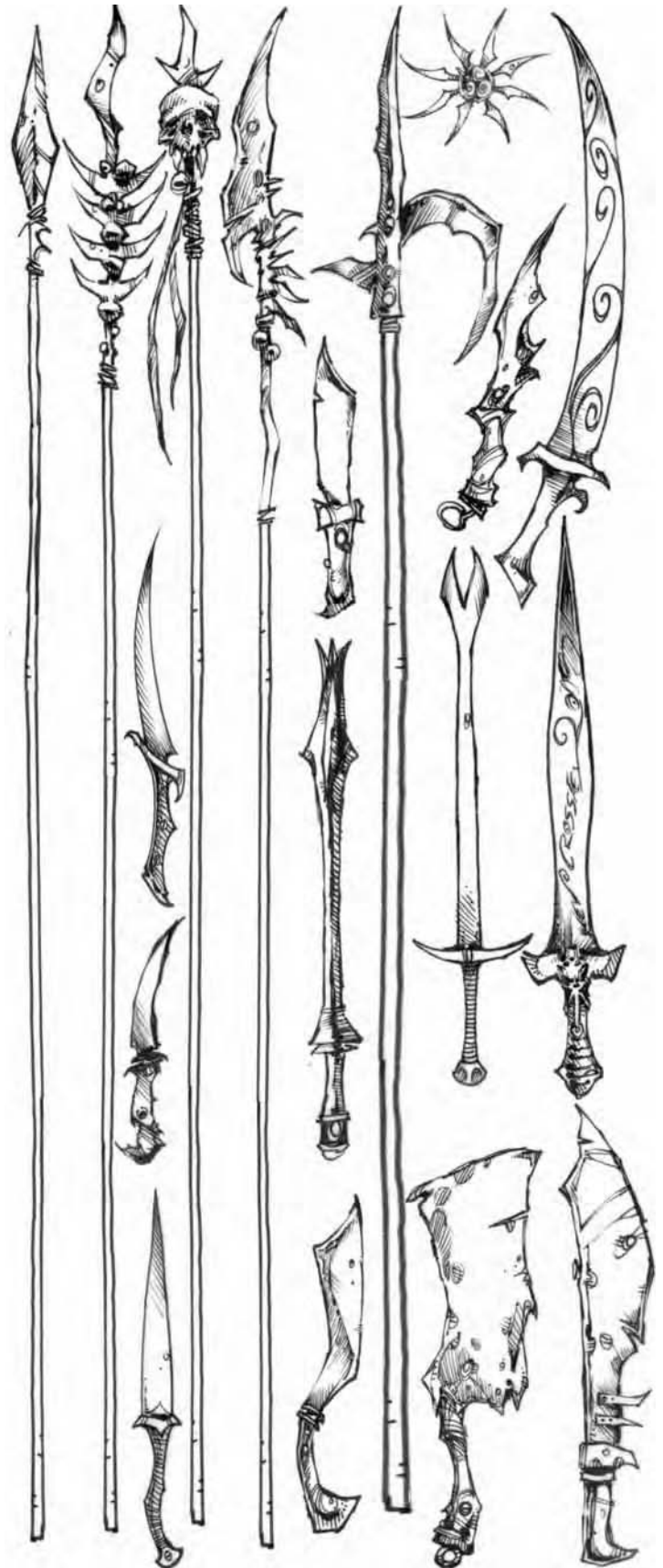
Projectile (Ready-Loading): This projectile weapon can be loaded and left ready to fire even if its owner sets it down on the ground. For example, you can cock a crossbow and leave it ready without maintaining your hold on it.

Projectile (Slow-Loading): These projectile weapons require at least a move action to load.

Projectile (Strength): This weapon relies on your physical strength to deliver damage, rather than the weapon's design or construction. Apply your Strength bonus to damage you deal with it.

Spear: A spear is any hafted weapon with a piercing end. It can range from a short javelin to a long pike used to keep mounted riders at bay.

Sword: A sword is a long, bladed weapon used to hack or stab at an opponent. Swords are useful for their versatility, as they excel in both offense and defense.

Thrown: A thrown weapon is any armament balanced for use as a ranged weapon. Most thrown weapons have a second identifying descriptor, such as a "throwing axe" or "throwing hammer." You can wield a thrown weapon in melee or use it to make a ranged attack.

STYLE DESCRIPTORS

Like the identifying descriptors, the style tags dictate how a weapon interacts with different feats and special abilities. In addition, a weapon's style descriptors determine some of its bonuses and abilities. For example, every weapon with the disarm descriptor grants a bonus to disarm attacks. Style descriptors also indicate the type of damage a weapon deals. A weapon can have more than one style descriptor.

Bludgeoning: Rather than a cutting edge, a bludgeoning weapon relies on its heavy weight to crush bones and organs. It inflicts bludgeoning damage.

Charger: This weapon is specifically designed for use by a mounted warrior. It inflicts double damage if you hit an opponent with it when you charge. Two-handed weapons with the charger descriptor are one-handed weapons as long as you wield them while mounted.

Disarm: A disarming weapon is designed to make it easier to rip an opponent's weapon from her hands. It might have a chain that can wrap around a haft, or tines on its pommel that can catch and turn a blade. A disarming weapon grants a +2 bonus to all opposed attacks made to disarm, including attacks made to resist being disarmed.

Double: A double weapon is usually a hafted weapon with two weapon heads or blades—one of them on each end. If you wield a double-weapon with two hands, you inflict 1.5 times your Strength bonus to damage with both ends. Usually, fighting with two weapons means you inflict only half your Strength bonus to damage with the weapon in your off-hand. When you fight with both ends of a double weapon, however, it's as though you strike twice with a two-handed weapon.

If you are proficient with a double weapon, you reduce the penalty for fighting with both ends by 4 for each attack. If you gain the Two-Weapon Fighting feat, use that ability's

superior penalty reduction in place of this modifier.

Finesse: A finesse weapon is designed for speed and agility. These exacting tools demand precision and careful aim. To gain the benefits of most Finesse mastery feats, you must wield a finesse weapon. A character with a good Dexterity benefits the most from a finesse weapon.

Nonlethal: A nonlethal weapon deals nonlethal damage rather than normal damage. You can use it to inflict standard damage if you accept a –4 penalty to your attack.

Piercing: A piercing weapon relies on a narrow head to drive deep into a target's body. These weapons tend to deliver light damage on average but devastating critical hits.

Power: A power weapon relies on its weight to smash through defenses. Strong characters gain the greatest benefit from these weapons, as they can put their physical might behind each hack or chop.

Reach: A reach weapon features a long haft or similar construction that allows you to strike distant opponents. For example, a pike can skewer a charging warrior before he moves close to you. Reach weapons double your normal reach, but they do not allow you to attack an opponent who stands closer to you than your normal maximum reach. For example, a character with a normal reach of one square would have a reach of two squares while using a reach weapon. However, she could not strike creatures in her own square, because they are closer than her normal maximum reach of one square. A character with a normal reach of two squares would have a reach of four squares while using a reach weapon. However, she could not strike creatures in her own square or one square away from her, because they are closer than her normal maximum reach of two squares.

Remember that in Iron Heroes you may suffer penalties for melee attacks against creatures who are not adjacent to you. Refer to page 179 for details.

Set: Usually, these weapons have long hafts and piercing ends. If you brace a set weapon against the ground, a charging creature may throw itself onto its point and suffer a terrible wound. If you use a ready action to set this weapon against a charge, you deal double damage on a successful hit against a charging opponent. You gain this bonus damage only on the readied attack.

Slashing: A slashing weapon has a cutting edge to chop into an opponent. Axes and most swords fall into this category.

Trip: A trip weapon is designed to make it easier to tangle an opponent's legs and send her tumbling to the ground. It might have spikes that can catch on clothes or armor, or it could feature a long chain that can wrap around a target's legs.

You must wield a trip weapon in order to make a trip attack. When you fight with such a weapon, you can opt to drop it rather than suffer an opponent's retaliatory trip attempt when your trip attack fails.

Unarmed: Because of their small size or design, these weapons are the equivalent of an unarmed attack. You provoke an attack of opportunity when you use one to make a melee attack, but using it grants you the benefits of any feats that interact with unarmed strikes.

PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTORS

The proficiency descriptors identify the difficulty inherent in learning how to use a weapon. There are three descriptors in this category—*simple, martial,* and *exotic*—and all weapons have one of them. A weapon cannot carry more than one proficiency descriptor.

The weapon proficiency general feats in Chapter Five (Martial Weapon Proficiency, etc.) and class abilities in Chapter Three determine which weapon proficiency descriptors you have mastered. If you lack proficiency with one of the three classifications, you suffer a −4 penalty to all attacks with weapons that have that descriptor.

Simple: A simple weapon requires little training to understand. Most characters can wield any weapon from this category. A club is a simple weapon.

Martial: A martial weapon requires training, drills, and intense study to master. These weapons may seem simple, but they usually have subtle characteristics and uses that a neophyte may miss. Most characters are proficient with all martial weapons. A longsword is a martial weapon.

Exotic: An exotic weapon is a bizarre implement that only a highly trained, focused warrior can master. You can gain proficiency with an exotic weapon only if you spend a feat on it. A two-bladed sword is an exotic weapon.

WEAPON SIZE AND EFFORT CATEGORIES

In addition to the descriptors, every weapon has a size: Tiny, Small, Medium, Large, or Huge. This designation indicates the size of the creature for which the weapon was designed; a Medium weapon was designed for a Medium creature to use.

APPROPRIATELY SIZED WEAPONS

No matter what size a weapon may be, some weapons are made to be used in one hand and others are meant to be held in two hands. Some weapons are even made specifically to be unusually light to wield. You designate how much effort it takes to use a weapon by labeling it as light, one-handed, or two-handed for a particular wielder. The weapon tables on the following pages break down the weapons into these effort categories.

Light: A light weapon is small and compact. If you wield a light weapon in your off-hand, you reduce the penalties for fighting with a second weapon by 2.

One-Handed: A one-handed weapon is obviously designed for use in one hand. You can opt to wield it with two hands, in which case you apply 1.5 times your Strength bonus to damage.

Two-Handed: A two-handed weapon is long, heavy, or bulky. It requires you to have both your hands free to wield it. You inflict 1.5 times your Strength bonus to damage when fighting with a two-handed weapon.

INAPPROPRIATELY SIZED WEAPONS

A creature can't make optimum use of a weapon that isn't properly sized for it. A cumulative −2 penalty applies on attack rolls for each size category of difference between the size of a weapon's intended wielder and the size of its actual wielder. (If the creature isn't proficient with the weapon, a −4 nonproficiency penalty also applies; see above.)
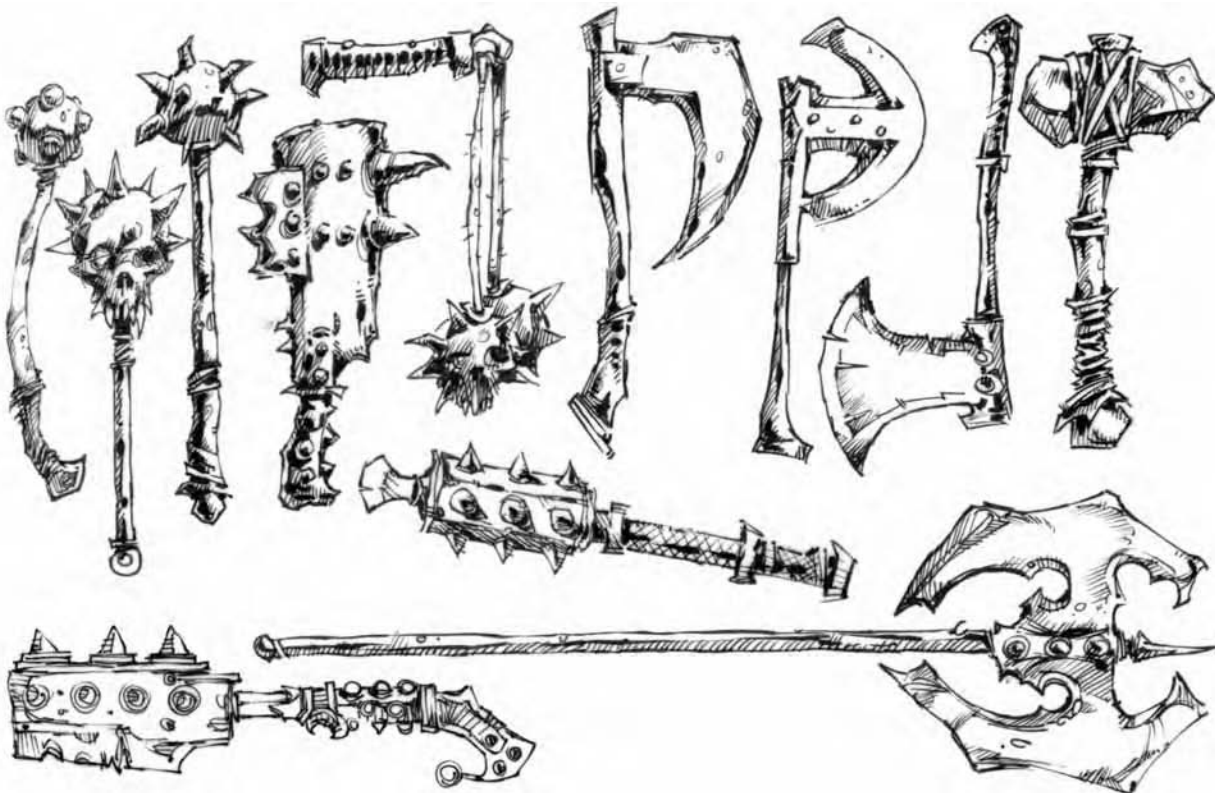
Comparing a weapon's size to the size of its actual wielder (regardless of who it was designed for) can also alter whether a weapon is considered one handed, two handed, or light. Find the weapon's proper effort classification in the weapon tables in this chapter. Alter this measure by one category for each size of difference between the wielder and the creature for which the weapon was designed.

For instance, a Medium one-handed weapon becomes two handed when wielded by a Small creature. In the hands of a Large creature, it's considered light.

If a weapon's effort designation would change to something lighter than light or heavier than two-handed by this alteration, the creature can't wield the weapon at all. In this case, the weapon is either too small or too big for a creature to wield.

Weapon Damage and Size

Larger weapons inflict more damage than smaller ones. The sample weapons given later in this chapter all carry damage values appropriate to size Medium, but you might need to determine the damage that a Large or Small weapon of that type would inflict. To figure that out, look up the Medium weapon's damage on the Weapon Damage Size Progression table below, in the "Base Weapon Damage" column.

The "Shift Up One Size" column gives the damage for a weapon one size category larger than the base. If you need to increase it by another category, find the "shift up" damage in the "Base Weapon Damage" column and repeat the process.

To determine the damage inflicted by a smaller weapon than the base, use the same process but consult the "Shift Down One Size" column.

For example, a Medium longsword inflicts 1d8 points of damage. To determine a Large longsword's damage, look up 1d8 in the "Base Weapon Damage" column, then read across to that entry's value in the "Shift Up One Size" column. The result is 2d6 points of damage.

For a Huge longsword, you would follow the same process. Once you have the damage for a Large weapon, look up that

damage value in the "Base Weapon Damage" column. If it's listed, read across to the "Shift Up One Size" column. The result is the damage inflicted by a Huge weapon. In the longsword's case, you would start with 1d8 for a Medium longsword. Looking on the table, you can see that shifting the size up to Large increases a 1d8 weapon to 2d6. Increasing a 2d6 weapon by another size category to Huge makes it a 3d6 weapon.

When shifting a weapon's size upward, you might not find its damage in the "Base Weapon Damage" column. In that case, increase the damage rolled by one die type. For example, a Huge longsword inflicts 3d6 points of damage. Since 3d6 isn't listed in the "Base Weapon Damage" column, just add another 1d6 to its damage (for a total of 4d6) to increase its size by one category to Gargantuan.

One-Handed, Two-Handed, and Light Weapons

The weapon tables in this chapter indicate the amount of damage each weapon inflicts. For example, a one-handed battleaxe inflicts 1d8 points of damage, and the two-handed greataxe deals 1d12.

However, if you cannot find a weapon listed in the tables, use the following rule of thumb to calculate damage: A weapon used two handed inflicts damage as if it were one size category larger than its one-handed counterpart. A light weapon inflicts damage as if it were one size category smaller than its one-handed counterpart. (The weapons presented here don't always follow this pattern, so check the weapon tables carefully before using this rule.)

Improvised Weapons

Sometimes objects not crafted to be weapons nonetheless see use in combat. Because such objects are not designed for battle, a creature using one in combat is considered not proficient with it and suffers a −4 penalty on attack rolls made with it. To determine the size category and appropriate damage for an improvised weapon, compare its relative size and damage potential to the weapons listed in the tables on pages 161 to 163 to find a reasonable match. An improvised weapon scores a threat on a natural roll of 20 and deals double damage on a critical hit. An improvised thrown weapon has a range increment of 10 feet.

Weapon Qualities

The tables on pages 161 to 163 provide the basic data for the weapons available in *Iron Heroes*. They are organized according to proficiency descriptor: simple, martial, and exotic. Each table header is explained below, along with notes for specific weapons where applicable.

Cost: This value is the weapon's cost in gold pieces (gp) or silver pieces (sp). The cost includes miscellaneous gear that goes with the weapon.

This cost is the same for a Small or a Medium version of the weapon. Halve the cost for weapons below size Small. Double the cost for each category above Medium.

WEAPON DAMAGE SIZE PROGRESSION

Base Weapon Damage	Shift Down One Size	Shift Up One Size
1d2	1	1d3
1d3	1d2	1d4
1d4	1d3	1d6
1d6	1d4	1d8
1d8	1d6	2d6
1d10	1d8	2d8
1d12	1d10	3d6
2d4	1d6	2d6
2d6	1d10	3d6
2d8	1d10	3d8
2d10	2d6	4d8

SIMPLE WEAPONS

Weapon	Cost	Damage (M)	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Descriptors (Identifying; Style)
*Light Melee Weapons**						
Dagger	2 gp	1d4	19–20/×2	10 feet	1 lb.	Dagger; finesse, piercing or slashing, thrown
Dagger, punching	2 gp	1d4	×3	—	1 lb.	Dagger; piercing, power
Gauntlet	2 gp	1d3	×2	—	1 lb.	N/A; bludgeoning, unarmed
Gauntlet, spiked	5 gp	1d4	×2	—	1 lb.	N/A; piercing
Mace, light	5 gp	1d6	×2	—	4 lbs.	Cudgel; bludgeoning
Sickle	6 gp	1d6	×2	—	2 lbs.	Axe; slashing
Unarmed strike	—	1d3	×2	—	—	N/A; bludgeoning, unarmed,nonlethal
One-Handed Melee Weapons						
Club	—	1d6	×2	10 feet	3 lbs.	Cudgel; bludgeoning, power, thrown
Mace, heavy	12 gp	1d8	×2	—	8 lbs.	Cudgel; bludgeoning, power
Morningstar	8 gp	1d8	×2	—	6 lbs.	Cudgel; bludgeoning and piercing, power
Shortspear	1 gp	1d6	×2	20 feet	3 lbs.	Spear; piercing, set, thrown
Two-Handed Melee Weapons						
Longspear	5 gp	1d8	×3	—	9 lbs.	Spear; piercing, reach, set
Quarterstaff	—	1d6/1d6	×2	—	4 lbs.	Cudgel (club); bludgeoning, double
Spear	2 gp	1d8	×3	20 feet	6 lbs.	Spear; piercing, set, thrown
Ranged Weapons (One- or Two-Handed)						
Crossbow, light	35 gp	1d8	19–20/x2	80 feet	4 lbs.	Projectile (ready-loading, slow-loading); piercing
Bolts, crossbow (10)	1 gp	—	—	—	1 lb.	Ammunition
Dart	5 sp	1d4	×2	20 feet	1/2 lb.	Thrown; piercing
Javelin	1 gp	1d6	×2	30 feet	2 lbs.	Spear, thrown; piercing
Sling	—	1d4	×2	50 feet	0 lbs.	Projectile (strength, slow-loading); bludgeoning
Bullets, sling (10)	1 sp	—	—	—	5 lbs.	Ammunition

* Unarmed attacked are treated as armed attacks with a light melee weapon.

Damage: This column lists the damage the weapon (of Medium size) deals on a successful hit. If two damage ranges appear, then the weapon is a double weapon; use the second damage figure for the double weapon's extra attack.

Critical: The entry in this column notes how the weapon is used with the rules for critical hits (see Chapter Eight: Combat). When your character scores a critical hit, roll the damage two, three, or four times, as indicated by its critical multiplier (using all applicable modifiers on each roll), and add all the results together.

Do not multiply extra damage over and above a weapon's normal damage (such as sneak attack damage) when you score a critical hit.

×2: The weapon deals double damage on a critical hit.

×3: The weapon deals triple damage on a critical hit.

×3/×4: One head of this double weapon deals triple damage on a critical hit. The other head deals quadruple damage on a critical hit.

×4: The weapon deals quadruple damage on a critical hit.

19–20/×2: The weapon scores a threat on a natural roll of 19 or 20 (instead of just 20) and deals double damage on a critical hit. (The weapon has a threat range of 19–20.)

18–20/×2: The weapon scores a threat on a natural roll of 18, 19, or 20 (instead of just 20) and deals double damage on a critical hit. (The weapon has a threat range of 18–20.)

Range Increment: Any attack at less than this distance carries no penalty for range. However, each full range increment imposes a cumulative –2 penalty on the attack roll. A thrown weapon has a maximum range of five range increments. A projectile weapon can shoot out to 10 range increments.

Weight: This column gives the weight of a Medium version of the weapon. Halve this number for Small weapons, and halve it again for each category below Small. Double this number for Large weapons, and double it again for each category beyond Large.

Descriptors (Identifying, Style): This header gives all of the identifying and style descriptors that apply to the weapon (see pages 156 to 159 for more on weapon descriptors).

MARTIAL WEAPONS

Weapon	Cost	Damage (M)	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Descriptors (Identifying; Style)
Light Melee Weapons						
Axe, throwing	8 gp	1d6	×2	10 feet	2 lbs.	Axe, thrown; slashing
Hammer, light	1 gp	1d4	×2	20 feet	2 lbs.	Cudgel (hammer), thrown; bludgeoning,
Handaxe	6 gp	1d6	×3	—	3 lbs.	Axe; slashing
Kukri	8 gp	1d4	18–20/×2	—	2 lbs.	Dagger; slashing
Pick, light	4 gp	1d4	×4	—	3 lbs.	Pick; piercing
Sap	1 gp	1d6	×2	—	2 lbs.	N/A; bludgeoning, nonlethal
Shield, Small	Special	1d3	×2	—	Special	N/A; bludgeoning
Spiked armor	Special	1d6	×2	—	Special	N/A; piercing
Spiked shield, Small	Special	1d4	×2	—	Special	N/A; piercing
Sword, short	10 gp	1d6	19–20/×2	—	2 lbs.	Sword; finesse; piercing
One-Handed Melee Weapons						
Battleaxe	10 gp	1d8	×3	—	6 lbs.	Axe; power, slashing
Flail	8 gp	1d8	×2	—	5 lbs.	Flail; bludgeoning, disarm, trip
Longsword	15 gp	1d8	19–20/×2	—	4 lbs.	Sword; slashing
Pick, heavy	8 gp	1d6	×4	—	6 lbs.	Pick; piercing, power
Rapier	20 gp	1d6	18–20/×2	—	2 lbs.	Sword; finesse, piercing
Scimitar	15 gp	1d6	18–20/×2	—	4 lbs.	Sword; finesse, slashing
Shield, Medium	special	1d4	×2	—	Special	N/A; bludgeoning
Spiked shield, Medium	special	1d6	×2	—	Special	N/A; piercing
Trident	15 gp	1d8	×2	10 feet	4 lbs.	Spear, thrown; piercing, power, set
Warhammer	12 gp	1d8	×3	—	5 lbs.	Cudgel (hammer); bludgeoning, power
Two-Handed Melee Weapons						
Falchion	75 gp	2d4	18–20/×2	—	8 lbs.	Sword; power, slashing
Glaive	8 gp	1d10	×3	—	10 lbs.	Polearm; reach, slashing
Greataxe	20 gp	1d12	×3	—	12 lbs.	Axe; power, slashing
Greatclub	5 gp	1d10	×2	—	8 lbs.	Cudgel (club); bludgeoning, power
Flail, heavy	15 gp	1d10	19–20/×2	—	10 lbs.	Flail; bludgeoning, disarm, trip
Greatsword	50 gp	2d6	19–20/×2	—	8 lbs.	Sword; power, slashing
Guisarme	9 gp	2d4	×3	—	12 lbs.	Polearm; slashing, trip
Halberd	10 gp	1d10	×3	—	12 lbs.	Polearm; piercing or slashing, set, trip
Lance	10 gp	1d8	×3	—	10 lbs.	Spear; charger, piercing, reach
Mattock	10 gp	1d8	×4	—	10 lbs.	Pick; piercing, power
Maul	8 gp	2d6	×3	—	12 lbs.	Cudgel (hammer); bludgeoning, power
Ranseur	10 gp	2d4	×3	—	12 lbs.	Polearm; disarm, piercing,
Scythe	18 gp	2d4	×4	—	10 lbs.	N/A; piercing or slashing, power
Ranged Weapons (One- and Two-Handed)						
Crossbow, heavy	50 gp	1d10	19–20/×2	120 feet	8 lbs.	Projectile (ready-loading, slow-loading); piercing
Bolts, crossbow (10)	1 gp	—	—	—	1 lb.	Ammunition
Longbow	75 gp	1d8	×3	100 feet	3 lbs.	Projectile; piercing
Arrows (20)	1 gp	—	—	—	3 lbs.	Ammunition
Longbow, composite	100 gp	1d8	×3	110 feet	3 lbs.	Projectile; piercing
Arrows (20)	1 gp	—	—	—	3 lbs.	Ammunition
Shortbow	30 gp	1d6	×3	60 feet	2 lbs.	Projectile; piercing
Arrows (20)	1 gp	—	—	—	3 lbs.	—
Shortbow, composite	75 gp	1d6	×3	70 feet	2 lbs.	Projectile; piercing
Arrows (20)	1 gp	—	—	—	3 lbs.	—

EXOTIC WEAPONS

Weapon	Cost	Damage (M)	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Descriptors (Identifying; Style)
Light Melee Weapons						
Kama	2 gp	1d6	×2	—	2 lbs.	N/A; slashing, trip, unarmed
Nunchaku	2 gp	1d6	×2	—	2 lbs.	N/A; bludgeoning, disarm, unarmed
Sai	1 gp	1d4	×2	10 feet	1 lb.	N/A; bludgeoning, unarmed, thrown
Siangham	3 gp	1d6	×2	—	1 lb.	N/A; piercing, unarmed
One-Handed Melee Weapons						
Sword, bastard	35 gp	1d10	19–20/×2	—	6 lbs.	Sword; finesse, power, slashing
Waraxe	30 gp	1d10	×3	—	8 lbs.	Axe; power, slashing
Whip	1 gp	1d3	×2		2 lbs.	N/A; disarm, finesse, nonlethal, reach, slashing, trip
Two-Handed Melee Weapons						
Axe, double	60 gp	1d8/1d8	×3	—	15 lbs.	Axe; double, power, slashing
Flail, dire	90 gp	1d8/1d8	×2	—	10 lbs.	Flail; bludgeoning, disarm, double, trip
Sword, two-bladed	100 gp	1d8/1d8	19–20/×2	—	10 lbs.	Sword; double, finesse, slashing
Ranged Weapons (One- and Two-Handed)						
Bolas	5 gp	1d4	×2	10 feet	2 lbs.	Thrown; bludgeoning, trip, nonlethal
Crossbow, hand	100 gp	1d4	19–20/×2	30 feet	2 lbs.	Projectile (ready-loading, slow-loading); finesse, piercing
Bolts (10)	1 gp	—	—	—	1 lb.	Ammunition
Crossbow, repeating heavy	400 gp	1d10	19–20/×2	120 feet	12 lbs.	Projectile (ready-loading, slow-loading); piercing
Bolts (5)	1 gp	—	—	1 lb.	—	Ammunition
Crossbow, repeating light	250 gp	1d8	19–20/×2	80 feet	6 lbs.	Projectile (ready-loading, slow-loading); piercing,
Bolts (5)	1 gp	—	—	—	1 lb.	Ammunition
Net	20 gp	—	—	10 feet	6 lb.	Thrown
Shuriken (5)	1 gp	1d2	×2	10 feet	1/2 lb.	Thrown; finesse, piercing

Some weapons deal multiple types of damage (bludgeoning, piercing, slashing), as indicated by multiple style descriptors. All the damage inflicted by such a weapon counts as all the listed types. Therefore, a creature would have to be immune to all its types of damage to ignore any of the damage from such a weapon.

In other cases, a weapon can deal either of two types of damage. These damage types are separated by the word "or" in the descriptor column. In a situation when the damage type is significant, the wielder can choose which type of damage to deal with such a weapon.

A weapon grants its wielder the benefits of all of its descriptors at all times, unless special circumstances, abilities, or feats dictate otherwise.

SPECIAL WEAPON RULES
Some weapons feature additional rules beyond the basic guidelines given for the various descriptors. Those exceptions appear below.

Bolas: You can't be tripped during your own trip attempt when using a set of bolas.

Crossbow, Hand: You can draw a hand crossbow back by hand. You can shoot (but not load) a hand crossbow with one hand at no penalty. You can shoot one hand crossbow with each hand, but you suffer a penalty to attack rolls as if attacking with two light weapons.

Crossbow, Heavy: You draw a heavy crossbow back by turning a small winch. Loading a heavy crossbow is a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity.

Normally, operating a heavy crossbow requires two hands. However, you can shoot (but not load) a heavy crossbow with one hand at a −4 penalty to attack rolls. You can shoot a heavy crossbow with each hand, but you take a penalty on attack rolls as if attacking with two one-handed weapons. This penalty is cumulative with the penalty for one-handed firing.

Crossbow, Light: You draw a light crossbow back by pulling a lever. Loading a light crossbow is a move action that provokes attacks of opportunity.

Normally, operating a light crossbow requires two hands. However, you can shoot (but not load) a light crossbow with one hand at a −2 penalty to attack rolls. You can shoot one light crossbow with each hand, but you suffer a penalty to

attack rolls as if attacking with two light weapons. This penalty is cumulative with the penalty for one-handed firing.

Crossbow, Repeating: The repeating crossbow (whether heavy or light) holds five crossbow bolts. As long as it holds bolts, you can reload it by pulling the reloading lever (a free action). Loading a new case of five bolts is a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity.

You can fire a repeating crossbow with one hand or fire one repeating crossbow in each hand in the same manner as you would a normal crossbow of the same size. However, you must fire the weapon with two hands in order to use the reloading lever, and you must use two hands to load a new case of bolts.

Dagger: You get a +2 bonus to Sleight of Hand checks made to conceal a dagger on your body (see the Sleight of Hand skill in Chapter Four).

Gauntlet: This metal glove lets you deal lethal damage rather than nonlethal damage with unarmed strikes. A strike with a gauntlet is otherwise considered an unarmed attack. The cost and weight in the table represent a single gauntlet. Medium and heavy armors (except breastplates) come with gauntlets; see "Armor and Shields," page 165.

Gauntlet, Spiked: Your opponent cannot use a disarm action to disarm you of spiked gauntlets. The cost and weight in the table represent a single gauntlet. An attack with a spiked gauntlet is considered an armed attack.

Javelin: Since javelins are not designed for melee, their wielders are treated as nonproficient with them and suffer a −4 penalty to attack rolls when using a javelin as a melee weapon.

Longbow: You need at least two hands to use a bow, regardless of its size. A longbow is too unwieldy to use while mounted. If you have a penalty for low Strength, apply it to damage rolls when you use a longbow. If you have a bonus for high Strength, you can apply it to damage rolls when you use a composite longbow (see below) but not a regular longbow.

Longbow, Composite: You need at least two hands to use a bow, regardless of its size. You can use a composite longbow while mounted. All composite bows possess a particular strength rating (that is, each requires a minimum Strength modifier to use with proficiency). If your Strength bonus is less than the strength rating of the composite bow, you can't effectively use it, so you take a −2 penalty to attacks with it. The default composite longbow requires a Strength modifier of +0 or higher to use with proficiency. One can craft a composite longbow with a high strength rating to take advantage of an above-average Strength score; this feature allows you to add your Strength bonus to damage, up to the maximum bonus indicated for the bow. Each point of Strength bonus granted by the bow adds 100 gp to its cost.

For purposes of weapon proficiency and similar feats, treat a composite longbow as if it were a regular longbow.

Net: You use a net to entangle enemies. When you throw a net, make a ranged touch attack against your target. A net's maximum range is 10 feet. If you hit, you entangle the target. An entangled creature takes a −2 penalty to attack rolls and a −4 penalty to Dexterity, can move at only half speed, and cannot charge or run. If you control the net's trailing rope by succeeding at an opposed Strength check while holding it, the entangled creature can move only within the limits the rope allows. If the entangled creature attempts to cast a spell, it must succeed at a Concentration check (DC 15) or be unable to cast it.

An entangled creature can escape a net with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 20, full-round action). One can burst the net, which has 5 hit points, with a Strength check (DC 25, full-round action).

A net is useful only against creatures within one size category of you.

A net must be folded to be thrown effectively. The first time you throw your net in a fight, make a normal ranged touch attack roll. After the net is unfolded, you take a −4 penalty on attack rolls with it. It takes 2 rounds for a proficient user to fold a net and twice that long for a nonproficient one to do so.

Shield, Heavy or Light: You can bash with a shield instead of using it for defense. See "Armor and Shields," page 165, for details.

Shortbow: You need at least two hands to use a bow, regardless of its size. You can use a shortbow while mounted. If you have a penalty for low Strength, apply it to damage rolls when you use a shortbow. If you have a bonus for high Strength, you can apply it to damage rolls when you use a composite shortbow (see below) but not a regular shortbow.

Shortbow, Composite: You need at least two hands to use a bow, regardless of its size. You can use a composite shortbow while mounted. All composite bows possess a particular strength rating (that is, each requires a minimum Strength modifier to use with proficiency). If your Strength bonus is lower than the strength rating of the composite bow, you can't effectively use it, so you take a −2 penalty to attacks with it. The default composite shortbow requires a Strength modifier of +0 or higher to use with proficiency. One can craft a composite shortbow with a high strength rating to take advantage of an above-average Strength score; this feature allows you to add your Strength bonus to damage, up to the maximum bonus indicated for the bow. Each point of Strength bonus granted by the bow adds 75 gp to its cost.

For purposes of weapon proficiency and similar feats, treat a composite shortbow as if it were a regular shortbow.

Sling: You can hurl ordinary stones with a sling, but stones are not as dense or as round as bullets. Thus, such an attack deals damage as if the weapon were designed for a creature one size category smaller than you, and you take a −1 penalty to attack rolls.

Spiked Armor: You can outfit your armor with spikes, which deals damage in a grapple or as a separate attack. See "Armor and Shields" on the next page for details.

Spiked Shield, Heavy or Light: You can bash with a spiked shield instead of using it for defense. See "Armor and Shields" on the next page for details.

Sword, Bastard: A bastard sword is too large to use in one hand without special training; thus, it is an exotic weapon. A character can use a bastard sword two handed as a martial weapon.

Waraxe: A waraxe is too large to use in one hand without special training; thus it is an exotic weapon. A character can use a waraxe two handed as a martial weapon.

Whip: A whip deals nonlethal damage. It deals no damage to any creature which is wearing armor or that possesses a natural armor bonus of +3 or higher. Treat the whip as a melee weapon with 15-foot reach, though you don't threaten the area into which you can make an attack. In addition, unlike most other weapons with reach, it can be used against foes anywhere within your reach.

Using a whip provokes an attack of opportunity, just as if you had used a ranged weapon.

MASTERWORK WEAPONS

A masterwork weapon is a finely crafted version of a normal weapon. Wielding it provides a +1 enhancement bonus to attack rolls.

You can't add the masterwork quality to a weapon after it is created. It must be crafted as a masterwork weapon (see the Craft skill in Chapter Four). The masterwork quality adds 300 gp to the cost of a normal weapon (or 6 gp to the cost of a single unit of ammunition).

Masterwork ammunition is damaged (effectively destroyed) when used. The enhancement bonus of masterwork ammunition does not stack with any enhancement bonus of the projectile weapon firing it.

Even though you can use some types of armor and shields as weapons, you can't create a masterwork version of such an item that confers an enhancement bonus on attack rolls. Instead, masterwork armor and shields enjoy reduced armor check penalties.

ARMOR AND SHIELDS

In *Iron Heroes,* armor plays little role in determining whether an attack hits or misses you. Instead, it serves to reduce the damage that a successful strike inflicts. It accomplishes this by providing you with *damage reduction* (DR). In order to understand fully how armor works, you need a basic grasp of damage reduction.

DAMAGE REDUCTION AND ARMOR

Damage reduction, as its name indicates, reduces the damage you suffer from an attack. When a sword hits you, the armor you wear absorbs part of its force. It might turn a deadly blow into merely a minor injury. However, armor isn't perfect. Some types of weapons or attacks can blast through it with ease. Magical weapons are tempered to cut through mundane steel, making most forms of armor useless against them. Luckily, magical weapons are rare and dangerous to wield.

Some creatures enjoy damage reduction because of their strange natures. Creatures spawned from magic, such as

demons or powerful undead, enjoy damage reduction against mortal weapons.

Damage reduction is usually represented by a die type or a constant value followed by a descriptor of some sort. The die type or number indicates how many points of damage the damage reduction prevents. The descriptor shows which types of attacks, if any, that the damage reduction fails to absorb. If a dash (–) takes the place of a descriptor, the damage reduction works against all types of attacks.

For example, a suit of chainmail provides DR 1d4/magic. Wearing chainmail reduces the damage you suffer from an attack by 1d4 points. Every time an attack strikes you, roll 1d4 to determine how much damage it prevents. The chainmail provides no defense against magical weapons or monsters whose claws or fangs are imbued with arcane energy.

Some armor provides a flat damage reduction value. For example, leather armor grants DR 1/magic. Every time a character in leather armor suffers damage from a physical attack, reduce the damage inflicted by 1.

Damage reduction never applies to energy types, such as fire or electricity. In these cases, energy resistance can provide some measure of defense. Unfortunately for adventurers, energy resistance applies only to strange, otherworldly creatures. Mortals can rarely, if ever, gain access to it.

ARMOR PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTORS

In order to properly wear a suit of armor, you must have the appropriate Armor Proficiency general feat (see Chapter Five). Like weapons, each type of armor has a proficiency descriptor, found on the Armor and Shields table on page 167: *light, medium,* and *heavy armor.*

Light Armor: Light armor usually consists of leather, perhaps with a few small plates or reinforcements made of metal. It provides mobility and weighs little, but it offers slight defense compared to other armor types.

Medium Armor: This armor category falls between the extremes of light and heavy armor. It provides moderate protection at the cost of speed; medium armor reduces your speed by one-quarter.

Heavy Armor: Heavy armor absorbs and deflects many blows, but its great weight forces you to move at a crawl. It reduces your speed by half, but it can turn a deadly blow into merely a nuisance.

ARMOR AND SPELLCASTING

Armor has no effect on spellcasting. An arcanist suffers no special benefits or drawbacks for using spells while wearing armor. Note that this fact applies only to casters who follow the magical tradition embraced by arcanists. Other forms of spellcasting, such as rules imported from other games, might levy a penalty or some sort of drawback for wearing armor and using spells.
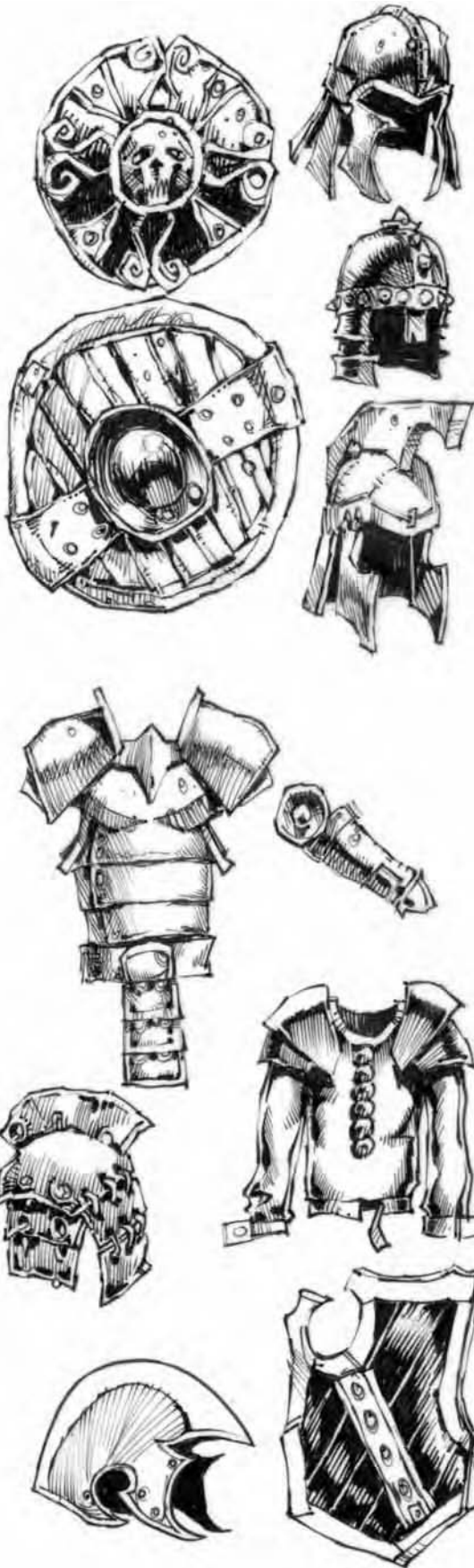
Few characters in *Iron Heroes* wear heavy (or even medium) armor. Aside from the armiger, heavy armor is a tool for warriors who expect to fight in close formations or in large-scale engagements. Aside from the armiger and the man-at-arms, most classes begin play with proficiency only in light armor.

If you lack proficiency with a type of armor, you endure penalties to your ability to both attack and defend yourself. Chapter Five provides full information on armor proficiency general feats, their benefits, and the drawbacks of wearing armor without them.

Sleeping in Armor

Armor is designed for protection, not comfort. If you sleep in medium or heavy armor, you automatically become fatigued the next day. Fatigued characters suffer a –2 penalty to Strength and Dexterity and can't charge or run. Sleeping in light armor does not cause fatigue.

Shields

Unlike armor, shields make you more difficult to hit. A skillfully wielded shield can deflect attacks, create a barrier against a volley of arrows, and even knock an opponent off balance. A shield intercepts an attack before it touches you, whereas armor absorbs the force of an attack that strikes home.

In game mechanic terms, a shield increases your defense. If you lack the Shield Proficiency feat, you may suffer a penalty to your attacks when you use a shield. It takes practice and training to use a shield and weapon in concert. Class abilities and feats allow you to refine your basic proficiency with a shield—a skilled warrior can increase the defense bonus his shield provides him.

Also unlike armor, shields do not reduce your speed. A shield's weight increases the total equipment load you carry, but it has little impact on your maneuverability.

Shields can limit your agility. If you carry a shield larger than your own size category, it may impose a maximum Dexterity bonus limit to your defense, just like a suit of armor (see "Armor and Shield Qualities" on the next page).

The benefits and drawbacks provided by a shield depend on its size relative to you. Almost every shield has a size, just like a weapon. The following examples assume that a Medium creature carries a shield.

