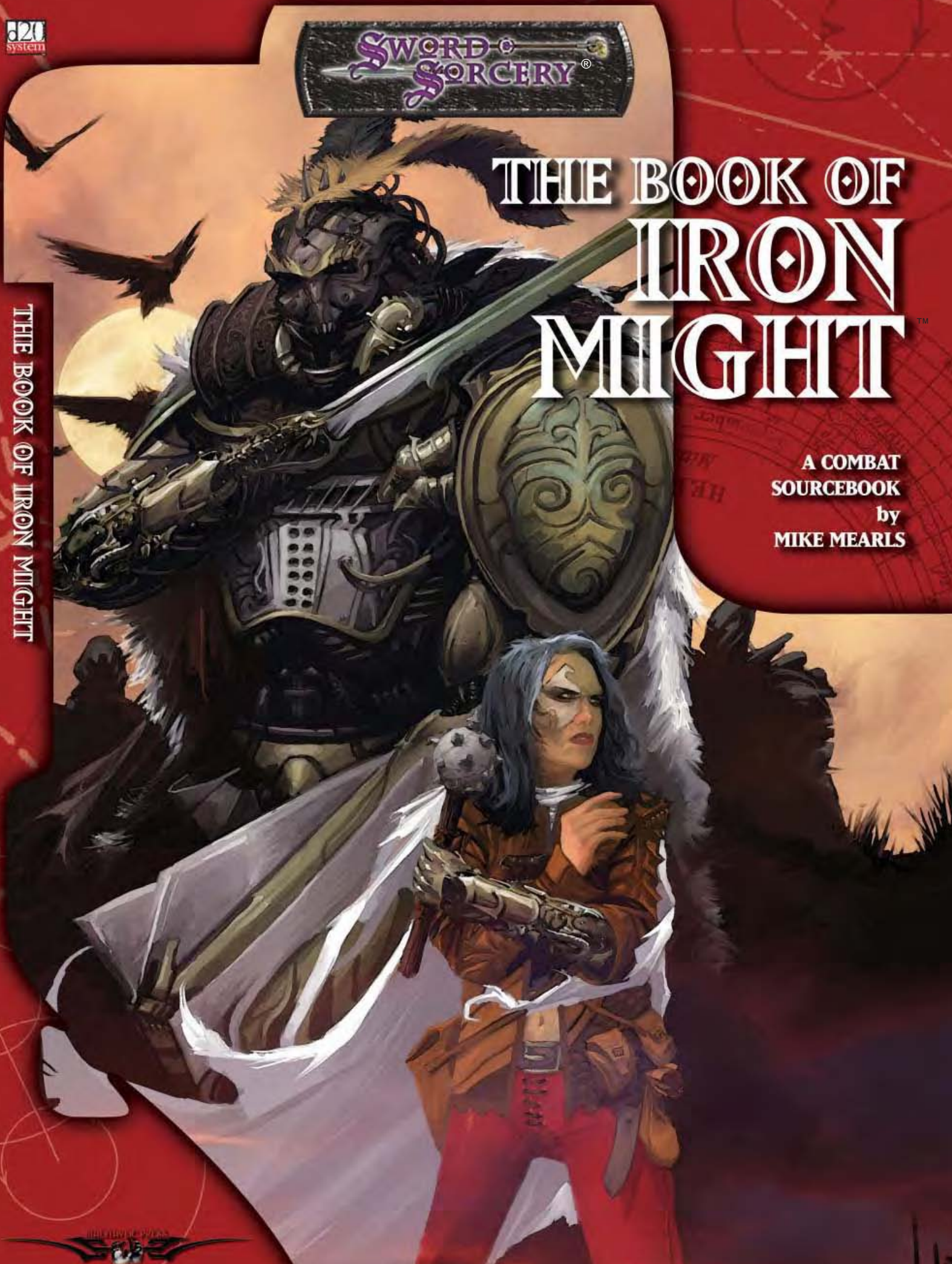d20 system

SWORD & SORCERY ®

THE BOOK OF IRON MIGHT ™

A COMBAT
SOURCEBOOK
by
MIKE MEARLS

MALHAVOC PRESS®

THE BOOK OF IRON MIGHT

A combat sourcebook

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.

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Death and Glory

"Il nous faut de l'audace, et encore de l'audace, et toujours de l'audace."
("We must dare, and again dare, and forever dare.")
— *Georges Jacques Danton*

Have you ever run a battle or participated in one during a roleplaying game session? Don't answer too quickly. You might have to think about it for a few moments. It's not as if combat is all that common in a game rife with rampaging dragons, foul trolls, towering giants, and other monsters. Why, fantasy roleplaying games are all about sitting at home, hoping that an adventure comes to call on the next-door neighbor, not here, no thank you.

Wait, that's not quite true. In fact, that's utterly wrong. Fantasy roleplaying games are all about charging a dozen orcs, sword raised high. Wars, revolutions, terrible monsters, and epic clashes are par for the course. These are interesting times that our heroes live in, and may they forever remain so.

The Book of Iron Might is a dash of hot sauce, a spicy kick for your heroic escapades. Within this book are new rules designed to make quite literally anything possible in a fight. New character options allow you to play an automaton built for war, or perhaps one designed to serve as a crafty scout. New feats broaden the horizons of all characters, while many skills receive new variations crafted specifically for use in combat. Here's a chapter-by-chapter overview:

Chapter One: Combat Maneuvers: The crown jewel of this book, the combat maneuver system makes it possible to simulate almost any sort of action in combat. If a player wants to grab a fistful of sand and throw it into an ogre's eyes, you can now quickly and easily resolve that action. The system presented here allows you to design combat moves that cover called shots to a foe's vitals. Rules let you determine the effectiveness of a variety of creative ruses, such as yanking a carpet out from beneath a foe.

Chapter Two: The Ironborn: Crafted from iron, built to serve, and now unleashed on the world, the ironborn are constructs that you can play as a character. Each ironborn was built to fulfill a specific purpose, allowing you to tailor your character (or an NPC) with racial abilities that fit his class.

Chapter Three: Feats of Iron Might: This chapter introduces three new types of feat. Arcane battle feats introduce the art of magic to fighters and other combatants, building a whole new, feat-based method of using arcane power to improve one's fighting ability. Battlemind feats are tailored for high-level characters. In many cases, they focus on granting powerful fighters fresh options at 10th level and above. Fighting style feats grow with your character, allowing you to choose a fighting specialty and improve it as you progress in skill.