Bucklers: A buckler is a shield two size categories smaller the creature wielding it. (For a Medium character, a buckler is a Tiny shield.) The buckler is so small, you simply strap it to your forearm. You can use a projectile weapon without penalty while carrying it. You also can use your shield arm to wield a weapon (either holding an off-hand weapon or helping to wield a two-handed weapon), but you suffer a –1 penalty to attack rolls while doing so. This penalty stacks with those that may apply for fighting with your off hand and for fighting with two weapons. In any case, if you use a weapon in your off hand, you don't get the buckler's defense bonus for the rest of the round.

A buckler is too small to serve as a weapon. You cannot make attacks with it, such as a shield bash, nor can you use any shield feats that allow you to use your shield to make attacks.

Light Shields: A light shield is a shield one size category smaller than the creature wielding it; the benefits listed for a light shield apply when you use a shield one size category below yours. You can carry an item in the same hand as your shield, but you cannot use a weapon effectively in this manner.

Heavy Shields: A heavy shield is a shield of the same size category as the creature wielding it; the benefits listed for a heavy shield apply when you carry a shield whose size equals your own. You cannot carry an item in your hand while you use a heavy shield, as you must grip it in order to use it well.

Tower Shields: A tower shield is a shield one size category larger than the creature wielding it. The tower shield's stats and effects come into play when you carry a shield one size category above your own. You cannot gain any benefit from a shield that is any greater in size, though you could conceivably duck behind it for cover.

In most situations, a tower shield provides the indicated passive bonus to your defense. However, you can instead use it as total cover, though you must give up your attacks to do so. The shield does not provide cover against targeted spells, though; a spellcaster can cast a spell on you by targeting the shield you are holding. You cannot bash with a tower shield, nor can you use your shield hand for anything else.

When employing a tower shield in combat, you suffer a –2 penalty to attack rolls because of the shield's encumbrance.

Shields of Other Sizes: To determine the weight and cost of a shield smaller than size Tiny, halve the cost and weight of a buckler once for each size category reduction. For shields above size Large, double the weight and cost of a Large shield for each size increase.

SHIELD BASH ATTACKS

You can bash an opponent with a shield, using it as an off-hand weapon. The Martial Weapons table on page 162 lists the appropriate damage and other statistics for shields used in this way. Using your shield as a weapon means you lose its defense bonus until your next action.

Small shields are light weapons. You cannot bash with a buckler or tower shield.

ARMOR AND SHIELD QUALITIES

The following traits from the Armor and Shields table below describe a suit of armor or a shield.

Cost: The cost of the armor for Small or Medium humanoid creatures. See "Armor for Unusual Creatures" on page 169 for armor prices for other creature sizes. Shields are priced by size. For each size category above Large, double the Large shield's cost.

Damage Reduction: This column lists the armor's damage reduction (see page 165).

Passive Defense Bonus: A shield grants the bonus in this column to your defense. Feats and abilities may grant an additional active bonus on top of this passive bonus to represent your skill in using a shield to protect yourself.

Maximum Dex Bonus: This number reflects the highest Dexterity bonus to defense that this type of armor allows.

ARMOR AND SHIELDS

Armor	Cost	Damage Reduction	Maximum Dex Bonus	Check Penalty	Weight (M)
Light Armor					
Padded	5 gp	1/magic	+8	0	10 lbs.
Leather	10 gp	1d2/magic	+6	0	15 lbs.
Studded leather	25 gp	1d3/magic	+5	–1	20 lbs.
Medium Armor					
Scale mail	50 gp	1d4/magic	+4	–4	30 lbs.
Chainmail	150 gp	1d5/magic	+5	–5	40 lbs.
Heavy Armor					
Banded mail	250 gp	1d6/magic	+1	–6	35 lbs.
Full plate	1,500 gp	1d8/magic	+1	–6	50 lbs.

Shield	Cost	Passive Defense Bonus	Maximum Dex Bonus	Check Penalty	Weight (M)
Buckler	15 gp	+1	—	–1	5 lbs.
Light shield, wooden	3 gp	+2	—	–1	5 lbs.
Light shield, steel	9 gp	+2	—	–1	6 lbs.
Heavy shield, wooden	7 gp	+3	—	–2	10 lbs.
Heavy shield, steel	20 gp	+3	—	–2	15 lbs.
Tower shield, wooden	30 gp	+4	+2	–10	45 lbs.
Tower shield, steel	90 gp	+4	+2	–10	65 lbs.

Extra Item	Cost	Passive Defense Bonus	Maximum Dex Bonus	Check Penalty	Weight (M)
Armor spikes	+50 gp	—	—	—	+10 lbs.
Gauntlet, locked	8 gp	—	—	Special	+5 lbs.
Shield spikes	+10 gp	—	—	—	+5 lbs.

Heavier armors limit mobility, reducing the wearer's ability to dodge blows. This restriction doesn't affect any other Dexterity-related skills or abilities.

Armor reduces your Dexterity bonus, but it never turns it into a penalty. Shields do not affect a character's maximum Dexterity bonus.

Check Penalty: Any armor heavier than leather hurts a character's ability to use some skills. An armor check penalty number is the penalty that applies to all Strength- and Dexterity-based skill checks. A character's encumbrance (the amount of gear carried, including armor) may also apply an armor check penalty (see "Encumbrance" in Chapter Nine: Adventuring).

Shields also inflict a check penalty. While they have no effect on movement, they are bulky and heavy enough to interfere with the use of some skills.

If a character wears armor and uses a shield, both check penalties apply.

Weight: This column gives the weight of the armor as sized for a Medium wearer. Armor fitted for Small characters weighs half as much, and armor for Large characters weighs twice as much.

SPECIAL ARMOR AND SHIELD RULES

Some of the armor, shields, and extras summarized on the tables on these pages need additional notes and clarifications, provided below. For more information on the various shields and their effects based on size, see "Shields" on page 166.

Armor Spikes: You can add spikes to your armor, allowing you to deal extra piercing damage as shown on the Martial Weapons table on page 162 on a successful grapple attack. The spikes count as a martial weapon. If you are not proficient with them (via the Martial Weapon Proficiency feat or a class ability), you suffer a –4 penalty on grapple checks when you try to use them. You can also make a regular melee attack (or off-hand attack) with the spikes, in which case they count as a light weapon. You can't make an attack with armor spikes if you have already made an attack with another off-hand weapon, and vice versa.

Banded Mail: This suit of armor includes gauntlets.

Chainmail: This suit of armor includes gauntlets.

Full Plate: This suit of armor includes gauntlets, heavy leather boots, a visored helmet, and a thick layer of padding worn underneath the armor. A master armorsmith must fit each suit of full plate individually to its owner, although a captured suit can be resized to fit a new owner at a cost of 200 to 800 (2d4 × 100) gold pieces.

Gauntlet, Locked: This armored gauntlet has small chains and braces that allow the wearer to attach a weapon to the gauntlet so that it cannot be dropped easily. It provides a +10 bonus on any roll made to keep from being disarmed in combat. Removing a weapon from a locked gauntlet or attaching a weapon to a locked gauntlet is a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity.

The price given is for a single locked gauntlet. The weight given applies only if you're wearing a breastplate, light armor, or no armor. Otherwise, the locked gauntlet replaces a gauntlet you already have as part of the armor.

While the gauntlet is locked, you can't use the hand wearing it for employing skills.

Like a normal gauntlet, a locked gauntlet lets you deal lethal damage rather than nonlethal damage with an unarmed strike.

Scale Mail: This suit of armor includes gauntlets.

Wooden or Steel Shields: Wooden and steel shields offer the same basic protection, but they have different hardness ratings and hit points. See Chapter Eight: Combat for more information on hardness, object hit points, and rules for attempting to break items.

Shield Spikes: When added to your shield, these spikes turn it into a martial piercing weapon that increases the damage dealt by a shield bash as if the shield were designed for a creature one size category larger than you. You can't put spikes on a buckler or a tower shield. Otherwise, attacking with a spiked shield is like making a shield bash attack (see "Shield Bash Attacks," page 167).

MASTERWORK ARMOR

Just as with weapons, you can purchase or craft masterwork versions of armor and shields. Such well-made items function like the normal versions, except that their check penalty decreases by 1 point.

A masterwork suit of armor or shield costs an extra 150 gp over and above the normal cost for that type of armor or shield.

The masterwork quality of a suit of armor or shield never provides a bonus to attack or damage rolls, even if the armor or shield is used as a weapon.

You can't add the masterwork quality to armor or a shield after it is created; it must be crafted as a masterwork item.

DONNING AND REMOVING ARMOR

Putting on a suit of armor, or removing one, is a complex, time-consuming process. If your camp suffers an ambush or you are otherwise caught unprepared for battle, you might need to know how long it takes to don your armor. The Donning Armor table below summarizes this information.

If someone helps you remove armor or don armor (but not a shield), cut the listed time in half. The person helping you

DONNING ARMOR

Armor Type	Don	Don Hastily	Remove
Shield (any)	1 move action	n/a	1 move action
Padded, leather, studded leather	1 minute	5 rounds	1 minute
Scale mail, chainmail, banded mail	4 minutes	1 minute	1 minute
Full plate	4 minutes	4 minutes	1d4+1 minutes

ARMOR FOR UNUSUAL CREATURES

		Humanoid		Nonhumanoid	
Size	Cost	Weight	Cost	Weight	
Tiny or smaller	×1/2	×1/10	×1	×1/10	
Small	×1	×1/2	×2	×1/2	
Medium	×1	×1	×2	×1	
Large	×2	×2	×4	×2	
Huge	×4	×5	×8	×5	
Gargantuan	×8	×8	×16	×8	
Colossal	×16	×12	×32	×12	

can do nothing other than aid you. For example, he cannot also don armor himself at the same time.

The one exception to this rule is full plate. You *must* have someone help you don this armor, and his efforts do not cut the time in half. Otherwise, you must don the armor hastily (see below).

Don: This column shows how long it takes a character to put the armor on. (One minute equals 10 rounds.) Readying (strapping on) a shield is only a move action.

Don Hastily: This column tells how long it takes to put the armor on in a hurry. The armor check penalty for hastily donned armor is 1 point worse than normal, and you also suffer a –1 penalty to its damage reduction. This penalty can reduce the armor's damage reduction to 0.

Remove: This column shows how long it takes to get the armor off. Loosing a shield (removing it from the arm and dropping it) is only a move action.

Armor for Large, Small, or Unusual Creatures

Armor and shields for unusually big creatures, unusually little creatures, and nonhumanoid creatures have different costs and weights than those given earlier. Refer to the appropriate line on the table below and apply the multipliers to cost and weight for the armor type in question. These multipliers apply to armor made for Large creatures, barding for horses (armor designed for mounts), and so forth.

GOODS AND SERVICES

In addition to weapons and armor, adventurers also need camping gear and tools useful for exploring dangerous places. This section provides more details on the other goods that you might find helpful in the hazardous world of *Iron Heroes*.

Miscellaneous Gear

Prices and weights for a variety of items appear in the tables on this page and the next. Indicated weights are the items' filled weights, except where otherwise noted.

Artisan's Tools: These special tools include the items needed to pursue any craft. Without them, you have to use improvised tools (–2 penalty on Craft checks), if you can do the job at all.

Artisan's Tools, Masterwork: These tools serve the same purpose as artisan's tools (above), but masterwork artisan's tools are the perfect tools for the job, so you get a +2 circumstance bonus to Craft checks made with them.

Caltrops: A caltrop is a four-pronged iron spike crafted so that one prong faces up no matter how the caltrop comes to rest. You scatter caltrops on the ground in the hope that your enemies step on them or are at least forced to slow down to avoid them. One 2 lb. bag of caltrops covers an area 5 feet square.

Each time a creature moves into an area covered by caltrops, it must make a Reflex save (DC 5). A charging or running creature must save against DC 10. Any creature moving at half speed or slower can pick its way through a bed of caltrops without a saving throw. On a failed save, the caltrop deals 1 point of damage, and the creature can move at only half speed because of its wounded foot. This movement penalty lasts for 24 hours, or until someone treats the creature with a successful Heal check (DC 15), or until the creature spends 2 points from its reserve to remove the penalty. This expenditure can be made only when the creature has a chance to use its reserve pool to heal as normal (see "Healing and Reserve Points" in Chapter Eight: Combat). A charging or running creature must immediately stop if it steps on a caltrop.

Candle: A candle dimly illuminates a 5-foot radius and burns for one hour.

Climber's Kit: This kit consists of metal hooks, a harness, and spikes that grant you a +2 circumstance bonus to Climb checks.

Crowbar: A crowbar grants a +2 circumstance bonus to Strength checks made to open doors or chests. If used in combat, treat a crowbar as a one-handed improvised weapon that deals bludgeoning damage equal to that of a club of its size.

Disguise Kit: The kit consists of makeup, a few simple pieces of clothing, and other useful props. It provides a +2 circumstance bonus to Disguise checks but is exhausted after 10 uses.

FOOD, DRINK, AND LODGING

Item	Cost	Weight
Ale (gallon)	2 sp	8 lbs.
Ale (mug)	4 cp	1 lb.
Inn stay, good (per day)	2 gp	—
Inn stay, common (per day)	5 sp	—
Inn stay, poor (per day)	2 sp	—
Meals, good (per day)	5 sp	—
Meals, common (per day)	3 sp	—
Meals, poor (per day)	1 sp	—
Wine, common (pitcher)	2 sp	6 lbs.
Wine, fine (bottle)	10 gp	1-1/2 lbs.

Flint and Steel: Lighting a torch with flint and steel is a full-round action; lighting any other fire with them takes at least that long.

Grappling Hook: Throwing a grappling hook successfully requires a Use Rope check (DC 10, +2 per 10 feet of distance thrown).

Hammer: If using a hammer in combat, treat it as a one-handed improvised weapon that deals bludgeoning damage equal to that of a spiked gauntlet of its size.

Healer's Kit: A healer's kit includes analgesic herbs, bandages, and salves. It provides a +2 circumstance bonus to Heal checks but is exhausted after 10 uses.

Holy Symbol, Silver or Wooden: Many adventurers carry holy symbols for luck. Others follow a deity and are quick to announce their allegiance.

Ink: This is black ink. You can buy ink in other colors at twice the price.

Lamp, Common: A lamp clearly illuminates a 15-foot radius, provides shadowy illumination out to a 30-foot radius, and burns for six hours on a pint of oil. You can carry a lamp in one hand.

Lantern, Bullseye: A bullseye lantern provides clear illumination in a 60-foot cone and shadowy illumination in a 120-foot cone. It burns for six hours on a pint of oil. You can carry a bullseye lantern in one hand.

Lantern, Hooded: A hooded lantern clearly illuminates a 30-foot radius and provides shadowy illumination in a 60-foot radius. It burns for six hours on a pint of oil. You can carry a hooded lantern in one hand.

Musical Instrument, Common or Masterwork: A masterwork instrument grants a +2 circumstance bonus to Perform checks involving its use.

Oil: A pint of oil burns for six hours in a lantern. You can use a flask of oil as a splash weapon; use the rules for splash weapons in Chapter Eight: Combat, except that it takes a full-round action to prepare a flask with a fuse. Once you throw it, there is a 50 percent chance of the flask igniting successfully.

You can pour a pint of oil on the ground to cover an area 5 feet square, provided that the surface is smooth. If lit, the oil burns for 2 rounds and deals 1d3 points of fire damage to each creature in the area.

Rope, Hempen: This rope has 2 hit points and can be burst with a Strength check (DC 23).

ADVENTURING GEAR

Item	Cost	Weight	Item	Cost	Weight
Artisan's tools	5 gp	5 lbs.	Lantern, hooded	7 gp	2 lbs.
Artisan's tools, masterwork	55 gp	5 lbs.	Mirror, small steel	10 gp	1/2 lb.
Backpack (empty)	2 gp	2 lbs.	Musical instrument, common	5 gp	3 lbs.
Bedroll	1 sp	5 lbs.	Musical instrument, masterwork	100 gp	3 lbs.
Bell	1 gp	—	Oil (1-pint flask)	1 sp	1 lbs.
Blanket, winter	5 sp	3 lbs.	Paper (sheet)	4 sp	—
Caltrops	1 gp	2 lbs.	Parchment (sheet)	2 sp	—
Candle	1 cp	—	Pick, miner's	3 gp	10 lbs.
Case, map or scroll	1 gp	1/2 lb.	Piton	1 sp	1/2 lb.
Chalk (1 piece)	1 cp	—	Pole, 10-foot	2 sp	8 lbs.
Climber's kit	80 gp	5 lbs.	Pouch, belt (empty)	1 gp	1/2 lb.
Crowbar	2 gp	5 lbs.	Rations, trail (per day)	5 sp	1 lb.
Disguise kit	50 gp	8 lbs.	Rope, hempen (50 feet)	1 gp	10 lbs.
Firewood (per day)	1 cp	20 lbs.	Rope, silk (50 feet)	10 gp	5 lbs.
Fishhook	1 sp	—	Sack (empty)	1 sp	1/2 lb.
Fishing net, 25 square feet	4 gp	5 lbs.	Sealing wax	1 gp	1 lb.
Flask (empty)	3 cp	1-1/2 lbs.	Set of clothes, crude	5 cp	3 lbs.
Flint and steel	1 gp	—	Set of clothes, plain	1 gp	5 lbs.
Grappling hook	1 gp	4 lbs.	Set of clothes, fine	75 gp	10 lbs.
Hammer	5 sp	2 lbs.	Signal whistle	8 sp	—
Healer's kit	50 gp	1 lb.	Sledge	1 gp	10 lbs.
Holy symbol, wooden	1 gp	—	Spade or shovel	2 gp	8 lbs.
Holy symbol, silver	25 gp	1 lb.	Spyglass	1,000 gp	1 lb.
Ink (1 oz. vial)	8 gp	—	Tent	10 gp	20 lbs.
Inkpen	1 sp	—	Thieves' tools	30 gp	1 lb.
Jug, clay	3 cp	9 lbs.	Thieves' tools, masterwork	100 gp	2 lbs.
Ladder, 10-foot	5 cp	20 lbs.	Torch	1 cp	1 lb.
Lamp, common	1 sp	1 lb.	Vial, ink or potion	1 gp	1/10 lb.
Lantern, bullseye	12 gp	3 lbs.	Waterskin	1 gp	4 lbs.

Rope, Silk: This rope has 4 hit points and can be burst with a Strength check (DC 24). It is so supple that it provides a +2 circumstance bonus to Use Rope checks.

Spyglass: Viewing objects through a spyglass magnifies them to twice their size.

Thieves' Tools: This kit contains the tools you need to use the Disable Device and Open Lock skills. Without them, you must improvise tools and suffer a –2 circumstance penalty on Disable Device and Open Lock checks.

Thieves' Tools, Masterwork: This kit contains extra implements and tools of better make, which grants a +2 circumstance bonus to Disable Device and Open Lock checks.

Torch: A torch burns for one hour, clearly illuminating a 20-foot radius and providing shadowy illumination out to a 40-foot radius. If used in combat, treat a torch as a one-handed improvised weapon that deals bludgeoning damage equal to that of a gauntlet of its size, plus 1 point of fire damage.

Vial: A vial holds 1 ounce of liquid. The stoppered container usually measures no more than 1 inch wide and 3 inches high.

Clothing

Characters start with an adventurer's outfit (or some other outfit of up to that price). Listed weights are for Medium characters; for Small characters, divide the weight in half.

For prices and weights, see the clothing table on the next page.

Adventurer's Outfit: This simple outfit includes boots, breeches, and a loose shirt. Though it looks casual, it is designed to give a character maximum mobility, and it's made of high-quality fabric. A character can hide small weapons in pockets secreted in the folds of this clothing.

Artisan's Outfit: A shirt with buttons, a skirt or pants with a drawstring, shoes, and perhaps a cap or hat. This outfit may include a belt or a leather or cloth apron for carrying tools.

Cold Weather Outfit: A wool coat, linen shirt, wool cap, heavy cloak, thick pants or skirt, and boots. When wearing a cold weather outfit, a character gains a +5 circumstance bonus to Fortitude saving throws against exposure to cold weather.

Courtier's Outfit: Fancy tailored clothes in whatever fashion happens to be the current style in the courts of the nobles. Anyone trying to influence nobles or courtiers while wearing street dress will have a hard time of it. Without jewelry (costing perhaps an additional 50 gp), the character will look like an out-of-place commoner, even if he has this outfit.

Entertainer's Outfit: A set of flashy, perhaps even gaudy clothes for entertaining. While the outfit looks whimsical, its practical design lets a character tumble, dance, walk a tightrope, or just run (if the audience turns ugly).

Explorer's Outfit: This is a full set of clothes for someone who never knows what to expect. It includes sturdy boots, leather breeches or a skirt, a belt, a shirt (perhaps with a vest or jacket), gloves, and a cloak. Rather than a leather skirt, the character instead may wear a leather overtunic on top of a cloth skirt. These clothes have plenty of pockets (especially
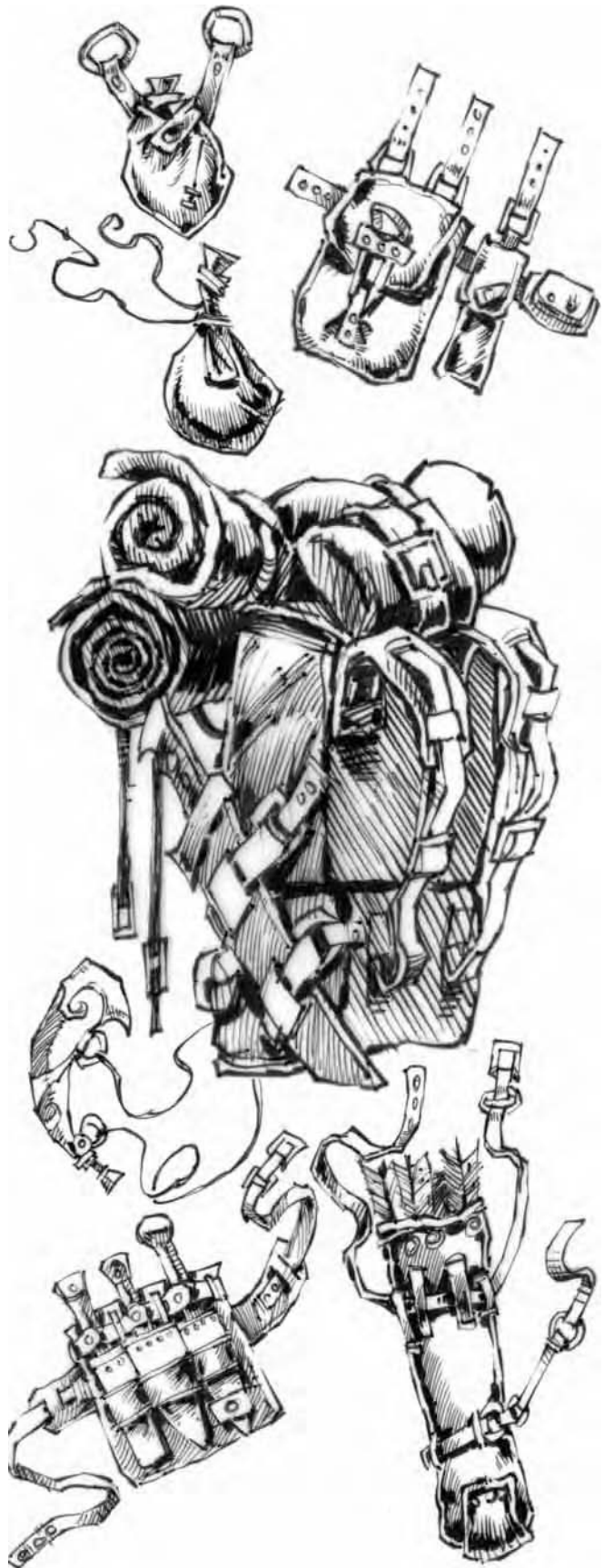
CLOTHING

Item	Price	Weight
Adventurer's outfit	5 gp	2 lbs.
Artisan's outfit	1 gp	4 lbs.
Cold weather outfit	8 gp	7 lbs.
Courtier's outfit	30 gp	6 lbs.
Entertainer's outfit	3 gp	4 lbs.
Explorer's outfit	10 gp	8 lbs.
Noble's outfit	75 gp	10 lbs.
Peasant's outfit	1 sp	2 lbs.
Scholar's outfit	5 gp	6 lbs.
Traveler's outfit	1 gp	5 lbs.

the cloak). The outfit also includes any extra items a character might need, such as a scarf or a wide-brimmed hat.

Noble's Outfit: This set of clothes is designed specifically to be expensive—and show it. Precious metals and gems are worked into the clothing. To fit into the noble crowd, every would-be noble also needs a signet ring and jewelry (worth at least 100 gp, or at least appearing to be worth that much). And it would be advisable to not show up to a ball in the same noble's outfit twice.

Peasant's Outfit: A loose shirt and baggy breeches, or a loose shirt and skirt or overdress. Cloth wrappings are used as shoes.

Scholar's Outfit: A robe, belt, cap, soft shoes, and possibly a cloak. The robe has many pockets.

Traveler's Outfit: Boots, a wool skirt or breeches, a sturdy belt, a shirt (perhaps with a vest or jacket), and an ample cloak with hood.

MOUNTS AND RELATED GEAR

A horse is useful not only as a mount, but also to help transport great sums of treasure, supplies, and goods over long distances. Full rules for mounts can be found in Chapter Four (see the Ride skill) and Chapter Eight (see "Mounted Combat").

Barding, Medium Creature and Large Creature: Barding is a type of armor that covers the head, neck, chest, body, and possibly legs of a horse. Barding made of medium or heavy armor provides better protection than light barding, but at the expense of speed. You can craft barding equivalent to any of the armor types covered in this chapter. It reduces the horse's speed as normal for an armor of its type.

Removing and fitting barding takes five times as long as the figures given on the Donning Armor table on page 168. A barded animal cannot carry any load other than the rider and normal saddlebags.

TYPES OF MOUNT

From donkeys and mules to fierce chargers bred for war, various types of mounts or beasts of burden are available in *Iron Heroes* games.

Donkey or Mule: Donkeys and mules remain stolid in the face of danger. The hardy creatures are sure-footed and capable of carrying heavy loads over vast distances. Unlike a horse, a donkey or a mule is willing (though not eager) to enter dungeons and other strange or threatening places.

Horse: Horses provide the most common form of transportation in the world of *Iron Heroes*. Whether ridden or used to pull a cart or wagon, they are reliable, hard-working animals.

Warhorses and warponies can be ridden easily into combat. Light horses, ponies, and heavy horses are hard to control in combat. See the Ride skill in Chapter Four for more information.

EQUIPMENT FOR MOUNTS

In addition to buying a horse, you also need a saddle, saddle-bags, feed, and other goods to care for it.

Feed: Horses, donkeys, mules, and ponies can graze to sustain themselves, but you may have to provide feed for them in rugged terrain.

Saddle, Military: A military saddle braces the rider, providing a +2 circumstance bonus to Ride checks related to staying in the saddle. If you're knocked unconscious while in a military saddle, you have a 75 percent chance to stay in the saddle (compared to 50 percent for a riding saddle).

Saddle, Pack: A pack saddle holds gear and supplies, but not a rider. It holds as much gear as the mount can carry (see "Carrying Capacity" in Chapter Nine: Adventuring).

Saddle, Riding: The standard riding saddle supports a rider. If you're knocked unconscious while in a riding saddle, you have a 50 percent chance to stay in the saddle.

MOUNTS AND RELATED GEAR

Item	Cost	Weight
Barding, horse	×4	×2
Bit and bridle	2 gp	1 lb.
Dog, guard	25 gp	—
Donkey or mule	8 gp	—
Feed (per day)	5 cp	10 lbs.
Horse, heavy	200 gp	—
Horse, light	75 gp	—
Pony	30 gp	—
Saddle, military	20 gp	30 lbs.
Saddle, pack	5 gp	15 lbs.
Saddle, riding	10 gp	25 lbs.
Saddlebags	4 gp	8 lbs.
Stabling (per day)	5 sp	—
Warhorse, heavy	400 gp	—
Warhorse, light	150 gp	—
Warpony	100 gp	—

COMBAT

In many ways, combat is the heart of Iron Heroes. *The player characters are great warriors who, through their deeds, become living legends. Even thieves and arcanists thrive in combat. While they may lack a weapon master's fighting talent, they have their own unique capabilities to out-think and trick their enemies.*

I f you have played other roleplaying games compatible with the d20 System, take a look at the new rules presented below before you begin play. Otherwise, everything works as you would expect.

WHAT'S NEW?

This summary for experienced players outlines the main ways in which *Iron Heroes* games deviate from standard d20 play.

Defense: Characters have a defense score in place of an Armor Class. Armor works differently in *Iron Heroes* (see below), so using the term Armor Class would be confusing. In addition, each character class provides a defense bonus to represent your skill in parrying, dodging, and otherwise avoiding blows. Some classes emphasize defense more than others.

Armor: Armor in *Iron Heroes* provides damage reduction (DR), as explained in the "Armor and Shields" section of Chapter Seven: Equipment. In short, when you suffer a hit, you roll a die (perhaps with a modifier) to see how much damage reduction your armor provides against an attack. You then subtract this result from the damage you suffered. This variable system for damage reduction prevents armor from becoming too reliable, plus it allows for feats and class abilities that improve how you use armor. Shields still provide a bonus to defense.

Stunts: A stunt is a heroic action that you can attempt. Stunts draw on the skill system and allow you to apply your skills in a manner beyond the uses described in Chapter Four. In summary, you can use almost any skill in a set of generic stunt actions to gain a variety of benefits in a fight. These benefits are often tied to the encounter's terrain. For example, a cunning warrior might kick a bale of hay at a troll to distract it as she moves in to attack. (For more details on stunts, see page 207.)

Challenges: A challenge is a penalty to your attacks or defense that you willingly accept in return for some benefit. Combat challenges work a lot like the skill challenges described in Chapter Four. (For more details on challenges in combat, see page 205.)

Attacks of Opportunity: Attacks of opportunity become much simpler in *Iron Heroes*. You only provoke one if you take a nonattack action or if you try to move too quickly through an opponent's threatened area. (1) If you take a standard or full-round action that isn't a melee attack, you provoke an attack of opportunity. (2) If you move more than one-quarter your speed in a threatened area, you provoke an attack of opportunity. Those are the only two rules you need to remember.

Movement: Movement and most distances in combat are expressed in squares in addition to feet. This presentation makes it easier to resolve many of the feats and abilities that draw on your opponent's position relative to your own. Whenever you must halve or quarter a creature's speed, apply that reduction to its squares and round down. If you then need to refer to its reduced speed in feet, multiply its new speed in squares by 5 feet.

Reserve Points: Without divine healing magic in the game, reserve points allow characters to regain their strength between battles.

ACTIONS IN COMBAT

Iron Heroes uses a turn-based system for resolving combat. In a turn-based system, each player has a chance to declare and resolve his character's actions. Once one player has gone, someone else gets to go. Unlike a board game, where play may progress clockwise around the table, characters (and monsters) in *Iron Heroes* act in order of their initiative (see page 176). Once cycle of turns for everyone takes about six seconds of in-game time and is called a *round*.

When it's your turn to act in the round, you have several basic options:

Standard actions represent firing a bow, swinging a sword, casting a spell, and other things that take up most of your attention during a round. They require effort, focus, and precision. You can take one standard action each round.

Move actions represent movement or other actions that you could logically perform while also completing a standard action. A harrier might run around a corner and slash at the giant snake hiding there. An archer takes a few steps to fire through a gap in a ruined wall. You can take one move action in addition to a standard action in a round. If you choose not to take a standard action, you can take an extra move action on your turn.

Full-round actions are complex acts that require so much focus that you cannot take a move action while completing one. If you take a full-round action, it replaces your standard and move actions.

Free actions represent anything you can do without distracting your other efforts. Shouting a warning, winking at an opponent, or dropping an item are all free actions. Your DM has the final say on how many free actions you can fit into a six-second round. You can probably shout a brief message, but you cannot deliver a monologue.

Longer actions may take a number of rounds or even minutes to complete. In this case, you must spend the required number of rounds using full-round actions to complete the task. If an action requires 1 round to complete, use a full-round action on your turn; at the start of your action on the next round, you complete the action. In essence, you must use a consecutive number of full-round actions equal to the number of rounds needed to complete the action. At the beginning of your action on the round after you took the last full-round action, the action takes effect or you complete it.

"Not an action" applies to activities that require no special effort on your part. This may seem like a strange category, but it is important to define combat options that don't fall into any of the other categories. When you use a combat option that isn't an action, you don't use any of your actions for the round on it. This classification generally applies to combat actions that allow you to alter your initiative and otherwise interact with the game system, rather than the fictional situation that the system describes. For example, the delay option (see page 176) is not an action. Delaying allows you to reduce your initiative to act later in a round. This concept exists purely within the system, since everyone's actions in a round theoretically occur almost simultaneously.

Full details on the different standard, move, and full-round actions come later in this chapter. The action type for each combat option is defined within its description.

A single round lasts six seconds. While everyone's actions during a round are considered roughly simultaneous, you apply the full effects of a character's actions before moving

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ACTIONS IN COMBAT

STANDARD ACTIONS
Standard attack*
Activate a magic item other than a potion or oil
Aid another*
Bull rush
Cast a spell (1 standard action casting time)
Concentrate to maintain an active spell
Dismiss a spell
Draw a hidden weapon (see Sleight of Hand skill)
Drink a potion or apply an oil
Escape a grapple
Feint*
Make a dying friend stable (see Heal skill)
Move a heavy object
Overrun
Read a scroll
Sunder a weapon or object (attack)
Total defense*
Use extraordinary ability

Use skill that takes 1 action
Use spell-like ability
Use supernatural ability

MOVE ACTIONS*
Move
Control a frightened mount
Direct or redirect an active spell
Draw a weapon
Load a hand crossbow or light crossbow
Mount a horse or dismount
Open or close a door
Pick up an item
Sheathe a weapon
Stand up from prone position
Ready or loose a shield or weapon
Retrieve a stored item

NOT AN ACTION*
Delay

FULL-ROUND ACTIONS
Full attack*
Charge*
Deliver *coup de grace*
Escape from a net
Extinguish flames
Light a torch
Load a heavy or repeating crossbow
Lock or unlock weapon in locked gauntlet
Prepare to throw splash weapon
Run
Use skill that takes 1 round
Withdraw*

FREE ACTIONS*
Drop an item
Drop to the floor
Ready an action
Speak

* Does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

on to the next person in the initiative queue. If a weapon master slays an ogre before the ogre's initiative, the ogre doesn't get a chance to act. It's dead as soon as the weapon master resolves his damage against it.

INITIATIVE

The quick-witted thief draws her dagger and leaps to strike. Meanwhile, the slow, ponderous berserker fumbles with his axe and steadies his feet before launching into combat. A sorcerer's stone war machine is so clumsy that it takes it a second to gather its balance every time it tries to smash an opponent with its massive fist. The concept of initiative models the reaction time of each of these combatants. Fast combatants usually get the chance to act first, while slower ones lag behind.

Initiative represents your speed and reflexes. Some combatants are better able to leap to action in the face of a threat than others. To determine your initiative, roll 1d20 and add your character's *initiative modifier*. Your initiative modifier consists of your Dexterity modifier plus other modifiers you may gain through feats and special abilities.

Initiative = d20 + Dexterity modifier + modifiers from feats and abilities

Before combat begins, everyone involved in the fight must roll for initiative. Your DM may roll one initiative result for a large group of similar creatures, such as a squad of a dozen guards, to keep things moving quickly.

The person with the highest initiative gets to act first. He resolves all his actions, and then the person with the next highest initiative goes. This process continues until the combatant with the lowest initiative has acted. When that happens, the round ends. The next round begins, the combatant with the highest total initiative goes again, and so forth.

If a tie for initiative arises, the tied creature with the highest initiative modifier goes first. If the tie remains, the tied creatures each roll 1d20 (without modifiers) and act in order of their rolls from highest to lowest. Reroll any ties. The result of this tiebreaker remains in effect for the rest of the fight.

You only roll once for initiative. You use that result for the entire encounter with your opponents. If a new creature enters a combat area, it rolls for initiative and inserts itself into the current initiative order according to its total. Creatures enter combat (and roll for initiative) between rounds. If a creature somehow stumbles into a fight in the middle of the action, such as if a harrier smashes open a clay jar containing a poisonous spider, the DM waits until the end of the current round to roll for the spider.

Even if a creature isn't directly involved in a fight, it is usually best to roll initiative for it to determine its progress. The brutes a few rooms over from the location of the current fight can roll for initiative and move toward the brawl on their turn, eventually arriving on the scene to join in the battle.

FLAT-FOOTED COMBATANTS

At the start of a fight, not everyone is ready to act. A slow warrior isn't ready to defend himself, which leaves him open to a devastating strike. Until you take your first action, you are considered *flat footed*. A flat-footed combatant does not gain its active bonuses to defense. In addition, flat-footed combatants do not threaten any area and cannot take attacks of opportunity, as described later in this chapter.

For example, on the first round of combat, an executioner has the highest initiative with a 21, a hunter has an 18, and a man-at-arms has a 9. The executioner goes first. She acts as normal and gains her active bonus to defense, but the hunter and the man-at-arms do not yet enjoy the benefit of their active bonuses to defense. When the hunter goes, he gains his active bonus, while the man-at-arms still does not have his. Finally, when it's the man-at-arms' turn, he gains his active bonus.

INITIATIVE ACTIONS

There are a few special actions that you can use to modify your initiative. A man-at-arms may wait until his arcanist ally ducks behind cover before firing an arrow at the troll that threatens him. A hiding executioner waits until a guard moves past her position before jumping out to attack. These actions rely on someone else's decisions or maneuvers to determine when they happen, or they require you to hold your action until an enemy or ally completes his. The various *initiative actions* are described below.

DELAY [NOT AN ACTION]

An archer waits until his comrades move to clear his line of fire before launching a volley at a swooping griffon. An arcanist waits until his berserker sidekick slays a giant before moving, to avoid drawing the creature's attention. In these cases, the delay action allows combatants to reduce their initiative voluntarily. By waiting for your allies (and enemies) to resolve their actions, you might gain an advantage.

When you choose to delay, you take no action on your normal initiative count, then act normally on the initiative count you decide upon. When you delay, you voluntarily reduce your own initiative result for the rest of the combat. When your new, lower initiative count comes up later in the same round, you can act normally. You can specify this new initiative result or just wait until some time later in the round and act then, thus fixing your new initiative count at that point.

You never get back the time you spend waiting to see what's going to happen. However, you can't interrupt anyone else's action by deciding to take yours (as you can with a readied action; see below). Before the other person acts, you must declare that you wish to act. Your DM should let you know that a monster or ally is about to act, to give you the chance to take your turn if you want to.

Initiative Consequences of Delaying: Your initiative result becomes the count on which you took your delayed

action. If you come to your original initiative count on the next round and have not yet performed an action, you have missed your chance to take a delayed action (though you can delay again).

Should you take a delayed action into the next round, before your regular turn comes up, your initiative count rises to that new point in the order of battle, and you do not get your regular action that round. You insert your new initiative immediately before the person who goes after your delayed action and after the previous person to act.

READY [FREE ACTION]
The ready action lets you prepare to take an action later, after your turn is over but before your next one has begun. Readying is a free action.

Readying an Action: You can ready a standard action, a move action, or a free action. However, you must still have the relevant action type available when you ready it—in essence, you figure out what you want to do, then you save the action until later in the round. You cannot use a standard action to attack and then ready another standard action, because you have already used your standard action. You could use a standard action and then ready a free one. The actual act of readying is a free action.

To ready an action, specify the action you will take and the conditions under which you will take it. Then, any time before your next turn, you may take the readied action in response to that condition. The action occurs just before the action that triggers it. If the triggering condition arises as part of another character's activities, you interrupt the other character's actions. Assuming he is still capable of doing so, the interrupted character continues his actions once you complete your readied action.

Your initiative result changes after you complete your readied action. For the rest of the encounter, your initiative result is the count on which you took your readied action. You act immediately ahead of the character whose action triggered it.

You can take a one-square (5-foot) step as part of your readied action, but only if you don't otherwise move any distance during the round, either on your normal action (when you announced that you wanted to ready) or as your readied action. (See page 190 for more details on one-square steps.)

Initiative Consequences of Readying: Your initiative result becomes the count on which you took the readied action. If you come to your next action and have not yet performed your readied action, you don't get to take it (though you can ready the same action again). If you take your readied action in the next round but before your regular turn comes up, your initiative count rises to that new point in the order of battle, and you do not get your regular action that round.

Readying a Weapon against a Charge: You can ready certain piercing weapons, setting them to receive charges. A readied weapon of this type deals double damage if you score a hit with it against a charging character.

Typical Readied Actions: When you ready an action, you must be reasonably clear about the conditions that trigger it. Your DM may require you to clarify your intent. Remember, you do not have to complete a readied action when its conditions are fulfilled. You can always choose to keep the action readied or use it.

Typical readied actions are:
- Make an attack with a weapon you have in hand.
- Close or open a door.
- Run.
- Use a skill (one you can use as a standard action).

Typical triggers for readied actions are:
- When a creature moves into your threatened area.
- When a creature moves into a specific place, such as through a doorway.
- When an object or item moves, such as when a door opens or an alarm bell rings.
- When someone takes a specific action, such as drawing a weapon, attacking, or casting a spell.

The clearer you are about your intention, the easier it is for your DM to determine whether your readied action can take place in response to something.

SURPRISE
An executioner leaps from the shadows, cutting down a guard before her target can even place a hand on his sword. A spectral demon lurks outside a bar, preparing an ambush for the heroes its master commanded it to slay. A hunter turns his shield just in time to deflect a cultist's arrow. While his companions gather their wits, he springs into action and cuts down the attacker. These are all examples of combat situations that involve surprise. A *surprise round* represents a few seconds where some people involved in battle are caught off guard. While they gather their wits, other combatants with keener senses or faster reflexes can act.

A surprise round is an exception to the normal flow of initiative. It works a lot like a regular combat round, but combatants who were surprised do not get a chance to act. Remember that a combatant whose initiative count has not yet come up is flat footed, as described on page 176. This status also applies to combatants who have not yet rolled initiative.

Typically, a surprise round takes place when a combatant fails a Spot or Listen check to notice an approaching enemy. In the example above, the guard didn't see the executioner as she hid in the shadows and prepared to attack. If the guard traveled with a keen-eared hunter, the hunter might have been ready for the attack, assuming he succeeded in his Spot check. In that case, the hunter and the executioner would act on the surprise round while the guard recovered his wits.

Flat-footed combatants usually lose their active bonus to defense, and they do not threaten any areas. Some abilities allow you to ignore this drawback.

During a surprise round, you can use a standard action or a move action but not both. This rule eliminates the possibility of a full-round action, since a full-round action replaces both a standard and a move action. The combatants who were not surprised roll for initiative and act as described above. At the end of the round, everyone who was surprised rolls initiative, and combat proceeds as normal.

ATTACKS

At its heart, combat is the process of swinging a mace or firing an arrow in the hopes of hitting and injuring an opponent. An attack is a lot like a skill check with a Difficulty Class that equals your opponent's defense.

Calculate your attack bonus with a melee weapon as follows:

Melee attack bonus = base attack bonus + Strength modifier + size modifier + miscellaneous modifiers

With a ranged weapon, it changes a bit:

Ranged attack bonus = base attack bonus + Dexterity modifier + size modifier + range penalty + miscellaneous modifiers

The standard modifiers that apply to an attack are listed in the tables on this page. When you meet the conditions for a given modifier, apply it to your attack.

Size Modifiers: A creature's size modifier represents the difficulty a big creature has in hitting a smaller one, while a small creature sees a bigger one as an easier target. The size modifier to defense balances this out when two creatures of the same or similar size fight against each other. See the table below for size modifiers to attacks.