Chapter Four: Skills and Stunts: The Bluff skill has a direct application in combat. Why not extend that capability to other skills? This section provides new, combat-focused applications for several skills. It also introduces the concept of stunts, a set of rules that allows you to make use of a skill or attribute to gain an advantage in battle.

How Will This Book Help My Game?

Have you ever been a little bored by combat? Has there ever been a time when you had a great idea for a move in a fight, but you weren't sure how it would fit into the rules?

A lot of DMs are understandably nervous about letting their players try weird, daring, or strange actions in a battle. Most of the time, the available choices include the actions from the core rules and a few other options. *The Book of Iron Might* breaks the disarm and trip attacks into their component pieces and uses that foundation for a comprehensive look at all the different effects you can create or produce

About the Author

Mike Mearls has worked as a freelance roleplaying game designer since 1999. This prolific writer maintains a high volume of work without compromising quality, which has won him a place on many gamers' lists of favorite designers. Buoyed by positive reaction to his first d20 works, he went on to produce material for the leading RPG publishers, including AEG, Atlas Games, Decipher, Fantasy Flight, Fiery Dragon, Goodman Games, Mongoose Publishing, Necromancer Games, and others before joining Malhavoc Press. His work appears regularly in Dragon® Magazine.

About the Illustrators

*Cover artist **Kieran Yanner** has always been interested in art, roleplaying games, and the fantasy/sci-fi genre. From Decipher to Malhavoc Press, White Wolf to Dream Pod 9, Kieran has produced hundreds of illustrations for the roleplaying industry and continues to do so.*

*Leeds, England, illustrator **Kev Crossley** learned early on that a monster lived in the abandoned house down the street—after that, he saw monsters everywhere. He drew monsters all the way through school but in art college and university he was told to stop. After getting a job in computer games, however, people started paying him to draw monsters. Moral? Art college and university were a waste of time.*

***Scott Purdy**, a UK-based illustrator, has a great love of horror, evil, and all things tentacular. He wills clients his way if they have need of nasty critters to bring to life. You can see more of Scott's work at ‹www.scottpurdy.net›.*

Malhavoc Press

***Malhavoc Press** is game designer Monte Cook's d20 System imprint devoted to the publication of evocative game elements that go beyond traditional fantasy. Malhavoc Press products such as* The Book of Eldritch Might *exhibit a mastery of the d20 System rules that only one of its original designers can offer.*

Current titles are available to purchase in either print or electronic (PDF) format at ‹www.montecook.com›. Look for Monte Cook's Arcana Evolved, *available soon.*

The ironborn represent a whole new take on character races. You can customize this race of manufactured constructs to fit the character class a person wants to play. This change brings a whole new layer of options and opportunities to characters.

The feats introduced in this book seek to establish new types of abilities tailored to benefit fighters. As the character class that receives the most feat selections, fighters have the greatest potential for customization. *The Book of Iron Might* expands on a fighter's choices and runs with the idea that you can define fighters by the feats they choose.

Finally, the skill rules demonstrate how abilities that might play only a tangential role in combat can become more important. Conjoined skill checks allow you to attempt dangerous maneuvers by making multiple, simultaneous skill checks to accomplish a single task. The stunt system builds on the maneuver rules to introduce a new set of options for all characters.

USING THIS BOOK

Like its predecessors, *The Book of Eldritch Might* and *The Book of Hallowed Might*, this tome is designed to present new character options and systems that you can use to improve your game. Where the first two books focused on arcane magic and divine magic, respectively, *The Book of Iron Might* covers combat.

The Book of Iron Might is a toy box full of stuff that you can use to make combat more fun in your game. The maneuver system in particular features plenty of advice, including a step-by-step example, for using the new rules and incorporating them into your game. In addition, it presents new feats and options for fighters, but any character who wants to play a role in combat can benefit from the new material here. DMs can unlock the potential of monsters, creating tricky maneuvers that reflect a creature's abilities and adding a new level of variety to the game.

Throughout *The Book of Iron Might*, all references to spells, feats, and other rules come from the v. 3.5 revision of the three Core Rulebooks: the *Player's Handbook*, DMG, and MM.

Bonus source material and ideas to augment the information in *The Book of Iron Might* appear on Monte Cook's website. To find the links to these free web enhancements, visit the book's product page online at the following address: <www.montecook.com/BOIM>.

This sourcebook is protected content except for items specifically called out as Open Gaming Content on the title page. For full details, please turn to the Appendix. Open content is not otherwise marked in the text of this book.

PURDY04

with a weapon. By linking these effects with a series of drawbacks, you can meld the two systems to create new combat moves. At the very least, *The Book of Iron Might* will change how you view actions in combat. Even if you don't use the maneuver system as presented here, you'll still have a better understanding of how to balance rewards with risks when making snap decisions during combat.

Combat Maneuvers

A barbarian slashes across a vampire's eyes, hoping to prevent the fiend from using his dominate *ability. This is a risky maneuver that requires skill and luck to complete, as the vampire takes special care to defend his head and other vital points, while the barbarian must take careful aim in the chaos of the fight. If the barbarian manages to hit, he can disable the vampire's special ability for a few moments—perhaps enough time to defeat the horrid, undead beast.*

Under the core rules, attacks like the one described above are impossible. You can disarm a creature, trip it, grapple it, and attempt a few other special moves, but most of your attacks are an effort to wear down a creature's hit points and knock it out of the fight. Most of the time, these options offer more than enough choices to keep players and DMs happy. However, sometimes you might want or need more options. Plenty of monsters rely on special attacks or abilities that might be vulnerable to special attacks. If a giant octopus surges over a small boat, it makes sense for the sailors to hack at its tentacles, chopping them away to allow the boat to escape from its grasp. Some monsters even have special rules for making attacks against their eyestalks and other body parts.

The rules in this section present a system that you—players and DMs alike—can use to create special combat maneuvers. It treats an attack as any effort to negatively affect an opponent. That negative effect could be anything from hit points of damage to temporary blindness or a trip attack. You can build a maneuver by adding special effects to a standard attack. Unusual, powerful, or exotic special effects impose a penalty on your attack roll to reflect their difficulty.

These rules are meant to produce special attack maneuvers that you can introduce into your campaign. If you don't mind slowing down combat by adding more options, you can create dozens of them to allow the players (and their foes) to attempt almost anything. If you and your players are experienced gamers, you can even use this system to create maneuvers on the fly.

Since the rules are rather abstract, a set of sample maneuvers demonstrates how you can wrap a set of rules around a description to create actions that make sense. For example, the blinding combat option lacks any context. As far as the rules are concerned, it is up to a player or DM to justify why a blinding attack is possible in the current situation. Part of the fun in these rules is that you can take any stunt or thrilling maneuver from a comic book, movie, or novel and translate it into game terms. All you need to do is figure out the maneuver's end result. Does the hero surprise his foe and get in a devastating shot? Does she confuse her opponent and leave him unable to make an effective counterattack? By using the effects described here, or others of your own devising, you can model a variety of actions in combat that open up the combat system's possibilities.

Building Blocks

Maneuvers are made up of four basic "building blocks." These elements are as follows:

1. Effect. All maneuvers have an effect; many are described later in this chapter. The summary tables on pages 8 and 13 list a variety of different effects you can use in maneuvers. They give an overview of the different effects and a brief summary of their mechanics. Some effects are designed to cause one of the conditions defined in the core rules, such as prone, blinded, and dazed. Others allow you to deal extra damage, or attach a penalty to your target's Armor Class, skill check, or saving throw.

Every maneuver effect is categorized by key abilities that describe, in broad terms, how you might accomplish a maneuver. For example, a maneuver designed to knock your opponent prone with a melee attack (such as Knockdown, described on page 11) could have both Strength and Dexterity as key abilities: A hulking warrior might use physical power to perform the maneuver, while a dashing swashbuckler could use quickness to achieve the same result. Key abilities are discussed in more detail on the next page.

Because maneuvers are more difficult to pull off than ordinary attacks, you must take a penalty on your attack roll when attempting one. However, some or all of that penalty can be offset by adding drawbacks to the maneuver (see below).

2. Drawbacks. A maneuver also has assigned drawbacks that pertain when a character attempts it. For instance, you might try to blind an ogre by throwing sand in its eyes. The sand distracts the ogre, giving it a penalty on attack rolls and maybe even blinding it for a few rounds, but your attack fails to deal any damage. Once the ogre clears its eyes, the maneuver's effect ends. The fact that your attack doesn't cause any hit point damage is incorporated into the maneuver as a drawback.

3. Net Effect. Once you have a maneuver's effect and drawbacks, you combine them to determine how the maneuver works in game terms. Each effect and drawback has characteristics that affect the die rolls—particularly attack rolls—that you make to resolve the maneuver attempt. Consolidate all these characteristics (use bonuses to offset penalties, and so forth) to determine the maneuver's net effect.

4. Visuals. The final element is a description of how the maneuver actually works. Roleplaying games are not wholly abstract board games or video games. You need to provide a

visual description of how the maneuver produces its effect and why its drawbacks are part of the package.

This process might sound complicated, but there are several ways you can get around this complexity during a game. You can create maneuvers before your game starts and make them available to characters and monsters. This chapter shows off a variety of sample maneuvers that illustrate the process of creation in action. Finally, if you and your players are experienced gamers, you can create maneuvers on the fly. The maneuvers "cheat sheets" on the Malhavoc website (see www.montecook.com/BOIM) provide a handy reference for free-form creation, as do the summary listings of the maneuver effects and drawbacks in this chapter. Further optional rules for going this route are provided later in this chapter.

Game Balance Alert

If you plan on making extensive use of maneuvers, particularly ones that can impart debilitating effects such as ability score damage or blindness, you should consider removing the *true strike* spell from your campaign. The maneuver system uses penalties on attack rolls in order to simulate and balance the more difficult maneuvers. *True strike,* by providing the +20 bonus on the caster's next attack roll, can make even the toughest maneuver a simple undertaking.

Alternatively, you can modify *true strike* as follows:

"This spell allows any attack that misses to deal its normal damage, including any relevant modifiers, but excluding any special effects due to a maneuver."

This change removes the bonus, allows you to deal damage even on an attack roll of 1, and prevents *true strike* from making it easy for casters of that spell to abuse the maneuver system.

The Rule of 20

Unlike a standard attack, a maneuver does not automatically succeed on a natural 20. When you attempt a maneuver, you exchange this small piece of predictability for the opportunity to gain a greater than normal benefit from an attack. If a 20 always hits, it makes sense for players to have their characters attempt the most ridiculous maneuvers possible if they could not hit an opponent by rolling any lower result. They can always rely on that natural 20 to make their risk worth the investment.

Spells and Maneuvers

You can use a maneuver when casting any spell that requires an attack roll. The spell counts as a ranged attack or melee attack as normal, depending on its nature, and it gains the full benefits and drawbacks associated with the maneuver. The DM is free to judge that some maneuvers require the use of a weapon and cannot be used along with the casting of a spell.

For example, you might use *Mel's acid arrow* in a maneuver to blind someone. If you strike an orc's eyes with the acid, you can ruin its sight. On the other hand, tripping the orc with the acid is almost impossible. A trip attack requires raw force to knock an opponent off his feet. *Mel's acid arrow* deals damage by burning your opponent, not hammering him with a physical impact.

Key Abilities

All maneuver effects have at least one key ability (one of the six ability scores). A key ability provides some hint about how you must act to perform the maneuver. It also indicates the type of ability check you would have to make if the maneuver has a drawback that requires such a check.

- **Strength:** A Strength-based maneuver requires raw, brutal force. For instance, you might slam an opponent so hard that he flies through the air and crashes into a dungeon wall.
- **Dexterity:** Maneuvers based on Dexterity rely on speed and finesse. A cunning goblin might duck between an ogre's legs and hamstring the towering beast, rendering it unable to move.

- **Constitution:** Constitution comes into play primarily with defensive maneuvers. It draws on your toughness and endurance, perhaps allowing you to shrug off a powerful blow to gain some sort of benefit.
- **Intelligence:** Maneuvers keyed to Intelligence allow you to outsmart an opponent, trick him into making a bad move, or use your wits to place him at a disadvantage. An elf fighter could notice that his opponent uses a specific pattern of attacks and parries and apply that information to make a quick feint followed by a devastating attack.
- **Wisdom:** A maneuver based on Wisdom could draw on your awareness of the environment and your ability to read others' emotions and intentions, or your ability to pick out hidden details and counter your opponent's action before he completes it.
- **Charisma:** Using your body language and personality, you trick your opponent to place him at a severe disadvantage. Using the Bluff skill to feint is a classic example of a Charisma-based maneuver.