Size	Size Modifier
Colossal	–8
Gargantuan	–4
Huge	–2
Large	–1
Medium	+0
Small	+1
Tiny	+2
Diminutive	+4
Fine	+8

If the total of your attack roll, after accounting for all modifiers, matches or beats your opponent's defense, you score a hit. Full details on defense and damage appear later in this chapter, starting on pages 181 and 185, respectively.

FLANKING

When making a melee attack, you enjoy a +2 flanking bonus if a character friendly to you threatens your opponent on the opposite border or opposite corner of the opponent's space.

ATTACK ROLL MODIFIERS

Attacker's Condition	Melee	Ranged
Dazzled*	–1	–1
Entangled*	–2**	–2**
Flanking defender	+2	—
Invisible*	+2†	+2†
On higher ground	+1	+0
Prone*	–4	N/A (+0)††
Shaken or frightened*	–2	–2
Squeezing through a space	–4	–4

Defender's Condition	Melee	Ranged
Engaged in melee	+0/–4‡	–4

*   Fully described under "States and Conditions," page 209.
** An entangled character also suffers a –4 penalty to Dexterity, which may affect his attack roll.
†   The defender loses any active bonus to defense. This bonus doesn't apply if the target is blinded.
†† Most ranged weapons can't be used while the attacker is prone, but you can use a crossbow or shuriken while prone at no penalty.
‡   See "Reach, Threatened Areas, and Melee Attacks," below.

When in doubt about whether two friendly characters flank an opponent in the middle, trace an imaginary line between the two friendly characters' centers. If the line passes through opposite borders of the opponent's space (including corners of those borders), then the opponent is flanked.

Some flankers may take up more than one square. In such a case. they receive the flanking bonus if any square they occupy counts for flanking.

Only a creature or character that threatens the defender can help an attacker get a flanking bonus. Thus, creatures with a reach of 0 feet can't flank an opponent.

You can also flank a creature on your own if you manage to maneuver around it *and* strike during your action. When you make an attack, if you occupied a space on the opposite border or corner during your current action and before your attack, you flank your target. In essence, you quickly move around your opponent and slash at him from behind, making it difficult for him to defend against your strike. When in doubt as to whether this exception applies, pretend that an ally occupies every square you moved into on your action. When you attack, if you would flank because of those imaginary allies, you gain the flanking bonus. In most cases, you must use a move action to move, then a standard action to attack in order to gain this benefit.

REACH, THREATENED AREAS, AND MELEE ATTACKS

In order to strike an opponent with a sword, axe, or other melee armament, you must be able to reach him with your weapon. Your *reach* is, in essence, the range of your melee attack. Count the shortest path between you and your

opponent, starting with a square adjacent to you and counting the square your foe occupies. You can count the range using diagonals, but every second diagonal counts as two squares or 10 feet. If the distance to your opponent is less than or equal to your reach, you can strike him. The attacker chooses the shortest route he can find.

In most cases, your reach is one square (5 feet). This means you can attack anyone who is in a square adjacent to you.

Any square that is within your reach is part of your *threatened area*. Your threatened area is important for attacks of opportunity, defined as attacks you make when someone tries to move past you or when an opponent lets down his guard to complete a risky action in combat. Attacks of opportunity are explained on page 180.

You do not have reach, nor do you threaten the area around you, when you are armed with a ranged weapon unless it is a melee weapon that you can throw, such as a spear or a throwing axe.

If you attack an opponent who is not adjacent to you with a melee attack, such as with a reach weapon or because you have a long natural reach, you suffer a –4 penalty to your attack if anyone else also threatens that target. In this case, you and your allies (or whoever else may threaten the target) get in each other's way. This penalty does not apply if you are adjacent to your target.

Range and Missile Weapons

With a ranged weapon, you can shoot or throw at any target within the weapon's maximum range and in line of sight. The maximum range for a thrown weapon is five range increments. For projectile weapons, the maximum range is 10 range increments. Some ranged weapons have shorter maximum ranges, as specified in their descriptions in Chapter Seven: Equipment.

STACKING MODIFIERS

In play, you cannot add two bonuses with the same name together and apply them both to your defense, ability score, ability check, skill check, attack roll, combat action, saving throw, or other action. Thus, two enhancement bonuses of +2 do not "stack" to make a modifier of +4 to a character's check. However, because they are different bonus types, an enhancement bonus of +2 and a luck bonus of +2 would stack to make a modifier of +4.

There are exceptions to this rule. Circumstance bonuses always stack together. Dodge bonuses to defense always stack as well. If a character receives a bonus that does not have a name, it always stacks with all other modifiers, even other bonuses without names.

Various feats and abilities grant benefits when used at certain ranges. The ranges used in this book are as follows:

*   **Close:** up to 25 feet away from you.
*   **Medium:** 100 feet + 10 feet per character level.
*   **Long:** 400 feet + 40 feet per character level.

As with reach, to determine range, count the shortest distance to your target and include the square your target occupies. The attacker picks the shortest route he can find. You suffer a –2 penalty to your attack for each full range increment that lies between you and your target.

Ranged Weapons Against Engaged Targets

You suffer a –4 penalty to ranged attacks made against creatures engaged in melee. A creature is considered engaged in melee if any of its opponents threaten it, unless they are far apart. If your target (or the part of your target you're aiming at, if it's a big target) is at least 10 feet away from the nearest friendly character, you can avoid the –4 penalty, even if the

creature you're aiming at is engaged in melee with a friendly character.

UNARMED STRIKES

An unarmed strike is an attack with a punch or a kick. Only humanoids can make unarmed attacks, as most animals and monsters have claws, fangs, and other natural weapons. Such attacks are not considered unarmed strikes.

Unarmed Strike Damage: An unarmed strike from a Medium character deals 1d3 points of damage (plus your Strength modifier, as normal; see "Damage, Injuries, and Death," page 185). A Small character's unarmed strike deals 1d2 points of damage, while a Large character's unarmed strike deals 1d4 points of damage. All damage from unarmed strikes is nonlethal damage (see page 186). Unarmed strikes count as light weapons (for the purposes of two-weapon attack penalties and so on).

Dealing Lethal Damage: You can specify before you make your attack roll that you wish to deal lethal damage with your unarmed strike, but you accept a –4 penalty on your attack roll. If you have the Improved Unarmed Strike general feat, you can deal lethal damage with an unarmed strike without penalty. Lethal and nonlethal damage are explained starting on page 185.

Attacks of Opportunity: When you make an unarmed strike, you provoke an attack of opportunity even though attack actions do not normally provoke them. If you have the Improved Unarmed Strike general feat, you do not provoke attacks of opportunity when making unarmed strikes.

ATTACK ACTIONS

The standard attack and full attack actions represent the generic combat options available to you (attacks of opportunity are a bit different, as you will see below). An attack with a ranged or melee weapon is usually a standard or full-round action. There are also a variety of options you can add to an attack, special maneuvers you can use, and so forth. These advanced rules appear on page 194 under "Special Attack Actions."

Later on, this chapter introduces a variety of other actions you can use, such as disarm or trip, that qualify as an attack.

STANDARD ATTACK [STANDARD ACTION]

You make a single attack using your full attack bonus against an eligible target. Unlike other standard actions, a standard attack does not provoke an attack of opportunity. You can attempt only one attack, even if you have multiple attacks because of a high base attack bonus or if you carry a second weapon.

This action does not provoke an attack of opportunity if you use a melee weapon. If you fight with a ranged weapon or make an unarmed attack, such a punch or kick, you do provoke an attack of opportunity. Beasts that fight with natural weapons, such as claws or fanged bites, do not provoke attacks of opportunity; such natural armaments are considered melee weapons.

FULL ATTACK [FULL-ROUND ACTION]

You can make multiple attacks if your base attack bonus is high enough (see the class tables in Chapter Three) or if you fight with more than one weapon. In most cases, you must use the full attack action to make more than one attack on your action. Unlike other full-round actions, a full attack does not provoke an attack of opportunity. You do not need to specify the targets of your attacks ahead of time. You can see how the earlier attacks turn out before assigning the later ones to targets.

The only movement you can take during a full attack is a single one-square (5-foot) step. You may take the step before, after, or between any two attacks.

If you get multiple attacks because your base attack bonus is high enough, you must make the attacks in order from highest bonus to lowest. If you are using two weapons, you can strike with either weapon first. If you are using a double weapon, you can strike with either part of the weapon first.

Deciding Between an Attack or a Full Attack: After your first attack, you can decide to take a move action instead of making your remaining attacks, depending on how the first attack turns out. If you've already taken a one-square step, you can't use your move action to move any distance, but you could still use a different kind of move action.

TOUCH ATTACKS

For a touch attack, it is only important to touch a foe, not necessarily to wound or penetrate armor. For instance, an arcanist who casts a spell with a range of Touch makes a touch attack. Touch attacks also apply in combat actions like grappling.

Touch attacks come in two types: *melee touch attacks* and *ranged touch attacks*. You make them as you would make a normal attack roll, and you can score critical hits with either type of attack. Your opponent's defense against a touch attack does not include any passive bonuses, except cover (other than that provided by a tower shield) and the target's size modifier.. The target's size modifier, Dexterity modifier, and deflection bonus (if any) all apply normally.

ATTACKS OF OPPORTUNITY

Sometimes a character in melee lets her guard down. In this case, combatants near her can take advantage of her lapse in defense to attack her for free. These free attacks are called *attacks of opportunity*. They are a special case for attacks that require some additional explanation.

THREATENED SQUARES

As explained in "Reach, Threatened Areas, and Melee Attacks" (page 178) you threaten all squares into which you can make a melee attack, even when it is not your action. Generally, that means everything in all squares adjacent to your space (including diagonally). An enemy that takes a standard or full-round action other than a melee attack while in a threatened square provokes an attack of opportunity from you. If you're unarmed or carrying a ranged weapon that you cannot use to

make melee attacks, you don't normally threaten any squares and thus can't make attacks of opportunity.

Note that a flat-footed combatant does not threaten any squares.

Reach Weapons: If you carry a reach weapon, you threaten any area that you can normally attack with the weapon's reach.

PROVOKING ATTACKS OF OPPORTUNITY

Three kinds of actions can provoke attacks of opportunity: moving more than a quarter of your speed in a threatened area, taking a standard action other than a standard attack, and taking a full-round action other than a full attack. Any other action or excess movement requires you to drop your guard, thus provoking an attack of opportunity.

Moving: If you spend more than a quarter of your speed (rounded down) moving into threatened squares, you provoke an attack of opportunity. In most cases, you can move into one threatened square before provoking an attack. If you are fast, you might be able to move two or more squares. If you move through multiple creatures' threatened areas, keep track of how far you move in each one's area. Your movement might provoke an attack from one opponent but not the other.

MAKING ATTACKS OF OPPORTUNITY

An attack of opportunity is a single melee attack, and you can make only one per round. You don't have to make an attack of opportunity if you don't want to. When you attack, you use the standard attack action described above (but you don't actually use up your standard action for the round). You cannot use special attack types, such as trips or disarms, as these require more time and focus than you normally have when making an attack of opportunity.

An attack of opportunity "interrupts" the normal flow of actions in the round. If an attack of opportunity is provoked, immediately resolve it, then continue with the next character's turn (or complete the current turn, if the attack of opportunity was provoked in the midst of a character's turn). For example, an arcanist may attempt to cast a spell, thereby provoking an attack of opportunity. If your attack killed him, he would not be able to finish his action and cast his spell.

Additional Attacks of Opportunity: Some feats and class abilities grant you bonus attacks of opportunity each round. These abilities generally do not let you make more than one attack for a given opportunity, but if the same opponent provokes two attacks of opportunity from you, some of them allow you to make two separate ones (since each one represents a different opening). Each square a creature moves beyond one-quarter of its speed in your threatened area represents an additional opportunity against that opponent. All these attacks are at your full normal attack bonus.

DEFENSE

A combatant's defense represents his ability to avoid harm. A weapon master uses a stunning series of parries to knock aside a mob's attacks, while a thief dodges a blow with his excellent reflexes and acrobatic abilities. The higher your defense, the harder it is to hit you.

Defense is calculated using the following basic formula:

Defense = 10 + passive defense modifiers + active defense modifiers

Passive defense modifiers are factors that protect you even while you stand still. They include a creature's thick hide, a shield you might carry, and your size. *Active defense modifiers* require special attention and effort. They include your natural ability to dodge attacks and your training in parrying strikes.

In *Iron Heroes*, armor absorbs damage. It does not increase your defense.

PASSIVE DEFENSE MODIFIERS

An arrow bounces off an anklosaurus' hide. A troll's leaden maul rebounds off a man-at-arms' shield. These defensive measures remain in place whether a combatant actively uses them or not. A shield provides a physical barrier to attacks. While you can gain additional benefits from it if you actively use it to block and parry, just having a wood-and-steel barrier provides a consistent level of protection. These measures are called passive defense modifiers. They almost always apply to your defense.

Passive defense modifiers tend to be lower than their active counterparts. The key benefit to passive defense modifiers is that you gain them even while you are flat footed.

Natural Armor: A monster's thick hide can deflect attacks, providing it with a natural bonus to defense. Unlike armor, natural protection either repels an attack or allows its full effects through. If a creature's bones and skin absorb an attack, then that strike, in essence, represents hit points of damage against the creature's body. Since armor isn't part of your body, it can absorb damage without injuring you.

Shield: A buckler, tower shield, or similar item provides a shield bonus to defense. This passive bonus remains the same regardless of your skill (see "Shields" in Chapter Seven: Equipment). If you choose to increase your training and ability with a shield, you might gain an active bonus from it, too. This additional bonus represents your talent for blocking attacks and deflecting arrows with a shield.

Size: Smaller targets are harder to hit than larger ones. That's why bigger combatants suffer a size penalty to defense, while smaller ones gain a size bonus. These modifiers to defense appear in the table on the next page. If you refer to the Attack Roll Modifiers table (page 178), you will notice that a creature's size modifier to attacks cancels out its size modifier to defense when it fights a creature of its own size. It's easiest to simply include these modifiers as part of a creature's attacks and defense, as everything evens out based on the attacker's and defender's sizes.

Size	Size Modifier
Colossal	−8
Gargantuan	−4
Huge	−2
Large	−1
Medium	+0
Small	+1
Tiny	+2
Diminutive	+4
Fine	+8

Feats and Training: A few feats and special abilities provide a bonus to your passive defense modifier. These are labeled as such in their descriptions. In most cases, however, having a feat provides an active bonus.

ACTIVE DEFENSE MODIFIERS

A parry or an acrobatic dodge provides an active defense modifier. These bonuses represent the benefits you gain when you use your natural agility and training to fend off attacks. Active defense modifiers tend to grant an overall larger bonus than passive ones, but you lose them when you are flat footed. Ambushes can really hurt in *Iron Heroes*, as in many cases they catch you virtually defenseless. Active defense modifiers fall into the following categories.

Base Defense Bonus: Your base defense bonus derives from your character class. It represents your ability to parry and dodge blows based on your fighting style. Some classes excel at defense, while others teach that the best defense is a good offense. Like your base attack bonus, your base defense bonus increases as you gain levels.

Dexterity Modifier: Your speed and agility provide you with a bonus to defense; a slow or clumsy character would take a penalty. Add your Dexterity modifier to your overall active defense.

Feats and Training: Some feats provide you with additional active defense modifiers. A skilled weapon master might learn to use a staff to deflect blows, while an acrobatic thief might prove too fast and maneuverable for the average warrior to hit. If a feat or ability provides a defense bonus, its description labels it as either active or passive.

Shields: Shields require a special mention. The physical barrier that a shield provides is a passive bonus. Your ability to use the shield is an active bonus. In most cases, class abilities and feats that improve your talent with shields provide an active bonus in addition to the shield's base passive defense.

DEFENSE ACTIONS

There are two special actions you can take to defend yourself from attacks.

STANDARD DEFENSE [STANDARD ACTION]

You can defend yourself as a standard action. Doing so grants you a +4 active bonus to your defense for 1 round. Your defense improves at the start of this action. In return, you make no attacks until your action next round. You can't make attacks of opportunity while using standard defense but you still threaten your normal area for the purposes of using class abilities, feats, skills and so on. You cannot gain the benefits of the standard defense action along with other actions and feats that, in return for a penalty to your attacks, grant you a bonus to defense (since you do not make any attacks as part of a standard defense).

Using the standard defense action does not provoke an attack of opportunity. It qualifies as an attack action for the purposes of attacks of opportunity, even though you make no effort to strike at your target.

Full Defense [Full-Round Action]

If you do nothing but ward off your enemies' attacks, you can defend yourself as a full-round action. This does not provoke an attack of opportunity. You gain a +6 active bonus to defense for 1 round. You can't make attacks of opportunity while using the full defense action but you still threaten your normal area for the purposes of using class abilities, feats, skills and so on. You cannot combine it with effects, feats, and abilities that grant you a penalty to attacks in return for a bonus to defense, as you cannot attack.

Cover, Concealment, and Other Defense Modifiers

Just as some modifiers can grant a bonus to your attacks, there are also situations and modifiers that improve your defense. See the Defense Roll Modifiers table, below.

Cover

A harrier dives behind a brick wall just in time, as an arcanist's bolt of eldritch energy batters against the rocks. An archer's arrows bounce harmlessly off the stone statue that an executioner takes cover behind. *Cover* is any solid object you can use to block an opponent's attacks. A stone column, a pile of rubble, or a wall can provide cover.

To determine whether your target has cover from your ranged attack, choose a corner of your square. If any line

DEFENSE ROLL MODIFIERS		
Defender's Condition	**Melee**	**Ranged**
Behind cover	+4	+4
Blinded*	–2**	–2**
Concealed or invisible	See "Concealment"	
Cowering*	–2**	–2**
Entangled*	+0†	+0†
Flat-footed (such as surprised, balancing, climbing)	+0**	+0**
Grappling (but attacker is not)	+0**	+0**††
Helpless (such as paralyzed, sleeping, or bound)	–4‡	+0‡
Kneeling or sitting	–2	+2
Pinned*	–4‡	+0‡
Prone*	–4	+4
Squeezing through a space	–4	–4
Stunned*	–2**	–2**

* *Fully described under "States and Conditions," page 209.*

** *The defender loses any active bonuses to defense.*

† *An entangled character suffers a –4 penalty to Dexterity.*

†† *Roll randomly to see which grappling combatant you strike. That defender loses any active bonus to defense.*

‡ *Treat the defender's Dexterity as 0 (–5 modifier). Some characters can sneak attack helpless or pinned defenders.*

from this corner to any corner of the target's square passes through a square or border that blocks line of effect or provides cover, or through a square occupied by a creature, the target has cover.

When making a melee attack against an adjacent target, your target has cover if any line from your space to the target's space goes through anything that acts as cover. When making a melee attack against a target that isn't adjacent to you (such as with a reach weapon), use the rules for determining cover from ranged attacks.

A target with cover against your attack gains a +4 passive bonus to defense. If your attack misses but would have hit if the target didn't have cover, your attack hits the cover. In some cases, you might damage or destroy the cover. (See "Breaking and Destroying Objects" in Chapter Nine: Adventuring for more information.)

Low Obstacles and Cover: A low obstacle (such as a wall no higher than half your total height) provides cover, but only to creatures within 30 feet (six squares) of it. The attacker can ignore the cover if he's closer to the obstacle than his target is.

Cover and Attacks of Opportunity: You can't execute an attack of opportunity against an opponent with cover relative to you.

Cover and Reflex Saves: Cover grants you a +2 bonus to Reflex saves against attacks that originate or burst out from a point on the other side of the cover from you. Note that spread effects (see "Effect" in Chapter Ten: Magic) can extend around corners and thus negate this cover bonus.

Cover and Hide Checks: You can use cover to make a Hide check. Without cover, you usually need concealment (see below) to attempt a Hide check.

Soft Cover: Creatures, even your enemies, can provide you with cover against melee attacks, giving you a +4 passive bonus to defense. However, such "soft cover" provides no bonus to Reflex saves, nor does it allow you to attempt a Hide check.

Big Creatures and Cover: Any creature with a space larger than 5 feet (one square) determines cover against melee attacks slightly differently than smaller creatures do. Such a creature can choose any square that it occupies to determine whether an opponent has cover against its melee attacks. Similarly, when making a melee attack against such a creature, you can pick any of the squares it occupies to determine whether it has cover against you.

NATURAL ARMOR AND DAMAGE REDUCTION

Using natural armor as a passive defense bonus speeds up the game and makes it easier to convert monsters to *Iron Heroes*. Remember, monsters don't receive a base defense bonus. Thus, their natural armor keeps things balanced. If you want to use natural armor as damage reduction, divide the total bonus by 2 and use that as damage reduction. Give the creature a base defense bonus equal to half its base attack bonus.

Total Cover: If you don't have line of effect to your target, he is considered to have total cover from you. You can't make an attack against a target that has total cover.

Varying Degrees of Cover: In some cases, cover may provide a greater than normal bonus to defense and Reflex saves. In such situations you can double the normal cover bonuses (to +8 and +4, respectively). A creature with this improved cover effectively gains a special benefit against any attack to which the Reflex save bonus applies. It takes no damage on a successful save and half damage on a failed one. Furthermore, improved cover provides a +10 bonus to Hide checks.

CONCEALMENT

A demon bursts from a pentagram in a great gout of smoke, making it difficult to see the beast as it approaches. On a foggy night, an archer can never be exactly sure where her target stands as she takes aim. In these cases, *concealment* makes it difficult to target an opponent directly.

The concept of concealment covers any gaseous or immaterial effect that nevertheless blocks an attack. It applies to effects that make it difficult to see your opponent. Regardless of your skill, it's hard to hit someone you can barely see.

To determine whether your target has concealment from your ranged attack, choose a corner of your space. If any line from this corner to any corner of the target's space passes through a square or border that provides concealment, the target has concealment.

When making a melee attack against an adjacent target, your target has concealment if his space remains entirely within an effect that grants concealment. When making a melee attack against a target that isn't adjacent to you, use the rules for determining concealment from ranged attacks.

There are two types of concealment, partial and total. Partial concealment applies to a target you can see a little, though the effect causing the concealment hides most of its form. Total concealment applies to a target that you cannot see at all because of the concealing effect.

Partial Concealment: Partial concealment gives the subject of a successful attack a 20 percent chance that the attacker actually missed because of the concealment, regardless of the result of his attack roll. Concealment can cause even a natural 20 to miss. If the attacker hits, the defender must make a miss chance percentile roll to avoid being struck. On a result of 20 or less, the attack misses. Multiple concealment conditions do not stack.

Total Concealment: You can't attack an opponent that has total concealment, though you can attack into a square that you think he occupies, since concealment doesn't physically block your attacks. A successful attack into a square occupied by an enemy with total concealment has a 50 percent miss chance (instead of the 20 percent miss chance for an opponent with partial concealment).

You can't execute an attack of opportunity against an opponent with total concealment, even if you know what square(s) he occupies.

Concealment and Hide Checks: You can use concealment to make a Hide check. Without concealment, you usually need cover to attempt a Hide check.

Ignoring Concealment: Concealment isn't always effective. A shadowy area or darkness doesn't provide any concealment against an opponent with darkvision. Creatures with low-light vision can see clearly for a greater distance with the same light source than other characters. Although invisibility provides total concealment, sighted opponents may still make Spot checks to notice the location of an invisible character. An invisible character gains a +20 bonus to Hide checks if moving, or a +40 bonus to Hide checks when not moving (even though opponents can't see you, they might be able to figure out where you are from other visual clues).

HELPLESS DEFENDERS

A *helpless* opponent is bound, sleeping, paralyzed, unconscious, or otherwise at your mercy. A helpless opponent loses his active modifiers to defense with one exception: He suffers the equivalent of a 0 Dexterity and the –5 defense penalty that goes with that score.

Regular Attacks: A helpless character suffers a –4 penalty to defense against melee attacks, but no penalty to defense against ranged attacks.

Coup de Grace: As a full-round action, you can use a melee weapon to deliver a *coup de grace* to a helpless opponent. You can also use a bow or crossbow, provided you are adjacent to the target.

On a *coup de grace,* you automatically hit and score a critical hit. A defender who manages to survive the damage must make a successful Fortitude save (DC 10 + damage dealt) or die.

You can't deliver a *coup de grace* against a creature that is immune to critical hits. You can deliver a *coup de grace* against a creature with total concealment, but doing so requires two consecutive full-round actions, one to "find" the creature once you've determined what square(s) it's in, and one to deliver the *coup de grace.*

DAMAGE, INJURIES, AND DEATH

Hit points measure your toughness, endurance, and tenacity. They are an abstract measure, one put in place to enable heroic action in a roleplaying game. They are *not* supposed to be realistic—no matter how many hit points you lose, your character isn't hindered in any way until your hit points drop to 0 or lower. You might be blinded or deafened, but those effects don't take away from your hit points, nor are they caused by the loss of hit points.

SUSTAINING DAMAGE

When you suffer a physical injury, you lose hit points. Most weapons or attack forms use dice and a modifier to determine how much damage they deal. If you wear armor, it might reduce the total amount of damage you take.

Damage doesn't slow you down until your current hit points reach 0 or lower:

- At 0 hit points, you're *disabled* (see below).
- From –1 to –9 hit points, you're *dying* (see below).
- At –10 or fewer hit points, there is a chance each round that you may die.

Massive Damage: If you ever sustain a single attack that deals 50 points of damage or more but doesn't kill you outright, you must make a Fortitude save (DC 15). If this saving throw fails, you die regardless of your current hit points. If you take 50 points of damage or more from multiple attacks, no one of which dealt 50 or more points of damage in itself, the massive damage rule does not apply.

DISABLED

When your current hit point total drops to 0 exactly, you're disabled.

While disabled, you can take only a single move or standard action each round, but not both. (You may not take full-round actions.) You can take move actions without further injuring yourself, but performing any standard action (or other strenuous activity) deals you 1 point of damage after you complete the act. Unless your activity increased your hit points, you are now at –1 hit points, and you're dying.

Healing that raises your hit points above 0 makes you fully functional again, just as if you'd never been reduced to 0 or fewer hit points.

You can also become disabled when recovering from dying. In this case, it's a step toward recovery, and you might have fewer than 0 hit points while disabled (see "Recovering With Help" on the next page).

DYING

When your character's current hit points drop to between –1 and –9 inclusive, you're dying. A dying character immediately falls unconscious and can take no actions.

A dying character loses 1 hit point every round. This continues until the character dies or becomes stable (see below).

DEATH'S DOOR

If you drop to –10 or fewer hit points, you are unconscious and must make a Fortitude save each round with a Difficulty Class equal to your negative hit point total. If this save fails, you die. If it succeeds, you survive for a short time longer. However, even if the save succeeds, you lose 1 hit point and must save again next round. You cannot normally stabilize while you are at death's door. Someone must take action to mend your injuries or stabilize you with the Heal skill. You cannot stabilize on your own.
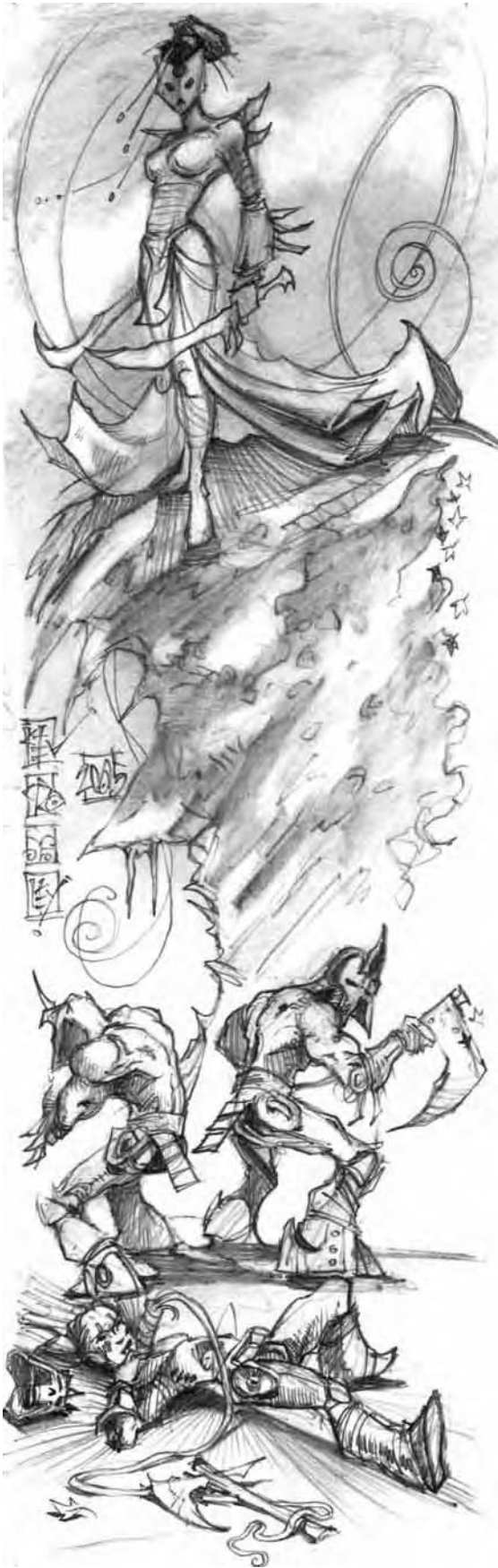
STABILIZATION AND RECOVERY

On the next turn after you fall to between –1 and –9 hit points, make a percentile roll to see whether you become stable. You have a 10 percent chance of becoming stable. If you don't, you lose 1 hit point. You may attempt a stabilization check in this way once each round until you either stabilize or fall to –10 or fewer hit points. Stable characters no longer lose 1 hit point per round (but see "Recovering Without Help," below).

If your hit points drop to –10 or lower, you cannot stabilize in this manner.

You can stabilize a dying character (or one at or death's door) with a Heal check (DC 15). You can use Heal in this manner regardless of the subject's hit point total, as long as he remains alive.

If any sort of healing cures a dying or death's door character of even 1 point of damage, he stops losing hit points and becomes stable.

Healing that raises the dying character's hit points to 0 makes him conscious and disabled. Healing that raises his hit points to 1 or more makes him fully functional again, just as if he'd never been reduced to 0 or lower.

A stable character who has been tended by a healer or who has been magically healed eventually regains consciousness and recovers hit points naturally (see "Healing and Reserve Points," next page). If the character has no one to tend him, however, his life is still in danger, and he may yet slip away.

Recovering With Help: One hour after a tended, dying character becomes stable, make a percentile roll. He has a 10 percent chance of regaining consciousness, at which point he becomes disabled (as if he had 0 hit points). If he remains unconscious, he has the same chance to revive and become disabled every hour. Even if unconscious, he recovers hit points naturally. He is back to normal when his hit point total rises to 1 or higher.

Recovering Without Help: A severely wounded character left alone usually dies. However, he has a small chance of recovering on his own.

A character who becomes stable on his own (by making the 10 percent roll while dying) but has no one to tend to him still loses hit points, just more slowly than before he stabilized. He has a 10 percent chance each hour of becoming conscious again. Each time he misses his hourly roll to become conscious, though, he loses 1 hit point. He also does not recover hit points through natural healing (as described on the next page).

Even once he becomes conscious and merely disabled, an unaided character still does not recover hit points naturally. Instead, each day he has a 10 percent chance to start recovering hit points naturally (starting with that day); otherwise, he loses 1 hit point that day.

Once an unaided character starts recovering hit points naturally, he is no longer in danger of naturally losing hit points (even if his current hit point total remains negative).

In any case, if a character's hit points drop to –10, he begins losing 1 hit point each round and must succeed at a Fortitude save as described above to survive.

Recovering with Reserve Points: Unconscious but stable characters can transfer Reserve Points to Hit Points as normal, even if they are denied the benefits of natural healing. Characters who are not stabilized cannot spend Reserve Points.

NONLETHAL DAMAGE

A group of kidnappers springs upon a man-at-arms. They pummel him with their clubs and fists, hoping to knock him unconscious and drag him to their master.

An executioner may need vital information from a spy. Rather than slay her target, she strikes him over the head to render him unconscious. These attacks are examples of dealing *nonlethal damage*. Such attacks aim to incapacitate rather than kill.

Dealing Nonlethal Damage: Certain attacks deal nonlethal damage, as do other effects, such as undue heat or exhaustion. When you suffer nonlethal damage, keep a running total of how much you've accumulated. Do not deduct the nonlethal damage number from your current hit points—it is not "real" damage. Instead, when your nonlethal damage equals your current hit points, you're staggered, and when it exceeds your current hit points, you fall unconscious (see below). It doesn't matter whether the nonlethal damage equals or exceeds your current hit points because the nonlethal damage has gone up or because your current hit points have gone down.

Nonlethal Damage With a Lethal Weapon: You can use a melee weapon that deals lethal damage to deal nonlethal damage instead, but you take a −4 penalty on your attack roll.

Lethal Damage With a Nonlethal Weapon: You can use a weapon that deals nonlethal damage, including an unarmed strike, to deal lethal damage instead, but you take a −4 penalty on your attack roll.

Staggered and Unconscious: When your nonlethal damage *equals* your current hit points, you're considered staggered. You can take only a standard action or a move action (but not both) in each round. You cease being staggered when your current hit point total once again exceeds your nonlethal damage.

When your nonlethal damage *exceeds* your current hit points, you fall unconscious. While unconscious, you are helpless. However, you are not dying (as described above) just because you fall unconscious.

Healing Nonlethal Damage: You heal nonlethal damage at the rate of 1 hit point per hour per character level. If an effect, such as your reserve pool (see "Healing and Reserve Points," below), heals hit points of damage, it also removes an equal amount of points of nonlethal damage at the same time.

Temporary Hit Points

Certain effects, such as magic or a class ability, can give a character temporary hit points. If injured in combat, you lose temporary hit points before real hit points.

Just before adding any temporary hit points you gain from any source, note your current hit point total. When the temporary hit points go away, your hit points drop to this current hit point total. If your hit points are already below that current hit point total, you've already lost all the temporary hit points, and your hit point total drops no further.

When you lose temporary hit points, you cannot restore them as you can restore real hit points, not even by magic.

Increases in Constitution Score and Current Hit Points: An increase in your character's Constitution score, even a temporary increase, can give you more hit points (an effective hit point increase), but these are not temporary hit points. They can be restored, and you do not lose them first, as you do temporary hit points. When your Constitution score returns to normal, subtract the bonus hit points the increase granted you from your current hit points. (In contrast, when you gain temporary hit points, your current hit point total goes down only if your total is above your maximum.)

Critical Hits

When you make an attack roll and get a natural 20 (the d20 shows 20), you hit regardless of your target's defense rating, and you have scored a *threat*. The hit might be a *critical hit* (or "crit"). To find out whether it is, make an immediate critical roll: another attack roll with all the same modifiers as the one you just made. If the critical roll also results in a hit against the target's defense, your threat counts as a critical hit. The critical roll just needs to hit to give you a crit; it doesn't need to come up 20 again. If the critical roll is a miss, then your threat is just a regular hit.

A critical hit means that you roll your damage more than once, with all your usual bonuses, and add the rolls together. Unless otherwise specified in the weapon tables in Chapter Seven: Equipment, the threat range for a critical hit on an attack roll is 20 and the multiplier is ×2. Extra damage over and above a weapon's normal damage is not multiplied when you score a critical hit.

Increased Threat Range: Sometimes the weapon tables show a threat range greater than 20 for a weapon. That is, you can score a threat on a 19, or even an 18. In such cases, a roll of lower than 20 is not an automatic hit. Any attack roll that doesn't result in a hit is not a threat.

Increased Critical Multiplier: Some weapons deal better than double damage on a critical hit; see the weapon tables in Chapter Seven.

Adding Multipliers: Sometimes you might have to double or triple your damage multiple times. For instance, you might score a critical hit when under the effects of an ability that doubles your damage. In this case, reduce all the multipliers that you need to add together by 1 except for the highest multiplier. Then, add them all together. The result is the total multiplier to use for the damage.

Magic and Critical Hits: A spell that requires an attack roll can score a critical hit. A spell attack that requires no attack roll cannot score a critical hit.

HEALING AND RESERVE POINTS

After taking damage, you can recover hit points through *natural healing* or through your own heroic resiliency. In any case, you can't regain hit points past your maximum hit point total.

Natural Healing

With a full night's rest (eight hours of sleep or more), you recover 1 hit point per character level. Any significant interruption during your rest prevents you from healing that night.

If you undergo complete bed rest for an entire day and night, you recover twice your character level in hit points.

Healing Ability Damage: Ability score damage is temporary, just as hit point damage is. Ability damage returns

at the rate of 1 point per night of rest (eight hours) for each affected ability score. Complete bed rest restores 2 points per day (24 hours) for each affected ability score. In either case, after a successful Heal skill check to provide long-term care, you recover ability score points lost to temporary ability damage at twice this rate (see Chapter Four: Skills and Ability Checks).

RESERVE POINTS

Reserve points represent your resiliency, toughness, and willpower. Since hit point damage has no effect on characters until they reach 0, most effects that damage you cause no more than superficial bleeding, minor scrapes, and bruises. While these injuries can prove life threatening if you sustain many of them in a short period, you can rally your strength quickly if you have time to rest. Reserve points represent your capacity to recharge your energy and shrug off the effects of minor injuries.

You have reserve points equal to your maximum hit points. Whenever you engage in nonstrenuous activity, you may choose to convert 1 reserve point to heal 1 hit point per minute. Remember that whenever you receive healing, you heal an amount of nonlethal damage equal to the hit point damage at the same time. During these minutes, you catch your breath, the pain from a twisted ankle fades, or a cut stops bleeding and slowly starts to heal. You do not gain reserve-point healing while engaged in combat or undertaking other strenuous actions such as climbing a wall or running a long distance.

If you have suffered nonlethal damage, you may use 1 reserve point to heal 4 points of nonlethal damage. When you choose this option, you do not heal 1 hit point with that reserve point, only nonlethal damage.

A successful Heal skill check to treat wounds as described in Chapter Four restores a number of reserve points to your pool equal to the healer's number of ranks in Heal. After a successful Heal check to offer long-term care, you recover reserve points at twice the normal rate.

REPLENISHING RESERVE POINTS

Any healing you receive above and beyond your maximum hit points replenishes your reserve point pool. You also regain reserve points via rest and relaxation. If you rest eight hours straight during a day, you regain reserve points equal to your Constitution score + your level. If you spend a full day doing nothing but resting, you regain reserve points equal to double your Constitution score + your level. You do not regain reserve points if your hit points are at or below 0.

CONSTITUTION CHANGES

If your Constitution score goes up or down, your reserve points go up or down just like your hit points. If your reserve points drop below 0, you suffer no additional effects or damage. You simply do not have any reserve points to spend on healing yourself.

RESERVE POINTS IN THE GAME

Reserve points make it possible for characters to soak up a fair amount of damage in combat without worrying about healing. Reserve points work too slowly to provide relief during a battle, making a character's maximum hit points as important as ever. However, once a fight ends, injured characters can quickly restore themselves to maximum hit points. And even with this healing, a series of tough encounters can prove deadly. As a character's reserve points drop to 0, he loses the ability to boost his hit points between fights. Players must pay careful attention to their reserve pools to avoid spending their strength before an important battle.

More importantly, reserve points have little effect on the lethality of a given encounter. They work too slowly to provide any relief during a battle. Instead, they make it possible to run three or four deadly fights in the course of a day without the action grinding to a halt as the PCs seek out healing. Reserve points don't make the current fight any less lethal. Instead, they create a cushion that causes the current battle to have less of an impact on the party's chances in the next fight.

WHO HAS RESERVE POINTS?

Only characters and creatures with levels in the *Iron Heroes* core classes gain access to a reserve pool, unless otherwise noted in a monster or NPC class' description. The NPC classes—warrior, adept, commoner, and others—do not gain access to reserve points, and neither do most monsters that lack class levels. Unless a creature's description specifically lists a reserve point total, it does not have one.

SPACE OCCUPIED IN COMBAT

Every creature occupies a certain number of spaces on the combat grid (see "Movement," next page); exactly how many spaces depends on the creature's size. An enormous dinosaur may take up nine squares in a three-square by three-square space. A human takes up only one square, while a tiny faerie might not even occupy a whole one.

The table below shows various creature sizes.

TYPICAL CREATURE SPACE BY SIZE		
Creature Size	**Space***	**Example**
Colossal	5 squares	Great devourer
Gargantuan	4 squares	Purple worm
Huge	3 squares	Behir
Large	2 squares	Ogre
Medium	1 square	Human
Small	1 square	Goblin
Tiny	1/2 square	Snake
Diminutive	1/4 square	Faerie
Fine	1/8 square	Spider

* The number of squares on one side of the creature's space. For instance, a Large creature takes up a space two squares on a side, for a total area of four squares.

Tiny, Diminutive, and Fine Creatures

Very small creatures take up less than one square of space. This means that more than one such creature can fit into a single square. A Tiny creature typically occupies a space only 2-1/2 feet across, so four of them can fit into a single square. Twenty-five Diminutive creatures or 100 Fine creatures can fit into a single square.

Creatures that take up less than one square of space typically have a natural reach of 0 feet, meaning they can't reach into adjacent squares. They must enter an opponent's square to attack in melee. This provokes an attack of opportunity from the opponent.

You can attack into your own square if you need to, so you can attack such creatures normally. Since they have no natural reach, they do not threaten the squares around them. You can move past them without provoking attacks of opportunity. They also can't flank an enemy.

Large, Huge, Gargantuan, and Colossal Creatures

Very large creatures take up more than one square of space.

Creatures that take up more than one square typically have a natural reach of 10 feet or more, meaning they can reach targets even if they aren't in adjacent squares.

A creature with greater than normal natural reach (more than one square/5 feet) threatens squares adjacent to it. A creature with greater than normal natural reach usually gets an attack of opportunity against you if you approach it. A creature's space and reach statistics appear in its description.

The table on the previous page lists the typical space occupied by a creature. A creature's space is listed as the length along one side of the square it occupies. Since *Iron Heroes* doesn't use rules to establish the direction a character is facing, creatures always take up a square area. This rule is an abstract measure meant to make combat run as smoothly as possible.

MOVEMENT

Movement is critical to any combat session. You might move into position to take cover against an enemy archer, or you may need to block a corridor to prevent a squad of soldiers from cutting off your escape route. *Iron Heroes* uses an abstract grid of squares called a *combat grid* to resolve movement. Each square on the grid represents a 5-foot by 5-foot space.

Basics of Movement

You can spend a move action to move a distance up to your current speed. One square of movement allows you to move one square straight ahead, backward, to the right, or to the left on the grid. If your movement is six squares, you can move six spaces on the grid.

Diagonal Movement: You can also move diagonally, but such a move sometimes costs more than one square of movement. Your first diagonal move is one square, but your second one costs two. If you keep moving diagonally, your third move is one square, your fourth move costs two, and so forth. This rule represents the fact that a diagonal move covers a bit more distance than a single square. The "every other square" rule evens things out. If your movement is six squares, you can move diagonally four times. The first and third squares cost one square of movement each, or two squares total, while the second and fourth squares cost two squares each, or four squares total, for a grand total of six.

You cannot move diagonally past obstacles that block movement. If either of the two squares adjacent to your starting square and the square you enter diagonally are occupied by terrain that blocks movement, such as a wall, a column, or a boulder, you cannot complete your movement. Creatures do not block movement in the same way as terrain, so you can move diagonally past them without restriction. You can otherwise move past pits, water, or other terrain as normal, as long your destination space remains accessible.

DOUBLE MOVE

A *double move* is a special term for using both your move action and your standard action in a round to move. You can move at twice your normal speed as part of a double move. Otherwise, there are no special restrictions or modifiers.

SPEED

Most characters have a base speed of six squares (30 feet). With each move action you spend to move, you can go that distance. However, your speed may increase or decrease based on your abilities, the armor you wear, and the weight you carry.

If you wear light armor or no armor, your speed suffers no penalty. Wearing medium armor reduces your speed to three-quarters of its full value. If you wear heavy armor, your speed becomes half its normal value. The amount of equipment or treasure you carry also can reduce your weight. A medium load reduces your speed to three-quarters, while a heavy one reduces it to half. See "Carrying Capacity" in Chapter Nine for more information about encumbrance and determining how much equipment you can carry.

If you carry a medium or heavy load and wear armor, you reduce your movement by whichever effect causes the greater reduction. If both your equipment and armor reduce your speed, increase the higher of the two movement penalties by one-quarter, to a maximum of a three-quarters penalty. In other words, your speed cannot fall to less than one-quarter normal.

The following table lists typical creature speed by size. See also the Tactical Speed table, above right.

Creature Size	Typical Speed
Colossal	12 squares
Gargantuan	10 squares
Huge	8 squares
Large	6 squares
Medium	6 squares
Small	4 squares
Tiny	4 squares
Diminutive	3 squares
Fine	2 squares

TACTICAL SPEED

Full Speed (No/Light Armor)	3/4 Speed (Medium Armor)	1/2 Speed (Heavy Armor)
6 squares/30 feet	4 squares/20 feet	3 squares/15 feet
7 squares/35 feet	5 squares/25 feet	3 squares/15 feet
8 squares/40 feet	6 squares/30 feet	4 squares/20 feet

RUNNING

You can *run* as a full-round action. You must move in a straight line, and you cannot cross any terrain that causes you to spend more than one square to enter it. You can move diagonally as normal.

If your movement is reduced by neither your armor nor the equipment you carry, you can run at quadruple your speed. If your speed is reduced by either armor or your equipment, you can run at up to triple your speed.

When you run, you lose your active bonuses to defense, as you are focusing on moving to the exclusion of any defensive efforts.

You can run for a number of rounds equal to your Constitution score, but after that you must succeed at a Constitution check (DC 10) to continue running. You must check again each round in which you continue to run; the Difficulty Class of this check increases by 1 point for each check you have already made. When you fail this check, you must stop running. A character who has run to his limit must rest for one minute (10 rounds) before running again. During a rest period, a character can move no faster than a normal move action.

A run represents a speed of about 12 miles per hour for an unencumbered human.

THE ONE-SQUARE STEP

If during the course of a round you have taken no movement whatsoever, you may take a step with a speed of one square (5 feet) if your speed is at least that amount. This one-square step never provokes an attack of opportunity. You may take it before, between, or after your move and standard actions. This step counts as a free action.

Remember that your speed is one square in this case; you cannot move into difficult terrain or other squares that cost double, nor can you make use of a step if your speed is below one square (5 feet) due to encumbrance, armor, and/or other effects.

TERRAIN

The movement rules assume that you move across a relatively clear, flat space. However, many combat sessions take place in old ruins, atop a sloped roof, along a broken mountain pass, and amid other rough terrain. In these cases, it might cost more than one square to enter a space, depending on the terrain you want to move into.

DIFFICULT TERRAIN

Difficult terrain hampers movement. Each square of difficult terrain counts as two squares of movement. Thus, each diagonal move into a difficult terrain square counts as three squares, since it costs you three squares to move through two diagonal spaces. You can't run or charge across difficult terrain.

If you occupy squares featuring different kinds of terrain, you can move only as fast as the most difficult terrain allows. This situation comes up for creatures that are larger than size Medium.

Flying and incorporeal creatures are not hampered by difficult terrain, since they can simply fly over it.

OBSTACLES

Like difficult terrain, *obstacles* can hamper movement. If an obstacle hampers movement but doesn't block it completely (a fence or low wall), each obstructed square or obstacle between squares counts as two squares of movement. You must pay this cost to cross the barrier, in addition to the cost of moving into the square on the other side. If you don't have sufficient movement to cross the barrier *and* move into the square on the other side, you can't cross the barrier.

On the other hand, some obstacles block movement entirely (a wall or closed gate that is taller than you). A character can't move through a blocking obstacle. You might be able to climb or fly over it, but you cannot cross it using your walking speed.

Flying and incorporeal creatures can avoid most obstacles, since they can fly over them.

In general, you can move through an obstacle if it is shorter than you. Otherwise, it blocks movement or requires you to climb over it.

Water works just like any other obstacle. You can walk through it if the water does not rise above your head. Otherwise, you must use the Swim skill to move through it. There are some exceptions to this general rule, such as if you simply sink down and walk along the water's bottom.

SQUEEZING

In some cases, you may have to *squeeze* into or through an area narrower than the space you take up. You can squeeze through or into a space that is at least half as wide as your normal space. Each move into or through a narrow space counts as if it were two squares. While squeezed in a narrow space, you suffer a −4 penalty to attack rolls and defense.

When a Large creature (which normally takes up four squares in a two-square by two-square space) squeezes into a space that's one square wide, the creature's figure occupies two squares, centered on the line between the two squares. For a bigger creature, center the creature likewise in the area it squeezes into.

A creature can squeeze past an opponent while moving, but it can't end its movement in an occupied square.

To squeeze through or into a space less than half your space's width, you must use the Escape Artist skill. You can't attack while using Escape Artist to squeeze through or into a narrow space. In addition, you take a −4 penalty to defense, and you lose any active bonus to defense.

MOVING THROUGH OCCUPIED SQUARES

Creatures do not function exactly like difficult terrain or obstacles, but that doesn't mean you can move through or into their spaces without penalty. Your allies automatically allow you to pass, but an opponent tries to block you. Small

and larger creatures can never end their movement in another creature's space.

Friendly Combatant: Unless you are charging, you can move through a square occupied by a friendly character. When you do so, however, that character doesn't provide you with cover.

Opponent: You can't move through a square occupied by an opponent, unless the opponent is helpless. You can move through a square occupied by a helpless opponent without penalty. Some creatures, particularly very large ones, may present an obstacle even when helpless. In such cases, each square you move through counts as two squares. For example, a slain elephant might still block a doorway. The Tumble skill allows you to move through an opponent's square if your check succeeds (see Chapter Four). In any case, an opponent does not grant cover if you somehow move into his space.

Exceptions to this general rule appear below. For instance, sometimes a creature is too small to block your movement, while enormous creatures can simply step over you as they move.

Ending Your Movement: You can't end your movement in the same square as another creature unless it is helpless. If, for some reason beyond your control, your movement ends in a creature's space, you must move to the closest free space. You end up prone in that space. You cannot willingly decide to end your move in the same space as another creature. If you try to, you immediately follow your path back to the last empty space you entered, and your move ends there.

Overrun: During your movement or as part of a charge, you can attempt to move through a square occupied by an opponent. This overrun action is described under "Special Attack Actions" on page 194.

Very Small Creature: A Fine, Diminutive, or Tiny creature can move into or through an occupied square. This movement provokes an attack of opportunity only if the creature moves more than a quarter of its speed, as normal.

Square Occupied by Creature Three Sizes Larger or Smaller: Any creature can move through a square occupied by a creature three size categories larger than itself. Likewise, a big creature can move through a square occupied by a creature at least three size categories smaller than it is.

Designated Exceptions: Some creatures break the above rules. One cannot move past a creature that completely fills the squares it occupies, even with the Tumble skill or similar special abilities. For example, an enormous ooze creature might fill an entire passageway.

SPECIAL MOVEMENT RULES

A few special cases require additional clarifications or notes.

Double Movement Cost: When your movement is hampered in some way, your movement usually costs double what it normally would. For example, each square of movement through difficult terrain counts as two squares, and each diagonal move through such terrain counts as three squares (just as two diagonal moves normally do).

If you must double your movement cost twice, each square counts as four squares (or as six squares if moving diagonally). If movement cost is doubled three times, each square counts as eight squares (12 if diagonal) and so on. This is an exception to the general rule that two doublings are equivalent to a tripling.

Minimum Movement: Despite penalties to movement, you can always take a full-round action to move one square (5 feet) in any direction, even diagonally. This rule doesn't allow you to move through impassable terrain or to move when all movement is prohibited. Such movement provokes attacks of opportunity as normal if it represents more than a quarter of your current speed.

CLIMBING, SWIMMING, AND OTHER MOVEMENT MODES

The above rules for movement assume you are walking or running on the ground. The following rules apply to creatures that use other modes of movement, such as flight. A monster might use its claws to burrow into the ground, while an aquatic beast can swim with far more speed and grace than a humanoid.

When a character attempts to swim or climb, consult the appropriate skills in Chapter Four for full information on how to resolve the action. The following rules apply specifically to creatures whose special movement mode (and speed) appear in their descriptions.

Burrow: A creature with a burrow speed can tunnel through dirt but not through rock unless its descriptive text says otherwise. Creatures cannot charge or run while burrowing. Most burrowing creatures do not leave behind tunnels that other creatures can use, either because the material they tunnel through fills in behind them or because they do not actually dislocate any material when burrowing. If a creature constitutes an exception to this rule, its description notes it as such.

Climb: A creature with a climb speed enjoys a +8 racial bonus to all Climb checks. It must attempt a Climb check to climb any wall or slope with a DC of more than 0, but it always can choose to take 10, even when rushed or threatened while climbing. The creature climbs at its given speed. It can move at double its listed climb speed if it accepts a –5 penalty to its Climb check. Creatures cannot run while climbing. A creature with a climb speed retains its active bonuses to defense (if any) while climbing, and opponents get no special bonus on their attacks against it.

Fly: A creature with a fly speed can move through the air at its indicated speed if carrying no more than a light load. Reduce its speed as normal for the load it carries and the armor it wears, if any. All fly speeds include a parenthetical note indicating maneuverability, as follows:

Perfect: The creature can perform almost any aerial maneuver it wishes. It moves through the air as well as a human moves over smooth ground.

FLIGHT MANEUVERABILITY

	Perfect	Good	Average	Poor	Clumsy
Minimum forward speed	None	None	Half	Half	Half
Hover	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Move backward	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Reverse	Free	−5 feet	No	No	No
Turn	Any	90°/5 feet	45°/5 feet	45°/5 feet	45°/10 feet
Turn in place	Any	+90°/−5 feet	+45°/−5 feet	No	No
Maximum turn	Any	Any	90°	45°	45°
Up angle	Any	Any	60°	45°	45°
Up speed	Full	Half	Half	Half	Half
Down angle	Any	Any	Any	45°	45°
Down speed	Double	Double	Double	Double	Double
Between down and up	0	0	5 feet	10 feet	20 feet

Good: The creature is very agile in the air (like a housefly or a hummingbird) but cannot change direction as readily as those with perfect maneuverability.

Average: The creature can fly as adroitly as a small bird.

Poor: The creature flies as well as a very large bird.

Clumsy: The creature can barely maneuver at all.

A creature that flies can make dive attacks. A dive attack works just like a charge (see page 195), but the diving creature must move a minimum of 30 feet and descend at least 10 feet before attacking. It can make only claw or talon attacks, but such an attack deals double damage on a hit.

A creature can use the run action while flying, provided it flies in a straight line. Details on moving in three dimensions and maneuverability classes appears below.

Swim: A creature with a swim speed can move through water at that rate without making Swim checks. It enjoys a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform a special action or avoid a hazard. The creature can always can choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or threatened. The creature can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

FLIGHT AND MOVEMENT IN THREE DIMENSIONS

Most flying creatures have to slow down at least a little to make a turn, and many are limited to fairly wide turns and must maintain a minimum forward speed. Each flying creature has maneuverability, as shown on the Flight Maneuverability table above. The entries on the table are defined below.

Minimum Forward Speed: If a flying creature fails to maintain its minimum forward speed, it must land at the end of its movement. If it is too high above the ground to land, it falls straight down, descending 150 feet in the first round of falling. Should this distance bring it to the ground, it suffers falling damage, 1d6 points of damage per 10 feet fallen. If the fall doesn't bring the creature to the ground, it must spend its next turn recovering from the stall. It recovers after succeeding at a Reflex save (DC 20). Otherwise it falls anoth-

er 300 feet. If it hits the ground, it takes falling damage. Otherwise, it falls another 300 feet and can attempt to recover on its next turn.

Hover: The ability to stay in one place while airborne.

Move Backward: The ability to reverse direction without turning around.

Reverse: A creature with good maneuverability uses up 5 feet of its speed to start flying backward.

Turn: How much the creature can turn after covering the stated distance.

Turn in Place: A creature with good or average maneuverability can use some of its speed to turn in place.

Maximum Turn: How much the creature can turn in any one space.

Up Angle: The angle at which the creature can climb.

Up Speed: How fast the creature can climb.

Down Angle: The angle at which the creature can descend.

Down Speed: A flying creature can fly down at twice its normal flying speed.

Between Down and Up: An average, poor, or clumsy flier must fly level for a minimum distance after descending and before climbing. Any flier can begin descending after a climb without an intervening distance of level flight.

SPECIAL MOVEMENT ACTION

One special movement-related action bears some discussion.

WITHDRAW [FULL-ROUND ACTION]

You may withdraw from combat using a full-round action. You can move up to double your normal speed when withdrawing. While withdrawing, you provoke attacks of opportunity for moving only if you move more than half your normal speed, rather than one-quarter your normal speed.

You may not withdraw using a mode of movement for which you have no listed speed (climb, swim, fly, etc.).

Note that despite the name of this action, you don't actually have to leave combat entirely in order to withdraw.

Restricted Withdraw: If you are limited to taking only a standard or a move action each round (but not both), you can withdraw as a standard action. In this case, you may withdraw at up to your speed (rather than up to double your speed).

OTHER MOVE ACTIONS

While moving is the most obvious type of move action, you can complete other acts with your move action as well. As a rule, a move action is anything that you can do while completing a standard action. If you can logically picture a character completing a particular activity while also attacking a foe in a six-second span, that action is probably a move action.

Move actions do not provoke attacks of opportunity. They are so short and easy to complete that you do not have to drop your guard for them. You can choose to take a move action instead of a standard action, allowing you to make two move actions during a round. (Such a choice does not provoke an attack of opportunity).

DRAW OR SHEATHE A WEAPON

Drawing a weapon so that you can use it in combat, or putting it away so that you have a free hand, requires a move action. This action also applies to a weaponlike object carried in easy reach, such as a torch. If your weapon or weaponlike object is stored in a pack or otherwise out of easy reach, treat this action as retrieving a stored item (see "Manipulate an Item," below).

If you use a standard action to move, you may draw a weapon as a free action combined with a regular move, regardless of your base attack bonus. If you have the Two-Weapon Fighting feat, you can draw two light or one-handed weapons in the time it would normally take a character to draw one.

Drawing ammunition for use with a ranged weapon (such as arrows, bolts, sling bullets, or shuriken) is a free action.

READY OR LOOSE A SHIELD

Strapping a shield to your arm to gain its shield bonus to your defense, or unstrapping and dropping a shield so you can use your shield hand for another purpose, requires a move action. If you use a standard action to move, you can ready or loose a shield as a free action combined with a regular move regardless of your base attack bonus.

Dropping a carried (but not worn) shield is a free action.

MANIPULATE AN ITEM

In most cases, manipulating an item that you touch or keep somewhere on your body or is a move action. This includes retrieving or putting away a stored item, picking up an item, or opening a door. If you must make an ability check to move the item, such as a Strength check to push a boulder, you must use a standard action.

STAND UP

Standing up from a prone position requires a move action. You do not suffer attacks of opportunity for standing up.

FREE ACTIONS

Free actions don't take any time at all, though there may be limits to the number of free actions you can perform on your turn. Free actions rarely incur attacks of opportunity. Some common free actions are described below.

DROP AN ITEM

Dropping an item in your space or into an adjacent square is a free action.

DROP PRONE

Dropping to a prone position in your space is a free action.

SPEAK

In general, speaking is a free action that you can perform even when it isn't your turn. More than a couple sentences is generally beyond the limit of a free action, however.

SPECIAL ATTACK ACTIONS

While the standard and full attack actions cover the typical methods for mayhem and violence in *Iron Heroes*, there are other types of attacks you can use to defeat your enemies as well. Warriors in *Iron Heroes* do not simply stand in place and trade blows. Rather, they rely on a variety of daring actions and stunts to overcome foes. If a special attack action provokes an attack of opportunity, its description notes that fact.

Special Attack	Brief Description
Aid another	Grant an ally a +2 bonus to attacks or defense
Bull rush	Push an opponent back 5 feet or more
Charge	Move up to twice your speed and attack with +2 bonus
Disarm	Knock a weapon from your opponent's hands
Feint	Negate your opponent's active bonus to defense
Grapple	Wrestle with an opponent
Overrun	Plow past or over an enemy as you move
Sunder	Strike an opponent's weapon or shield
Throw splash weapon	Throw a container of dangerous liquid at target
Trip	Trip an opponent
Two-weapon fighting	Fight with a weapon in each hand

AID ANOTHER [STANDARD ACTION]

In melee combat, you can help a friend attack or defend by distracting or interfering with an opponent. If you're in position to make a melee attack on a foe that is engaging your friend in melee combat, you can attempt to aid your friend.

Make a touch attack roll against your foe. If you succeed, your friend gains either a +2 bonus on her next attack roll against that opponent or a +2 bonus to defense against that opponent's next attack (your choice), as long as that attack comes before the beginning of your next turn. Multiple characters can aid the same friend, and similar bonuses stack.

You can also use the aid another action to help a friend in other ways, such as when she is affected by a spell, or to assist an ally's skill check.

Bull Rush [Varies]

You can make a bull rush as a standard action (an attack) or as part of a charge (see "Charge," below). When you make a bull rush, you attempt to push an opponent straight back instead of damaging him. You can only bull rush an opponent who is one size category larger than you, the same size as you, or smaller than you.

Initiating a Bull Rush: First, you move into the defender's space, which provokes an attack of opportunity from each opponent that threatens you, including the defender. An attack of opportunity made by anyone other than the defender against you during a bull rush has a 25 percent chance of accidentally targeting the defender instead. Likewise, any attack of opportunity by someone other than you against the defender has a 25 percent chance of accidentally targeting you. (When someone attempts an attack of opportunity, make the attack roll, then roll to see whether the attack went astray.)

Second, you and the defender make opposed Strength checks. You each add a +4 bonus for each size category by which you are larger than Medium or a −4 penalty for each size category by which you are smaller than Medium. You get a +2 bonus if you are charging. The defender gets a +4 bonus if he has more than two legs or is otherwise exceptionally stable.

Bull Rush Results: If you beat the defender's Strength check result, you push him back one square (5 feet). If you wish to move with the defender, you can push him back an additional square (5 feet) for each 5 points by which your check result exceeded the defender's. You can't, however, exceed your normal movement limit. The defender provokes attacks of opportunity if he is moved; so do you, if you move with him. The two of you do not provoke attacks of opportunity from each other, however.

If you fail to beat the defender's Strength check result, you move 5 feet straight back to where you were before you moved into his space. If that space is occupied, you fall prone in it.

Charge [Full-Round Action]

Charging is a special full-round action that allows you to move up to twice your speed and attack during the action. However, it carries tight restrictions on how you can move.

Movement During a Charge: You must move before your attack, not after. You must move at least two squares (10 feet) and may move up to double your speed directly toward the designated opponent.

You must have a clear path toward the opponent, and nothing can hinder your movement, such as difficult terrain or obstacles. You must move to the closest space from which you can attack the opponent. If this space is occupied or otherwise blocked, you can't charge. If any line from your starting space to the ending space passes through a square that blocks movement, slows movement, or contains a creature (even an ally), you can't charge. Helpless creatures don't stop a charge, since they have no effect on movement.

If you don't have line of sight to the opponent at the start of your turn, you can't charge her.

If you are able to take only a standard action or a move action (but not both) on your turn, you can still charge, but you may move only up to your speed (instead of up to double your speed). You can't use this option unless you are restricted to taking only a standard action or a move action on your turn.

Attacking on a Charge: After moving, you may make a single melee attack. You enjoy a +2 bonus on the attack roll and suffer a −2 penalty to your defense until the start of your next turn.

A charging character gets a +2 bonus on the Strength check made to bull rush or overrun an opponent (see "Bull Rush," page 195, and "Overrun," page 200).

Even if you have extra attacks, such as from having a high base attack bonus or from using multiple weapons, you only get to make one attack during a charge.

Lances and Charge Attacks: A lance deals double damage if employed by a mounted character in a charge.

Weapons Readied Against a Charge: Spears, tridents, and certain other piercing weapons deal double damage when readied (set) and used against a charging character. (See weapon descriptions in Chapter Seven.)

Disarm [Varies]

As a melee attack, you may attempt to disarm your opponent. If you do so with your weapon, you knock the opponent's weapon out of his hands and to the ground. If you attempt the disarm while unarmed, you end up with the weapon in your own hand.

If you're attempting to disarm a foe of his melee weapon, follow the steps outlined here. If you're attempting to disarm him of something else, the defender may still oppose you with an attack roll, but he takes a penalty and can't attempt to disarm you in return if your attempt fails.

Step 1: Attack of Opportunity. You provoke an attack of opportunity from the target you are trying to disarm. Should the defender's attack of opportunity deal any damage, your disarm attempt fails.

Step 2: Opposed Rolls. You and the defender make opposed attack rolls with your respective weapons. The wielder of a two-handed weapon on a disarm attempt gets a +4 bonus to this roll, and the wielder of a light weapon takes a −4 penalty. An unarmed strike is considered a light weapon, so you always take a penalty when trying to disarm an opponent using an unarmed strike. If the combatants are of different sizes, the larger combatant gets an attack roll bonus of +4 per category of difference in size. If the targeted item isn't a melee weapon, the defender takes a −4 penalty on the roll.

Step 3: Consequences. If you beat the defender, you disarm him. If you attempted the disarm action unarmed, you now have his weapon. If you were armed, the defender's weapon lies on the ground in his square.

If you fail on your disarm attempt, the defender may react immediately and attempt to disarm you with the same sort of opposed melee attack roll. His attempt does not provoke an

attack of opportunity from you. If he fails his disarm attempt, the action is concluded; you do not subsequently get a free disarm attempt against him.

Grabbing an Item: You can use a disarm action to snatch an item worn by the target. If you want to hang onto the item, you must attempt the disarm as an unarmed attack.

If the item is poorly secured or otherwise easy to snatch or cut away, you get a +4 bonus. Unlike normal disarm attempts, failing the attempt doesn't allow the defender to try to disarm you. Grabbing an item otherwise functions identically to a disarm attempt.

You can't snatch an item that is well secured unless you have pinned the wearer (see "Grapple," below). Even then, the defender gains a +4 bonus on his roll to resist the attempt.

Feint [Standard Action]

To feint, make a Bluff check opposed by a Sense Motive or base attack check from your target. If your Bluff check result exceeds your target's check result, the next melee attack you make against him prevents him from using his active bonuses to defense. You must make this attack on or before your next turn.

When feinting in this way against a nonhumanoid you suffer a −4 penalty. Against a creature of animal Intelligence (1 or 2), you take a −8 penalty. You cannot use a feint against a non-intelligent creature (Intelligence 0 or no Intelligence score).

Feinting in combat does not provoke attacks of opportunity. It is an attack action, even if you do not intend to land a blow against your foe.

Grapple [Varies]

With a grapple, you attempt to grab hold of your opponent and wrestle him. You might try to hold him place, lift him into the air to throw him off a cliff, or apply a painful armlock.

Grapple Checks

Repeatedly in a grapple you make opposed grapple checks against your opponent. A grapple check is like a melee attack roll. Your attack bonus on a grapple check is: **base attack bonus + Strength modifier + special size modifier.** This figure is called your *grapple check modifier.*

The table below summarizes the special size modifiers mentioned above. These figures replace the normal modifiers to attacks based on size.

Grappler's Size	Modifier
Colossal	+16
Gargantuan	+12
Huge	+8
Large	+4
Medium	+0
Small	−4
Tiny	−8
Diminutive	−12
Fine	−16

Starting a Grapple

First you need to grab and hold your target, so starting a grapple requires a successful melee attack roll. If you get multiple attacks, you may attempt to start a grapple with each one.

Step 1: Attack of Opportunity. Next, you provoke an attack of opportunity from the target with whom you wish to grapple. If the attack of opportunity deals damage, your grapple attempt fails. If the target's attack of opportunity misses you or fails to deal damage, proceed to Step 2.

Step 2: Grab. Make a melee touch attack to grab the target (see page 180). If you do not hit him, the grapple attempt fails. If you do hit, proceed to Step 3.

Step 3: Hold. Make an opposed grapple check as a free action. If you succeed, you and your target are now grappling, and you deal damage to the target as if with an unarmed strike. Should you lose, you fail to start the grapple. You automatically lose an attempt to hold if the target is two or more size categories larger than you.

In case of a tie, the combatant with the higher grapple check modifier wins. If this is a tie, roll again to break the tie.

Step 4: Maintain Grapple. To maintain the grapple for later rounds, you must move into the target's space. This movement is free and doesn't count as part of your movement in the round.

As normal, moving provokes attacks of opportunity from threatening opponents, but not from your target, if you move more than one-quarter your speed in a threatened area.

If you can't move into your target's space, you can't maintain the grapple and must immediately let go of the target. To start a new grapple, you must begin at Step 1.

Grappling Consequences

While you're grappling, your ability to attack others and defend yourself is limited.

No Threatened Squares: You don't threaten any squares while grappling.

No Active Bonus: You lose your active bonuses to defense against opponents you aren't grappling. You can still use them against opponents you are grappling.

No Movement: You can't move normally while grappling. You may, however, attempt an opposed grapple check (see below) to move while grappling.

No Provoking: The actions you take in a grapple do not normally provoke attacks of opportunity. The chaos of the scrum is too much for a foe to take advantage of your lapse in defense.

If You're Grappling

When you are grappling (regardless of who started the grapple), you can perform any of the following actions. Some of them take the place of an attack, rather than being a standard action or a move action. This means that, if your base attack bonus allows you multiple attacks, you can attempt one of these actions in place of each of your attacks, but at successively lower base attack bonuses. The actions you take while in a grapple do not provoke attacks of opportunity unless otherwise noted.

Attack Your Opponent: You can make an attack with an unarmed strike or a light weapon against a character you are grappling. You suffer a –4 penalty on such attacks. You can't attack with two weapons while grappling, even if both are light weapons. If you have natural weapons (claws, fangs, etc.), you can use them to attack without penalty.

Damage Your Opponent: While grappling, you can deal damage to your opponent equivalent to an unarmed strike. Make an opposed grapple check in place of an attack. If you win, you deal nonlethal damage as normal for your unarmed strike (1d3 points for Medium attackers or 1d2 points for Small attackers, plus Strength modifiers). If you want to deal lethal damage, you suffer a –4 penalty on your grapple check.

Draw a Light Weapon: You can draw a light weapon as a move action after a successful opposed grapple check.

Escape from Grapple: You can escape a grapple by winning an opposed grapple check in place of making an attack. You may attempt an Escape Artist check in place of your grapple check if you so desire, but this requires a standard action. If more than one opponent is grappling you, your grapple check result must beat all their individual check results to allow you to escape. Opponents don't have to try to hold you if they don't want to. If you escape, you finish the action by moving into any space adjacent to your opponent(s).

Lift Your Opponent: You can attempt to hoist your opponent in the air, leaving him virtually helpless but restricting the actions you can take. You must make a successful grapple check with a –4 penalty. In addition, you must be capable of lifting your opponent's weight above your head. If you succeed, you now hold your foe in the air above you (see "If You Lift an Opponent" on the next page for the benefits of hoisting a grappled foe). You can use this option only if no more than one opponent is part of the grapple.

Move: You can move half your speed (bringing all others engaged in the grapple with you) after winning an opposed grapple check. This requires a standard action, and you must beat all other grapplers' individual check results to move the grapple.

Pin Your Opponent: You can hold your opponent immobile for 1 round by winning an opposed grapple check (made in place of an attack). Once you have a foe pinned, you have a few options available to you (see below). In essence, you gain greater control over the grapple, leaving your enemy at your mercy.

Undo Another's Pin: If you are grappling an opponent who has another character pinned, you can make an opposed grapple check in place of an attack. If you win, you break the opponent's hold over the other character. The character is still grappling but no longer pinned.

Use Opponent's Weapon: If your opponent is holding a light weapon, you can use it to attack him. Make an opposed grapple check (in place of an attack). If you win, make an

attack roll with the weapon, with a –4 penalty (doing this doesn't require another action). You don't gain possession of the weapon by performing this action.

IF YOU'RE PINNING AN OPPONENT

When you have an opponent pinned, you can't draw or use a weapon (against the pinned character or any other), escape another's (not the pinned opponent's) grapple, pin another character, or break another's pin. Otherwise, you can use the options given for grappling in addition to the ones given below.

Attack Your Opponent: As for the normal grapple rules, but you do not suffer a –4 penalty to your attacks.

Damage Your Opponent: Against a pinned opponent you can deal either lethal or nonlethal damage without a penalty to your grapple check. You might use a bear hug or a similar maneuver to crush him, for instance.

Disarm: You can use a disarm action to remove or grab away a well-secured object worn by a pinned opponent, but he gets a +4 bonus on his roll to resist your attempt (see "Disarm," page 196).

Escape From Grapple: You can escape a grapple by winning an opposed grapple check in place of making an attack. You can attempt an Escape Artist check in place of your grapple check if you so desire, but doing so requires a standard action. If more than one opponent is grappling you, your grapple check result has to beat all grapplers' individual check results to escape. Opponents don't have to try to hold you if they don't want to. If you escape, you finish the action by moving into any space adjacent to your opponent(s).

Limb Lock: You bend and twist your pinned opponent's arm or leg, causing excruciating pain. If you succeed at an opposed grapple check, your opponent must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + your grapple check modifier). If he fails, he suffers a –2 penalty to all grapple checks until the end of his next turn. This penalty stacks if you use multiple limb locks, but only one person can successfully use a limb lock against a target at a time. If you apply this maneuver successfully, your allies in the grapple could not also use it.

Silence: You can prevent a pinned opponent from speaking as a free action.

Release: You may voluntarily release a pinned character as a free action. If you do so, you are no longer considered to be grappling that character (and vice versa).

IF AN OPPONENT HAS PINNED YOU

When an opponent has pinned you, he holds you immobile (but not helpless) for 1 round. While pinned, you suffer a –4 penalty to defense against opponents other than the one pinning you. At your opponent's option, you may also be unable to speak. On your turn, you can try to escape the pin by making an opposed grapple check in place of an attack. You can attempt an Escape Artist check in place of your grapple check if you want, but doing so requires a standard action. If you win, you escape the pin, but you're still grappling.

IF YOU LIFT AN OPPONENT

When you lift an opponent as described above, you hold him above your head (or otherwise in an awkward and exposed position). Anyone who attacks you can freely choose which target to strike, rather than using a random method as normal for attacking into a grapple. You lose your active bonuses to defense as normal. You have the following options when you hold an opponent. None of them requires a grapple check, though each one is the equivalent of a single attack made with a standard attack action or as part of a full attack.

Hold: You keep your opponent hoisted in the air as he flails helplessly. See "If An Opponent Lifts You" on the next page for the game effects of being hoisted. Use the standard rules for carrying a weight (see "Carrying Capacity" in Chapter Nine) to see how long you can hold an opponent still.

Slam: You drive your opponent into the ground, slamming him into the dirt with the full weight of your brutal strength. Your foe suffers nonlethal damage equal to 1d6 + double your Strength modifier. In addition, he is prone in a square of your choice within your reach.

Throw: You launch your opponent into the air. You can throw him into a space or toss him at another foe. In either case, you must make a ranged touch attack against the target space or foe. If you try to throw the opponent you grapple into a specific, unoccupied square, treat the square's defense as 5. If you miss, use the scatter rules to determine where your opponent lands (see "Throw Splash or Grenadelike Weapon," page 200). This attack has a maximum range equal your Strength score divided by 5, rounded down, to a minimum of one square.

Your target takes damage as if he fell a number of feet equal to the distance you threw him, plus any vertical distance he falls. For example, if you throw a goblin into a well that is 10 feet away from you, it suffers a fall of 10 feet + the well's depth. (Falling damage equals 1d6 points of damage per 10 feet fallen.) The thrown creature lands prone in the target space.

Anyone struck by a thrown creature suffers damage based on the creature's size, as shown in the table below. A creature with a moderate load or medium armor counts as one size category higher than normal, while one in heavy armor or with a heavy load counts as two sizes larger than normal when determining damage. Anyone struck in this manner is automatically knocked prone if they are the same size or smaller than the thrown creature. The table below shows damage from thrown creatures.

Creature Size	Damage
Colossal	5d6
Gargantuan	4d6
Huge	3d6
Large	2d6
Medium	1d8
Small	1d6
Tiny	1d4
Diminutive	1d3
Fine	1d2

IF AN OPPONENT LIFTS YOU

While held aloft, you remain almost helpless. You lose all active bonuses to defense, while anyone attacking the grapple can freely choose to strike you or your opponent. You can try to break free, cast a spell, attack the person holding you, or attack another target. To attempt anything other than breaking free, you must use a full-round action to make an opposed grapple check with a –4 penalty. Success means you can attempt the action as part of your full round action. Breaking free is a normal grapple check with a –4 penalty.

JOINING A GRAPPLE

If your target is already grappling someone else, you can use an attack to start a grapple, as described above, except that the target doesn't get an attack of opportunity against you, and your grab automatically succeeds. You still must win an opposed grapple check to become part of the grapple.

If multiple opponents are involved in the grapple, pick one to make the opposed grapple check against.

MULTIPLE GRAPPLERS

Several combatants can be in a single grapple. Up to four combatants can grapple a single opponent of the same size in a given round. Creatures one or more size categories smaller than you count for half; creatures one size category larger than you count double; and creatures two or more size categories larger count quadruple.

When you are grappling with multiple opponents, you choose one opponent to make an opposed check against. The exception is an attempt to escape from the grapple; to escape, your grapple check must beat the check results of each opponent.

You can also choose to aid an ally's grapple checks. In this case, make a grapple check opposed by a grappling opponent of your choice. If you succeed, your chosen ally gains a +2 bonus to all his checks until the start of your next action. You may attempt this action from outside the grapple.

ATTACKING INTO A GRAPPLE

Striking an opponent involved in a grapple is a risky maneuver. As the grapplers grab, pull, and wrestle each other, they roll and tumble through the spaces that all of them occupy. It is almost impossible to target a single opponent cleanly. When you use a melee or ranged attack against a creature in a grapple, you attack the grapple as a whole and randomly determine whom you hit. This system may sound complex, but if you try it a few times, it's very easy in practice.

Determine the smallest creature in the grapple. This creature, and all creatures of the same size, should be assigned a single number. Designate one creature as 1, another as 2, and so forth.

If there are creatures one size category larger than the smallest one in the grapple, assign them two consecutive numbers. If any grappling creatures are another size category

larger, assign them four numbers; creatures one size larger still get eight numbers, and so forth.

Once every grappler has been assigned one or more numbers, pick a die type whose number of sides is greater than or equal to the largest number assigned and roll the die. You attack the creature whose number comes up on the die you rolled. Make your attack as normal and compare it to the defender's defense. Remember, creatures in a grapple lose their active bonuses to defense against opponents who are not in the grapple. If no one was assigned the number you rolled, roll again.

Example: A Medium creature, Melvar; a Large creature, Lubrash; and a Huge creature, Hurlgrim, are in a grapple. If you attacked the grapple, you would assign numbers in this manner: Melvar, the smallest creature, gets one number, 1. Lubrash is one size category larger, so she receives two numbers, 2 and 3. Hurlgrim is two size categories larger than Melvar, so he receives four numbers: 4, 5, 6, and 7. Since there are seven possible results, 1d8 is the best matching die. On a roll of a 1, the attack goes against Melvar. On a 2 or 3, it goes against Lubrash; and on a 4, 5, 6, or 7 it counts against Hurlgrim. On an 8, roll again.

OVERRUN [VARIES]

You can attempt an overrun as a standard action taken during your move, or as part of a charge (see above). In general, you cannot take a standard action during a move; this is an exception. Normally, your standard action comes before or after your move action.

With an overrun, you attempt to plow past or over your opponent (and move through his square) as you move. You can only overrun an opponent who is one size category larger than you, the same size, or smaller. You may attempt only one overrun per round.

If you're trying to overrun an opponent, follow these steps.

Step 1: Attack of Opportunity. Since you begin the overrun by moving into the defender's space, you provoke an attack of opportunity from him.

Step 2: Opponent Avoids? The defender has the option to simply avoid you. If he avoids you, he suffers no ill effect.

If you were attempting the overrun as part of a charge, you may keep moving. (You can always move through a square occupied by someone who lets you by.) In either case, the overrun attempt doesn't count against your actions this round (except for any movement required to enter the opponent's square). If your foe doesn't avoid you, move to Step 3.

Step 3: Opponent Blocks? If your opponent blocks you, make a Strength check opposed by the defender's Dexterity or Strength check (whichever ability score has the higher modifier) to knock your opponent prone. A combatant gets a +4 bonus on the check for every size category he is larger than Medium or a –4 penalty for every size category he is smaller than Medium. You gain a +2 bonus on your Strength check if you made the overrun as part of a charge. The defender gets a

+4 bonus on his check if he has more than two legs or is otherwise more stable than a normal humanoid.

If you win this opposed check, you knock the defender prone. If you lose, the defender may react immediately with a Strength check opposed by your Dexterity or Strength check (including the size modifiers noted above, but no other modifiers) to try to knock you prone.

Step 4: Consequences. If you succeed in knocking your opponent prone, continue your movement as normal. Should you fail and get knocked prone yourself, you have to move 5 feet back the way you came and fall, ending your movement there. If you fail but are not knocked prone, you have to move 5 feet back the way you came, ending your movement there. If that square is occupied, you fall prone in that square

SUNDER [VARIES]

You can use a melee attack with a slashing or bludgeoning weapon to strike a weapon or shield that your opponent holds. If you're attempting to sunder a weapon or shield, follow the steps outlined here. Attacking held objects other than weapons or shields is covered below.

Step 1: Attack of Opportunity. You provoke an attack of opportunity from the target whose weapon or shield you are trying to sunder.

Step 2: Opposed Rolls. You and the defender make opposed attack rolls with your respective weapons. The wielder of a two-handed weapon on a sunder attempt gets

a +4 bonus on this roll, and the wielder of a light weapon takes a −4 penalty. If the combatants are of different sizes, the larger combatant gets a bonus to his attack roll of +4 per difference in size category.

Step 3: Consequences. If you beat the defender, roll damage and deal it to the weapon or shield. See the Common Hardness & Hit Points table below to determine how much damage you must deal to destroy the weapon or shield.

If you fail the sunder attempt, you don't deal any damage.

Sundering a Carried or Worn Object: You don't use an opposed attack roll to damage a carried or worn object. Instead, just make an attack roll against the object's defense. A carried or worn object's defense is equal to:

10 + its size modifier + the active defense modifier of the character carrying or wearing it.

Attacking a carried or worn object provokes an attack of opportunity just like attacking a held object. To attempt to snatch away an item worn by a defender rather than damage it, see "Disarm" on page 196. You can't sunder armor worn by another character.

THROW SPLASH OR GRENADELIKE WEAPON [STANDARD]

A *splash weapon* is a ranged weapon that breaks on impact, splashing or scattering its contents over its target and nearby creatures or objects. A *grenadelike weapon* is anything that detonates or releases an effect regardless of whether it hits its target or lands off its mark.

To attack with these weapons, first make a ranged touch attack against the target. (Thrown weapons require no weapon proficiency, so you don't suffer a −4 nonproficiency penalty.) A hit deals direct hit damage to the target. A splash weapon damages all creatures within 5 feet of the target, while a grenadelike weapon detonates with its center on the targeted square or creature.

Instead of a creature, you can target a specific grid intersection or square. Treat this as a ranged attack against a defense of 5. If you target a grid intersection with a splash weapon, creatures in all adjacent squares are dealt the splash damage, and the direct hit damage is not dealt to any creature. You can't target a grid intersection occupied by a creature, such as a Large or larger creature—in such a case, you'd be aiming at the creature.

If you miss the target (whether aiming at a creature or a grid intersection), roll 1d8. The result determines the misdirection of the throw, with 1 being straight back at you and 2 through 8 counting clockwise around the squares surrounding the grid intersection or target creature.

Then, count a number of squares in the indicated direction equal to the range increments of the throw. Unless otherwise noted, a splash or grenadelike weapon has a 10-foot range increment. If the weapon lands in your space or behind you, assume it bounced or was somehow knocked back at you.

COMMON HARDNESS & HIT POINTS

Weapon or Shield	Hardness	hp*
Light blade	10	2
One-handed blade	10	5
Two-handed blade	10	10
Light metal-hafted weapon	10	10
One-handed metal-hafted weapon	10	20
Light hafted weapon	5	2
One-handed hafted weapon	5	5
Two-handed hafted weapon	5	10
Projectile weapon	5	5

Armor	Hardness**	Armor Bonus ×5†
Buckler	10	5
Light wooden shield	5	7
Heavy wooden shield	5	15
Light steel shield	10	10
Heavy steel shield	10	20
Tower shield	5	20

* The hit point value given is for Medium armor, weapons, and shields. Divide it by 2 for each size category by which the item is smaller than Medium. Multiply it by 2 for each size category by which the item is larger than Medium.

** Varies by material.

† Armor's hit point total equals its armor bonus ×5.

GRENADELIKE WEAPONS

Weapon*	Price	Direct Hit Damage	Splash Damage	Range Increment	Weight
Acid (flask)	10 gp	1d6	1 point*	10 feet	1-1/4 lbs.
Alchemist's fire/frost (flask)	20 gp	1d6	1 point*	10 feet	1-1/4 lbs.
Flash powder	35 gp	Blinds	—	10 feet	1 lb.
Smoke bomb	40 gp	Smoke	—	10 feet	1 lb.
Thunderstone	30 gp	Sonic	—	20 feet	1 lb.

* Grenadelike weapons deal splash damage as noted to all creatures within 5 feet of where they land.

After you determine where the weapon landed, it deals splash damage to all creatures in adjacent squares or it explodes in the new target spot.

Typical grenadelike weapons include the following:

Acid: A flask of caustic, fast-acting acid.

Alchemist's Fire/Frost: This flask of a sticky, adhesive substance either ignites when exposed to air or freezes when exposed to flesh. On the round following a direct hit, the target takes an additional 1d6 points of fire/cold damage. The target can use a full-round action to try to extinguish the flames or wipe off the frost (Reflex save, DC 15) before suffering this extra damage. Rolling on the ground confers a +2 bonus to the attempt. (Full immersion in water automatically smothers flames.)

Flash Powder: When the contents of this powder-filled pellet hits the air, it creates a bright flash that blinds those within 10 feet (Fortitude save, DC 15) for 1d4 rounds.

Smoke Bomb: When this ceramic ball breaks open, it produces a cloud of smoke with a 10-foot radius. Creatures within the radius have 50 percent concealment. Those outside it have 100 percent concealment. Unless wind conditions dictate otherwise, the cloud lasts for 1d6+1 rounds.

Thunderstone: When this stone strikes a hard surface, it creates a deafening bang (a sonic attack against those within 10 feet; Fortitude save, DC 15). Deaf creatures suffer a −4 initiative penalty. Deafness lasts 1d6+4 rounds.

TRIP [VARIES]

You can try to trip an opponent as an unarmed melee attack. You can only trip an foe who is one size category larger than you, the same size, or smaller.

Making a Trip Attack: Make an unarmed melee touch attack against your target. This provokes an attack of opportunity from your target as normal for unarmed attacks.

If your attack succeeds, make a Strength check opposed by the defender's Dexterity or Strength check (whichever ability score has the higher modifier). A combatant enjoys a +4 bonus for every size category by which he is larger than Medium or suffers a −4 penalty for every size category by which he is smaller than Medium. The defender gets a +4 bonus on his check if he has more than two legs or is otherwise more stable than a normal humanoid. If you win, you trip the defender. Should you lose, the defender may react

immediately and make a Strength check opposed by your Dexterity or Strength check to try to trip you. A trip attack does not deal damage.