Maneuver Effects

Maneuver effects are presented using the following format.

Combat Category: All maneuver effects belong to one of two combat categories: melee or ranged. This book presents melee effects first, followed by a section on ranged effects starting on page 13.

Melee effects allow you to injure, hinder, or harm someone else with a sword, dagger, or similar weapon. This category identifies effects that can be completed only with a melee attack.

Ranged effects can be delivered by ranged attacks, such as thrown weapons, crossbows, and slings.

Name: The maneuver effect's name appears first in each description, with its key ability (or abilities) following in parentheses. If the key ability entry is "Any," all six abilities apply to the effect.

Description: A basic description of the maneuver effect appears in a short paragraph after the name. This section lacks any game mechanics. Instead, it's designed to make it easier to scan the effects for a maneuver effect you can use.

Warning Flag: Some effects are powerful enough that the DM may not wish to use them. Although they are mechanically balanced, they present the possibility of making some class feature, feat, or magical ability redundant. For example, if a fighter can deal Strength or Constitution damage with a melee attack maneuver, then poison and certain spells lose some of their utility.

In most cases, effects marked with a warning flag have rules built into them that render them less attractive than a spell, a poison attack, or some other special ability. The warning flag provides you with some additional advice and game balance commentary related to the effect.

Prerequisites: In a few cases, you can use an effect only if you meet certain conditions or against a limited range of foes.

Rules: This section summarizes how the effect works.

Threat: Some maneuvers grant additional benefits if you confirm a critical hit while using them.

Penalty: Maneuver effects offer a benefit at the expense of some sort of penalty (typically a penalty on your attack roll). Those penalties are listed here.

Special Features: Some effects have options you can select to modify them. These added rules and benefits are not normally included in the effect. You must add their penalties or modifiers to the effect's base characteristics in order to gain their benefit. Many special features have keywords, which appear in brackets following the feature's name, where applicable. Treat these keywords as maneuver drawback keywords (described starting on page 14). In essence, drawback keywords prevent you from doubling up on certain effects to reduce a maneuver's attack roll penalty.

If an effect lacks one of these entries, no rule information exists regarding that topic. For example, an effect that has no Threat entry confers no special benefit on a critical hit.

Melee Attack Effects

Melee attack effects allow you to strike at an opponent in a way that brings you some benefit in place of or in addition to your weapon's standard damage. This category includes most of the different effects you can inflict on a target. Melee attack strikes offer a wide array of options. You can attempt the melee attack maneuvers described below and listed on the table on page 8.

Ability Score Damage (Strength, Dexterity)

You hammer an opponent with great force or cut him in just the right spot so that you injure one of his physical or mental abilities.

Warning Flag: This effect is deadly against wizards, sorcerers, and other creatures that rely on an ability score to use their primary class abilities effectively but that usually have a poor Armor Class. It could leave spellcasters too vulnerable in your campaign.

Prerequisite: Target must be vulnerable to critical hits.

Rules: You strike at a joint, nerve center, or other vulnerable area of your opponent's body, temporarily damaging one of his abilities. You inflict a –2 penalty to a single ability score of your choice. This penalty lasts until the creature is restored to its full hit points or for one hour, whichever happens last.

Threat: On a confirmed critical hit, you inflict a –4 penalty to a single ability.

Penalty: You take a –20 penalty on your attack roll.

Area Attack (Strength)

You make an attack that covers a wide area. You might sweep over a group of enemies with a large weapon, throw a large object that crashes onto several of your foes, or send a ceiling or wall collapsing down upon them.

Prerequisite: You must have some way of physically harming the entire targeted area, such as having reach to it. This effect represents a single attack that sweeps through an area, not multiple attacks.

Rules: You attack an area rather than a single target. You may pick as many 5-foot squares as you could conceivably reach with your weapon. (Unless you are using a reach weapon, the most squares you could affect would be all those you are adjacent to.) You take a penalty

on your attack roll based on the number of squares you try to strike. You make a single attack roll and apply its result against all foes in the area. Roll damage separately for each target you hit.

Penalty: You take a −5 penalty on your attack roll for each 5-foot square that you try to attack. For example, a strike against three squares entails a −15 penalty. You cannot score a critical hit with an attack that uses this maneuver.

Blinding Attack
(Dexterity, Intelligence, Wisdom)

You slash at an opponent's eyes, temporarily blurring his vision with a bloody cut to his brow or directly injuring his eyes.

Warning Flag: This maneuver has potential for abuse, in that once a creature suffers this effect, its foes have an easier time applying it again (because a blinded creature automatically has a lower Armor Class than when it's not blinded). A blinded opponent should behave logically under the circumstances, either trying to break off the fight or having its allies help it to safety. Only under extraordinary circumstances should a blinded foe stand fast and continue to fight. In some cases, this maneuver should result in a circumstance penalty to reflect the damage to a creature's eyes rather than full blindness. For example, a halfling rogue might throw coal dust at an ogre's eyes to distract it. The ogre might suffer a circumstance penalty, as per the effect described in this chapter, but the attack isn't powerful enough to cause blindness.

Prerequisite: Your target must use eyes or a similar organ in order to see.

Rules: The target of this effect is considered blinded for 1d4 minutes.

Threat: On a critical hit, the target is blinded for 2d4 minutes instead of 1d4.

Penalty: You take a −30 penalty on your attack roll. Not only must you strike at a foe's eyes, but you must hit him in the precisely correct spot to cause injury to the visual organs. Most creatures wear helms or take special care to defend their faces.

Bonus Damage (Any)

You maneuver in a way that allows you to strike with greater damage-dealing potential at the cost of accuracy, perhaps employing brute force (with Strength as the key ability), using the benefits of terrain (which could play off Dexterity or Wisdom), or watching your foe's actions to gauge the best time to strike (which would be an Intelligence-based maneuver) to get off a more lethal attack than you normally could manage. In essence, this maneuver is a poor man's Power Attack. It is less efficient than Power Attack, since you take a bigger attack penalty and deal less extra damage than with the feat, but anyone can attempt this maneuver.

Rules: If your attack hits, you gain a +2 bonus on your damage roll. You can increase this bonus in 2-point increments to a maximum of +10.

Threat: This extra damage is multiplied as normal on a critical hit.

Penalty: You take a −5 penalty on your attack roll for every 2 points of extra damage you wish to deal.