Being Tripped: A tripped character is prone. Standing up is a move action.

Tripping a Mounted Opponent: You may attempt a trip attack against a mounted opponent. The defender may make a Ride check in place of his Dexterity or Strength check. A successful trip means you pull the rider from his mount.

Tripping With a Weapon: Some weapons can be used to make trip attacks. These weapons are marked with the trip style descriptor in Chapter Seven: Equipment. Make a melee touch attack with the weapon instead of an unarmed melee touch attack. You provoke no attack of opportunity.

If you are tripped during your own trip attempt, you can drop the weapon to avoid being tripped in return.

TWO-WEAPON FIGHTING [VARIES]

If you wield a second weapon in your off hand, you can make one extra attack per round with that weapon. You suffer a −6 penalty with your regular attack(s) with your primary hand and a −10 penalty to the attack with your off hand when you fight this way. You can mitigate these penalties in two ways:

If your off-hand weapon is light, reduce the penalties by 2 points each. An unarmed strike is always considered light.

A variety of feats and abilities can reduce these penalties and give you added options when fighting with two weapons. See Chapter Five for details. See the table below for two-weapon fighting penalties:

Circumstances	Primary Hand	Off Hand
Normal penalties	−6	−10
Off-hand weapon is light	−4	−8

Double Weapons: When using a double weapon, you can make an extra attack with the off-hand end of the weapon as if you were fighting with two weapons. Full details on double weapons appear in Chapter Seven.

Thrown Weapons: The same rules apply when you throw a weapon from each hand. Treat a dart or shuriken as a light weapon when used in this manner, and treat bolas or a javelin, net, or sling as a one-handed weapon.

SAVING THROWS

Generally, when you are subject to an unusual or magical attack, you get a *saving throw* to avoid or reduce the effect. Like an attack roll, a saving throw is a d20 roll plus a bonus based on your class, level, and an ability score. Your saving throw modifier is as follows:

Base save bonus + ability modifier

Saving throws are fairly rare in *Iron Heroes*. They apply when a character is the target of a spell, but also in cases of poison and disease resistance and so forth.

The three different kinds of saving throws are Fortitude, Reflex, and Will.

Fortitude: These saves measure your ability to stand up to physical punishment or attacks against your vitality and health, like poison or disease. Apply your Constitution modifier to your Fortitude saving throws.

Reflex: These saves test your ability to dodge large-scale threats, such as a blast of energy from a demonic spellcaster or a pit trap that opens beneath your feet. Apply your Dexterity modifier to your Reflex saving throws.

Will: These saves reflect your resistance to mental influence as well as many magical effects, such as a harpy's beguiling song. Apply your Wisdom modifier to your Will saving throws.

Saving Throw Difficulty Class: The Difficulty Class for a save is determined by the attack itself.

Automatic Failures and Successes: *Iron Heroes* does not feature automatic failures for saving throws. If you roll a 1, add the relevant modifiers and check if you succeed or fail as normal. A die roll of 20 on a saving throw always succeeds, regardless of the modifiers or the Difficulty Class.

MOUNTED COMBAT

Mounted combat requires some special rules to cover the interplay between a rider and his mount, along with the difficulties and intricacies of handling a mounted opponent.

MOUNTS IN COMBAT

Warhorses and warponies readily serve as combat steeds. Light horses, ponies, heavy horses, and any other mounts that are not trained for combat are frightened by battle. If you don't dismount, you must make a Ride check (DC 20) each round as a move action to control such a horse. If you succeed, you can perform a standard action after the move action. Should you fail, the move action becomes a full-round action, and you can't do anything else until your next turn.

Your mount acts on your initiative count as you direct it. You move at its speed, but the mount uses its action to move.

A horse (not a pony) is a Large creature and thus takes up a space 10 feet (two squares) across. For simplicity, assume that you share your mount's space during combat.

FIGHTING WHILE MOUNTED

With a Ride check (DC 5), you can guide a war-trained mount using your knees so as to keep both hands free to attack or defend yourself. This is a free action. If this check fails, you must use a move action to direct your mount.

When you attack a creature on foot that is smaller than your mount, you get a +1 bonus to melee attacks for being on higher ground. If your mount moves more than 5 feet, you can make only a single melee attack. Essentially, you have to wait until the mount gets to your enemy before attacking, so you can't make a full attack. Even at your mount's full speed, you don't take any penalty on melee attacks while mounted.

If your mount charges, you and it suffer the defense penalty associated with a charge. If you make an attack at the end of the charge, you receive the bonus gained from the charge. When charging on horseback, you deal double damage with a lance (see "Charge" on page 195).

You can use ranged weapons while your mount takes a double move, but you suffer a –4 penalty on your attack roll. You can use ranged weapons while your mount is running (quadruple speed), at a –8 penalty. In either case, you make the attack roll when your mount has completed half its movement. You can make a full attack with a ranged weapon while your mount moves. Likewise, you can take move actions normally

If Your Mount Falls in Battle: Should your mount fall, you have to succeed at a Ride check (DC 15) to make a soft fall and take no damage. If the check fails, you suffer 1d6 points of damage.

If You Are Dropped: If you are knocked unconscious, you have a 50 percent chance to stay in the saddle (75 percent if you're in a military saddle). Otherwise you fall and take 1d6 points of damage.

Without you to guide it, your mount avoids combat.

Mounted Overrun (Trample): If you attempt an overrun while mounted, your mount makes the Strength check to determine the success or failure of the overrun attack (and applies its size modifier, rather than yours). If you have the Mounted Combat expanded mastery 1 ability and attempt an overrun while mounted, your target may not choose to avoid you. Should you knock your opponent prone with the overrun, your mount may make one hoof attack against your opponent.

SPECIAL ACTIONS AGAINST MOUNTED FOES

You can use the following actions against mounted foes. Some of them work only if you, too, are mounted. Such exceptions are noted in the action's description.

BOARDING ACTION [STANDARD]

You can climb aboard an opponent's mount if you threaten it with an unarmed attack. In this case, make a Climb check opposed by your foe's Ride check. If you succeed, you climb aboard the mount and move with it as normal. Your opponent suffers a –4 penalty on attacks against you unless his saddle makes it easy for him to turn and attack you.

FORCED DISMOUNT (ON FOOT) [STANDARD]

You can knock a creature off a mount in a couple different ways. For example, you can use the trip attack action to pull an opponent off a horse (see page 201).

Alternatively, you can use a bull rush to knock an opponent from the saddle. In this case, resolve the bull rush action as normal. However, as part of your move into your opponent's space, you must make a Jump check to leap at your foe. Assume that you must clear 6 feet to knock a rider from a horse. Otherwise, your DM estimates a height.

JOUSTING [STANDARD]

You can knock an opponent from his saddle if you make a charge attack with a lance while you, too, are mounted. In this case, your opponent must make a Ride check with a Difficulty Class equal to the damage your lance inflicted. If your opponent has a saddle and stirrups, he gains a +10 bonus to this check. On a failure, he falls from his mount in his current space.

MAGIC IN COMBAT

Most spells require one standard action to cast. You can cast such a spell either before or after you take a move action. See Chapter Ten: Magic for more information on spells. This section covers spells only as they relate to combat.

CONCENTRATION

You must concentrate to cast a spell. If you can't concentrate, you can't cast a spell. If you start casting but something interferes with your focus, you must make a Concentration check or lose the spell. The check's Difficulty Class depends on what is distracting you (see the Concentration skill in Chapter Four). Should you fail, the spell fizzles with no effect, but you still lose the mana you gathered to cast it.

Concentrating to Maintain a Spell: Some spells require continued concentration to keep their effects going. Concentrating to maintain a spell is a move action. Anything that could break your concentration when casting a spell can keep you from concentrating to maintain one. If your concentration breaks, the spell ends.

Casting Time: As mentioned above, most spells have a casting time of one standard action. A spell cast in this manner takes effect immediately.

Attacks of Opportunity: Generally, when you cast a spell you provoke attacks of opportunity from threatening enemies. If you take damage from an attack of opportunity, you must succeed at a Concentration check (DC 10 + points of damage taken + mana spent) or lose the spell. Spells that require only a free action to cast don't provoke attacks of opportunity.

TOUCH SPELLS IN COMBAT

Many spells have a range of Touch, which means that you cast the spell and then touch the subject in order to use it. You may touch (or attempt to touch) the subject in the same round that you cast the spell, or you may do so at a later time. You may take your move before casting the spell, after touching the target, or between casting the spell and touching the target.

You can touch one friend or use the spell on yourself automatically, but to touch an opponent, you must succeed at a melee touch attack roll (see page 180). Touching a foe with a Touch spell is considered an armed attack and therefore does not provoke attacks of opportunity. (However, the act of casting a spell does provoke them.)

You can touch one friend as a standard action or up to six friends as a full-round action.

HOLDING THE CHARGE

If you don't discharge the Touch spell in the same round you cast it, you can hold the magical discharge—or *hold the charge*—indefinitely. You may continue to make touch attacks round after round while holding it.

However, if you touch anything or anyone while holding a charge, even unintentionally, the held spell discharges. If you cast another spell before discharging the first one, the held charge dissipates.

Instead of a touch attack, you may attempt a normal unarmed attack (or an attack with a natural weapon) while holding a charge. In this case, you aren't considered armed and you provoke attacks of opportunity as normal for the attack. (If your unarmed attack or natural weapon attack normally doesn't provoke attacks of opportunity, neither does this attack.) Should the attack hit, you deal normal damage for your unarmed attack or natural weapon and the spell discharges. If the attack misses, you are still holding the charge.

DISMISS A SPELL

Dismissing an active spell to cancel its ongoing effects is a standard action that doesn't provoke attacks of opportunity. Casters can dismiss only their own spells, as described in Chapter Ten: Magic.

USING SPECIAL ABILITIES

A character's traits or class features may grant him access to three types of special ability: spell-like, supernatural, and extraordinary. Unless otherwise noted in Chapter Three, class-related abilities are extraordinary abilities. Using a special ability is usually a standard action, but whether it is a standard action, a full-round action, or not an action at all is defined by the ability.

Spell-Like Abilities: These are magical abilities (often belonging to monsters) that work like spells. For instance, using one requires concentration and provokes attacks of opportunity. The "casting time" of a spell-like ability is one standard action, unless the specific ability description notes otherwise.

Spell-like abilities can be disrupted like spells. If your concentration is broken, your attempt to use the ability fails, but the attempt counts as if you had used it.

As with spells, you can suppress and dispel these abilities via magic. The potency of a spell-like ability depends on the user's caster level and key ability score modifier. If no caster level is specified, use the creature's Hit Dice or character level. If no key ability is specified, use Charisma.

Using a Spell-Like Ability on the Defensive: You may attempt to use a spell-like ability on the defensive, just as with casting a spell. If the Concentration check (DC 15 + mana spent) fails, you can't use the ability, but the attempt counts as if you had used it.

Supernatural Abilities: These are magical abilities that cannot be disrupted like spells but can be suppressed and dispelled magically. Using these abilities does not require concentration nor does it provoke attacks of opportunity.

As with spells, the potency of a supernatural ability can depend on caster level and key ability score modifier. If no caster level is specified, use the creature's Hit Dice or character level. If no key ability is specified, use Charisma.

Using a supernatural ability is a standard action unless defined otherwise in the ability's description.

Extraordinary Abilities: These abilities are actually not magical, so they are not susceptible to anything that disrupts or suppresses magic. Certain creatures' ability to see in the dark with darkvision is extraordinary, for example.

Using an extraordinary ability is generally not an action, because most of them kick in automatically in a reactive fashion. Those extraordinary abilities that are actions are usually standard actions that cannot be disrupted, do not require concentration, and do not provoke attacks of opportunity.

COMBAT CHALLENGES

A skilled weapon master slashes at a gray ogre's eyes, drawing blood that temporarily blinds it. If the master's aim were the slightest bit off, his attack might have missed. An armiger shrugs off his opponent's blows, allowing his armor to absorb the hits as he prepares to deliver the killing strike. In these situations, a warrior accepts a level of risk in return for a potential reward.

Combat challenges work a lot like the skill challenges presented in Chapter Four. In return for a penalty to your attack or defense, you gain a bonus to your actions or inflict a penalty on your foe. Normally, this penalty is −2 to either your attacks or defense, but in some cases it is steeper. In return for this penalty, your attack gains an additional effect, such as a bonus to damage. A defensive challenge might give you the option to move faster or provide a bonus to a skill check. Attack challenges increase the risk that your strike may miss. Defensive challenges lower your defense, making you more vulnerable to your foe's attacks.

ACCEPTING A CHALLENGE

You can take on one attack challenge and one defensive challenge per round. You must state that you wish to accept an attack challenge *at the beginning of your turn*, before you take either your move or standard action. You could not move, draw an attack of opportunity, and decide to accept a defensive challenge before striking. Even if you do not gain any of the benefits of the challenges, you still suffer the penalties. These penalties last until the start of your next action, though all of your attacks gain their benefits. An attack challenge's penalties and benefits apply to any attacks of opportunity you make, in addition to your normal attacks. Note, however, that many of these effects cause named penalties. Be sure that their effects stack depending on their type. (For more on stacking effects, see the sidebar on page 179.)

Defensive challenges work a little differently than attack challenges. To gain a defensive challenge's benefits, you first must expose yourself to the risk associated with it. You can use a defensive challenge only if at least one opponent threatens you. You gain its benefits only to melee attacks. When making a reckless strike, you allow an opponent to take an easy shot at you. In return, you throw your full weight behind a strike and batter aside his defenses.

If you want to use a defensive challenge, you must declare your intention during your action. You then suffer the

This section on the challenge system cannot cover every possible action that would fall under it. Gamers are an inventive lot, and invariably they will try something that doesn't fall within the rules. The key to judging whether to consider something a proper challenge is to look at it in terms of its benefit. If an action simply grants a character a numeric bonus (or inflicts a numeric penalty on an opponent) for an ability or check, then it probably would make a good challenge.

Attack challenges should cover actions that inflict penalties on an opponent or that clearly modify an attack's result. Defensive challenges should cover most other cases where you can logically assume a character would have to reduce his defenses in order to eke out a bonus.

The challenges apply only in combat situations. A character cannot shoulder a defensive challenge when attempting to use Climb outside of combat, for instance. The game mechanics reward characters for taking extra risk—if there is no danger, then there can be no added risk. It's assumed that in a combat situation, a character takes extra precautions to fend off attacks while making a skill check. Outside of combat, he need not protect himself from attack. Realistically, all skill checks should receive a penalty in combat, but to keep the game simple, easy to run, and consistent, Difficulty Classes remain stable regardless of combat circumstances.

For the actual effects of a new challenge, use the existing descriptions as guidelines. A challenge should never provide a bonus or advantage that is the equivalent of a feat. For example, notice how the various challenges that increase damage are always less efficient than the Power Attack feat. In essence, a challenge allows a character to try to mimic a feat but fall a little short. Challenges should be limited to simple combat maneuvers that might be refined into a feat with additional training and focus.

appropriate penalty to your defense until your next action. On that action, you gain the challenge's benefits. This stricture ensures that a character suffers exposure to the challenge's drawbacks. From a realism standpoint, it makes sense that you would have to drop you guard before gaining the benefits offered by a defensive challenge.

Each challenge provides a different benefit. The minimum drawback you can suffer is a −2 penalty to defense or attacks, though some grant you greater benefits in return for a stiffer penalty.

ATTACK CHALLENGES

Attack challenges break down into three categories based on the penalty they levy. *Lesser attack challenges* cause a −2 attack penalty, *moderate* ones inflict a −4 penalty, and *major* ones carry a −6 modifier. Each category presents successively greater benefits, as befits the penalties they cause. Unless otherwise noted, an attack must hit and inflict damage (in other words, your damage beats the target's damage reduction) in order to grant you the challenge's benefit.

You only gain an attack challenge's benefits if you make an attack during your action. If you do not attack, you gain neither the benefits nor the drawbacks levied by the challenge.

Following are examples of attack challenges you can accept.

LESSER ATTACK CHALLENGES (–2)

Bonus Damage: You make a wild swing at your opponent, one that compensates for its inaccuracy with raw power. You gain a +1 bonus to melee damage.

Fight Defensively: You keep back from your opponent, making tentative strikes as you focus on defense. You gain a +1 active bonus to defense.

Hamper Movement: You tangle your opponent's legs, slash at his thighs, or otherwise make it tough for him to move. He suffers a –1 square injury penalty to movement for 1 round.

MODERATE ATTACK CHALLENGES (–4)

Force Movement: You drive your foe back with a mighty blow, forcing him to cede ground in the face of your advance. Your target must move one square to allow you to move into at least one square that he occupied. Your opponent chooses where he wants to move. If all the available spaces present any sort of physical or environmental threat, such as a fire or a pit, he does not have to move. You can force an opponent to move only once per round, and you do not gain this benefit on attacks that are not made as part of your standard or full-round action. For example, you do not gain this benefit on attacks of opportunity.

Improved Bonus Damage: As described above for the bonus damage lesser attack challenge, except you gain a +3 bonus to melee damage.

Improved Fight Defensively: You make only a few careful swipes at your foe, preferring instead to concentrate on parrying. You gain a +2 active bonus to defense.

Wild Flurry: You gain an additional, highly inaccurate attack. You strike one extra time without the benefits of your base attack bonus and Strength or Dexterity bonus to attacks and damage. Your other bonuses apply as normal, as does the challenge penalty. You may use this option as part of a standard or full-round action.

MAJOR ATTACK CHALLENGES (–6)

Improved Force Movement: As described for the force movement moderate attack challenge above, except you choose where your opponent moves. If you attempt to force him into a square that would inflict damage to him, such as a burning fire or a pit, your target may attempt a Reflex save (DC 10 + half your base attack bonus) to cancel the movement. In the event of a successful saving throw, your target does not move and you cannot move him. Additional attacks against him lose the benefits of this challenge until your next action.

Improved Wild Flurry: As above for wild flurry, except you gain the benefit of your Strength or Dexterity bonus to your attack and damage, if applicable.

Superior Bonus Damage: As the bonus damage lesser attack challenge, except you gain a +6 bonus to melee damage.

DEFENSE CHALLENGES

Defense challenges, like attack challenges, break down into three categories based on the penalty they levy. *Lesser defense challenges* cause a –2 defense penalty, *moderate* ones inflict a –4 penalty, and *major* ones carry a –6 modifier. Each category presents successively greater benefits, as befits the penalties they cause. Remember, you only gain the benefits of a defensive challenge after you have accepted its penalties for 1 round.

LESSER DEFENSE CHALLENGES (–2)

Defensive Roll: You roll with each hit you suffer, making yourself easier to strike but harder to injure. You gain a +1 bonus on all damage reduction checks for armor. This option works best against highly skilled opponents who have an excellent chance to hit you.

Reckless Strike: You drop your guard to focus solely on hitting and injuring your opponent. You gain either a +2 bonus to damage or a +1 bonus to attacks for 1 round after accepting this challenge.

Steely Focus: You set aside the chaos and din around you to focus on an action. You gain a +2 bonus to a single skill or ability check of your choice as you lower your defenses to complete the task before you. You must complete this check on your next action after taking on this challenge.

MODERATE DEFENSE CHALLENGES (–4)

Heedless Strike: You pay little mind to your defenses as you leap forward to attack. You gain either a +4 bonus to damage or a +2 bonus to attacks for 1 round after accepting this challenge.

Hustle: You press ahead, reducing your defenses in favor of covering ground. You gain a +1 square (5-foot) bonus to speed. This bonus applies to your base walking speed. Determine other movement modes, such as climbing, based on your improved speed.

Improved Defensive Roll: As for the defensive roll lesser defense challenge, except you gain a +2 bonus to damage reduction checks.

Improved Steely Focus: As for the steely focus lesser defense challenge, except you gain a +4 bonus to your skill or ability check.

Lashing Strike: You gain the ability to make an additional attack of opportunity on the round after you accept this challenge. This extra attack works just like any other attack of opportunity—you gain no special ability to make multiple attacks of opportunity against a single target, for instance.

MAJOR DEFENSE CHALLENGES (–6)

Focused Determination: You reduce your defenses to buy yourself time for a skill or ability check. After you suffer this challenge's defense penalty for 1 round, you may attempt a skill or ability check without provoking attacks of opportunity.

Improved Hustle: As for the hustle moderate defense challenge, except you gain a +2 square (10-foot) bonus to speed.

Suicidal Strike: Your opponent's blows slam into you with vicious accuracy, but you shrug them off in your relentless drive to conquer your foe. You gain either a +6 bonus to damage or a +3 bonus to attacks for 1 round after accepting this challenge.

Superior Defensive Roll: As for the defensive roll lesser defense challenge, except you gain a +3 bonus to damage reduction checks.

STUNTS

A *stunt* is an action in combat that falls outside the normal bounds of the rules. *Iron Heroes* defines a wide variety of different combat actions you can take. The stunts cover everything else. These rules are a tool to help you come up with imaginative, clever, and exciting actions in combat. If you can imagine it, the stunt rules allow you to attempt it. You might throw a fistful of sand in an opponent's face to blind him, run along the narrow top of a wall to maneuver around a foe, or crack open a keg of beer to send a stream of liquid into an opponent's face. Stunts reward you for coming up with interesting and visually engaging actions in combat.

STUNT MECHANICS

The mechanics behind a stunt are relatively simple. When you attempt a stunt, first you pick out the effect you want to create. The following sections list several different possible results for a stunt, broken down into three categories: *offensive stunts, defensive stunts,* and *maneuver stunts.*

Next you describe the stunt. How do you attempt it? Do you use the terrain and combat situation to your advantage? What do you expect to happen if the stunt succeeds? Think of the game as if it were a movie, and describe the scene as you put the stunt into action. As part of this step, you must choose the mechanical effect you want to gain from the stunt. For example, the inflict penalty offensive stunt allows you to force an opponent to take a penalty to his defense or attacks. When you attempt the stunt, you announce the total penalty you wish to inflict. A small penalty calls for a much lower Difficulty Class than a higher one. In the case of an opposed check, seeking more powerful effects forces you to accept a penalty to your check.

The DM then picks one or more skills for you to use for the stunt. You make this "stunt check" against a Difficulty Class chosen by the DM or one determined by the effect you are seeking. Some stunts allow one of your opponents, such as the target of an offensive stunt, to make a skill, ability, or base attack check to foil your stunt. If the stunt check succeeds, you gain its benefits or your foe suffers its effects.

STUNTS AND ACTIONS

Listed next to the name of each stunt is the action required to complete it. Most stunts require a standard action to complete, but a few qualify as attack actions. The attack action stunts require either a standard attack or a full attack action.

CHALLENGES AND STUNTS

The new options provided by challenges and stunts may seem a little confusing at first. In some ways, they grant you the same basic effects but deliver them via different methods. However, the various methods they use are an important part of how they work.

Challenges are designed to give you more options when attacking. They allow you to take a penalty to an attack or defense in return for a temporary bonus. They all focus on attacks and are the easier of the two systems to use. Think of them as pseudo-feats that any character can use. They give you benefits similar to Power Attack and Combat Expertise, but they are less efficient. The key to remember with a challenge is that **it is a simple variation on an attack or defense**.

A stunt is a more elaborate type of action. It can take almost any form and allows you to **create a free-form method of achieving a variety of different ends**. While challenges focus only on attacks, your attack bonus, and your defense, stunts allow you to use your skills to gain an advantage in a fight. While challenges are focused, defined, and limited to modifying your attack or defense, a stunt can achieve a much wider spread of effects. Think of the stunt rules as a flexible package of benefits that you can use to create an effect. You then wrap that effect around a description of the stunt that produces it. You can also do the opposite—describe a stunt, and then pick effects that match the description.

Both these options exist to add variety, excitement, and choice to the game. When you first play *Iron Heroes*, don't be afraid to experiment. Stunts and challenges take some getting used to.

STUNTS AND SKILLS

The DM chooses the skill you must use to complete a stunt and the skill your target uses to oppose your efforts, if applicable. He can also decide to replace a skill check with a base attack/defense check or an ability check. Each of the stunt types includes a short list of skills that are a good match for its effects. While the DM can choose any skill he wants, he should pick one that makes logical sense based on your description of the stunt. Remember, though, that the DM has final say on how a stunt works.

When you announce a stunt, you can choose to cancel it and use a different action if you do not agree with the skill the DM decides to use. Never argue with the DM on this point. Wait until the game session is done if you have any concerns.

For DMs, remember that the players trust you to make fair, impartial decisions. Don't pick skills simply to penalize the players or make stunts more difficult than normal. By the same token, be consistent when the NPCs attempt stunts. If you consistently force the PCs to make illogical skill checks to defend against stunts, particularly if you choose skills that they have few ranks in, the players will quickly become frustrated with your game.

To see some stunts in action, turn to the Example of Play on page 210.

OFFENSIVE STUNTS

There are three types of offensive stunt. All of them count as attack actions.

ATTACK STUNT (FULL ATTACK)

You use a full attack action to combine a stunt with an attack. Usually this stunt check requires you to make an acrobatic maneuver as you deliver an attack or somehow use the environment to improve your attack's potency. The target of this stunt makes a skill or base attack check opposed by your own check.

You gain either a +1 bonus to your attack or a +2 bonus to damage. You can increase either of these bonuses, with no maximum limit, in return for a −2 penalty to your stunt check for each point of increase. You cannot gain both a bonus to an attack and a bonus to damage. You must choose one or the other.

You enjoy this bonus until the end of your action against the foe who opposed your stunt check.

Failure: If this stunt fails, you attack without the bonus to your attack or damage.

Special: If you use Climb, Jump, or Tumble with an attack stunt, you may move up to half your speed as part of this stunt action. For example, if you use Climb to scramble up a wall and then, in the next round, jump down, sword first, to impale a monster, you could move half your speed following the attack to represent you rolling away from the beast or bouncing off it after the strike. This movement does not draw an attack of opportunity from the stunt's target if the stunt succeeds. It draws attacks of opportunity from other creatures as normal, regardless of success or failure.

Fast Stunt: At higher levels, you might want to use a stunt to improve your attacks while still gaining a full attack action. In this case, you can attempt a stunt as a free action. You cannot move as part of the stunt (as described under "Special," above), and you suffer a −5 penalty to your stunt check. If you fail the stunt check, you suffer a −2 penalty to your attacks as your stratagem fails to trick your foe. Otherwise, use the standard rules given above.

Examples: Use the Jump skill to leap over a foe and attack him from above. Use Balance to run along a giant's club and slash at its arms. Use Tumble to dodge between an ogre's legs while slashing at it from behind.

DISRUPTING ATTACK (FULL ATTACK)

You fire an arrow into a dragon's maw, leaving it unable to breathe fire for a short time. You splash ink onto a basilisk's face, nullifying the effect of its gaze to turn your friends into stone. These are example of disrupting attack stunts.

The disrupting attack stunt works a bit differently from the other offensive stunts. You must bid on the Fortitude save DC your target must beat to continue using a supernatural ability or an extraordinary ability. Once you pick the DC, you then must make a skill check with a DC equal to the chosen save DC + 10. If you succeed, your foe loses the use of the attack mode of your choice for 1 round. If the creature randomly determines how often it can use an ability, increase the time it must wait by 1 round. For example, a dragon might be able to breathe once every 1d4 rounds. If you successfully used this stunt against it, it would have to wait 1 extra round before breathing again.

Failure: If this stunt fails, the creature continues to use its special ability as normal.

Special: If you use a base attack check to complete this stunt, you inflict your attack's damage without any bonuses. In this case, you trade brute force for accuracy and precision. If you use an improvised weapon, you do not gain this benefit.

Examples: Use a base attack check to injure a creature's eyes, preventing it from using a deadly gaze. Use a Spot check to target a gorgon's throat before firing so that your arrow disrupts its breath weapon.

INFLICT PENALTY (STANDARD ATTACK)

You attempt to inflict a penalty to an opponent's attacks, defense, or skill and ability checks (your choice). You throw sand in his eyes to disrupt him, tangle him up with a length of rope, or otherwise confuse his efforts. Your foe opposes your check using the same skill or ability, or with a base attack check. (The target chooses one of the two.)

You inflict a base −2 penalty for 1 round. You can increase the duration by 1 round and/or the penalty by −1 by accepting a −2 penalty to your check. There is no limit to the total penalty or duration.

Failure: If your stunt fails, the target suffers none of the penalties you attempted to inflict.

Examples: Use a base attack check to throw sand in an ogre's eye. Use Bluff to trick an opponent into letting his guard down for a moment. Use a base attack check to slam your shield into a foe, knocking him off balance. Use the Use Rope skill to lasso a foe and hinder him for a few moments.

DEFENSIVE STUNTS

The defensive stunts all count as move actions. Most of them provide a benefit to you if you complete them on your turn.

DEFENSE BONUS (MOVE ACTION)

You use a combination of the terrain and your abilities to improve your defense against a single opponent. Your stunt check is a skill or base attack check opposed by your foe's check. If you succeed, you gain an active bonus to defense.

You gain a +2 active bonus to defense if you succeed at this stunt. You can increase this bonus by +1 in exchange for a –2 penalty to your check, with no limit on the bonus you bid on. This bonus lasts until the start of your next action.

Failure: If this stunt fails, your opponent gains a +1 bonus on attacks against you until the start of your next action.

Examples: Use Bluff to trick an opponent into thinking you dodge left when you break to the right. Use Jump to leap into the air and over an opponent's attack. Use Sense Motive to see where an opponent aims his attack. Use Tumble to dodge around the statue that stands behind you.

SAVE BONUS (MOVE ACTION)

You take action to foil an opponent's special attacks. Maybe you cut your thumb on your knife, using the pain to throw off a witch's charm. Or perhaps you hold your breath rather than breathe in poisonous fumes.

You must make a skill or ability check as your stunt check. You gain a +2 bonus to one type of save against a single effect or opponent of your choice with a DC 20 check. You increase this bonus by +1 for every 5 points you increase the Difficulty Class, with no limit on the bonus you can gain. This bonus lasts until the start of your next action.

Failure: You suffer no special drawbacks if this stunt fails.

Special: Unlike other stunts, the save bonus places limits on the skills and abilities you can use to gain its benefits. To gain a bonus to Reflex saves, you must use a Dexterity or Dexterity-based skill check as your stunt check. For Will saves, use a Wisdom or Wisdom-based skill check. For Fortitude saves, use a Constitution or Constitution-based skill (in other words, Concentration) check.

Examples: Use Concentration to ignore a poison's crippling effects. Use Tumble to dodge a lightning bolt. Use Sense Motive to resist a medusa's attempt to ensorcel you.

MANEUVER STUNTS

The single maneuver stunt makes it easier for you to move across the battlefield.

IMPROVED SPEED (SPECIAL ACTION)

You spring off a wall, swing along a length of rope, or use a steep slope to increase your speed. You may make a skill check (DC 20) to gain a +1 square bonus to your speed for the round. You can increase your speed bonus by +1 in return for a +5 modifier to the DC. You cannot increase your speed by more than double in this manner.

You make this check as part of your movement, and the bonus applies only to your current move or standard action used to move. You can use this stunt once per round.

Failure: On a failed check, reduce your speed by the amount you attempted to increase it.

Special: You can only use skills based on Strength or Dexterity, or those two abilities, to attempt this stunt.

Examples: Use Balance to sprint down a slope. Use Tumble to roll across a slippery bridge. Use the Use Rope skill to swing across a ship's rigging.

STATES AND CONDITIONS

As a result of combat, a character might become deafened, blinded, or otherwise inhibited in some way other than sustaining hit points of damage. This section summarizes the various effects and consequences of these conditions. If more than one condition affects a character, apply them all. If you can't combine certain effects, apply the most severe of them.

The states and conditions here are the same as in the core rules except as regards negative levels and prone creatures.

Ability Damaged: The character has temporarily lost 1 or more ability score points. Lost points return at a rate of 1 point per day unless noted otherwise by the condition dealing the damage or unless the character is subject to a successful Heal check for long-term care. A character with Strength 0 falls to the ground and is helpless. A character with Dexterity 0 is paralyzed. A character with Constitution 0 is dead. A character with Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma 0 is unconscious. Ability damage is different from penalties to ability scores, which go away when the conditions causing them go away.

Ability Drained: Ability drain is a more severe form of ability damage (see above). When you suffer drain, it takes you a week to recover drained ability score points See also "Necromancy Method: Healing Hands" in Chapter Ten.

STUNTS AND CHALLENGES: AN EXAMPLE OF PLAY

This example of play is meant to illustrate the differences between challenges and stunts to help you better understand how to use them in your games.

Argren the man-at-arms battles a hideous lizard man in the ruins of a strange temple. His friends are outside the temple, and the powerful lizard man threatens to overwhelm him.

As the battle starts, Argren must buy time until his allies can arrive to help him. On the first round of combat, he uses a **combat challenge** to improve his defense. He uses the improved fight defensively option to give himself a −4 penalty to his attacks and a +2 active bonus to defense.

After absorbing the creature's first attacks, Argren notices that his ally Jessa the thief has moved into position for a sneak attack. However, on this round she'll be just short of taking position for an attack. Argren decides he must force the lizard man to move just far enough to give Jessa the chance to attack this round. Argren can use a **combat challenge** to force the creature to move, or he can use a stunt. Since he's a man-at-arms, he has a good base attack bonus. With his feats, he is better off using a combat challenge than a stunt. He also gains multiple attacks, offering him more chances to force the lizard creature back and giving him the chance to move it farther. Argren makes his full attack action, hitting twice to drive the lizard man back toward the shadowy wall where Jessa hides.

Later in the fight, another lizard man warrior emerges from a dark tunnel that leads to the temple's catacombs. Jessa the thief sees that the lizard man warrior has moved directly next to a cracked, crumbled statue next to the tunnel entrance. She approaches the statue and decides to use **an inflict penalty offensive stunt**. From behind the statue, she scoops up a handful of dust and debris and throws it at the creature's eyes. She decides that she wants to inflict a total penalty of −4 on the ogre. Normally, this stunt causes a −2 penalty, but Jessa decides to go for a greater penalty. She takes a −4 penalty to her check for increasing the base penalty by 2.

The DM decides that a base attack check provides the best fit for resolving the stunt. Jessa then makes her stunt check, which the DM opposes with a base attack check for the lizard warrior. Jessa's result is an 18, while the lizard gets only a 12, so her stunt succeeds. Jessa remains behind the statue to gain cover against the creature.

Later, another lizard warrior moves next to the statue. Jessa is still hiding behind it. She wants to use a stunt to hinder the creature, but she knows she must use a skill as part of the stunt to have the best chance to score a spectacular success. She decides on the following **attack stunt**. She climbs to the top of the statue, leaps into the air, then kicks down into the statue's head to send it flying at the lizard warrior. The DM had already described the statue as crumbling and battered, and he agrees that the stunt makes sense and functions with the Climb skill. Jessa decides that she wants to knock out the lizard warrior in one shot. She bids for a +8 bonus to damage, giving her a total −12 penalty to her check. The DM decides that the stunt she described requires her to make a Climb check opposed by her foe's base attack check.

This example shows that many times your choice of options depends on what you are good at and the total effect you need to create. A thief is better off using stunts rather than challenges. A weapon master is probably better off with a challenge, but if he cannot attack his foe, he might use a stunt.

Blinded: The character cannot see. He takes a −2 penalty to defense, loses his active bonus to defense, moves at half speed, and suffers a −4 penalty to Search checks and to most Strength- and Dexterity-based skill checks. All checks and activities that rely on vision (such as reading and Spot checks) automatically fail. All opponents are considered to have total concealment (50 percent miss chance) relative to the blinded character. Characters who remain blinded for a long time grow accustomed to these drawbacks and can overcome some of them.

Blown Away: Depending on its size, a creature can be blown away by winds of high velocity. A creature on the ground that is blown away is knocked down and rolls 1d4 × 10 feet, suffering 1d4 points of nonlethal damage per 10 feet. A flying creature that is blown away is blasted back 2d6 × 10 feet and suffers 2d6 points of nonlethal damage due to battering and buffeting.

Checked: A checked character is prevented from achieving forward motion by an applied force, such as wind. Checked creatures on the ground merely stop. Checked flying creatures move back a distance specified in the description of the effect.

Confused: A confused character's actions are determined by a percentile roll at the beginning of his turn:

d%	Confused Action
01–10	Attack random target with melee or ranged weapons (or close with caster if attacking is not possible).
11–20	Act normally.
21–50	Do nothing but babble incoherently.
51–70	Flee away from area at top possible speed.
71–100	Attack nearest creature.

A confused character who can't carry out the indicated action does nothing but babble incoherently. Combatants receive no special advantage when attacking a confused character. Any confused character who is attacked automatically attacks its attacker(s) on its next turn, as long as it is still confused when its turn comes. A confused character does not make attacks of opportunity against any creature that it is not already devoted to attacking (either because of its most recent action or because it has just been attacked).

Cowering: The character freezes in fear and can take no actions. A cowering character suffers a −2 penalty to defense and loses his active bonuses to defense.

Dazed: The creature cannot act normally. A dazed creature can take no actions but suffers no penalty to defense. A dazed condition typically lasts 1 round.

Dazzled: The creature cannot see well because of overstimulation of the eyes or because sand, blood, or some other material has gotten into them. A dazzled creature suffers a −1 penalty on attack rolls, Search checks, and Spot checks.

Deafened: A deafened character cannot hear. He suffers a −4 penalty on initiative checks, automatically fails Listen

checks, and has a 20 percent chance of spell failure when casting spells. Characters who remain deafened for a long time grow accustomed to these drawbacks and can overcome some of them.

Energy Drain and Negative Levels: Negative levels are difficult for *Iron Heroes* characters to cope with, as they lack access to the spells normally used to remove them. In *Iron Heroes*, a negative level has slightly different effects than in the core rules. A character suffers the following effects for each negative level he gains:

- −1 penalty on all skill checks and ability checks
- −1 penalty to his base attack bonus
- −1 penalty to his base defense bonus
- −1 penalty on saving throws
- −5 hit points
- −1 effective level (whenever the creature's level is used in a die roll or calculation, reduce it by one for each negative level)

Negative levels remain until your body has a chance to recover from the trauma of receiving one. You naturally heal one negative level per day (eight hours) of complete rest. If you undertake any strenuous activity, you do not heal the negative level. No Fortitude save is required to see whether a negative level becomes permanent.

A creature gains 5 temporary hit points for each negative level it bestows (though not if the negative level is caused by a spell or similar effect).

Entangled: The character becomes ensnared. Entanglement impedes movement but does not prevent it entirely unless the bonds are anchored to an immobile object or tethered by an opposing force. An entangled creature moves at half speed, cannot run or charge, and suffers a −2 penalty on all attack rolls and a −4 penalty to Dexterity. An entangled character who attempts to cast a spell must make a Concentration check (DC 15 + the spell's mana cost) or lose the spell.

Exhausted: An exhausted character moves at half speed and suffers a −6 penalty to Strength and Dexterity. After one hour of complete rest, an exhausted character becomes merely fatigued (see below). A fatigued character becomes exhausted by doing something else that would normally cause fatigue.

Fascinated: A fascinated creature is entranced by a supernatural or spell-like effect. The creature stands or sits quietly, taking no actions other than to pay attention to the fascinating effect for as long as the effect lasts. It suffers a −4 penalty on skill checks made as reactions, such as Listen and Spot checks. Any potential threat, such as a hostile creature approaching, allows the fascinated creature a new saving throw against the fascinating effect. Any obvious threat, such as someone drawing a weapon, casting a spell, or aiming a ranged weapon at the fascinated creature automatically breaks the effect. A fascinated creature's ally may shake it free of the condition as a standard action.

Fatigued: A fatigued character can neither run nor charge and suffers a −2 penalty to Strength and Dexterity. Doing anything that would normally inflict fatigue causes the character to become exhausted. After eight hours of complete rest, fatigued characters are no longer fatigued.

Flat-Footed: A character who has not yet acted during a combat round is flat footed, unable to react normally to the situation yet. A flat-footed character loses his active bonus to defense and cannot make attacks of opportunity. Once it's their turn to act in the combat round, characters are no longer flat-footed.

Frightened: A frightened creature flees from the source of its fear as best it can. If unable to flee, it may fight. A frightened creature suffers a –2 penalty on all attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks. A frightened creature can use special abilities, including spells, to flee; indeed, the creature must use such means if they are its only way to escape. Frightened is like the shaken condition (see below), except the creature must flee if possible. The panicked condition is a more extreme state of fear.

Grappling: A character is grappling while engaged in wrestling or another form of hand-to-hand struggle with one or more attackers. A grappling character can undertake only a limited number of actions. He threatens no squares and loses his active bonus to defense against opponents he isn't grappling.

Helpless: A helpless character is paralyzed, held, bound, sleeping, unconscious, or otherwise completely at an opponent's mercy. Treat a helpless target as having a Dexterity of 0 (–5 modifier). Melee attacks against a helpless target get a +4 bonus (equivalent to attacking a prone target). Obviously, a helpless target loses his active bonus to defense. Ranged attacks get no special bonus against helpless targets.

As a full-round action, an enemy can use a melee weapon to deliver a *coup de grace* upon a helpless foe. An enemy can also use a bow or crossbow, provided he is adjacent to the target. The attacker automatically hits and scores a critical hit. Defenders who survive must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10 + damage dealt) or die.

Delivering a *coup de grace* provokes attacks of opportunity.

Creatures immune to critical hits do not take critical damage, nor do they need to make Fortitude saves to avoid being killed by a *coup de grace*.

Incorporeal: Incorporeal creatures can be harmed normally by other incorporeal creatures. They gain a 50% miss chance against all other attacks, regardless of source. They are immune to critical hits and to precision-based damage such as sneak attacks. Armor provides no protection against incorporeal creatures, even if the suit would normally protect against magical damage. When incorporeal creatures make attacks, they ignore all passive defense bonuses except force and deflection bonuses. They can move through physical barriers such as walls, though they cannot see through them.

Instant Kill Abilities: Any effect that causes its target to die immediately due to an effect other than hit points of damage is an instant kill ability. Due to *Iron Heroes'* reduced emphasis on spellcasting, some of these abilities need to be toned down from what appears in the core rules. A petrified or slain character is no longer easy to bring back—parties have no high-level divine casters or powerful friends at the local temple.

Any character who suffers the effects of an instant kill ability immediately falls to –10 hit points. He must make a Fortitude save as normal to survive.

Invisible: Visually undetectable, an invisible creature gains a +2 bonus on attack rolls against sighted opponents and ignores its foes' active bonuses to defense.

Knocked Down: Depending on their size, creatures can be knocked down by winds of high velocity. Creatures on the ground are knocked prone by the force of the wind; flying creatures are instead blown back 1d6 × 10 feet.

Nauseated: Due to stomach distress, nauseated creatures find themselves unable to attack, cast spells, concentrate on spells, or do anything else requiring attention. The only action such a character can take is a single move action per turn.

Negative Levels: See "Energy Drain and Negative Levels" on page 211.

Panicked: A panicked creature must drop anything it holds and flee at top speed from the source of its fear, as well as any other dangers it encounters, along a random path. It can't take any other actions. In addition, the creature suffers a –2 penalty on all saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks. If cornered, a panicked creature cowers and does not attack. A panicked creature can use special abilities, including spells, to flee; indeed, the creature must use such means if they are its only way to escape. Panicked is a more extreme state of fear than the shaken or frightened states.

Paralyzed: A paralyzed character freezes in place, unable to move or act. A paralyzed character has effective Dexterity and Strength scores of 0 and is helpless, but can take purely mental actions. A winged creature flying in the air at the time it becomes paralyzed can no longer flap its wings and falls. A paralyzed swimmer can't swim and may drown. One can move through a space occupied by a paralyzed creature— ally or not.

Petrified: A petrified character has been turned to stone and is considered unconscious. Petrification wears off after 2d4 days. If a petrified character cracks or breaks, but the broken pieces are joined with the body as he returns to flesh, he emerges unharmed. If the character's petrified body is incomplete when it returns to flesh, he drops to –10 hit points if the DM judges that he has lost enough parts to incapacitate him. The DM also may rule that the petrified character is dead when he returns to normal if he loses his heart, head, or other vital organs.

Prone: The character is on the ground. A prone attacker suffers a –4 penalty to melee attack rolls and cannot use a ranged weapon (except for a crossbow). A prone defender gains a +4 bonus to defense against ranged attacks but takes a –4 penalty to defense against melee attacks. A prone character threatens no squares, but he can attack adjacent squares with melee weapons.

Shaken: A shaken character suffers a –2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks. Shaken is a less severe state of fear than the frightened or panicked states.

Sickened: A sickened character suffers a –2 penalty on all attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks.

Stunned: A stunned creature drops everything held, takes no actions, incurs a –2 penalty to defense, and loses his active bonus to defense.

CHAPTER NINE:

ADVENTURING

Iron Heroes is designed for fast-paced, exciting action, but not all of it takes place during combat. Once the fight is over, you have to move on, so parties of player characters travel, explore, and interact with others during their adventures as well.

This chapter includes many of the basic rules needed for a variety of adventuring situations, from determining how much equipment you can carry to keeping track of how much light a torch casts over an area.

CARRYING CAPACITY
Encumbrance rules determine how much your armor and equipment slow you down. Encumbrance comes in two parts: encumbrance by armor and encumbrance by total weight.

ENCUMBRANCE BY ARMOR
Your armor defines your maximum active bonus to defense, armor check penalty, speed, and running speed. Unless you are weak or carrying a lot of gear, that's all you need to know. The extra gear you carry won't slow you down any more than your armor already does. If you are weak or carrying a lot of gear, however, then you'll need to calculate encumbrance by weight as described below. Doing so is most important when you're trying to carry some heavy object.

TOTAL WEIGHT
If you want to determine whether your gear is heavy enough to slow you down more than your armor already does, total the weight of all your items, including armor, weapons, and gear. Compare this total to your Strength on the Carrying Capacity table on the next page. Depending on how the weight compares to your carrying capacity, you may be carrying a *light*, *medium*, or *heavy* load. Like armor, your load affects your maximum active bonus to defense, carries a check penalty (which works like an armor check penalty), reduces your speed, and affects how fast you can run, as shown on the Carrying Loads table on the next page. A medium or heavy load counts as medium or heavy armor for the purpose of abilities or skills restricted by armor. Carrying a light load does not encumber a character.

Your *maximum load* is the upper end of the "Heavy Load" range on the Carrying Capacity table.

If you are wearing armor, use the worse figure (from armor or from load) for each category. Do not stack the penalties.

LIFTING AND DRAGGING
You can lift as much as your maximum load (as defined above) over your head.

You can lift as much as double your maximum load off the ground, but you can only stagger around with it. While overloaded in this way, you lose any active bonus to defense and can move only one square (5 feet) per round as a full-round action.

You can generally push or drag along the ground as much as five times your maximum load. Favorable conditions can double these numbers, and bad circumstances can reduce them to one-half or less.

BIGGER AND SMALLER CREATURES
The figures on the Carrying Capacity table are for Medium bipedal creatures. A larger bipedal creature can carry more weight depending on its size category, as follows: Large ×2, Huge ×4, Gargantuan ×8, Colossal ×16. A smaller creature can carry less weight depending on its size category, as follows: Small ×3/4, Tiny ×1/2, Diminutive ×1/4, Fine ×1/8.

Quadrupeds can carry heavier loads than characters can. Instead of the multipliers given above, multiply the value corresponding to the creature's Strength score from the Carrying Capacity table by the appropriate modifier, as follows: Fine ×1/4, Diminutive ×1/2, Tiny ×3/4, Small ×1, Medium ×1-1/2, Large ×3, Huge ×6, Gargantuan ×12, Colossal ×24.

TREMENDOUS STRENGTH

For Strength scores not shown on the Carrying Capacity table, first find the Strength score between 20 and 29 that has the same number in the "ones" digit as the creature's Strength score does. Multiply the numbers in that row by 4 for every 10 points the creature's Strength exceeds the score for that row.

MOVEMENT

There are three scales used when discussing movement in *Iron Heroes*. They are as follows.

- *Tactical*, for combat, measured in feet (or squares) per round (for details, see the "Movement" section in Chapter Eight: Combat).
- *Local*, for exploring an area, measured in feet per minute (see the "Local Movement" section on the next page).
- *Overland*, for getting from place to place, measured in miles per hour or miles per day (see the "Overland Movement" section starting on the next page).

CARRYING CAPACITY AND CARRYING LOADS

CARRYING CAPACITY

Strength Score	Light Load	Medium Load	Heavy Load
1	3 lbs. or less	4–6 lbs.	7–10 lbs.
2	6 lbs. or less	7–13 lbs.	14–20 lbs.
3	10 lbs. or less	11–20 lbs.	21–30 lbs.
4	13 lbs. or less	14–26 lbs.	27–40 lbs.
5	16 lbs. or less	17–33 lbs.	34–50 lbs.
6	20 lbs. or less	21–40 lbs.	41–60 lbs.
7	23 lbs. or less	24–46 lbs.	47–70 lbs.
8	26 lbs. or less	27–53 lbs.	54–80 lbs.
9	30 lbs. or less	31–60 lbs.	61–90 lbs.
10	33 lbs. or less	34–66 lbs.	67–100 lbs.
11	38 lbs. or less	39–76 lbs.	77–115 lbs.
12	43 lbs. or less	44–86 lbs.	87–130 lbs.
13	50 lbs. or less	51–100 lbs.	101–150 lbs.
14	58 lbs. or less	59–116 lbs.	117–175 lbs.
15	66 lbs. or less	67–133 lbs.	134–200 lbs.
16	76 lbs. or less	77–153 lbs.	154–230 lbs.
17	86 lbs. or less	87–173 lbs.	174–260 lbs.
18	100 lbs. or less	101–200 lbs.	201–300 lbs.
19	116 lbs. or less	117–233 lbs.	234–350 lbs.
20	133 lbs. or less	134–266 lbs.	267–400 lbs.
21	153 lbs. or less	154–306 lbs.	307–460 lbs.
22	173 lbs. or less	174–346 lbs.	347–520 lbs.
23	200 lbs. or less	201–400 lbs.	401–600 lbs.
24	233 lbs. or less	234–466 lbs.	467–700 lbs.
25	266 lbs. or less	267–533 lbs.	534–800 lbs.
26	306 lbs. or less	307–613 lbs.	614–920 lbs.
27	346 lbs. or less	347–693 lbs.	694–1,040 lbs.
28	400 lbs. or less	401–800 lbs.	801–1,200 lbs.
29	466 lbs. or less	467–933 lbs.	934–1,400 lbs.
+10	×4	×4	×4

CARRYING LOADS

Load	Maximum Dex	Check Penalty	Speed	Run
Light	N/A	0	30 feet	×4
Medium	+3	−3	20 feet	×4
Heavy	+1	−6	15 feet	×3

MODES OF MOVEMENT

While moving at the different movement scales, creatures generally walk, hustle, or run.

Walk: A walk represents unhurried but purposeful movement at 3 miles per hour for an unencumbered human.

Hustle: A hustle is a jog at about 6 miles per hour for an unencumbered human. A character moving her speed twice in a single round, or moving that speed in the same round that she performs a standard action (or another move action) is hustling when she moves.

Run (×3): Moving three times one's speed is a running pace for a character in heavy armor. It represents about 9 miles per hour for a human in full plate.

Run (×4): Moving four times one's speed is a running pace for a character in light, medium, or no armor. It represents about 12 miles per hour for an unencumbered human, or 8 miles per hour for a human in chainmail.

LOCAL MOVEMENT

Characters exploring an area use local movement, measured in feet per minute.

Walk: A character can walk without a problem on the local scale.

Hustle: A character can hustle without a problem on the local scale. See "Overland Movement," below, for movement measured in miles per hour.

Run: A character with a Constitution ability score of 9 or higher can run for a minute without a problem. Generally, a character can run for a minute or two before having to stop and rest for a minute.

OVERLAND MOVEMENT

Characters covering long distances cross-country use overland movement. Measure overland movement in miles per hour or miles per day. In game terms, a day represents eight

MOVEMENT, DISTANCE, AND TERRAIN

MOVEMENT AND DISTANCE

	Speed 15 feet	Speed 20 feet	Speed 30 feet	Speed 40 feet
1 Round (Tactical)*				
Walk	15 feet	20 feet	30 feet	40 feet
Hustle	30 feet	40 feet	60 feet	80 feet
Run (×3)	45 feet	60 feet	90 feet	120 feet
Run (×4)	60 feet	80 feet	120 feet	160 feet
One Minute (Local)				
Walk	150 feet	200 feet	300 feet	400 feet
Hustle	300 feet	400 feet	600 feet	800 feet
Run (×3)	450 feet	600 feet	900 feet	1,200 feet
Run (×4)	600 feet	800 feet	1,200 feet	1,600 feet
One Hour (Overland)				
Walk	1-1/2 miles	2 miles	3 miles	4 miles
Hustle	3 miles	4 miles	6 miles	8 miles
Run	—	—	—	—
One Day (Overland)				
Walk	12 miles	16 miles	24 miles	32 miles
Hustle	—	—	—	—
Run	—	—	—	—

* Tactical movement is often measured in squares on the battle grid (1 square = 5 feet) rather than feet.

TERRAIN AND OVERLAND MOVEMENT

Terrain	Highway	Road or Trail	Trackless
Desert, sandy	×1	×1/2	×1/2
Forest	×1	×1	×1/2
Hills	×1	×3/4	×1/2
Jungle	×1	×3/4	×1/4
Moor	×1	×1	×3/4
Mountains	×3/4	×3/4	×1/2
Plains	×1	×1	×3/4
Swamp	×1	×3/4	×1/2
Tundra, frozen	×1	×3/4	×3/4

hours of actual travel time. For rowed watercraft, a day represents 10 hours of rowing. For a sailing ship, it represents 24 hours.

Walk: A character can walk eight hours in a day of travel without a problem. Walking for longer than that can wear her out (see "Forced March," below).

Hustle: A character can hustle for one hour without a problem. Hustling for a second hour in between sleep cycles deals 1 point of nonlethal damage; each additional hour deals twice the damage taken during the previous hour of hustling.

A character who takes any nonlethal damage from hustling becomes fatigued (see "States and Conditions" in Chapter Eight: Combat). A fatigued character can't run or charge and suffers a penalty of –2 to Strength and Dexterity. Eliminating the nonlethal damage also eliminates the fatigue.

Run: A character can't run for an extended period of time. Attempts to run and rest in cycles effectively work out to a hustle.

Terrain: The terrain through which a character travels affects how much distance she can cover in an hour or a day (see the Terrain and Overland Movement table on the previous page).

- A highway is a straight, major, paved road.
- A road is typically a dirt track.
- A trail is like a road, except that it allows only single-file travel and does not benefit a party traveling with vehicles.
- Trackless terrain is a wild area with no paths.

Forced March: In a day of normal walking, a character walks for eight hours. The rest of the available daylight time is spent making and breaking camp, resting, eating, and so on.

A character can walk for more than eight hours in a day by making a forced march. Each hour of marching beyond eight hours requires a Constitution check (DC 10, +2 per extra hour). Should the check fail, the character suffers 1d6 points of nonlethal damage. Taking any nonlethal damage

MOUNTS AND VEHICLES

Mount/Vehicle	Per Hour	Per Day
Mount (With Load)		
Light horse or light warhorse (light load only)	6 miles	48 miles
Light horse (151–450 lbs.)*	4 miles	32 miles
Light warhorse (231–690 lbs.)*	3 miles	24 miles
Heavy horse or heavy warhorse	5 miles	40 miles
Heavy horse (201–600 lbs.)*	3-1/2 miles	28 miles
Heavy warhorse (301–900 lbs.)*	2-1/2 miles	20 miles
Pony or warpony (light load only)	4 miles	32 miles
Pony (76–225 lbs.)*	3 miles	24 miles
Warpony (101–300 lbs.)*	2 miles	16 miles
Donkey or mule (light load only)	3 miles	24 miles
Donkey (51–150 lbs.)*	2 miles	16 miles
Mule (231–690 lbs.)*	1-1/2 miles	12 miles
Cart or wagon	2 miles	16 miles
Ship		
Raft or barge (poled or towed)**	1/2 mile	5 miles
Keelboat (rowed)**	1 mile	10 miles
Rowboat (rowed)**	1-1/2 miles	15 miles
Sailing ship (sailed)	2 miles	48 miles
Warship (sailed and rowed)	2-1/2 miles	60 miles
Longship (sailed and rowed)	3 miles	72 miles
Galley (rowed and sailed)	4 miles	96 miles

* Quadrupeds, such as horses, can carry heavier loads than characters can. See "Carrying Capacity," pages 213 to 214, for more information.

** Rafts, barges, keelboats, and rowboats are used on lakes and rivers. If going downstream, add the speed of the current (typically 3 miles per hour) to the vehicle's speed. In addition to 10 hours of being rowed, the vehicle can float an additional 14 hours, if someone can guide it, so add an additional 42 miles to the daily distance traveled. You can't row these vehicles against any significant current, but draft animals on the shores can pull them upstream.

from a forced march also fatigues a character. Eliminating the nonlethal damage also eliminates the fatigue. It's possible for a character to march into unconsciousness by pushing herself too hard.

Mounted Movement: A mount bearing a rider can move at a hustle. The damage it suffers while doing so, however, is lethal damage, not nonlethal damage. One can also ride the creature in a forced march, but its Constitution checks automatically fail, and, again, the damage it takes is lethal. Mounts also become fatigued when they suffer any damage from hustling or forced marches.

See the Mounts and Vehicles table on the previous page for mounted speeds and speeds for vehicles pulled by draft animals.

Waterborne Movement: See the "Ships" section of the Mounts and Vehicles table on the previous page for speeds of water vehicles.

VISION AND LIGHT

In an area of bright light, all characters can see clearly. A creature can't hide in an area of bright light unless it is invisible or has cover.

In an area of shadowy illumination, a character can see dimly. Creatures within this area have concealment relative to that character. A creature in an area of shadowy illumination can make a Hide check to conceal itself.

In areas of darkness, creatures without darkvision (see below) are effectively blinded. In addition to the obvious effects, a blinded creature has a 50 percent miss chance in combat (all opponents have total concealment), loses any active bonus to defense, suffers a –2 penalty to defense, moves at half speed, and takes a –4 penalty on Search checks and most Strength and Dexterity-based skill checks.

VISION SPECIAL ABILITIES

Certain creatures naturally have extraordinary vision.

Low-Light Vision (Ex): Characters with low-light vision can see objects twice as far away as the radius given in the table below.

Darkvision (Ex): Creatures with darkvision (often subterranean creatures) can see 60 feet even in total darkness. Darkvision is black and white only, but otherwise like normal sight.

LIGHT SOURCES & ILLUMINATION

Object	Bright	Shadowy	Duration
Candle	N/A*	5 feet	1 hour
Lamp, common	15 feet	30 feet	6 hours/pint
Lantern, bullseye**	60-foot cone	120-foot cone	6 hours/pint
Lantern, hooded	30 feet	60 feet	6 hours/pint
Torch	20 feet	40 feet	1 hour

A candle does not provide bright illumination, only shadowy illumination.

**A bullseye lantern illuminates a cone, not a radius.*

BREAKING AND DESTROYING OBJECTS

When attempting to break an object, you have two choices: either smash it with a weapon or break it with sheer strength.

SMASHING AN OBJECT

To smash a weapon or shield with a slashing or bludgeoning weapon, you use the sunder special attack action (see Chapter Eight). Smashing an object is a lot like sundering a weapon or shield, except that your attack roll is opposed by the object's defense. Generally, you can smash an object with only a bludgeoning or slashing weapon.

Defense: Objects are easier to hit than creatures because they usually don't move, but many are tough enough to shrug off some damage from each blow. An object's defense is equal to the following:

10 + its size modifier –7 (Dex modifier).

Note that an inanimate object has not only a Dexterity of 0 (–5 penalty to defense), but also an additional –2 penalty to its defense. Furthermore, if you take a full-round action to line up a shot against the object, you get an automatic hit with a melee weapon and a +5 bonus on attack rolls with a ranged weapon.

Hardness: Each object has hardness, a number that represents how well it resists damage (see the Substance/Object Hardness & Hit Points table on the next page). Whenever an object takes damage, subtract its hardness from the damage. Deduct only damage in excess of its hardness from the object's hit points.

Hit Points: An object's hit point total depends on what it is made of and how big it is. When an object's hit point total reaches 0, it's ruined.

Very large objects have separate hit point totals for different sections.

Damaged Objects: A damaged object remains fully functional until its hit points fall to 0, at which point it is destroyed. Damaged (but not destroyed) objects can be repaired with the Craft skill.

Energy Attacks: Acid and sonic attacks deal damage to most objects just as they do to creatures. Roll damage and apply it normally after a successful hit. Electricity and fire attacks deal half damage to most objects. Divide the damage dealt by 2 before applying the hardness. Cold attacks deal one-quarter damage to most objects. Divide the damage dealt by 4 before applying the hardness.

Ineffective Weapons: Certain weapons, as judged by the DM, just can't effectively deal damage to certain objects. For example, a sap is useless if you want to batter down a door.

Immunities: Objects are immune to nonlethal damage and to critical hits.

Ranged Weapon Damage: Objects take half damage from ranged weapons (unless the weapon is a siege engine or something similar). Divide the damage dealt by 2 before applying the object's hardness.

SUBSTANCE/OBJECT HARDNESS & HP

SUBSTANCE HARDNESS AND HIT POINTS

Substance	Hardness	Hit Points
Paper or cloth	0	2/inch of thickness
Rope	0	2/inch of thickness
Glass	1	1/inch of thickness
Ice	0	3/inch of thickness
Leather or hide	2	5/inch of thickness
Wood	5	10/inch of thickness
Stone	8	15/inch of thickness
Iron or steel	10	30/inch of thickness
Mithral	15	30/inch of thickness
Adamantine	20	40/inch of thickness

SIZE AND DEFENSE OF OBJECTS

Object's Size	Defense Modifier
Colossal	−8
Gargantuan	−4
Huge	−2
Large	−1
Medium	+0
Small	+1
Tiny	+2
Diminutive	+4
Fine	+8

OBJECT HARDNESS AND HIT POINTS

Object	Hardness	hp	Break DC
Rope (1-inch diameter)	0	2	23
Simple wooden door	5	10	13
Small chest	5	1	17
Good wooden door	5	15	18
Treasure chest	5	15	23
Strong wooden door	5	20	23
Masonry wall (1 foot thick)	8	90	35
Hewn stone (3 feet thick)	8	540	50
Chain	10	5	26
Manacles	10	10	26
Masterwork manacles	10	10	28
Iron door (2 inches thick)	10	60	28

Vulnerability to Certain Attacks: Your DM may rule that certain attacks prove especially successful against some objects. In such cases, attacks deal double their normal damage and may ignore the object's hardness.

Saving Throws: Nonmagical, unattended items never make saving throws. They are considered to have failed their saving throws, so they always are affected by spells. An item attended by a character (being grasped, touched, or worn) makes saving throws as the character (that is, using the character's saving throw bonus).

BREAKING ITEMS

When a character tries to break something with sudden force rather than by dealing damage, use a Strength check (rather than an attack roll and damage roll, as with the sunder special attack action) to see whether she succeeds. The Difficulty Class depends more on the item's construction than on the material.

If an item has lost half or more of its hit points, the Difficulty Class to break it drops by 2.

Larger and smaller creatures get size bonuses and size penalties on Strength checks to break open doors as follows: Fine −16, Diminutive −12, Tiny −8, Small −4, Large +4, Huge +8, Gargantuan +12, Colossal +16.

A crowbar or portable ram improves a character's chance of breaking open a door.

See the table below for the Difficulty Classes needed to break or burst common items.

Strength Check to:	DC
Break down a simple door	13
Break down a good door	18
Break down a strong door	23
Burst hempen rope bonds	23
Bend iron bars	24
Break down a barred door	25
Burst chain bonds	26
Break down an iron door	28

UNUSUAL MATERIALS

From time to time, characters may come across rare objects made of materials other than metal, wood, and similar mundane substances. Two such materials are described below.

Adamantine: This ultrahard metal adds to the durable quality of an item. Items without metal parts cannot be made from adamantine.

Mithral: Mithral is a very rare silvery, glistening metal that is lighter than iron but just as hard. When worked like steel, it becomes a wonderful material from which to create items of metal. An item made from mithral weighs half as much as the same item made from other metals. Items not primarily of metal are not meaningfully affected by being partially made of mithral.

CHAPTER TEN:

MAGIC

An arcanist delves into the mysteries of magic, but in the end it is a resource that none can truly control. Magic is the stuff of chaos beaten into order, and even the mightiest archmage can do little more than hold it in place temporarily. Few spells work exactly as their casters intend. Sometimes arcane power proves far more hazardous to its user than to his enemies.

Magic in *Iron Heroes* is an unpredictable, dangerous force. Arcanists can control it to an extent, but even the most skilled mage risks a disastrous mishap each time he summons his power. In most cases, arcanists prefer to rely on the magical powers they develop. Arcane feats represent the most practiced, refined, and controlled magical formulas. They operate on established and reliable principles.

In contrast, magical spells are dangerous, random, and unstable. When an arcanist casts a spell, he gathers energy, shapes it to the best of his ability, and allows it to flood into reality. If the arcanist is skilled and lucky, the power he unleashes has the effect he intended. Usually, however, something changes in the transition between sculpting the magical energy and channeling it into reality.

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF MAGIC

Iron Heroes' system of magic operates on a set of basic principles. These rules form the foundation of magical theory and describe the major aspects of an arcanist's craft. The principles are as follows:

The law of material states that *mana* is the basic building block of a magical effect. Mana is a strange type of energy that seems to slide between worlds. An arcanist taps into these dimensional spaces and manipulates the energies there to create effects. Most arcanists believe that mana is the stuff of raw chaos. It holds within it all possibilities and no possibilities— unless it is tended and directed by an intelligent mind. Without a force capable of imposing order upon it, mana becomes a blur of all the potential held captive within it.

The law of chaos states that, in the transition from a dimensional space to reality, all mana changes in some way. No spell works exactly as its user intends, but a skilled caster can ensure that the changes his spell suffers are too minor to alter its overall effects. The material of the space between the planes simply remains too unstable and strange to survive entry into reality unchanged. Because mana is the raw stuff of chaos, it rarely acts exactly as intended.

The law of balance states that a caster's ability to manipulate and control mana declines in proportion to the amount of mana he attempts to handle. In other words, the more mana you try to move to reality, the harder it is to control.

The law of mortal limits states that, as creatures native to the material world, humans can never command ultimate mastery over mana. Only those who transcend their mortal bounds can attain pure mastery of magic. Yet all who have done so invariably become something other than human.

Thus far, these laws have proven immutable. Many arcanists attempt to transcend them, but none have succeeded without selling their souls to otherworldly creatures, descending into madness, or dying in the attempt.

THE MECHANICS OF MAGIC

When Morthoth the arcanist attempts to cast a spell, he must gather magical energy, focus it into the form he desires, then unleash it into the world. The process of gathering the energy can place a strain on his mind and body, but as he trains and studies, he learns to gather mana without injuring himself.

As an artist gains skill throughout his career, an arcanist can improve his ability to form spells. Not only can he create more powerful effects, but the simple effects he mastered as an apprentice become easier to shape. Unfortunately, every mage—from the simplest initiate to the mightiest archmage—faces a simple, insurmountable problem: The process of shepherding a fully-formed spell from the space between dimensions to reality is fraught with peril. Random fluctuations in planar geometry and the volatility of mana can cause a spell to take on almost any form. Morthoth can reduce the chance of losing control of a spell by gathering as little mana as possible to achieve his intended effect.

In game terms, casting a spell involves three steps:

1. First, an arcanist must determine how much mana to gather. If he tries to gather more than he can normally handle, he might push his body and mind beyond their levels of endurance.
2. Next he decides what he wants to do with the mana and sculpts it into his desired form.
3. With the spell shaped to his liking, the arcanist then attempts to channel it into reality. This last step is the most important portion of the process. If the arcanist successfully channels the spell, it has its desired effects. If he fails, the spell runs wild.

STEP 1: GATHER MANA

Every spellcaster can draw on mana to shape his spells. An arcanist's *mana limit* (see the Arcanist Class Features and Mastery table in Chapter Three) represents his ability to gather points of mana. The mana limit does not represent a supply of energy that a caster taps into. Rather, it measures the total energy that he can gather without stretching his mental and physical abilities beyond their capacity. Think of it as the total distance a runner can travel before tiring. This measure shows the limit of what an arcanist is capable of handling, not a discrete supply of energy that he can access.

When you use mana to shape a spell, you reduce your total available mana by the amount spent on the spell. If casting a spell reduces your available mana to less than zero, track the negative total. When you cast a spell that leaves you with a negative mana total, make a Fortitude save (DC 15 + your negative mana total; ignore the minus sign on your total when you determine this Difficulty Class).

STRAIN

If you fail this saving throw, you suffer *strain*. Strain is temporary ability score damage equal to your negative mana total. You suffer this damage to all of your ability scores.

TRACKING MANA

It may seem a little strange to track mana according to the rules described here, since it represents your capacity to channel mana rather than a discrete energy supply. In terms of bookkeeping and records, this method proved much easier while yielding the same mathematical results as rules that start your mana spent at zero and increase it up to a maximum amount you can spend per day. In particular, keeping track of strain save Difficulty Classes requires less math using the method described here.

You can continue to cast spells after your mana total drops below zero, but you must continue to make Fortitude saves. If you fail another saving throw, you again suffer temporary ability score damage equal to your negative mana total. You do not reset your mana total after taking damage.

You cannot reduce your mana pool to less than 0 − your Constitution score. If your pool somehow drops below this value, you immediately die from the traumatic strain.

Example: Morthoth currently has 2 points of available mana. He casts a spell that costs 4 mana, dropping him to −2. He must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 17 [15 + 2, since he's at −2 mana]) or suffer 2 points of damage to his ability scores. Later, he casts another spell that costs 8 mana, bringing his available mana down to −10. He must make a Fortitude save (DC 25 [15 + 10 for his negative mana]) or suffer 10 more points of damage to each of his ability scores. If he failed both saves, his scores would each suffer 12 points of damage. As you can see, pushing your mana pool below zero can prove risky.

STEP 2: CREATE SPELL EFFECTS

A spellcaster shapes spells based on his mastery of the various *schools of magic*. Each school encompasses a variety of methods. As a spellcaster achieves greater mastery in a school, he learns more methods.

SCHOOLS OF MAGIC

The eight schools of magic are outlined below. Full details about the schools and the methods they offer appear starting on page 228.

Abjuration: The school of abjuration covers magic that can create barriers, whether physical or arcane in nature. An abjuration spell might create a rock wall or a spectral barrier that disrupts the flow of magic. A greater mastery in abjuration allows a caster to produce stronger barriers and to create walls against a wider range of energies, creatures, and effects. Skilled arcanists also can create barriers that allow some effects or creatures through while blocking others.

When a caster fails to channel an abjuration spell properly, the barriers he creates might trap him or restrict the wrong things.

Conjuration: The school of conjuration allows a spellcaster to create items, objects, or creatures. In most cases, this magic creates temporary effects, but truly skilled arcanists can produce items as real and lasting as anything forged by an artisan's hands.

A failed conjuration spell may create a hideous mockery of life that attacks anything near it. Even conjured inanimate objects may suffer this fate.

Divination: Divination is the magic of knowledge and learning. It allows a spellcaster to uncover information normally beyond his reach. Spells of this school can reveal hidden objects, pry the truth from a creature's mind, or grant a caster a useful insight in battle.

A failed divination spell might drive a caster mad as he uncovers a cosmic truth that his mind simply cannot contain.

Enchantment: Spells of the school of enchantment alter and influence the minds of living creatures. A spellcaster could turn a sworn enemy into a friend or trick a victim into believing that a lump of coal is a valuable gem.

A failed enchantment spell can warp and twist the target's or caster's mind, turning him into a raving homicidal lunatic.

Evocation: By turns the simplest, best-known, and most dangerous school of magic, evocation allows a mage to channel raw destructive energy into reality. This energy can blast a legion of enemies into little more than a pile of ash.

If a caster fails to channel an evocation spell properly, it might engulf him in its energy.

Illusion: The school of illusion allows a caster to trick the senses. Its spells can create phantasmal images, render a creature invisible, or cause powerful delusions.

A failed illusion can trap its caster within its tendrils, causing him to believe in the phantasms he created while others remain unaffected by them.

Necromancy: The feared school of necromancy deals with the power of death. It can create spells that strike a creature dead or summon a being from beyond the veil of mortal existence. It can also mend wounds, destroy diseases, or purge poisons from a creature's body.

In many ways, necromancy is the most dangerous school of magic. Should a caster fail to channel one of these spells properly, he may suffer severe physical and mental degradation as baneful energies wash over him.

Transmutation: The school of transmutation alters the properties of physical objects and creatures. Its spells can increase a warrior's strength, harden a suit of armor, or sharpen a sword.

A failed transmutation spell can scar, twist, or weaken its target. Rather than strengthen or reinforce its subject, it has the opposite effect.

SHAPING SPELLS

Creating a spell effect is simply a matter of deciding what you want to do with the mana you have gathered. Your mastery in each school determines your options. A spellcaster

skilled in transmutation might be able to turn lead into gold, while a mighty necromancer could raise an army of zombies and skeletons.

In addition, more powerful spell effects require more mana to fuel them. Simpler spells gain greater benefits if you channel more mana into them. For instance, an apprentice might use the evocation school to create a fiery dart that strikes as hard as a man's fist, while an archmage could hurl a mighty bolt capable of shattering a castle's walls.

Each school of magic encompasses a variety of *methods*. The methods are basic practices of magic that represent the most common shapes and forms for spells. When you cast a spell, you must have access to a method that can produce the effect you want. An arcanist must delve into magical lore and practice a variety of arcane exercises in order to learn how to shape different effects. Think of a method as a blueprint for a spell. An arcanist can make some modifications on the fly, but he must understand the basic shape and form of the spell needed to produce a particular effect before he can cast it.

STEP 3: CHANNEL THE SPELL

Once you have gathered mana and shaped your spell using an available method, you must channel it into reality. This step is the most hazardous part of spellcasting.

To channel a spell, you must make a *channeling check*. To do so, roll 1d20 and add your mastery in the school of magic you want to use (see the Arcanist Spell Mastery Ratings table in Chapter Three for ratings by level). Your channeling check has a Difficulty Class equal to the amount of mana spent on the spell + 5.

The Difficulty Class of your channeling check increases with each point of mana spent on the spell. Powerful spells are harder to control and more likely to react in strange, unpredictable ways as they breach the barrier between reality and the realm of magic.

Note that the channeling check and the Difficulty Class increase associated with using mana applies *only to human characters*. Strange immortal beings, demons, and other monstrosities can channel magic with much greater ease—as beings composed at least partially of magic, they can manipulate it well.

FAILING A CHANNELING CHECK

If your channeling check fails, the spell has some effect you did not plan on. At worst, the spell has nearly its opposite effect. A magical blast strikes you instead of an opponent. A spell to beguile a creature and make it friendly throws its target into a murderous rage. Most of the time, the spell changes in a subtle way. An illusion takes on a different form. A divination gives you false or irrelevant information. A transmutation creates or alters an item in a way you didn't anticipate.

In general, a spell's effects come close to your intended outcome if you fail your channeling check by only a small

margin. There are four different outcomes for a channeling check.

If your check meets or exceeds the Difficulty Class, you successfully cast the spell. It has all the effects you wanted.

If your check fails by 10 or less, you suffer a moderate disaster. The spell takes the basic form you wanted, but it has several unintended effects. It might affect a different target or have the opposite of its intended effect. A smart arcanist plans on this and uses spells that might help him even with this result. Each method has different potential disasters, as described in "Spell Methods" starting on page 228.

If your check fails by more than 10, you suffer a major disaster. The spell may affect you or it could help your enemies. Humanity has learned the hard way never to trust magic because of the destruction wrought by this result. Each method has different potential disasters, as described in "Spell Methods" starting on page 228.

If you roll a natural 1 but your check would succeed, you suffer a moderate disaster. If your check fails, you suffer a major disaster. In this case, the amount by which you failed makes no difference to the spellcasting process. Magic is a dangerous, unpredictable force. Even the most skilled mages sometimes suffer a disaster.

CASTING SPELLS

Mana is a wild, chaotic form of energy. Arcanists attempt to impose order upon it. Like mystic scientists, they seek to build reliable principles that allow them to create the same basic effects time and again. Magic's unpredictability remains its greatest hurdle to becoming a truly useful tool. Arcanists seek to erase this uncertainty, yet their efforts

have yielded only limited results. Many theorists believe that magic, as a fundamentally chaotic force, can never be truly controlled. Instead, arcanists can only hope to guess at how it reacts to specific, carefully defined attempts to shape it.

Nonetheless, the arcanist class represents the most common form of magical study in the world of *Iron Heroes*. Other magical traditions exist, but most of them are highly secretive, difficult to learn, or followed by only a handful of adepts. The study of the schools of magic and their forms has been passed down from one generation to the next in great compendiums of arcane lore. Anyone capable of reading the vernacular used to write one of these books could potentially learn to cast a spell, though most folk lack the necessary mental acuity and dedication.

No one knows exactly where this magical tradition arose. From the *Sathrap Codex* to the eight volumes of the *Invocations to Kaernath*, the arcanist's practice traces its routes to a variety of sources. While the details of each codex or tome may differ, the basic methods are the same.

Throughout this section, the words "method" and "spell" are essentially interchangeable. A caster uses a method to cast a spell in the same way that a chef uses a recipe to prepare a meal. Think of the method as the instructions a caster follows to produce a spell. In some cases, a method gives you choices—such as how much mana to spend—when casting a spell.

The description of each method starting on page 228 includes various elements that explain its basic function and the consequences of a disaster when attempting to use it. The following sections discuss the different elements of a spell method.

MASTERY

Each school of magic offers one or more methods for use in crafting spells, and every method covers varying levels of mastery, from 1 to 10. You have sufficient *mastery* to use a particular method if your mastery rating for the school in question equals or exceeds the method's mastery level.

When you attain a given mastery rating in a school, you have learned all the methods listed for your current mastery level and all lower ones.

Several of a method's elements are variable depending on your mastery in the method's particular school of magic. For instance, the method's listed duration may be "one hour/abjuration mastery level," which means that, if you have a mastery rating of 4 in the abjuration school, a spell effect you shape with this method lasts four hours. It's important to note that this reference applies not to the method's mastery level but to your own mastery level.

DESCRIPTORS

A *descriptor* categorizes a method in some way. Usually it details the type of damage a method inflicts, such as fire or sonic. Some spells have more than one descriptor. In many cases, you can alter a method's descriptors when you use it to cast a spell.

The descriptors are as follows: acid*, air*, cold*, darkness, death, earth*, electricity*, fear, fire*, force*, language-dependent, light, mind-affecting, sonic*, and water*. (The asterisk designates descriptors suitable for use with certain abjuration spell methods.)

Most of these descriptors have no game effect by themselves. However, they govern how the method interacts with special abilities, other spells, unusual creatures, and so on.

A language-dependent spell uses intelligible language as a medium for communication. If the target cannot understand or cannot hear what the caster of a language-dependent spell says, the spell fails.

A mind-affecting spell works only against creatures with an Intelligence score of 3 or higher.

MANA

Most methods allow you to spend a variable amount of mana when casting a spell. Usually, a spell produces more spectacular or useful effects if you pump more than the minimum required mana into it. However, spells that use a lot of mana prove difficult to cast properly and remain vulnerable to a catastrophic disaster.

Spells require mana for a variety of factors. One method may require you to spend mana on the spell's duration and the damage it inflicts, while another uses it solely to determine the save Difficulty Class. This entry in the method's description summarizes what you need to spend mana on to cast a spell.

DETERMINING MANA COST FOR SPELLS

To shape a spell, an arcanist must weave a number of different elements together to create the overall effect. In most cases,* these various spell facets each require a minimum level of mastery, according to the tables included in each spell method.

For example, in the *creation* method used to conjure an object, one must shape the object from a *material* into a given *size*. Let's say an arcanist with a conjuration mastery rating of 8 wants to create an iron object (iron requires a minimum mastery of 4, according to the Conjuring Creatures and Objects table on page 233) that is size Large (on the same table, a Large object calls for a minimum mastery of 6). She can accomplish this feat, as her mastery of 8 is higher than both 4 for the iron and 6 for the Large size.

As you can see, each element (in this case, size and material) has its own associated mastery level. You must take each element's mastery into account separately when shaping the spell. In other words, you can't gain both a material and a size for your object with a single mastery value; each has its own, listed all on the same table for the sake of convenience.

When it comes time to determine the spell's mana cost, the caster must look at the mastery required for each element of the spell. (Use the minimum mastery value needed for each facet of the spell.) The spell's cost in mana equals the highest mastery level required for an element + half of all the other necessary mastery levels. So in the case of our *creation,* the cost to create a Large iron object totals 8 mana (6 + [4 ÷ 2]).

Sidebars in this chapter offer detailed examples of shaping spells from the various methods.

* Abjuration spells work a bit differently. See "Abjuration" starting on page 228.

DIVISION AND MANA COST

Sometimes you might have to divide a number to determine the corresponding mana cost. For instance, many spell methods require you to divide the mastery rating of a spell ability in half to determine the mana cost of casting it. Whenever you divide a number to figure a mana cost, always round up. This is an exception to the rounding rules outlined in the Introduction.

CASTING TIME

Most spells have a *casting time* of one standard action. Others take 1 round or more, while a few require only a free action. "Actions in Combat" in Chapter Eight describes the various action types, including how to resolve actions that take more than 1 round. See also the "Magic in Combat" section in that same chapter.

RANGE

A method's *range* indicates how far from you its spell effects can reach. A method's range, as defined in the range entry

of the method description, is the maximum distance from you at which the spell's effect can occur, as well as the maximum distance at which you can designate the spell's point of origin. If any portion of the spell's area would extend beyond this range, that area is wasted. Standard ranges include the following.

Personal: The spell affects only you.

Touch: You must touch a creature or object to affect it. A Touch spell that deals damage can score a critical hit just as a weapon can. A Touch spell threatens a critical hit on a natural roll of 20 and deals double damage on a successful critical hit. Some Touch spells allow you to touch multiple targets; you can touch up to six willing targets that you can reach as part of the casting, but you must touch them all in the same round you finish casting the spell. You can touch up to one unwilling target as part of casting a spell.

Close: The spell reaches up to 25 feet away from you. The maximum range increases by 5 feet for every two full mastery levels.

Medium: The spell reaches as far as 100 feet + 10 feet per mastery level.

Long: The spell reaches as far as 400 feet + 40 feet per mastery level.

Range Expressed in Feet or Miles: Some spells simply express their range in terms of feet or miles.

Mana-Dependent Range: Some methods require you to spend mana to increase the spell's range.

Aiming a Spell

When casting a spell, you must choose whom to affect with it or where the effect is to originate, depending on the type of spell. The description of a method defines the spell's target (or targets), its effect, or its area, as appropriate.

Target(s)

Some methods have a target(s). You cast these spells on creatures or objects, as defined by the spell itself. You must be able to see or touch the target, and you must specifically choose that target. You do not have to select your target until you finish casting the spell.

If the target of a spell is yourself (the description has a line that reads Target: You), you do not receive a saving throw, and spell resistance does not apply. Such method descriptions omit the "Saving Throw" and "Spell Resistance" lines.

Some spells restrict you to willing targets only. Declaring yourself a willing target is something you can do at any time (even if you're flat footed or if it isn't your turn). Unconscious creatures are automatically considered willing, but a character who is conscious but immobile or helpless (such as one who is bound, cowering, grappling, paralyzed, pinned, or stunned) is not automatically willing.

Some methods allow you to redirect the effect to new targets or areas after you cast the spell. Redirecting a spell is a move action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

SHAPABLE AREAS AND EFFECTS

If an Area or Effect entry ends with "(S)," you can mold the spell's effect or area. A shaped effect or area can have no dimension smaller than 10 feet. Many effects or areas—especially in the abjuration school—are given as squares to make it easy to model irregular shapes. Three-dimensional volumes usually define aerial or underwater effects and areas.

EFFECT

Some methods create or summon things rather than affecting things that are already present.

You must designate the location where these things are to appear, either by seeing it or defining it. Range determines how far away an effect can appear; if the effect is mobile, it can move regardless of the spell's range.

Ray: Some effects are rays. You aim a ray as if using a ranged weapon, though typically you make a ranged touch attack rather than a normal ranged attack. As with a ranged weapon, you can fire into the dark or at an invisible creature and hope you hit something. You don't have to see the creature you're trying to hit with a ray, as you do with a targeted spell. Intervening creatures and obstacles, however, can block your line of sight or provide cover for the creature you're aiming at.

If a ray spell has a listed duration, it's the duration of the effect that the ray causes, not the length of time the ray itself persists.

When a ray spell deals damage, you can score a critical hit just as if it were a weapon. A ray spell threatens a critical hit on a natural roll of 20 and deals double damage on a successful critical hit.

Spread: Some effects, notably clouds and fogs, spread out from a point of origin, which must be a grid intersection. The effect can extend around corners and into areas that you can't see. Figure distance by actual distance traveled, taking into account turns the spell effect takes. When determining distance for spread effects, count around walls, not through them. As with movement, do not trace diagonals across corners. You must designate the point of origin for a spread effect, but you need not have line of effect (see below) to all portions of the effect.

AREA

Some spells affect an area. A method description may specify a particular area, but usually an area falls into one of the categories defined below.

Regardless of the area's shape, you select the point where the spell originates, but otherwise you don't control which creatures or objects the spell affects. An area spell's point of origin is always a grid intersection. When determining whether a given creature is within the area of a spell, count out the distance from the point of origin in squares just as you do when moving a character or determining the range for a ranged attack. The only difference is that, instead of counting from the center of one square to the center of the next, you count from intersection to intersection.

You can count diagonally across a square, but remember that every second diagonal counts as two squares of distance. If the far edge of a square is within the spell's area, anything within that square lies within the spell's area. If the spell's area touches only the near edge of a square, however, anything within that square remains unaffected by the spell.

Burst, Emanation, or Spread: Most spells that affect an area function as either a burst, an emanation, or a spread. In each case, select the spell's point of origin and measure its effect from that point.

A *burst spell* affects whatever it catches in its area, even creatures you can't see. It can't affect creatures with total cover from its point of origin (in other words, its effects don't extend around corners). The default shape for a burst effect is a sphere, but some burst spells are specifically described as cone-shaped. A burst's area defines how far from the point of origin the spell's effect extends.

An *emanation spell* functions like a burst spell, except that the effect continues to radiate from the point of origin for the duration of the spell. Most emanations are shaped like cones or spheres.

A *spread spell* spreads out like a burst but can turn corners. You select the point of origin, and the spell spreads out a given distance in all directions. Figure the area the spell effect fills by taking into account any turns the spell effect takes.

Cone, Cylinder, Line, or Sphere: Most spells that affect an area have a particular shape, such as a cone, cylinder, line, or sphere.

A *cone-shaped spell* shoots away from you in a quarter-circle in the direction you designate. The effect starts from any corner of your square and widens out as it goes. Most cones are either bursts or emanations (see above), and thus won't go around corners.