MELEE ATTACK MANEUVER EFFECTS			
Name	**Key Abilities**	**Attack Roll Penalty**	**Benefit**
Ability Score Damage	Str, Dex	−20	−2 penalty to single ability score
Area Attack	Str	−5 per 5-foot square	Attack an area and all targets in it
Blinding Attack	Dex, Int, Wis	−30	Target blinded 1d4 rounds
Bonus Damage	Any	−5 per +2 of bonus	Bonus on damage, max. +10
Daze Attack	Str	−20	Target dazed 1 round
Deafening Attack	Str, Dex, Int	−10	Target deafened 1d6 minutes
Deny Dexterity Bonus	Dex, Cha	−10	Opponent must make Sense Motive check or Reflex save (DC 10 + half base attack bonus + key ability modifier) or lose Dex bonus to AC
Disable Natural Attack	Str, Dex, Int, Wis	−20	Prevent use of one physical attack
Disarming Attack	Str, Dex, Int	−20	Target loses weapon
Disrupt Special Ability	Str, Int	−20	Prevent use of Su or Ex ability
Forced Movement	Int, Cha	−10	Opponent moves 5 feet
Inflict Penalty	Any	−5 per −1 of penalty	Cause penalty to foe's attacks, AC, checks, or saves, max. −5
Knockback	Str	−10	Opposed Str check to push foe back
Knockdown	Str, Dex	−20	Knock opponent prone
Movement Damage	Str, Dex, Int, Wis	−10	Reduce foe's speed by 5 feet
Stagger	Str	−10	Foe loses next move action
Stun	Str, Int, Wis	−30	Target stunned 1 round
Sundering Attack	Str	−10	Deal damage against object or weapon foe carries

DAZE ATTACK (STRENGTH, WISDOM)

You slam your opponent's head or hit him in a sensitive spot, causing him to become disoriented for a brief moment.

Warning Flag: This effect could prove deadly for an opponent with a low Armor Class, since an attacker who hits the foe in every round could keep dazing it and leaving it unable to take any actions for the entire combat.

Prerequisite: The target must be vulnerable to critical hits.

Rules: Your opponent is dazed as a result of this effect. He loses his next action but takes no penalties to his Armor Class. He holds onto any items he had in his hands.

Penalty: You take a –20 penalty on your attack roll.

DEAFENING ATTACK

(STRENGTH, DEXTERITY, INTELLIGENCE)

You slash at an opponent's ears or other auditory organs, temporarily deafening him with a well-placed attack.

Prerequisite: The target must be vulnerable to critical hits, and the DM must judge that it hears in a manner similar to humans or animals.

Rules: If your attack hits, your target is deafened for 1d6 minutes. A deafened creature takes a –4 penalty on initiative checks, automatically fails Listen checks, and has a 20 percent chance of spell failure when casting spells with verbal components.

Penalty: You take a –10 penalty on your attack roll.

DENY DEXTERITY BONUS (DEXTERITY, CHARISMA)

With a quick, clever tactic, you confuse your opponent and leave him unable to respond to your next attack.

Warning Flag: This effect is already covered by the feint application of the Bluff skill. A DM may rule that you must use the standard rules for feinting to gain this effect's benefits. In any case, this maneuver effect is more difficult to complete than a feint. It serves as a useful tool for skilled warriors who lack the Bluff skill.

Rules: Your opponent must make a Sense Motive check or a Reflex save with a Difficulty Class equal to 10 + half your base attack bonus + your key ability modifier. If this save fails, your opponent loses his Dexterity bonus to Armor Class against your next attack. Make your attack as normal, but apply your Dexterity or Charisma modifier to the attack roll in place of your Strength modifier—and do not apply an ability modifier to your damage roll.

Penalty: You take a –10 penalty on your attack roll.

DISABLE NATURAL ATTACK

(STRENGTH, DEXTERITY, INTELLIGENCE, WISDOM)

You compromise a creature's ability to use one of its natural attacks, slicing a tendon or hitting a vulnerable spot.

Prerequisite: This maneuver functions only against creatures that use natural weapons, such as a bite, claws, or a fist. In essence, it is a disarm maneuver against such attacks.

Rules: Before attempting this maneuver, select one of your foe's natural weapons. If you hit, your opponent cannot use that attack for 1d4 rounds.

Penalty: You take a –20 penalty on your attack roll.

Special Features: You can modify this effect so that it has a longer duration, depending on your foe's ability to overcome the disabling injury or effect.

Hinder Attack [Damage]: Your opponent cannot use his attack again until he makes a Strength check (DC 10 + your Strength modifier). Your attack deals no damage—instead, you pull off the maneuver by wedging an object into a creature's mouth, tying a sack around its claws to dull them, or otherwise neutralizing the attack form without actually striking with your weapon. This feature has no effect on the maneuver's attack roll penalty.

Disarming Attack
(Strength, Dexterity, Intelligence)

You strike at your opponent's weapon in an attempt to knock it from his grasp.

Prerequisite: You can use this maneuver only against opponents that are armed with manufactured weapons as opposed to claws, fangs, and other natural weapons.

Rules: You force your opponent to drop his weapon.

Penalty: You take a −20 penalty on your attack roll.

Special: Using a two-handed weapon grants a +4 bonus on your attack roll, while using a light one confers a −4 penalty. Ignore these modifiers if Intelligence is the maneuver's key ability. An unarmed strike counts as a light weapon when you use such an attack in an attempt to disarm a foe.

The larger of the attacker or the target gains a +4 bonus to Armor Class per size category of difference between the two combatants. You can attempt this maneuver if you are armed with a weapon that cannot be used in melee, but you take a −4 penalty on your attack roll.

Disrupt Special Ability
(Strength, Intelligence)

You chop at a creature's eyestalk, slice at its mouth, or otherwise act to disrupt one of its special abilities.

Rules: When you attack, you must select a part of the creature's anatomy that is obviously the source of, or provides the impetus for, a supernatural or extraordinary ability, such as a creature's mouth (for a breath weapon) or its eyes (for a gaze attack). You cannot target a spell-like ability unless the DM judges that the creature generates it through the use of some organ or other body part. If your attack hits, the creature loses the benefit of that ability until it receives magical healing or heals naturally.

Penalty: You take a −20 penalty on your attack roll.

Forced Movement (Intelligence, Charisma)

Your attacks slowly drive your opponent back, forcing him to yield his position. Unlike with a Knockback maneuver, which relies on the raw power of your attack, you pull off this maneuver by making a series of well-placed strikes to force an opponent gradually to give ground.

Rules: On a successful attack, you may shift your opponent 5 feet in any direction—except that you cannot force an opponent to move into terrain that would damage him or otherwise prove hazardous. This 5-foot move does not provoke attacks of opportunity. You cannot force your opponent into an occupied area.

Penalty: You take a −10 penalty on your attack roll.

Inflict Penalty (Any)

You make an attack that somehow hinders your enemy's ability to fight or use his skills. You might throw sand in his eyes, partially stun him, or otherwise leave him less effective than normal. In most cases, this maneuver is a good way to simulate a wide variety of attacks or actions that can hinder an opponent without rendering him helpless.

Rules: You inflict a −1 circumstance penalty on your opponent's attack rolls, Armor Class, checks, or saves. Pick one type of penalty when designing the maneuver. You can increase this penalty to a maximum of −5. This penalty lasts for a number of rounds equal to 1 + the modifier for your key ability, or until the opponent receives healing of any kind.

A creature can only suffer the effects of one Inflict Penalty maneuver at a time. It always suffers the highest penalty inflicted upon it. For example, you could use a maneuver to grant a creature a −2 penalty to Armor Class, but you could not use Inflict Penalty to cause another penalty until the first penalty's duration expires or you hit it with an attack that causes a −3 penalty.

Threat: If you score a critical hit, the penalty you inflict worsens by −1 (to a maximum of −6, if you chose to inflict a −5 penalty with the maneuver).

Penalty: You take a −5 penalty on your attack roll for each −1 penalty you try to inflict on a foe.

Special Features: This maneuver is perhaps the most versatile one in these rules, since it covers a wide range of situations.

Touch Attack [Damage]: You need to make only a touch attack to hit your opponent, but you do not deal your normal damage. Instead, you cause only the circumstance penalty.

Knockback (Strength)

You hammer your foe with such a ferocious blow that he stumbles backward. You might simply knock him back a few steps, or you could push him forward with the momentum of your charge.

Rules: If your attack hits, make a Strength check opposed by your opponent's Strength check. If you succeed on the check, you push your foe 5 feet directly away from you. For every additional 5 points by which your Strength check beats your opponent's result, you push him back an additional 5 feet. Your foe suffers any negative consequences for moving into lava, water, or similar terrain. If he hits a solid object, he takes 1d6 points of damage, +1 point for every 5 feet of knockback movement he had not yet completed. For example, a stone giant might use this maneuver against a foe and succeed in knocking the foe 30 feet back. If the opponent is knocked back only 10 feet before he hits a wall, then he takes 1d6+4 points of damage. The extra 4 points of damage come from the 20 feet of knockback movement the opponent was unable to complete.

If a victim of this maneuver hits another creature, both of them must make Strength checks (DC 10) or be knocked prone. If the second creature in the collision is smaller than the victim, it takes a −4 penalty on its Strength check for each size category of difference between it and the victim. If the knocked-back creature is larger than the second creature, it receives a +4 bonus on its Strength check for each size category of difference between it and the second creature.

If you are larger than the creature you attempt to knock back, you gain a +4 bonus on your Strength check for each size category of difference between you and your opponent. If you are one size category smaller than your opponent, you take a −4 penalty on the check. (If

you attempt to use this maneuver against an opponent two or more size categories larger than you, the maneuver automatically fails.)

If you made a charge just before attacking, you gain a +2 bonus on your Strength check. The defender gains a +4 bonus if he has four or more legs or is exceptionally stable, such as a dwarf.

Penalty: You take a –10 penalty on your attack roll.

Special: You cannot apply the Saving Throw or Opposed Check drawbacks to this effect. The Strength check described above already covers that drawback and is reflected in this effect's cost.

Special Features: You can use the following special features to modify a knockback attack.

Close Quarters Push [*Attack of Opportunity*]: You must step into your opponent's space in order to attempt the knockback, as you put the full force of your body into the effort. You provoke attacks of opportunity from the defender and anyone else who threatens you, but anyone other than your target has a 25 percent chance to accidentally strike your target with the attack of opportunity. If you use this special feature, reduce the maneuver's attack roll penalty by 5.

Knockdown (Strength, Dexterity)

You force an opponent to the ground by striking him with a mighty blow or by catching him on your weapon and pulling him to the ground.

Rules: If you hit, you knock your opponent prone.

Penalty: You take a –20 penalty on your attack roll.

Special Features: You can turn this maneuver into a touch attack, though this version of a knockdown attack does not deal damage.

Touch Attack [*Damage*]: You can make a touch attack to initiate a knockdown. You might simply wrap your weapon around your opponent or catch it on his clothing. In either case, resolve an opposed ability check based on the key ability you chose for this maneuver. However, this maneuver made as a touch attack never deals damage; you only gain the benefit of its effect. This special feature decreases your attack roll penalty by 5.

Movement Damage
(Strength, Dexterity, Intelligence, Wisdom)

You slash at your opponent's wings, feet, knees, or some other body part used for movement. If your maneuver succeeds, you can inhibit your foe's ability to move.

Warning Flags: This maneuver evens a character's odds against a flying creature, since it allows him to knock such a creature from the sky or leave it unable to take wing. Also, keep in mind that successive uses of this attack make it more difficult for an injured NPC or monster to escape from the party, and vice versa.

Prerequisites: With this effect, you cannot negate a creature's movement if it moves without the aid of an obvious anatomical

means, such as wings or legs. You target muscles, bones, and other physical organs. Thus, you could not negate the aerial movement of a wizard who is using a *fly* spell.

Rules: Pick a movement mode used by your target, such as climbing, flying, or walking. With a successful attack, you reduce its speed by 5 feet. If you reduce its speed to 0 feet, it cannot move on its next turn using that mode.

A flying creature drops one maneuverability category for every 10 feet of speed it loses (to a minimum of clumsy). If it drops to a speed of 0 feet or below its minimum forward speed while in the air (or to less than half speed, if its maneuverability is average or worse), it immediately falls and takes damage as normal.

Note that this effect reduces a target's base speed as well as its speed after accounting for armor and encumbrance.

The effects of this maneuver stack with other effects that reduce speed. They last until the creature receives healing of any kind.

Threat: On a critical hit, you reduce the defender's speed by 10 feet.

Penalty: You take a −10 penalty on your attack roll.