When casting a *cylinder-shaped spell*, you select the spell's point of origin. This point is the center of a horizontal circle, and the spell shoots up or down from the circle, filling a cylinder. A cylinder-shaped spell ignores any obstructions within its area.

A *line-shaped spell* shoots away from you in a line in the direction you designate. It starts from any corner of your square and extends to the limit of its range or until it strikes a barrier that blocks line of effect. A line-shaped spell affects all creatures in squares that the line passes through.

A *sphere-shaped spell* expands from its point of origin to fill a spherical area. Spheres may be bursts, emanations, or spreads, as described above.

Creatures: A spell with this kind of area affects creatures directly (like a targeted spell), but it affects all creatures in an area of some kind rather than individuals you select. The

area might be a spherical burst, a cone-shaped burst, or some other shape.

Many spells affect "living creatures," which means all creatures other than constructs and undead. Creatures in the spell's area that are not of the appropriate type do not count against the creatures affected.

Objects: A spell with this kind of area affects objects within an area you select (as Creatures, but affecting objects instead).

Other: A spell can have a unique area, as defined in its description.

DURATION

A spell's Duration entry tells you how long the magical energy of the spell lasts.

TYPES OF DURATIONS

A method can measure its spells' durations in several ways.

Timed Durations: A spell might last a number of rounds, minutes, hours, or some other increment. When the time is up, the magic goes away and the spell ends. If a spell's duration is variable, the DM rolls the duration secretly (the caster doesn't know how long the spell will last).

Instantaneous: In a method whose spells have Instantaneous durations, the spell energy comes and goes the instant the spell is cast, though the consequences might be long lasting.

Permanent: The energy remains as long as the effect does.

Concentration: The spell lasts as long as the caster concentrates on it. Concentrating to maintain a spell is a move action. Anything that could break your concentration when casting a spell can also break your concentration while you're maintaining one, causing the spell to end. (See "Magic in Combat" in Chapter Eight.)

You can't cast a spell while concentrating on another one. A spell may last for a short time after you cease concentrating, according to its method description.

SUBJECTS, EFFECTS, AND AREAS

If a spell affects creatures directly, the result travels with the subjects for the spell's duration. If a spell creates an effect, the effect lasts for the duration. The effect might move or remain still. Such an effect can be destroyed prior to the end of its duration. If the spell affects an area, then the spell stays with that area for its duration.

Creatures become subject to the spell when they enter the area and are no longer subject to it when they leave.

Discharge: Occasionally a spell lasts for a set duration *or* until triggered or discharged.

TOUCH SPELLS AND HOLDING THE CHARGE

In most cases, if you don't discharge a Touch spell on the round you cast it, you can hold the charge (postpone the discharge of the spell) indefinitely. You can make touch attacks round after round until you succeed. If you cast another spell, the Touch spell dissipates.

Some touch spells allow you to touch multiple targets as part of the spell. You can't hold the charge of such a spell; you must touch all targets of the spell in the same round that you finish casting the spell.

DISMISSIBLE SPELLS

If the Duration line ends with "(D)," the caster can dismiss the spell at will. To do so, you must be within range of the spell's effect and must speak words of dismissal. Dismissing a spell is a move action.

A spell that depends on concentration is dismissible by its very nature. Dismissing such a spell does not require an action, since all you have to do to end it is to stop concentrating on your turn.

SAVING THROW

Usually a harmful spell allows a target to make a saving throw to avoid some or all of the effect.

TYPES OF ENTRIES

The Saving Throw entry in a spell description defines which type of saving throw the spell allows and describes how saving throws against the spell work.

Negates: The spell has no effect on a subject that makes a successful saving throw.

Partial: The spell causes an effect on its subject. A successful saving throw means that some lesser effect occurs.

Half: The spell deals damage, and a successful saving throw halves the damage taken (round down).

None: No saving throw is allowed.

Disbelief: A successful saving throw lets a subject ignore the effect.

(Harmless): The spell is usually beneficial, not harmful, but a targeted creature can attempt a saving throw if desired.

LINE OF EFFECT

A line of effect is a straight, unblocked path that indicates what a spell can affect. A solid barrier cancels a line of effect. It's like line of sight for ranged weapons, except that it's not blocked by fog, darkness, and other factors that limit normal sight.

You must have a clear line of effect to any spell target or to any space in which you wish to create an effect. You must have a clear line of effect to the point of origin of any spell you cast.

A burst, cone, cylinder, or emanation spell affects only an area, creatures, or objects to which it has line of effect from its origin (a spherical burst's center point, a cone-shaped burst's starting point, a cylinder's circle, or an emanation's point of origin).

An otherwise solid barrier with a hole of at least one square foot through it does not block a spell's line of effect. Such an opening means that the 5-foot length of wall containing the hole is no longer considered a barrier for purposes of a spell's line of effect.

OBJECT

Some spells can be cast on creatures or objects. When a spell is cast on an object, the item receives a saving throw only if it is magical or if it is attended (held, worn, grasped, or the like) by a creature resisting the spell, in which case the object uses the creature's saving throw bonus. Magic items enjoy a +20 bonus to all saves.

SAVING THROW DIFFICULTY CLASS

A saving throw against your spell has a DC of 10 + your Intelligence modifier + half the number of mana points spent to power it. The more energy contained within a spell, the more difficult it is to resist. You can always choose to spend additional mana to increase a spell's save DC. This mana has no effect on the spell's other features.

SUCCEEDING AT A SAVING THROW

A creature that successfully saves against a spell with no obvious physical effects feels a hostile force or a tingle but cannot deduce the exact nature of the attack. Likewise, if a creature's saving throw succeeds against a targeted spell, you as the caster sense that your spell has failed. You do not sense when creatures succeed on saves against effect and area spells. There are no automatic failures or successes on saves against spells.

VOLUNTARILY GIVING UP A SAVING THROW

A creature can voluntarily forego a saving throw and willingly accept a spell's effect. Even a character with a special resistance to magic can suppress this quality to accept an effect.

SPELL RESISTANCE

Some creatures are composed of fundamentally alien matter, or their very natures derive from the raw stuff of mana. These creatures typically have spell resistance (SR). This line of a spell's description notes whether a method is subject to spell resistance (Yes or No).

When you cast a spell that can be affected by spell resistance at a creature with SR, you must make a caster level check (1d20 + your arcanist level) with a Difficulty Class equal to the creature's spell resistance. If you succeed, the spell affects the creature as normal. Failure means the spell has no effect on the creature.

SPELL METHODS

Iron Heroes campaigns take place in a world where magic is a force too potent for mere mortals to control with any confidence. Nevertheless, they continue to try by perfecting their methods. The eight schools of magic each describe different methods for shaping the unstable arcane energies, as detailed below.

ABJURATION

The school of abjuration deals in creating barriers. An apprentice can create a field that deflects arrows or wards off attacks, while an archmage could shape a physical wall as stout as a castle. The barriers created via the school of abjuration might block magical energy, fire, living creatures, or some other specific target.

ABJURATION METHOD: ARCANE SHIELD

Mastery: 1
Descriptor: Force
Mana: 2/point of deflection bonus
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Touch
Target: Creature touched
Duration: One hour (D)
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

You create a shield of magical force that can repel attacks. The shield has a visual aspect that makes it easy to identify. Anyone who can see the spell's target knows that a magical effect protects her. When you gain access to this method, you must create a brief description of the *arcane shield's* visual effects.

This spell grants a +1 deflection bonus to defense for every 2 points of mana you spend on it, to a maximum deflection bonus equal to your abjuration mastery rating.

Moderate Disaster: The spell's energy goes out of control and affects a random target within 30 feet of the desired target. If there are no eligible targets, the energy boils over and inflicts a major disaster (see below).

Major Disaster: The spell rebounds upon the caster and reverses the polarity of its effect. Rather than deflect attacks away, it guides them toward you like a gravity well. Anyone who attempts a melee or ranged attack against you gains a bonus to her attack equal to the deflection bonus this spell was supposed to provide. You do not gain the deflection bonus.

ABJURATION METHOD: ENERGY SHIELD

Mastery: 2
Descriptors: Force plus chosen energy type(s)
Mana: 4 + 2/extra energy type + 2/extra square of effect
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Short (25 feet + 5 feet/2 abjuration mastery levels)
Effect: Wall of energy 10 feet high that fills five adjacent squares, +1 square/2 mana spent to increase size (S)

Duration: 10 minutes/abjuration mastery level (D)
Saving Throw: Yes (see description)
Spell Resistance: Yes (see description)

You create a shimmering wall of null energy that cancels out one type of attack. Choose any of the descriptors marked with an asterisk on page 224 (fire, cold, etc.). Any effect that deals damage of the chosen type fails to breach this barrier. The *energy shield* blocks line of effect and line of sight to such attacks and spells. If the energy effect is part of a larger effect, such as a flaming arrow fired through a *fire energy shield*, the object moves as normal but it loses any fire damage it would ordinarily inflict.

A spell with this method costs a base 4 mana to cast. For each additional 2 mana you spend, you create a barrier against an additional energy type (descriptor). Creatures with a subtype that corresponds to the chosen descriptor must make a Will save (DC 10 + Intelligence modifier + half the mana spent on this spell) to move through it. Such creatures may use their spell resistance to ignore the spell. Other creatures can pass through it as normal.

The wall measures 1 foot thick and bisects each square it passes through. Each section of the wall must be adjacent to at least one other, though the wall need not be anchored against anything.

Moderate Disaster: The barrier shifts and warps in space. The DM picks one square that the wall occupies and treats the wall as a grenadelike weapon (see "Throw Splash or Grenadelike Weapon" in Chapter Eight) that scatters 10 feet per point of mana spent on the spell. Any portions of the *energy shield* that cut through a solid object fail to appear. In this case, the shield might become several separate shields due to objects between each segment. The rest of the wall forms in relation to the scattered segment as normal.

Major Disaster: The shield forms a small dome that surrounds you and inflicts the chosen energy type(s) against anyone in your space. The shield inflicts 1d6 points of the appropriate type of damage for every 2 points of mana spent on it. A creature can move through the shield as normal.

ABJURATION METHOD: ABSORBING SHIELD

Mastery: 3
Descriptor: Force
Mana: 2 per DR bonus
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Touch
Target: Creature touched
Duration: 10 minutes/abjuration mastery level (D)
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

You create a stout field of powerful energy that absorbs physical attacks. You gain a +1 bonus to your damage reduction from armor, or DR 1/– for every 2 mana spent on this spell. If an attack ignores your damage reduction from armor but is still subject to other forms of damage reduction, you still gain the bonus DR from this spell. The *absorbing shield* exists alongside any armor you wear, providing its damage reduction in addition to whatever other effects you currently enjoy.

Moderate Disaster: The energy of this spell runs wild and affects a random target within 100 feet of its intended target.

Major Disaster: You accidentally reverse the spell's field. It rebounds onto you and grants anyone who makes a physical attack against you a bonus to damage equal to the damage reduction bonus the spell would normally have provided. You do not gain the spell's damage reduction.

ABJURATION METHOD: ELEMENTAL SHIELD

Mastery: 4
Descriptors: Force plus chosen energy type
Mana: 2/1d6 points of damage
Casting Time: One standard action
Target: You
Duration: 2 rounds/abjuration mastery level (D)

You create a cocoon of energy around your body that injures anyone attempting to touch you. Choose a single energy descriptor marked with an asterisk on page 224 (fire, sonic, etc.). Anyone who makes a successful melee attack against you suffers 1d6 points of damage of the appropriate type for every 2 mana spent on the spell. For descriptors with no associated damage type, the damage is magical bludgeoning damage. A Fortitude save (DC 10 + your Intelligence modifier + half the mana spent) halves this damage.

Moderate Disaster: The energy floods the area and seeks out a different target. The spell affects a random creature within a 100-foot radius.

Major Disaster: The spell backlashes onto its caster, encasing you in a searing coffin of the appropriate energy type. You suffer 1d6 points of damage per round from the energy. The spell has no effect on anyone who attacks you.

ABJURATION METHOD: MANA VACUUM

Mastery: 5
Descriptor: Force
Mana: 4 + 1/additional SR bonus
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Touch
Target: Creature touched
Duration: 10 minutes/abjuration mastery level (D)
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

This powerful spell creates an area inaccessible to mana. Any spells cast against the spell's target might be sucked into the vacuum and harmlessly dissipated. The target of *mana vacuum* gains spell resistance 10 for the base 4 mana spent on this spell. If you spend more than 4, the target gains +1 SR per additional point of mana spent on the spell.

Moderate Disaster: The spell seeks out a random target within 100 feet of the intended recipient.

Major Disaster: The spell creates a *mana spout*, the opposite of a *mana vacuum*, centered on the caster. Each time you use a spell, there is a 50 percent chance you inadvertently use double the intended mana, as the sudden flare washes over you. You suffer all the normal penalties, drawbacks, drain, and benefits of using more mana than normal. You may spend the mana to improve a spell as you see fit. In addition, you suffer a –5 penalty on all saves against magical effects and spells, as they draw on the spout to bombard you with greater energy.

ABJURATION METHOD: INSTANT FORTIFICATION

Mastery: 6
Descriptor: Force
Mana: 12
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Touch
Effect: A wall that covers 10 squares (S)
Duration: 10 minutes/abjuration mastery level (D)
Saving Throw: See text
Spell Resistance: No

You create a wall of a gray, stonelike material. The wall has a hit point total equal to the mana spent on this spell multiplied by five and a hardness equal to half the mana spent (rounded down) for each 5-foot square.

The wall measures 1 foot thick and bisects the squares it covers. You can shape this material into basic forms, such as stairs, ladders, chairs, and tables, so long as each piece remains attached the created walls or platforms. *Instant fortification* is most commonly used to create walls and other barriers, but you can also use it to create a bridge or similar structure.

The *instant fortification* has no moving parts. It fades into nothingness at the end of the spell's duration. The squares the structure occupies must be adjacent to at least one other square targeted by this spell.

Common tricks for the *instant fortification* include building a box to trap a creature, separating a powerful opponent from his lackeys, and so forth. If the *instant fortification* appears in the same square as a creature, the creature immediately moves to an unoccupied square of its choice. If the creature cannot move out of the wall's path, the wall simply fails to appear in the space it occupies; the rest of the wall appears as normal. When an *instant fortification* structure appears adjacent to a creature, it may attempt a Reflex save (DC 10 + Intelligence modifier + half the mana spent on this spell) to move to the opposite side of the barrier, provided there is space for it there.

As a default, the wall measures 10 feet high. If you halve the number of squares that it occupies, you can double this height. If you quarter the squares, its height triples, and so forth.

Moderate Disaster: The fortification appears in a random spot. The DM picks one square that the wall occupies and treats the wall as a grenadelike weapon (see "Throw Splash or Grenadelike Weapon" in Chapter Eight) that scatters 10 feet per point of mana spent on the spell. Any portions of the wall that cut through a solid object fail to appear. The rest of the wall forms in relation to the scattered segment as normal.

Major Disaster: The spell flows through you and falls apart. It forms a wall in the squares adjacent to you, according to the method description above.

ABJURATION METHOD: ELEMENTAL FORTIFICATION
Mastery: 7
Descriptors: Force plus chosen energy type
Mana: 12
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Touch
Effect: A wall that covers 10 squares (S)
Duration: 10 minutes/abjuration mastery level (D)
Saving Throw: See text
Spell Resistance: No

Spells shaped with this method are identical to *instant fortification*, except the structure you create is sculpted from a single energy type of your choice. It's dangerous to even approach the *elemental fortification*. Choose one descriptor marked with an asterisk from the list on page 224. Any creature within 30 feet of the wall suffers 1d6 points of damage each round. A creature within 20 feet suffers 3d6 points of damage each round. A creature within 10 feet of the structure takes 4d6 points of damage each round. This damage is of the energy type chosen for this spell.

The wall can suffer damage as normal, though it is immune to effects that deal the same damage as its own damage descriptor.

Moderate Disaster: The fortification appears in a random spot. The DM picks one square that the wall occupies and treats the wall as a grenadelike weapon (see "Throw Splash or Grenadelike Weapon" in Chapter Eight) that scatters 10 feet per point of mana spent on the spell. Any portions of the wall that cut through a solid object fail to appear. The rest of the wall forms in relation to the scattered segment as normal.

Major Disaster: The spell flows through you and falls apart. It forms a wall in the squares adjacent to you, according to the method description above.

ABJURATION METHOD: IMPENETRABLE WALL
Mastery: 8
Descriptor: Force
Mana: 16
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Touch
Effect: A wall that covers 10 squares (S)
Duration: 10 minutes/abjuration mastery level (D)
Saving Throw: See text
Spell Resistance: No

You create a barrier of pure force energy, invulnerable to all physical harm and arcane energy. Only a dispelling attempt can destroy it. Otherwise, the wall follows the rules given from *instant fortification*. Though transparent, this barrier blocks line of effect for spells.

Moderate Disaster: The wall appears in a random spot. The DM picks one square that it occupies and treats the wall as a grenadelike weapon (see "Throw Splash or Grenadelike Weapon" in Chapter Eight) that scatters 10 feet per point of mana spent on the spell. Any portions of

the wall that cut through a solid object fail to appear. The rest of the wall forms in relation to the scattered segment as normal.

Major Disaster: The spell flows through you and falls apart. It forms a wall in the squares adjacent to you, according to the method description above.

ABJURATION METHOD: ARCANE MEMBRANE
Mastery: 9
Descriptor: Force
Mana: 16 + 2/effect
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Touch
Effect: A wall that covers 10 squares (S)
Duration: 10 minutes/abjuration mastery level (D)
Saving Throw: See text
Spell Resistance: No

This strange wall resembles *impenetrable wall*, save that you can configure it to allow certain materials, creatures, or energy through while it blocks others. When you cast *arcane membrane*, you can spend 2 mana to gain one of the following effects. You can purchase multiple effects by spending 2 mana for each one you want the spell to include. For any effect that requires you to designate a number of creatures, you can count yourself as one against your total.

Selective Portal: Up to six specific creatures that you designate can move through the membrane without restriction. All other creatures cannot pass through, as for *impenetrable wall*. Note that if you use *arcane membrane* to create a bridge, those six creatures fall through it. You can select this feature more than once, paying 2 mana and designating an additional six creatures.

Energy Container: You can designate one type of energy that can travel through the portal. All other energy types cannot breach it.

Arcane Portal: You can designate up to four creatures whose spells, supernatural abilities, and spell-like abilities can cross the membrane. A designated caster ignores the *arcane membrane* when determining whether he has line of effect to a target. You can select this feature more than once, paying 2 mana and naming up to four additional creatures.

Moderate Disaster: The membrane appears in a random spot. The DM picks one square that it occupies and treats the membrane as a grenadelike weapon (see "Throw Splash or Grenadelike Weapon" in Chapter Eight) that scatters 10 feet per point of mana spent on the spell. Any portions of the membrane that cut through a solid object fail to appear. The rest of it forms in relation to the scattered segment as normal.

Major Disaster: The spell flows through you and falls apart. It forms a membrane in the squares adjacent to you, according to the method description above.

ABJURATION METHOD: TEMPORAL SHELL
Mastery: 10
Descriptor: Force
Mana: 20
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Touch
Effect: Shell of energy that covers a 10-foot radius (S)
Duration: 5 rounds (D)
Saving Throw: See text
Spell Resistance: No

You create a small but powerful shell of energy that carries all within it out of time's normal flow. In essence, you build a barrier that blocks the flow of time. This shell occupies an area with a 10-foot radius.

Any creatures within this area may act as normal for 5 rounds as they step outside the time stream. To outside observers, time continues to flow as normal. Creatures within the shell can take actions, cast spells, and otherwise act as normal. They can move beyond the shell, but they cannot physically interact with objects or creatures. For example, you could not stab an opponent, move an object, or knock over a wall. Any object that was in motion at the time of the spell's casting appears blurry and indistinct. You can interact with the other creatures and objects caught within the spell's area of effect, but not those outside of it.

When the spell's duration ends, you return to the normal flow of time. You retain all the benefits (and drawbacks) of actions you took while outside of time. For example, if you cast this spell and moved, creatures outside of the shell would see you vanish and reappear at your new location in the blink of an eye.

Moderate Disaster: The spell manifests in a random spot. Treat it as a grenadelike weapon (see "Throw Splash or Grenadelike Weapon" in Chapter Eight) for the purposes of the misdirection of its effect; it shifts away 4d10 squares from its intended target.

Major Disaster: You become trapped in time as the spell frays and rebounds on to you. You remain frozen in place as time slows to a crawl, and you are considered helpless for the spell's duration.

CONJURATION

Conjuration magic allows you to create either a living creature or an object, depending on your mastery of this school. It offers what amounts to a single *creation* method—your mastery determines the limits of what your spells can form.

CONJURATION METHOD: CREATION
Mastery: 1–10
Descriptors: Special
Mana: See below
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Short (25 feet + 5 feet/2 conjuration mastery levels)
Effect: A single object or living creature
Duration: 10 minutes/conjuration mastery level (D)
Saving Throw: No
Spell Resistance: No

With this spell, you create a single creature or object within the limits defined by your mastery. A creature conjured in this manner obeys your mental commands as long as you have line of sight to it. If you lose sight of it, the conjured creature continues to fulfill your last command.

A SAMPLE CONJURATION METHOD *CREATION* SPELL

Dalgram the Mystic wants to create several objects. First, he needs to make a Small wooden object. Creating a wooden object requires a minimum mastery of 1, as does a small object. To determine the mana cost of the spell, we take the highest mastery rating of the options and add to it half the mastery rating of the other, lower-ranked options. In this case, we have two options with mastery level 1. In case of a tie for the highest level, keep one rating and halve the others. With two mastery ratings of 1, we halve one of them: 1 + 0.5. When figuring mana cost of spells, always round up: 0.5 goes to 1. Thus, the spell has a total mana cost of 2.

Later, Dalgram wants to create a creature to fight for him. He decides to make a magical beast with 6 HD. The lowest mastery level that grants him access to a magical beast is 4. He needs only a mastery of 3 to create a 6 HD creature. Taking the highest mastery (4), we then add half the other mastery (3 divided in half is 1.5, rounded up to 2) for a total cost of 6. Remember, always round up when figuring mana costs for your spells.

A created object can be crafted from any material of up to the hardness listed on the table below (for hardness ratings of other objects, see the Substance Hardness & Hit Points table in Chapter Nine). Generally, an object created from a valuable material is worth an amount equal to the mastery level used to create it times 20 gp, though an Appraise check (DC 10 + your conjuration mastery) reveals it as a magical, temporary item.

When creating a creature, choose it from a published source of creatures that your DM approves. You cannot normally invent your own creatures based on the Hit Dice allowed by your conjuration mastery rating.

To determine the mana cost of this spell, figure the minimum mastery needed *for each element* of your intended creation (material and size or creature type and HD). The spell's cost in mana equals the highest mastery level required for an element + half of all the other necessary mastery levels.

You can create multiple objects or creatures at once. Pay the full mana cost of the most expensive creature or object and half the mana cost for each additional one.

You cannot choose an option with a mastery level greater than your current conjuration mastery rating. Refer to the Conjuring Creatures & Objects table below.

Moderate Disaster: A created object is twisted, wrecked, and useless; a creature forms in a disgusting bag of protoplasm. You spend the needed mana, but the creation is useless and disintegrates.

Major Disaster: The object or creature attacks you (and only you) to the best of its abilities. If you create an object, use the highest mastery level of the various elements that make it up to determine its Hit Dice, and the next highest mastery to determine its creature type. The DM selects a creature that fits the given limits, but it takes the form of a twisted, bizarre, living version of the object you tried to create.

DIVINATION

The divination school offers a single method that allows a caster to peer into secret hidden places. A simple divination *scrying* spell might allow you to look around a corner without exposing yourself to danger, while a complex one can open a creature's mind like a book.

DIVINATION METHOD: SCRYING

Mastery: 1–10
Descriptor: None
Mana: See below
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Determined by mana and mastery
Target: A single creature, object, or place
Duration: 1 round/divination mastery level (D)
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

The *scrying* method allows you to uncover information based on the type of secret you wish to learn, the distance to the target, and other factors. Any creature within the radius of this spell gains a Will save (DC 10 + Intelligence modifier + half the mana spent). If the save succeeds, the creature appears as a blurry outline and you learn nothing more of it

CONJURING CREATURES & OBJECTS

Mastery Level	Material (Hardness)	Maximum Size	Creature Type	Maximum HD
1	Wood (5)	Small	Animal	1
2	Wood (5)	Small	Animal	3
3	Wood (5)	Medium	Animal	6
4	Iron (10)	Medium	Magical beast	9
5	Iron (10)	Medium	Magical beast	12
6	Iron (10)	Large	Magical beast	15
7	Mithral (15)*	Large	Aberration	18
8	Mithral (15)*	Large	Aberration	22
9	Mithral (15)*	Huge	Aberration	26
10	Adamantine (20)*	Huge	Any	30

* See description in Chapter Nine: Adventuring.
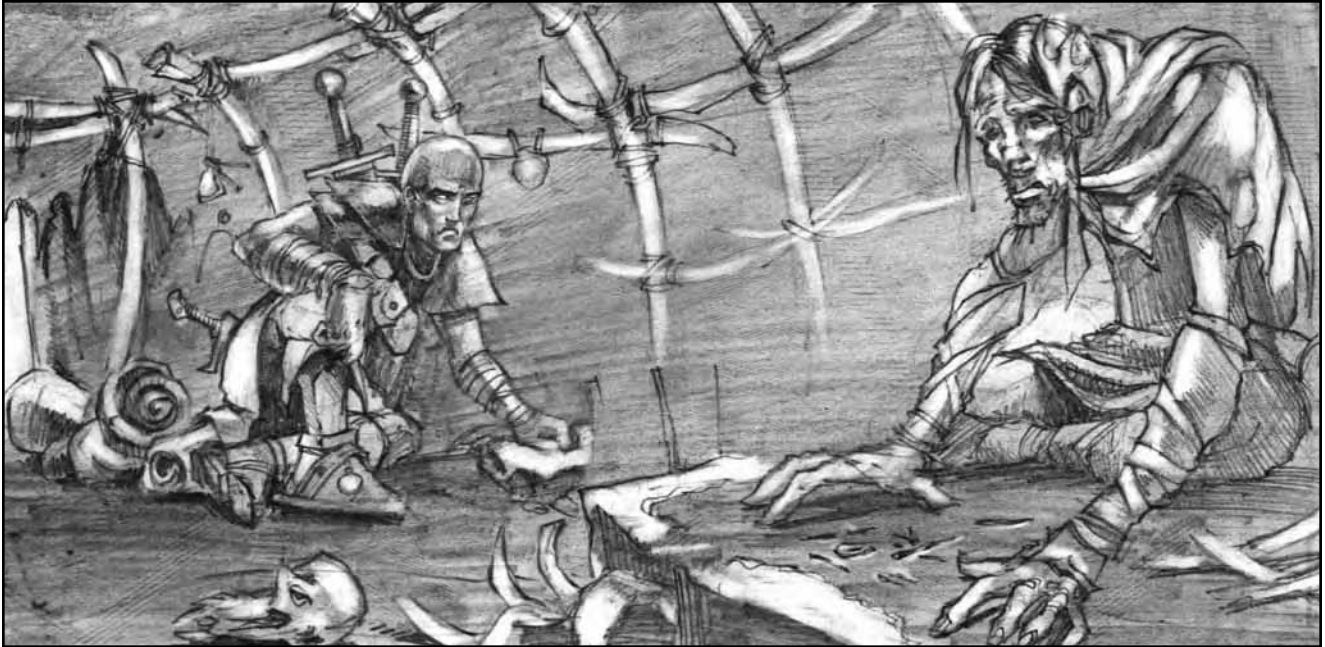
aside from its presence. If the creature makes its save by 10 points or more, it knows that something watches it.

To determine the mana cost of this spell, note the minimum mastery needed *for each element* of your divination (range, senses, and radius) on the table on the next page. The spell's cost in mana equals the mastery level needed for the most powerful effect you select + half the mastery levels for all other associated facets.

The following are various spell facets listed in the Divination Mastery table. You cannot choose an option with a mastery greater than your current divination mastery rating.

Range: This factor determines the maximum range at which you can choose to view an object, creature, or location. You must focus on a specific creature, place, or thing in your mind and mentally envision it. For example, you could not attempt to view the person who murdered an ally unless you saw the killer. If the thing you wish to view moves, your spell moves with it. The radius of the effect always centers on it.

Alternatively, you can project your senses in a direction and distance you specify up to the given range. In this case, the spell centers on the location you specify.

A SAMPLE DIVINATION METHOD *SCRYING* SPELL

Lessadra needs to spy on a warlord. His lordship is in negotiations with her friends, and if she can read his mind, she'll know whether he plans to betray them. She must be able to view the meeting room 2 miles away (mastery 4) with psionic senses (minimum mastery 6) in a 40-foot radius (mastery 4). The spell element with the highest mastery is 6, plus half of the two other masteries (4 in both cases, each divided in half to 2) for a total cost of 10 mana (6 + 2 + 2).

Senses: This factor determines your ability to observe a situation and garner useful information from it. Each factor is described below.

- *Normal Senses:* You see the target magically and may use your normal sight and hearing to watch and listen in on it. You use your Spot and Listen skills as normal, but do not gain the use of other senses.
- *Augmented Senses:* You gain sight and hearing and can feel the relative temperature and smell any odors. In addition, you can see in the dark with a range equal to the radius of the spell. You also gain a bonus to all Spot and Listen checks equal to twice your mastery.
- *Psionic Senses:* You hear the thoughts of creatures within the radius. If they lie, you know it automatically, as their minds betray them. This ability proves particularly useful if you read the mind of a creature while your allies question it. Note that this ability does *not* also include augmented senses.
- *Omniscience:* In addition to the benefits of augmented and psionic senses, you learn the general history and background of all creatures that you observe, plus you automatically become aware of all hidden or obscured items in the area. You notice all magical effects and can see through illusions and other attempts at trickery, whether mundane or magical.

Radius: This factor determines the distance around your target that you can view. You cannot see anything beyond this radius from the point or object you observe.

Moderate Disaster: Any creature within the spell's radius gains an immediate, clear vision of you and your relative distance and location. You must succeed at a Will save (DC 10 + Intelligence modifier + half the mana spent) or the creature(s)

DIVINATION MASTERY

Mastery	Range	Senses	Radius
1	100 feet	Normal senses	10 feet
2	500 feet	Augmented senses	20 feet
3	1 mile	Augmented senses	30 feet
4	10 miles	Augmented senses	40 feet
5	100 miles	Augmented senses	60 feet
6	1,000 miles	Psionic senses	80 feet
7	2,500 miles	Psionic sense	160 feet
8	5,000 miles	Psionic sense	320 feet
9	10,000 miles	Psionic sense	640 feet
10	Unlimited	Omniscience	1,280 feet

can read your thoughts and immediately know your real name and intentions toward them.

Major Disaster: As you cast your mind's eye into the fabric of the world, you see the true inner workings of reality. Unable to cope with this shock, your mind snaps. You suffer temporary damage to Intelligence and Wisdom equal to half the mana spent on this spell.

ENCHANTMENT

The magic of enchantment allows an arcanist to reach into a subject's mind and alter her emotions. In much the same way that an artist blends colors and styles to produce a masterpiece, the enchanter tweaks a target's mind to produce the desired result.

Enchantment features a single basic method that covers the full possibilities of this school of magic. The difficulty in using an enchantment lies in shifting a target from her current state to the one you wish to place her in. You can easily incite bloodlust in an angry character, but pushing a calm, happy pacifist to action requires more skill and magical energy.

ENCHANTMENT METHOD: ALTER MIND

Mastery: 1–10
Descriptor: Mind-affecting
Mana: See text
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Determined by mana and mastery
Target: One single creature
Duration: See below (D)
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

You alter a creature's emotional state, causing it to gain one of several different conditions. You could incite a creature to a murderous rage, lull it to sleep, or cause it to mistake you for a close friend.

You alter a creature's mind by shifting its mental state by one or more categories—from neutral to friendly, for example. To use this method, you first must decide how many cate-

gories you need to change a creature's emotional state to reach your desired end. The more categories you need to push a creature, the more mana you must spend. You must also meet a minimum mastery requirement to change a creature's state by many categories at once.

Many enchanters prefer to take a slow, steady approach to a target. You can use three spells to move a creature's emotions three categories rather than casting one spell for the same result, though obviously the former option requires more time.

The sections below summarize the various emotional states into which you can shift a creature. Your DM selects the target's current state, which you use to determine how many categories you must push the creature. These emotions all refer to the target's attitude toward you. You cannot directly alter the target's attitude toward someone else, although some states provide virtually the same thing. For example, you could not force an ogre to attack its ally instead of you, but you could incite a murderous rage in it that causes it to lash out randomly, perhaps striking its friend.

Characters fall into one of four basic emotional divisions: neutrality, anger, fear, and friendship. Each division contains one or more emotional states, as shown in the table on the next page. To determine the number of categories between two states in the same division, subtract the lower-ranked state from the higher. The number of categories between two states in different divisions equals the sum of their ranks.

Neutrality: Neutrality is the standard state for a creature that has no special leanings toward you or its current situation. There is only one emotional state in this division: indifferent. A neutral creature doesn't see itself as involved in the current situation and probably leaves to find something

A SAMPLE ENCHANTMENT METHOD *ALTER MIND* SPELL

Beldegast the Magnificent faces a group of three angry barbarians. Desperate to deflect their anger before they attack, he uses his magic to calm them down. He must change their mood from hostile (rank 2 in the anger division) to helpful (rank 2 in the friendship division). Since these two states are in different divisions, we add them together to determine the total number of emotional category shifts. In this case, it's 4 (2+2). The minimum mastery needed to move a creature's attitude four categories is 4 (see the Casting *Alter Mind* table).

Beldegast also must affect three targets, which requires a minimum mastery of 3. He decides to change their attitude for 1 round/mastery level, minimum mastery 1. Since the barbarians are humanoids, the minimum mastery to affect their creature type is 1.

The mastery levels for all aspects of the spell are 4, 3, 1, and 1. The total cost is 7. We take the full 4 from the element with the highest mastery. Then we take half of the others: Half of 3, 1, and 1 is 1.5, 0.5, and 0.5. Since we never round down when determining a spell's mana cost, we round the 0.5 values to 1 and the 1.5 to 2. Thus, the total cost is 8 mana.

more interesting or keeps to itself unless threatened. A creature in this state completes its jobs and responsibilities as normal, such as attacking intruders or helping its allies.

Anger: The anger division covers a range of aggressive stances. An angry creature has an active reason to dislike you and might be willing to commit violence.

Fear: Fear is a primal emotion that can overwhelm rational thought. It proves useful in causing an opponent to flee rather than stand and fight. A spell used to create a fear state is a fear effect.

Friendship: Friendship allows you to curry favor with a neutral creature. It can turn an enemy into an ally or a neutral party into someone willing to die for you. You can also use the emotional states in this division to fortify your allies.

To determine the mana cost of this spell, note the minimum mastery needed *for each element* of your enchantment (duration, categories of shift, number of targets, and creature type). The spell's cost in mana equals the mastery level needed for the most powerful of these effects + half the mastery levels for all other associated elements.

ENCHANTMENT: EMOTIONAL STATES & ALTER MIND

EMOTIONAL STATES

Division	Rank	Emotional State	Description
Neutrality	0	Indifferent	The creature considers itself uninvolved in the situation and either leaves, keeps to itself, or carries on with its previous activity.
Anger	1	Unfriendly	The creature makes no effort to help you and attacks you if given any reasonable excuse.
Anger	2	Hostile	The creature attacks you.
Anger	3	Murderous	The creature attacks you and only you. It ignores all other opponents. If it cannot reach you, it uses ranged weapons or screams, yells, and taunts you.
Anger	4	Furious	As "murderous," except the creature gains a +2 bonus to Strength.
Anger	5	Enraged	The creature enters a psychopathic fury. It gains a +2 bonus to Strength and attacks a random living creature(including allies) within its reach. A creature with a ranged attack targets a random individual (again, including allies) within range.
Fear	1	Disheartened	Doubts nibble at the creature's mind. It suffers a −1 penalty to attacks, saves, skill checks, and ability checks.
Fear	2	Shaken	The nervous and tense creature suffers a −2 penalty to attacks, saves, skill checks, and ability checks.
Fear	3	Frightened	As "shaken," save that the creature must flee whatever has frightened it to the best of its ability. It fights only if cornered.
Fear	4	Panicked	As "shaken," save that the creature drops whatever it holds in its fear and makes no attempt to defend itself if cornered. It is not helpless, but it does not attack.
Fear	5	Terrified	The creature drops to the ground in terror. It is considered helpless and takes no actions.
Friendship	1	Friendly	The creature considers you a friend and ally. It doesn't risk its life or job for you but does what it can to help within reason. It doesn't attack you unless you attack first.
Friendship	2	Helpful	The creature does anything short of risking its life to help you.
Friendship	3	Dedicated	The creature risks its life for you and favors you above all other friends and allies.
Friendship	4	Fanatical	The creature fights alongside you with vigor and purpose. It gains a +2 bonus to attacks, checks, and damage against enemies who stand against you. Otherwise, treat as "dedicated."
Friendship	5	Enthralled	As "fanatical," save that the bonus increases to +4.

CASTING *ALTER MIND*

Mastery	Duration*	Categories	Number of Targets	Creature Type	Range
1	5 rounds	1	1	Caster's type	25 ft. + 5 ft. per 2 levels of mastery
2	5 rounds	2	2	Animal, plant, vermin	25 ft. + 5 ft. per 2 levels of mastery
3	1 minute	3	4	Humanoid, monstrous humanoid	25 ft. + 5 ft. per 2 levels of mastery
4	1 minute	4	6	Giant	25 ft. + 5 ft. per 2 levels of mastery
5	10 minutes	5	10	Magical beast	100 ft. + 10 ft. per level of mastery
6	10 minutes	6	15	Elemental	100 ft. + 10 ft. per level of mastery
7	10 minutes	7	20	Fey	100 ft. + 10 ft. per level of mastery
8	1 hour	8	25	Aberration	100 ft. + 10 ft. per level of mastery
9	1 hour	9	35	Dragon	100 ft. + 10 ft. per level of mastery
10	1 day	10	50	Outsider	100 ft. + 10 ft. per level of mastery

* Duration is given amount of time per each of the caster's enchantment mastery levels.

You cannot choose an option with a mastery greater than your current enchantment mastery rating.

Check the Diplomacy skill in Chapter Four for full details on the various emotional states an NPC might assume based on your actions and ability to sway him with words.

Moderate Disaster: You create an unintended shift in the target's mind. The DM picks the single emotional state that would prove the most trouble-some to you, depending on the current situation.

Major Disaster: The effects of the spell channel into you rather than your enemies. You suffer its effects as if a random individual had cast it.

EVOCATION

Evocation serves as the primary weapon of many arcanists. This school focuses on channeling mana into reality in its basic raw form. It allows a caster to create blasts of energy that can slam into a foe with the force of a berserker's axe or generate a ball of searing energy that explodes in a burst hundreds of feet wide. A lone evoker can defeat an entire mob of warriors, though the volatile nature of magic makes it likely that the energy destroys him along with his foes.

EVOCATION METHOD: ELDRITCH BLAST
Mastery: 1–10
Descriptors: Varies
Mana: See below
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Determined by mana and mastery
Target: Varies
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Reflex half
Spell Resistance: Yes

You create a bolt of energy or a similar attack that harms your foes. The *eldritch blast* method provides a variety of options, from an attack that covers an area to a lone dart of power that slams into a foe. Your mastery in this school determines the effects you can create. The aspects below refer to the table on the next page.

Damage: For every point of mana you spend on an evocation spell's damage, your spell inflicts 1d6 points of damage. You can spend up to your mastery rating in mana for damage.

You cannot choose an option with a mastery greater than your current evocation mastery rating.

The evocation mastery table above describes the following spell parameters:

Target/Effect This factor determines the spell's area of effect or the creatures it can target. Consult "Casting Spells" on page 223 for more information on rays, spreads, and so forth.

Unerring: An unerring spell automatically hits a single target for full damage, no saving throw allowed. You must still have line of effect to the target.

Energy Type: The spell gains the corresponding energy descriptor(s). If you select "Any (1 type)," you can choose any energy descriptor from page 224 which has an asterisk. The "Any (2 types)" option allows you to pick two such forms of energy. The target enjoys resistance against the spell (such as fire resistance) only if it has resistance against both types of energy; in such a case, it uses the lesser of the two resistance values. For descriptors with no associated damage type, the damage is magical bludgeoning damage.

Moderate Disaster: You become the sole target of the spell, but you may save for half damage.

Major Disaster: As a moderate disaster, except you gain no saving throw.

EVOCATION MASTERY

Evocation Mastery	Target/Effect	Energy Type
1	Melee Touch Attack	Fire
2	Ray – range 25 ft + 5ft per mastery in Evocation	Fire
3	Ray – range 100 ft + 10 ft per mastery in Evocation	Fire
4	Ray (2 targets) – range 25 ft + 5ft per mastery in Evocation	Cold
5	Ray (2 targets) – range 100 ft + 10 ft per mastery in Evocation	Cold
6	A 15 ft. Cone starting from the caster	Acid
7	A 30 ft. Cone starting from the caster	Acid
8	Spread (20 ft) – range 100 ft + 10 ft per mastery in Evocation	Sonic
9	Spread (40 ft) – range 100 ft + 10 ft per mastery in Evocation	Any (1 type)
10	Unerring – range 400 ft + 40 ft per mastery in Evocation	Any (2 types)

ILLUSION

Arcanists who thrive on deception prefer to use illusions. The methods of this school allow a caster to create a broad range of phantoms, from spectral mirages to distracting noises. The illusion school has three different methods: one to cover the creation of illusory objects, one to cover illusions that affect senses other than sight, and one to create illusions that alter a creature's appearance.

ILLUSION METHOD: PHANTASMAL FORCES

Mastery: 1–10
Descriptors: None
Mana: See text
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Medium (100 feet + 10 feet/illusion mastery level)
Target: Varies
Duration: Concentration, but see text
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

A SAMPLE EVOCATION METHOD
ELDRITCH BLAST SPELL

Brigit Flamedottir blasts a group of skeletons with a 30-foot cone of flame. The minimum mastery for the cone is 7, while the fire damage is mastery 1. Thus, the base cost of the spell is 8 mana: 7 for the area of effect and 1 (half of 1 is 0.5, which rounds up to 1; always round up when figuring mana costs). She wants the spell to inflict 4d6 points of damage, for an additional 4 mana.

The *eldritch blast's* total cost becomes 12 mana. Normally the channeling Difficulty Class for a 12-mana spell is 17. However, for this method you double the mana spent on damage to determine the DC. In this case, the Difficulty Class is now 21: base DC 5, plus 7 for the area of effect, plus 1 for the fire energy type, plus 8 for spending 4 mana on damage.

This method allows you to create a variety of illusory effects. As you gain greater illusion mastery, you can shape illusions that are larger, more convincing, and better detailed. *Phantasmal forces* never includes sound, heat, scent, or other factors. It has only a visual aspect unless you augment it with a *sensory deception* spell (see next page).

When you create an illusion, you must consider its three basic aspects: size, reality, and duration (see table, next page).

Size: Size determines the physical area your illusion covers or the size of the object it duplicates. Regardless of the size of your illusion, you cannot duplicate a creature that has more Hit Dice than double your illusion mastery rating.

You can create an illusion the same size as a creature with the listed size category. For illusions that duplicate things other than creatures, use the number of squares indicated on the table instead. If you create an illusion of an object that covers multiple squares, each square the illusion occupies must be adjacent to at least one other square it covers.

Reality: The reality setting shows how much of an illusion's effects translate into real damage. For example, an illusory wall might inflict damage when someone runs into it if you set its reality rating high enough.