STAGGER (STRENGTH)

This maneuver allows you to send your opponent reeling, forcing him to spend a precious moment to collect his wits before he can act again.

Rules: If you hit with your attack, your opponent loses his next move action.

Penalty: You take a −10 penalty on your attack roll.

STUN (STRENGTH, INTELLIGENCE, WISDOM)

You slam your opponent, leaving him temporarily unable to act. Making this attack requires either tremendous strength, intense training, or an intuitive feel for the sensitive points in an opponent's anatomy.

Warning Flag: This attack mimics the monk's stunning fist ability and the feat of the same name. While this maneuver's penalties make it far less efficient than the monk's stunning fist ability, its presence in your game could detract from the unique status of the feat.

Prerequisite: Your target must be vulnerable to stunning attacks.

Rules: Your opponent is stunned for 1 round. A stunned creature drops whatever he holds, suffers a −2 penalty to Armor Class, and loses his Dexterity bonus to Armor Class.

Penalty: You take a −30 penalty on your attack roll.

SUNDERING ATTACK (STRENGTH)

You hack at an object carried by an opponent in the hope of destroying it.

Prerequisite: You can only attempt to use this maneuver if you are using a natural attack or a bludgeoning or slashing weapon.

Rules: You strike and deal damage against a weapon or shield carried by a foe. Against an object your foe wears or has secured to his person, make an attack roll against the object's Armor Class. A

carried or worn object's Armor Class is equal to 10 + its size modifier + the Dexterity modifier of the carrying or wearing character.

You cannot use this action against a target's armor, since armor is designed precisely to absorb and deflect such attacks. If this weren't the case, every attack that missed a target could potentially be a sunder attempt against its armor.

Penalty: You take a –10 penalty on your attack roll.

Ranged Attack Effects

Compared to melee attacks, ranged strikes offer a much more limited array of options. You can grab an opponent with your bare hands and throw him to the ground, for instance, but it is much more difficult to make someone fall prone with an arrow or sling bullet. Many of the effects you can achieve with melee attack maneuvers are possible with ranged attacks as well, but are more difficult to complete. A ranged weapon doesn't have the same leverage or force of impact as many melee weapons. In addition, hitting a specific point on an opponent is much harder from long range than at close quarters.

You can attempt the ranged attack maneuver effects described in this section and listed on the table below. Some of the ones in the table have the same names and work the same way as certain melee attack maneuver effects described above. These are not reprinted in full here; refer to the table below and to the appropriate melee attack effect for details. In certain of these cases, the penalty on your attack roll is more severe for the ranged effect than for the corresponding melee maneuver effect.

You can use the following maneuvers with any ranged attack.

Immobilizing Shot

(Strength, Dexterity, Intelligence)

Your shot pins your target in place. You may skewer his hand to the wall, or you might catch his clothing or armor with a well-placed shot.

Prerequisite: Your target must be adjacent to something that you could pin him to.

Rules: If your attack hits, you make a Strength, Dexterity, or Intelligence check, as appropriate to this effect's key ability, opposed by your opponent's check. If you succeed at the opposed check, your target cannot move until he succeeds at a Strength, Dexterity, or Escape Artist check with your check result as the Difficulty Class.

Penalty: You take a –20 penalty on your ranged attack roll.

Sniping Shot (Dexterity, Wisdom)

You take aim at a small gap in your target's cover, allowing you to strike him even if he is almost completely protected by a wall or other barrier.

Prerequisite: There must be at least some hole in your opponent's cover, even if it is above him.

Rules: By accepting drawbacks that would reduce your –20 attack roll penalty to –5 or eliminate the penalty altogether (see "Maneuver Drawbacks" on the next page), you can use this maneuver to ignore a target's cover. The drawbacks represent the time and effort you expend to take careful aim and the risks of making a difficult trick shot. You might still end up with a penalty on your attack roll, but in the end it should be less than your opponent's cover bonus to Armor Class.

This is the only maneuver effect that can have a total penalty less than –5. The idea behind it is that you can take drawbacks to reduce the penalty below the Armor Class bonus your opponent would gain for cover. You can also use it to make an attack against a foe who has total cover.

Penalty: You take a –20 penalty on your ranged attack roll.

Surprise Shot (Dexterity, Intelligence)

With this maneuver effect, you can get off a shot that attacks from an unexpected direction or one that manages to surprise a ready foe.

Rules: Your target loses his Dexterity bonus to Armor Class against your attacks.

Penalty: You take a –20 penalty on your ranged attack roll.

RANGED ATTACK MANEUVER EFFECTS			
Name	Key Abilities	Attack Roll Penalty	Benefit
Bonus Damage*	Any	–5 per +2 of bonus	Bonus on damage, max. +10
Disarming Attack**	Str, Dex, Int	–30	Target loses weapon
Forced Movement*	Int, Cha	–10	Opponent moves 5 feet
Immobilizing Shot	Str, Dex, Int	–20	Target can't move until it makes a Strength, Dex, or Escape Artist check
Inflict Penalty‡	Any	–10 per –1 of penalty	Cause penalty to foe's attacks, AC, checks, or saves, max. –5
Movement Damage*	Str, Dex, Int, Wis	–10	Reduce foe's speed by 5 feet
Sniping Shot	Dex, Wis	–20	Ignore a foe's cover
Surprise Shot	Dex, Int	–20	Deny foe Dex bonus to AC

*   This effect is the same as the melee attack effect of the same name. (See "Melee Attack Effects," page 7, for details.)

**   This effect is the same as the melee attack effect of the same name, except you take an additional –10 penalty on your attack roll.

‡   This effect is the same as the melee attack effect of the same name, except that you suffer a –10 penalty on your attack roll (instead of a –5 penalty) for each –1 circumstance penalty you wish to confer.

MANEUVER DRAWBACKS

Maneuvers are risky, but the benefits they offer can outweigh the drawbacks they incur. The greater the effect a maneuver has on a target, the more difficult it is to complete.

As you can see from the maneuvers described above, you must endure crippling penalties to attempt them. Against all but the most pitiable of foes, many of the effects are nearly impossible to achieve. However, by adding drawbacks to a maneuver, you can make it easier to complete while increasing the consequences of failure. Think of the trip combat action. You provoke an attack of opportunity for attempting it. If you fail to trip your opponent, he gets a free chance to send you tumbling to the ground. Using these maneuver rules, you could try to trip someone without risking those consequences, but your attack is made with a significant penalty. If you apply some drawbacks to the maneuver, you can reduce your attack roll penalty at the expense of increasing the cost of failure and accepting attacks of opportunity.