The percentage listed in the table below determines how much of any damage inflicted by an illusion counts as real damage. For example, the illusion of a berserker with a 20 percent reality rating inflicts 20 percent of its normal damage with each attack. An illusion can mimic a character with a level up to the illusionist's mastery rating. It can duplicate any monster as long as the illusion's size permits.

Duration: Finally, duration determines how long your illusion lasts. A *phantasmal force* usually has a duration of Concentration, but you can increase this aspect of the spell to make an illusion last longer than normal. The illusion continues to last for the given duration after you stop concentrating on it. You can control the illusion as a free action as

ILLUSION MASTERY: PHANTASMAL FORCES

Mastery	Size	Reality	Duration
1	Small (1 square)	0%	Concentration
2	Medium (2 squares)	0%	Concentration
3	Medium (2 squares)	10%	2 rounds
4	Large (4 squares)	10%	5 rounds
5	Large (4 squares)	20%	1 minute
6	Huge (9 squares)	20%	5 minutes
7	Huge (9 squares)	30%	10 minutes
8	Gargantuan (16 squares)	30%	30 minutes
9	Gargantuan (16 squares)	40%	1 hour
10	Colossal (25 squares)	50%	6 hours

long as you maintain line of effect to it. If you lose line of effect, it remains still in its current place. The illusion of a monster would stop fighting.

To determine the mana cost of a *phantasmal forces* spell, note the minimum mastery needed *for each element* of your illusion (size, reality, and duration). The spell's cost in mana equals the mastery level needed for the most powerful effect you select + half the mastery levels for all other associated facets.

You cannot choose an option with a mastery greater than your current illusion mastery rating.

Moderate Disaster: Your illusion turns back onto your mind and draws its inspiration from a dark, hidden part of your psyche. Your DM gains control of the illusion, which attacks creatures or otherwise acts at random. You must save as normal to disbelieve the illusion, as must your allies.

Major Disaster: While sculpting your illusion, the strange interplay of planar energies and the dark recesses of your subconscious mingle to create the stuff of your worst nightmares. No one else can see your illusion but you, and it takes on the form of (literally) your worst nightmare. The illusion attacks you. If it hits, you must make a Fortitude save with a Difficulty Class equal to the illusion's save DC. If you fail, you fall unconscious from the shock and fear and cannot be roused for 2d6 minutes. You suffer no hit point damage.

ILLUSION METHOD: SENSORY DECEPTION

Mastery: 1–10
Descriptors: None
Mana: See text
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Medium (100 feet + 10 feet/illusion mastery level)
Target: Varies
Duration: Concentration, but see text
Saving Throw: No
Spell Resistance: No

This spell method allows you to create illusions that trick a creature's hearing, scent, touch, and senses other than sight. *Sensory deception's* illusions serve as good distractions. You can also attempt to combine them with a *phantasmal force* to create a more believable than normal phantom.

Like *phantasmal forces*, this method has different aspects to consider as you create an illusion: size and duration (each described below). Unlike *phantasmal forces*, these spells allow no saving throw. Instead, you make a Bluff check to see whether your illusion tricks those who interact with it.

Size: This aspect refers to the maximum size of a creature or object you can affect with this illusion. For example, you could make a frayed, rough tapestry feel like smooth silk. The size is given in terms of creature size. If you need to know the area an illusion covers, use the number of squares indicated on the table instead.

Duration: The illusion continues to last for the given duration *after you stop concentrating.* For example, an illusion at mastery 6 persists for five minutes after you stop concentrating. At low mastery levels, it continues only as long as you concentrate.

To determine the mana cost of a *sensory deception* spell, note the minimum mastery needed *for each element* of your illusion (size and duration). The spell's cost in mana equals the mastery level needed for the most powerful effect you select + half the mastery levels for all other associated elements of the spell.

You may choose to deceive more than one sense at a time. For each sense beyond the first, pay half of this spell's base mana cost.

You can add a *sensory deception* spell effect to a *phantasmal force* by casting the two spells at the same time. Doing this grants a +2 bonus to the save DC of the *phantasmal force.* This requires 2 rounds of spellcasting. Spend mana for each spell separately, and make a channeling check for each. Track each spell's duration separately, if necessary. A creature makes saving throws only against the *phantasmal force.* You do not need to make a Bluff check to determine whether the *sensory deception* fools anyone. Both spells must be able to affect the same size creature or area. If they do not match, the *sensory deception* does not grant the *phantasmal force* a bonus to its save DC.

You cannot choose an option with a mastery greater than your current illusion mastery rating.

Moderate Disaster: The spell targets you instead of your desired target.

Major Disaster: The magic of this spell sweeps through your mind, clouding your senses while leaving others unaffected. You must succeed at a Will save each round (DC 10 +

ILLUSION MASTERY: SENSORY DECEPTION		
Mastery	**Size**	**Duration**
1	Small (1 square)	Concentration
2	Medium (2 squares)	Concentration
3	Medium (2 squares)	2 rounds (D)
4	Large (4 squares)	5 rounds (D)
5	Large (4 squares)	1 minute (D)
6	Huge (9 squares)	5 minutes (D)
7	Huge (9 squares)	10 minutes (D)
8	Gargantuan (16 squares)	30 minutes (D)
9	Gargantuan (16 squares)	1 hour (D)
10	Colossal (25 squares)	6 hours (D)

Intelligence modifier + half the mana spent) or do nothing but move toward the illusion's location. Once you reach it, you refuse to move away from it but otherwise may act as normal. The illusion has a duration of one minute, regardless of what you originally chose for the spell.

ILLUSION METHOD: VEIL OF TRICKERY
Mastery: 1–10
Descriptors: None
Mana: See text
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Touch
Target: Creature touched
Duration: One minute/illusion mastery level (D)
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

The *veil of trickery* method allows you to create illusions that mask or alter a creature's appearance. With it, you can shift your appearance, hide from view, or make it more difficult for enemies to strike you.

When you cast a *veil of trickery* spell, you must select a primary effect for it: alter features, blurred features, or obscure presence (each described below). Unlike other illusion methods, *veil of trickery* presents aspects that are contradictory, not complementary. They all provide the same basic function—altering the target's appearance to trick an observer—but their specific effects differ radically.

Alter Features: With *veil of trickery* you change the appearance of the target to help it mimic another creature. The target gains a bonus to all Disguise checks. Alternatively, you can make a Disguise check as part of casting this spell and apply the results to the target. You gain the bonus listed on the table on the next page for this spell as normal. Alter features costs 2 mana per mastery level.

Blurred Image: This illusion creates a shimmering field of energy that makes it difficult for others to focus their vision on the target. Its features shift, and its position seems to jump about. The target gains the equivalent of concealment against all attacks that require an attack roll to hit it. The amount of concealment gained depends on the mastery level at which you cast this spell.

Blurred image costs 3 mana per mastery level. The percentage listed on the table for each mastery is the chance that an attack that would otherwise hit you actually misses. In addition, you become immune to critical hits against all attackers who are subject to this miss chance—your blurred image makes it impossible for them to target vital areas.

Obscure Presence: This aspect allows you to obscure the target's presence, making it more difficult for others to see, hear, or even smell the target (handy against guard dogs, but perhaps not against humans). When you select this aspect, pick a single sense. This spell costs 2 mana per mastery level to obscure the target's presence relative to this sense.

You can select additional senses to mask as well. Each one

ILLUSION MASTERY: VEIL OF TRICKERY

Mastery*	Alter Features Disguise Bonus	Blurred Image Concealment	Obscure Presence Effects
1	+5	10%	20% ignore chance
2	+10	20%	40% ignore chance
3	+15	30%	60% ignore chance
4	+20	40%	80% ignore chance
5	+25	50%	100% ignore chance
6	+30	60%	Persistent effect, 20%
7	+35	70%	Persistent effect, 40%
8	+40	80%	Persistent effect, 60%
9	+45	90%	Persistent effect, 80%
10	+50	95%	Persistent effect, 100%

* *You may select a value from **only one column** at the given mastery level, not from multiple columns for the same spell.*

increases the aspect's mana cost by half its base value. For example, a *veil of trickery* spell using obscure presence at mastery 6 to mask one sense costs 12 mana. Each added sense costs 6 more mana, half its base value.

This spell method gives a flat chance that creatures automatically fail to notice you with the affected sense (see the table above). For example, at mastery 1, there is a 20 percent a creature fails to notice you. If you attack a creature in any way, you sunder the magic that allows you to escape notice, and the spell ends. For mastery levels above 5, you enjoy a 100 percent probability of escaping notice and have a chance to remain hidden even after attacking. The number listed for a persistent effect is the percentage chance that the spell continues to operate after you attack. Check after each individual attack, not after each attack action. For example, if you use a full attack to make three strikes, check after each of the three blows to see whether the effect persists.

You determine a *veil of trickery* spell's mana cost, using the table here, based on the effect you choose to create with it.

You cannot choose an option with a mastery greater than your current illusion mastery rating.

Moderate Disaster: The energy of this spell rebounds against the planar currents and targets a random creature within 100 feet of your target.

Major Disaster: The deceptive magic of this spell twists, turns, and flows back to you. Every creature you see gains the benefits of the illusion you sought to create. For example, if you used *alter features,* you make a Disguise check for every creature you see.

NECROMANCY

The school of necromancy deals with magic of life and death. A skilled necromancer can banish diseases and heal injuries with one hand while striking creatures dead or animating skeletons and zombies with the other. For this reason, many people fear necromancers but consider them too useful to drive away merely for practicing their magic.

NECROMANCY METHOD: ANIMATE DEAD

Mastery: 1–10
Descriptor: Negative energy
Mana: 4 mana/undead HD
Casting Time: One minute
Range: Medium (100 feet + 10 feet/necromancy mastery level)
Target: One or more dead creatures
Duration: Permanent
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

NECROMANCY: ANIMATING A CORPSE

Creature Size	HD	Speed	Space/Reach	Str	Dex
Small	1	20 feet	1 square/1 square	8	12
Medium	2	30 feet	1 square/1 square	10	10
Large	4	30 feet	2 squares/2 squares	14	8
Huge	8	40 feet	3 squares/3 squares	18	6

You reach into a corpse and find the failed flame of life within it. Using your necromantic magic, you reignite that fire with negative energy, allowing the dead to walk once more—as your servant. Using this method, you can animate a creature with Hit Dice equal to up to twice your mastery rating. At any given time you can control a number of undead with total Hit Dice equal to five times your necromancy mastery rating. If you attempt to control more than that, the undead you control with the most Hit Dice becomes independent. It might flee or attack you and your allies, based on the DM's judgment.

The undead obey your mental commands to the best of their ability. If you lose line of effect to an undead servant, it obeys your last commands as well as it can. Commanding an undead servant is a free action.

When you animate a corpse, it becomes either a skeleton or a zombie. Use the monster templates given below in the "Creating a Skeleton" and "Creating a Zombie" sections for your newly animated undead. Either apply the template to the existing stats of a creature you wish to animate or use the generic creature statistics in the table above for each size creature from Small to Huge—you don't need many stats, such as base attack or Intelligence, because the templates determine them. You can select almost any creature type to become undead, as animating a creature makes it lose most of its type-specific abilities.

Moderate Disaster: The mote of energy you create to sustain the creature runs rampant and drains your life force. You suffer damage equal to the mana spent to cast *animate dead*.

Major Disaster: The undead creature animates as normal, but a minor error introduced into the process causes it to attack you immediately and in preference to all other creatures. It tracks you unerringly.

CREATING A SKELETON

You can create a skeleton by using *animate dead* to apply this template to a base creature (either one from a monster book or one made using the generic stats by size given above).

Size and Type: The creature's type changes to undead. It retains any subtypes. It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Hit Dice: Drop any Hit Dice gained from class levels (to a minimum of 1 HD) and raise remaining Hit Dice to d12s.

Speed: Winged skeletons can't use their wings to fly. If the base creature flew magically, so can the skeleton.

Defense: Natural armor bonus changes based on the skeleton's size, as follows:

Size	Natural Armor
Tiny or smaller	+0
Small	+1
Medium or Large	+2
Huge	+3
Gargantuan	+6
Colossal	+10

Attacks: A skeleton retains all the base creature's natural weapons, manufactured weapon attacks, and weapon proficiencies, except for attacks that can't work without flesh. A creature with hands gains one claw attack per hand; the skeleton can strike with each of its claw attacks at its full attack bonus. A skeleton's base attack bonus is equal to half its Hit Dice.

Damage: Natural and manufactured weapons deal damage normally in the hands of a skeleton. A claw attack deals damage depending on the skeleton's size. (If the base creature already had claw attacks with its hands, use the skeleton claw damage only if it's better.)

Size	Claw Damage
Diminutive or Fine	1
Tiny	1d2
Small	1d3
Medium	1d4
Large	1d6
Huge	1d8
Gargantuan	2d6
Colossal	2d8

Special Attacks: A skeleton retains none of the base creature's special attacks.

Special Qualities: A skeleton loses most of the base creature's special qualities. It retains any extraordinary special qualities that improve its melee or ranged attacks. A skeleton gains the following special qualities.

- *Immunity to Cold (Ex):* Skeletons are not affected by cold.
- *DR 5/Bludgeoning:* Skeletons lack flesh or internal organs.
- *Saves:* Base save bonuses are as follows: Fortitude +1/3 HD, Reflex +1/3 HD, and Will +1/2 HD + 2.

Ability Scores: A skeleton's Dexterity increases by +2, and it has no Constitution or Intelligence score. Its Wisdom score changes to 10, and its Charisma drops to 1.

Skills: A skeleton has no skills.

Feats: A skeleton loses all the base creature's feats and gains Improved Initiative.

CREATING A ZOMBIE

You can create a zombie by using *animate dead* to apply this

template to a base creature (either one from a monster book or one made using the generic stats by size given in the table above). Note that when determining how many Hit Dice of undead you can control, use the zombie's final Hit Dice, not the Hit Dice of the creature you animated.

Size and Type: The creature's type changes to undead. It retains any subtypes. It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Hit Dice: Drop any Hit Dice from class levels (to a minimum of 1 HD), double the number of Hit Dice left, and raise them to d12s.

Speed: If the base creature can fly, its maneuverability drops to clumsy.

Defense: Natural armor bonus changes based on the zombie's size, as follows:

Size	Natural Armor
Tiny or smaller	+0
Small	+1
Medium	+2
Large	+3
Huge	+4
Gargantuan	+7
Colossal	+11

Base Attack: A zombie has a base attack bonus equal to half its Hit Dice.

Attacks: A zombie retains all the base creature's natural weapons, manufactured weapon attacks, and weapon proficiencies. A zombie also gains a slam attack.

Damage: Natural and manufactured weapons deal damage normally. A slam attack deals damage based on the zombie's size. (Use the base creature's slam damage if it's better.)

Size	Slam Damage
Fine	1
Diminutive	1d2
Tiny	1d3
Small	1d4
Medium	1d6
Large	1d8
Huge	2d6
Gargantuan	2d8
Colossal	4d6

Special Attacks: A zombie retains none of the base creature's special attacks.

Special Qualities: A zombie loses most of the base creature's special qualities. It retains any extraordinary special qualities that improve its melee or ranged attacks. A zombie also gains the following special quality:

- *Single Actions Only (Ex):* Zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only a single move action or standard action each round. A zombie can move up to its speed and attack in the same round only in a charge.

Saves: Base save bonuses are as follows: Fortitude +1/3 HD, Reflex +1/3 HD, and Will +1/2 HD + 2.

Ability Scores: A zombie's Strength increases by +2, and its Dexterity decreases by 2. It has no Constitution or Intelligence score. Its Wisdom changes to 10, and its Charisma drops to 1.

Skills: A zombie has no skills.

Feats: A zombie loses all the base creature's feats and gains Toughness, which grants it +3 hit points.

NECROMANCY METHOD: HEALING HANDS

Mastery: 1–10
Descriptor: Positive energy
Mana: See text
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Touch
Target: Creature touched
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

Using your power to manipulate the energies of death, you channel positive energy into a creature to heal it. You can also use this method to cast spells that allow you to cure diseases, remove poison from a creature's system, cure blindness, and remove other unwanted conditions.

Healing a creature is merely a matter of gathering enough mana and transforming it into curative energy. There is no mastery level limit on how much damage you can heal at one time. For every 2 points of mana you spend on a spell, you heal the target creature of 1d8 points of damage. Any magical healing above a creature's maximum hit points restores its reserve pool. A creature cannot receive healing that pushes its reserve above its maximum limit.

In addition, you can heal or remove other conditions based on your mastery. If you wish to heal one of these conditions, you must pay mana based on the mastery rating necessary to remove it. You can restore more than one condition with a single spell. Each condition aside from the most expensive one costs half its listed mastery in mana. You cannot choose to heal a single condition, such as ability score damage, more than once with a given spell.

Mastery	Condition
1	Stun or daze
2	Deafness
3	Ability score damage (minor)
4	Blindness
5	Ability score damage (major)
6	Poison
7	Negative levels
8	Disease
9	Limb regeneration
10	Rejuvenation

In most cases, a successful casting simply removes the list-

ed state from the target. Added notes for some of the conditions appear on the next page. If a state has inflicted damage in the past, removing it does not cure that damage—it merely prevents future damage. For example, Karrak the berserker suffers a sting from a scorpion. The poison inflicts 4 points of Strength damage. Morthoth successfully casts a spell to remove the poison. Karrak avoids further damage from the poison, but he still has suffered the 4 points of Strength damage.

Ability Score Damage, Minor: You heal 2 points of damage to a single ability score.

Ability Score Damage, Major: You heal 4 points of damage to a single ability score or 2 points to two different ones.

Negative Levels: You remove two negative levels from the target (see "States and Conditions" in Chapter Eight: Combat).

Limb Regeneration: If the target has lost a limb to an attack or spell effect, she immediately regains it.

Rejuvenation: You heal all ability score damage, all hit point damage, remove all states and effects that can harm the creature, or you remove five years from the creature's age. A creature cannot be reduced to less than an adolescent through this spell effect.

Moderate Disaster: The spell energy rebounds on a planar tide and targets a random creature within 100 feet of the intended target.

Major Disaster: The magic you had hoped would heal your ally becomes perverted, twisted, and reversed as it enters reality. You suffer all the effects that you had hoped to remove. If you attempted to heal damage, you suffer it instead. There is no saving throw against this effect.

TRANSMUTATION

The school of transmutation allows you to change one material into another or to bring out traits and abilities in living creatures that they do not normally possess. You could cause a warrior's muscles to grow and course with power, or you could turn a rusted old weapon into a keen blade capable of slicing through the strongest armor. Transmutation magic has two methods: one for living creatures and one for use on objects.

TRANSMUTATION METHOD: ALTER CREATURE

Mastery: 1–10
Descriptors: None
Mana: 2/effect's mastery level
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Short (25 feet + 5 feet/2 transmutation mastery levels)
Target: One living creature
Duration: One minute/transmutation mastery level (D)
Saving Throw: Fortitude negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

You alter a creature's body in some way, augmenting or diminishing its natural abilities. You can cause a number of effects depending on your mastery rating in transmutation magic.

Remember that, as described earlier in this chapter, a creature can always choose to forgo a saving throw or spell resistance check. Obviously, if this spell offers a benefit, a creature should drop such defenses.

This spell's mana cost equals double the mastery level of the ability you want to use.

Mastery	*Alter Creature* Effect
1	Alter size
2	Augment ability (minor, +4 ability bonus)
3	Drain ability (minor, −2 ability penalty)
4	Augment ability (moderate, +8 ability bonus)
5	Drain ability (moderate, −4 ability penalty)
6	Polymorph
7	Augment ability (major, +12 ability bonus)
8	Drain ability (major, −6 ability penalty)
9	Spawn/destroy limb
10	Alter composition

Alter Size: This effect allows you to increase or decrease a creature's size by one or more categories. Any equipment it carries grows or shrinks along with it, changing the damage any weapons deal. Magical items or similar devices also change size, but they gain no special bonuses or penalties to their powers.

For each size category a creature increases, it gains a +2 bonus to Strength. Determine damage for its weapons according to the rules in Chapter Seven: Equipment. The creature may gain an increased size penalty to attacks and defense.

For each size category a creature decreases, it suffers a −2 penalty to Strength. Determine its weapon's new damage according to Chapter Seven. The creature's size penalties to defense and attacks drop, or it may gain a size bonus.

The creature's new size category determines its space and reach, as shown below.

Size	Space/Reach (Squares)
Fine	0/0
Tiny	0/0
Small	1/1
Medium	1/1
Large	2/2
Huge	3/3
Gargantuan	4/4
Colossal	5/5

You can shift a creature's size by more than one category. It costs 4 additional mana to do so for each extra category. You cannot shrink a creature to less than size Fine or enlarge it beyond size Colossal. Halve the spell's duration for each place you shift a creature beyond one category. For example, if you shift a creature two categories in size, halve the duration. If you shift a creature three size categories, halve it twice.

Augment Ability: Drawing on your magical energy, you improve a creature's natural abilities. The amount of improvement you bestow depends on which *alter creature* effect you choose to use (see table on page 244).

When you cast this spell, select one of the six abilities: Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma. The target gains a bonus to the chosen ability score. The consequently increased ability score modifier may improve skills related to the ability, perhaps improving the target's defense, attack bonus, hit points, and so forth. When the spell's duration ends, the ability score returns to normal and the target loses the benefits of the improved score. In the case of Constitution, the target creature loses hit points as if its Constitution had been reduced.

Drain Ability: You sap a creature's natural talents, leaving it weaker, slowly, stupider, or uglier. When you cast this spell, choose a single ability. The touched creature must make a Fortitude save or suffer a penalty to the chosen score as determined by the mastery level of this effect (see table on page 244). If the creature's score drops to 0 or lower, it suffers the usual effects of having such a low ability score. When this spell expires, the penalty disappears. However, if the creature died or fell unconscious because of this spell, such as if Constitution loss dropped it to below 0 hit points or killed it, it remains dead or unconscious.

Polymorph: You change your chosen target into a snail, fish, dragon, or some other creature. When you cast *alter creature* with the polymorph effect, you can either try to change the creature's mind or allow it to retain its personality. In any case, the target gains the new form's Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, movement modes, natural bonus to armor, and extraordinary special abilities. If you change the target's mind, it also gains the creature's Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma, along with its supernatural and spell-like abilities. It replaces its skills and feats with the creature's abilities. The target gains the typical personality of the creature and either attacks the nearest creature or flees.

Apply changes to the creature's ability scores as if it suffered a penalty or gained a bonus to its base scores. Should the target die, it immediately reverts to its original form.

The creature's equipment changes with its body—a warrior's armor might become the scales of the dragon he transforms into, for instance. This equipment returns to normal when the spell expires.

You may attempt to polymorph the target into a creature of its same size, unless you also use the alter size ability.

Spawn/Destroy Limb: You either grant a creature an additional limb or cause one of its arms or legs to become a boneless sack of organic jelly. Choose the desired effect when you cast this spell.

If you grant a creature an extra limb, it gains an additional attack with that limb at its highest base attack bonus. It can make a claw attack with this limb or carry a weapon. The limb's damage depends on the target creature's size.

Size	Claw Damage
Fine	1
Tiny	1d2
Small	1d3
Medium	1d4
Large	1d6
Huge	1d8
Gargantuan	2d6
Colossal	3d6

When you render a creature's limb useless, you must decide whether to target a limb the creature uses to move (a

leg or fin) or to fight (an arm or tentacle). If you target an arm or similar limb, the creature cannot use it to fight, carry a shield, or attempt similar actions. It suffers a −4 penalty to all Strength and Strength-based skill checks. Targeting a leg reduces the creature's movement by half. If the creature has no remaining limbs that it can use to move, it falls prone. In the case of a wing or similar limb used to fly, the creature falls to the ground, unless its flight comes from a supernatural or spell-like ability.

When the spell's duration ends, the creature's limb returns to normal or its body re-absorbs the extra limb.

Alter Composition: You change a creature's body from flesh and bone to some other material, such as stone or glass. You can cast this spell to either benefit or harm a creature. If you cast it to help an ally, you grant the target hardness 5 in addition to its other defenses. You shift its body to an organic stone composition that can shrug off many attacks.

Should you seek to harm a creature with this effect, you change all of its organic matter into an inorganic substance. In this case, the creature takes on the petrified condition, as described in Chapter Eight: Combat.

Moderate Disaster: The magical energy you summon accidentally shifts to a different target. The spell affects a random creature within 100 feet of your target.

Major Disaster: You suffer the spell's effects. If the spell is beneficial, you suffer the opposite effects; if not, you suffer the intended effects.

TRANSMUTATION METHOD: ALTER OBJECT
Mastery: 1–10
Descriptors: None
Mana: 2/mastery level of effect
Casting Time: One standard action
Range: Short (25 feet + 5 feet/2 transmutation mastery levels)
Target: One object (see text)
Duration: One minute/transmutation mastery level (D)
Saving Throw: Fortitude negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

This method allows you to cast spells that alter the characteristics and composition of inanimate objects. You could turn a sword into glass, make a suit of armor tougher, or turn a wall of stone into cotton.

Should you cast *alter object* on an unattended item, it receives no saving throw. If a creature holds the item or otherwise uses it, the creature makes a save for the item. Magical objects are unaffected by this method.

When you use this method, choose one aspect to apply to an object. You can increase or decrease an item's hardness or hit points, or grant it a bonus to its primary function. The maximum benefit you can confer depends on your mastery, as shown on the table above at right.

If you target an object that occupies more than one square, your spell might affect only part of it. Each aspect can affect size and area in different ways.

TRANSMUTATION: ALTER OBJECT

Mastery*	Hardness	Hit Points	Bonus
1	1	2d6	+1
2	2	4d6	+2
3	3	6d6	+3
4	4	8d6	+4
5	5	12d6	+5
6	6	16d6	+6
7	7	20d6	+7
8	8	25d6	+8
9	9	30d6	+9
10	10	40d6	+10

* *You may select a value from only one column at the given mastery level, not from multiple columns for the same spell.*

When you use *alter object* you may select only one effect. You cannot combine more than one aspect into a single spell. See the table above.

Hardness: You can increase or reduce an object's hardness by the amount listed for a given mastery. You cannot reduce an item's hardness to less than 0. This aspect proves useful if you need to smash through a stone wall, fortify a door against a rampaging troll, or break the chains that hold a friend captive.

If you apply this effect to an object that occupies more than one square, you affect two squares per mastery level.

Hit Points: You inflict or repair the listed hit points against a single object. You cannot target more than one square of a Large object, however. For example, if you needed to dig through a wall two squares wide, your spell would damage only one square.

This effect has an Instantaneous duration with one exception: You can repair an object to more than its maximum hit points. Those bonus hit points come off first if the object suffers damage, and they last until the spell's normal duration expires.

Bonus: This aspect infuses a weapon, tool, or suit of armor with an enhancement bonus that applies to any actions an individual normally attempts with the item. A weapon gains the bonus to attacks and damage, while a suit of armor gains the bonus to its damage reduction. A tool would confer the bonus to all skill attempts used with it. This bonus does not render the object itself magical. A weapon would not inflict magical damage while under the effects of this aspect, nor would a suit of armor offer protection against magical damage.

Moderate Disaster: The spell's magic runs rampant and targets a random unattended object within 100 feet of the intended target.

Major Disaster: The magical energy of the spell rebounds and randomly targets one of the items you carry.

CAMPAIGNS AND CONVERSIONS

One great thing about Iron Heroes *is that you can run it as its own game or use its rules in your standard d20 System campaigns.*

This appendix covers both of the above situations, offering guidance for DMs of full *Iron Heroes* campaigns as well as conversion suggestions for those who'd like to add some of these new rules like a kick of hot sauce to their existing fantasy games.

RUNNING IRON HEROES

This section supplies you with the basic information you need to run a game of *Iron Heroes*. A player's and DM's guidebook called *Mastering Iron Heroes* is available in print starting in October 2005 and offers a more in-depth treatment.

MONSTERS

The character classes in *Iron Heroes* are balanced against the creatures from the standard d20 System rules. Thus, a 2nd-level *Iron Heroes* party can handle CR 2 monsters and other threats in the same manner as a group of 2nd-level characters playing regular d20 System games. There are still a few things to look out for, however.

Instant death effects, such as petrification, are far more troubling to *Iron Heroes* PCs than to characters in other games. Since *Iron Heroes* characters lack access to the magic needed to cure such conditions, a character who fails a save is permanently dead unless the DM provides some way to restore her. Thus, try to avoid using creatures like basilisks, bodaks and medusas, which have instant kill abilities. Such opponents should appear only in encounters that serve as the climax or another important part of an adventure.

Of course, at high levels, it becomes difficult to avoid using creatures with instant kill abilities. In such cases, try to tone down the creature's ability by using it less often, perhaps only once every 5 rounds. This way, the tension remains high, but the characters aren't ruthlessly mowed down by a run of bad luck on saving throws.

When converting monsters for *Iron Heroes* games, the only thing you have to adjust is Armor Class and damage reduction. If a creature wears armor, use the armor's closest match in Chapter Seven: Equipment for the purposes of damage reduction. Otherwise, break a creature's defense down into active and passive bonuses. As a rule of thumb, any bonus that disappears when a creature is flat footed is an active defense.

If a feat, skill, or ability does not have a direct definition in *Iron Heroes,* use the rules from the appropriate core book. For example, monsters from *Monte Cook's Arcana Evolved* should use the *Arcana Evolved* rules for any feats and abilities that do not appear in *Iron Heroes.*

VILLAINS

In most cases, build your villains using the classes from *Iron Heroes.* The one exception to this guideline might be a spellcasting villain. In this case, you may use a spellcasting class from a different game, along with its entire magic system. After all, a villain might be an alien or demonic entity. As such creatures use magic with ease, they can wield strange and dangerous spells.

All classes from non-*Iron Heroes* sources should use the average defense bonus progression at the beginning of Chapter Three: Character Classes. Give the villain magical gear, but treat the items' effects as magical abilities inherent

to nonplayer characters. For example, boots that increase a sorcerer's speed might reflect the power of arcane tattoos inscribed into his feet. A magic wand or staff might function only when the NPC uses it, as it is attuned to her arcane aura.

ADVENTURES

When creating adventures, be sure to come up with interesting situations that allow the player characters to use their abilities. Try to avoid fights in plain, empty rooms.

Battles in *Iron Heroes* tend to last longer than in other games, since the characters have more hit points and more complex abilities. Thus, you must ensure that there is more to the fights than merely two lines of opponents standing still and smacking each other. Throw in lots of interesting terrain to encourage creative, active play.

When designing adventures, remember that you cannot offer magic items to the party as a reward. Gold and jewels also lose some of their value in terms of character power, because the PCs cannot use them to purchase magic items. The onus is on you, as DM, to come up with interesting stories, villains, and enemies. The characters need motivation other than the simple accumulation of treasure to push them ahead to adventures.

Entire books have been written about adventure design, leaving far too little space for the topic here. However, you'll do fine if you remember one important thing: The characters should always have a good, compelling reason to do something. Whether it's a noble desire to defeat an evil overlord, a selfish need to escape the law, or some other reason, you need to create a clear and interesting rationale to drive the action forward.

CONVERSION RULES

Converting the *Iron Heroes* rules to use in other games is relatively simple using the guidelines that follow.

CHARACTERS

Use the *Iron Heroes* character classes with a few important cautions, as outlined below.

- Do not convert the arcanist class to other systems that have their own magic rules, as the arcanist is at a disadvantage compared to such classes.
- Do not convert the man-at-arms to games that use the fighter class.
- Do not convert the thief to games that use the rogue class.
- Do not convert the berserker in games that use the barbarian.

These last three classes—man-at-arms, thief, and berserker—are essentially *Iron Heroes* versions of the fighter, rogue, and barbarian, respectively. You should use one or the other. Use both only if you feel comfortable with classes that offer almost identical abilities.

Traits: The character keeps the bonuses and abilities granted by his chosen traits, as these benefits replace the ones a character would normally gain from his race.

Alignment: *Iron Heroes* does not use alignment. If you're exporting your *Iron Heroes* character into a game that does, simply pick the alignment that you think is the best match for the character, in keeping with his defining characteristics.

Hit Die: Change the Hit Die from d4+X to d(4+X). In other words, a class with a Hit Die of d4+4 per level uses a d8.

Defense: Drop this ability if the game you are converting into uses the Armor Class system for defense.

Skills: Drop skill groups and use the conversions in the table below for ranks and skills.

Feats: *Iron Heroes* characters should gain feats according to the advancement rate in the game you wish to convert them to.

Equipment: Characters in *Iron Heroes* do not come into other games with magic items. Instead, their classes grant them valuable special abilities (such as token pools) that take the place of magic items in the game. Giving such characters magic items would only result in their becoming too powerful for their level.

Tokens: For any ability that uses tokens, double the token cost needed to activate the ability if you plan on giving *Iron Heroes* characters the standard array of magic items. In this case, magic items give the characters such useful tools, the token abilities become too powerful when combined with them.

Certain *Iron Heroes* classes do not use token pools. Two of them, the man-at-arms and thief, should not be a problem, as they are not recommended for conversion (use the fighter and rogue instead). The harrier, however, is a special case. Halve the bonuses the harrier gains from its combat speed, mobile assault, and mobile defense abilities. In the case of mobile defense, you end up having to divide the squares moved by 4 to determine the harrier's defense (or AC) bonus.

SKILL GROUPS

Use the following guidelines if you wish to import skill groups

SKILL CONVERSION		
Iron Heroes Class	Base Ranks	Skills As...
Arcanist	8	Bard
Archer	2	Fighter
Armiger	2	Fighter
Berserker	2	Barbarian
Executioner	6	Rogue
Harrier	4	Ranger
Hunter	6	Ranger
Man-at-Arms	2	Fighter
Thief	8	Rogue
Weapon Master	2	Fighter

into a d20 System game. You can apply the new rules for Craft and Knowledge, the extended skill checks, and the skill challenges as written.

d20 Class	Skill Groups
Barbarian	Athletics
Bard	Theatrics
Cleric	None
Druid	Wilderness lore
Fighter	Athletics
Monk	Athletics, stealth
Paladin	Athletics
Ranger	Athletics, wilderness lore
Rogue	Robbery
Sorcerer	Social
Wizard	Mysticism

FEAT MASTERY

The feat mastery ratings and the expanded mastery abilities given for a feat are rather easy to convert. Unless otherwise noted, a character can gain a feat when his base attack bonus equals (2 × mastery rating) − 1. The mastery conversion table below summarizes the results.

Mastery Rating	Equivalent Attack Bonus
1	+1
2	+3
3	+5
4	+7
5	+9
6	+11
7	+13
8	+15
9	+17
10	+19

Feats also have different prerequisites depending on their type. Power feats require Strength 13 or higher, Finesse feats Dexterity 13 or higher. Tactics feats demand Intelligence 13 or higher, and Social feats need a Charisma of 13 or more.

For Social feats, ignore the base attack bonus equivalents given above. Instead, a player character must have ranks in the appropriate skill (Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate, as determined by the feat) equal to the equivalent attack bonus + 3.

Expanded Mastery: Treat the expanded mastery abilities as feats with the prerequisites that correspond to their mastery ratings as given above. In addition, you must have the expanded mastery ability's base feat in order to select it.

Feat Equivalencies: If a feat appears in both the game you are converting to and in *Iron Heroes*, use the version that fits your game better. In most cases, it's easier to import the *Iron Heroes* feats whole cloth. When using the *Iron Heroes* version of feats, feel free to replace existing feats in the game with the equivalent expanded mastery abilities given in Chapter Five: Feats.

WEAPONS

When converting certain feats to other games, decide whether you want to carry over the expanded rules for weapons. If so, retain the prerequisites given for *Iron Heroes* feats. Otherwise, drop them.

OTHER SUBSYSTEMS

Most *Iron Heroes* subsystems can be used in their entirety in d20 System-compatible games. If you feel like playing around with them, feel free to pull the mechanics for combat and skill challenges, stunts, and more right into your game, and have fun with them.

The one subsystem that will need a little tinkering is the trait system. Allow human characters to take two traits in exchange for dropping the racial bonuses they normally gain (a bonus feat, +4 skill ranks at 1st level, and +1 skill rank per level).

Note that *Iron Heroes'* magic system is less powerful than the standard d20 magic system. If you want to use it in your game, bring the arcanist class along with it. This magic system's abilities are designed to work with the arcanist, but they are not effective with the standard wizard, sorcerer or cleric (or greenbond, mage blade, magister, or witch).

MONTE COOK PRESENTS:
IRON HEROES

CHARACTER SHEET

CHARACTER NAME: _____

Player Name: _____

Traits: _____

Class: _____ Level: _____ Gender: _____

ABILITY SCORES

Ability	Score	Modifier	Ability	Score	Modifier
Strength	__	__	Intelligence	__	__
Dexterity	__	__	Wisdom	__	__
Constitution	__	__	Charisma	__	__

SAVING THROWS

Type	Total	=	Base Save	+	Ability Modifier	+	Misc. Modifiers
Reflex (Dex)	__	=	__	+	__	+	__
Fortitude (Con)	__	=	__	+	__	+	__
Will (Wis)	__	=	__	+	__	+	__

INIT.

Initiative Modifier

_____

DEFENSE AND HIT POINTS

Defense	=	10	+	Active Bonus	+	Passive Bonus	+	Misc. Modifiers
__	=	10	+	__	+	__	+	__

Hit Points: _____ Reserve Points: _____ Nonlethal Damage: _____

Armor Type / DR: _____
Shield Type / DR: _____
Armor Check Penalty: _____ Speed: _____
Spell Failure Chance: _____ Armor Weight: _____

ATTACKS AND WEAPONS

Melee Attack	=	Base Attack	+	Str Modifier	+	Misc. Modifier	Ranged Attack	=	Base Attack	+	Dex Modifier	+	Misc. Modifier
__	=	__	+	__	+	__	__	=	__	+	__	+	__

Grapple: _____ Melee Touch: _____ Ranged Touch: _____

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Size	Type
_____	__	__	__	__	__	__	__
_____	__	__	__	__	__	__	__
_____	__	__	__	__	__	__	__

PERSONAL INFO

XP: _____ Money: _____
Height: _____ Weight: _____
Age: _____ Languages: _____

Goals: _____
Personality: _____
Defining Qualities: _____
_____
_____

SKILLS, TRAITS, AND ABILITIES

Skill Group or Skill	Skill Modifier	=	Skill Ranks	+	Ability Modifier	+	Misc. Modifiers
_____	__	=	__	+	__	+	__
_____	__	=	__	+	__	+	__
_____	__	=	__	+	__	+	__
_____	__	=	__	+	__	+	__
_____	__	=	__	+	__	+	__
_____	__	=	__	+	__	+	__
_____	__	=	__	+	__	+	__
_____	__	=	__	+	__	+	__
_____	__	=	__	+	__	+	__
_____	__	=	__	+	__	+	__
_____	__	=	__	+	__	+	__
_____	__	=	__	+	__	+	__

Special Trait and Class Abilities
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EQUIPMENT, TOKENS, SPELLS, AND FEATS

EQUIPMENT AND GEAR NOTES
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Total Weight of Equipment: _____
Carrying Capacity: _____

TOKEN POOLS AND CURRENT TOKENS
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_____
_____
_____
_____

SPELLCASTING
Available Mana: _____ Mana Limit: _____
Primary School (Mastery): _____
Secondary School (Mastery): _____
Tertiary School (Mastery): _____
Other Schools (Mastery): _____
Spell Method Notes: _____

FEATS
Mastery Ratings:
_____

Feat Categories:
_____

Feat Benefits:
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_____
_____

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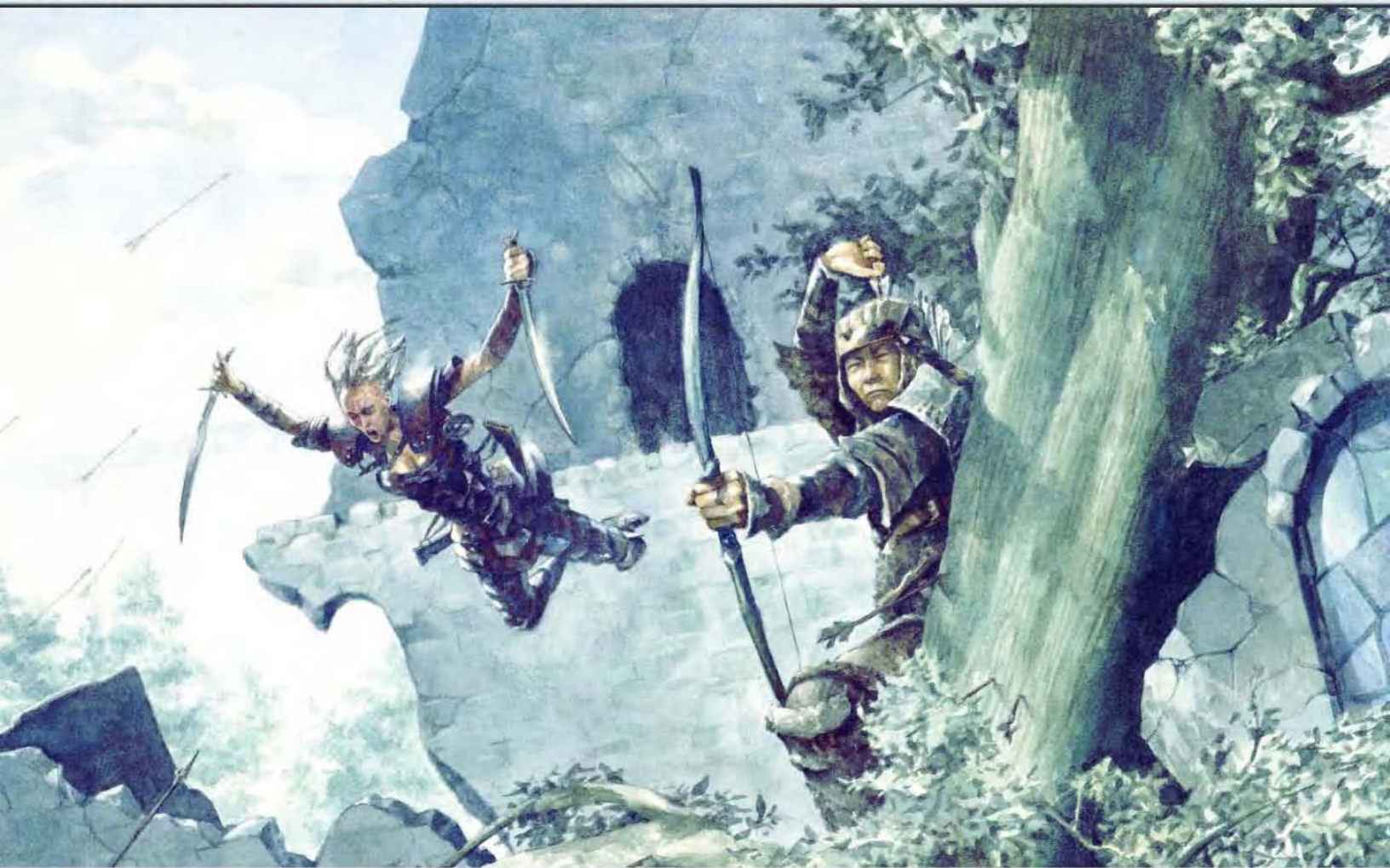
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IRON HEROES REVISED

It is not the sword, but the arm that wields it.... This exciting new game of heroic combat action is for skilled heroes who have no need for magic swords or arcane trinkets. Armed with their cunning, talent, and unmatched bravery, they wade sword first into a savage world of high-octane adventure. *Iron Heroes,* a variant player's handbook, provides 10 new core classes, expanded feat and skill systems, new combat options like stunts and challenges, character traits, the innovative token system, a new magic paradigm, and much more. Use this exciting book to supplement an existing fantasy roleplaying game or as a complete rules system unto itself.

Fiery Dragon

FDP16154R