You cannot use drawbacks to change an attack roll penalty into a bonus. For example, say the maneuver you want to use carries a –10 penalty to your attack roll. You can add drawbacks that reduce this penalty by 10 (removing the penalty altogether), but if you added an additional drawback that allowed you to reduce your penalty by 5 more, you still make your attack roll with a +0 modifier, not +5. The extra 5 points of penalty reduction are wasted (which means, of course, that adding that additional drawback would be pointless—you get no benefit in return for the drawback).

Most drawbacks have a keyword (sometimes one word, sometimes a phrase) listed alongside their names. You cannot select different drawbacks that share the same keyword for a single maneuver. You can use multiple drawbacks that lack keywords, but you can never use the same drawback more than once per maneuver.

Ranged attack maneuvers, by their nature, already provoke attacks of opportunity. Thus, they cannot use drawbacks that have the Attack of Opportunity keyword. In addition, ranged attacks cannot use drawbacks with the Counter keyword.

Within the constraints of the rules above, you can incorporate as many drawbacks into a maneuver as you want: Add their penalty modifiers together and apply the total to the effects and penalties of your maneuver.

DRAWBACK DESCRIPTIONS

Each drawback description includes advice about how and why you should use it. These comments show how to use the drawbacks in conjunction with a maneuver's description, and they should help you decide how to apply drawbacks to a maneuver.

ATTACK OF OPPORTUNITY, TARGET ONLY (ATTACK OF OPPORTUNITY)

Executing your maneuver requires you to drop your guard long enough for your opponent to take a swing at you. Before you can begin your maneuver, you provoke an attack of opportunity from your target.

Modifier: Reduce the penalty on your attack roll by 5. You can opt to reduce the penalty by 10 if you decide that your maneuver automatically fails if your opponent hits with the attack of opportunity it provokes. In this case, a successful attack of opportunity ruins your focus and causes your maneuver to fail even before it is attempted.

Usage: This drawback is a good choice for a maneuver that requires the attacker to put himself in harm's way. For example, a Disarming Attack requires the attacker to swing at an opponent's blade rather than his body, leaving him unable to parry the opponent's attack or block it with his shield. If the attacker has to block or parry, then obviously he's in no position to make a disarming attack.

		Penalty	
Name	Keyword	Reduction	Description
Attack of Opportunity, Target Only	Attack of Opportunity	5 or 10	Suffer attack of opportunity from target, perhaps ruining maneuver
Attack of Opportunity, Total	Attack of Opportunity	10 or 15	Provoke attack of opportunity from all foes, perhaps ruining maneuver
Effects Only	Damage	5	Inflict only maneuver effects, not standard damage
Free Strike	Attack of Opportunity	10	Foe automatically hits with free strike
Full-Round Action	Action	5	Maneuver requires full-round action
Opposed Check	Defense	5	Target makes opposed attack roll, skill check, or ability check to avoid effect
Overpowering Effort	Effort	5	Lose Dex bonus to AC until next action
Overwhelming Effort	Effort	5	Fall prone after completing maneuver
Reflective Attack	Counter	5	Foe has chance to use your maneuver on you
Reflective Effects	Counter	10	You suffer maneuver's effects
Saving Throw	Defense	5	Target allowed save to avoid effects

MANEUVER DRAWBACKS

Attack of Opportunity, Total
(Attack of Opportunity)

When you attempt a maneuver with this drawback, you must completely disregard all defensive actions and throw yourself entirely into your strike. You provoke attacks of opportunity from every opponent who threatens you.

Modifier: Reduce the penalty on your attack roll by 10. You can opt to reduce your penalty by 15 if you decide that your maneuver automatically fails if any of your opponents hits you with an attack of opportunity. In this case, a successful attack of opportunity ruins your focus and causes the maneuver to fail.

Usage: This drawback makes sense for a maneuver that demands a brief moment of preparation, during which the attacker cannot defend himself. For example, an Area Attack may require the attacker to wind up, steady his feet, and unleash his attack. This relatively methodical action leaves him open to attack.

Effects Only (Damage)

An attack made using a maneuver with this drawback never deals damage. Executing the maneuver produces its full effect as normal, but you do not roll for damage.

Modifier: Reduce the penalty on your attack roll by 5.

Usage: The effect of this drawback is usually obvious from the nature of the maneuver or the attacker's intentions. A fighter might slam an orc's helm with the flat of his blade, dropping the monster's headgear over its eyes to leave it blinded but otherwise unhurt.

Free Strike (Attack of Opportunity)

When you attempt a maneuver with this drawback, you cannot attempt any sort of defensive action. Your opponent automatically hits with his melee attack and rolls damage as normal.

Modifier: Reduce the penalty on your attack roll by 10.

Usage: This drawback is best used for maneuvers that require a nearly suicidal lack of defense. A monk might leap into a dragon's mouth to wedge its fanged maw open with his staff. In this case, the monk takes damage from a bite attack while putting his staff into place.

Full-Round Action (Action)

A maneuver with this drawback requires you to gather your energy for a single powerful swing, or it otherwise requires planning and careful timing. You must use a full-round action to attempt the maneuver.

Modifier: Reduce the penalty on your attack roll by 5.

Usage: Use this drawback with maneuvers that take some time to complete or that require special preparation. For example, an archer may have to take careful aim before attempting to disarm a foe with an arrow.

Opposed Check (Defense)

You must overcome your opponent's natural talents or skills to complete a maneuver with this drawback. Make your attack as normal, with all relevant standard and maneuver penalties. If you hit, you must either win an opposed check using the key ability for the maneuver, an opposed skill check, or an opposed attack roll to inflict the maneuver's effects. You still inflict damage as normal, if applicable. On an opposed attack roll, you make an attack using the base attack bonus and modifiers that apply to the attack made as part of the maneuver, but ignoring the maneuver's base attack roll penalty. Your foe uses his best base attack bonus and all relevant modifiers.

Modifier: Reduce the penalty on your attack roll by 5.

Usage: If a maneuver can succeed only if the attacker somehow overcomes the target's abilities in addition to striking him, this drawback fits the maneuver. Trip attacks are an excellent example. The attacker may need to force his target to the ground with his raw strength.

OVERPOWERING EFFORT (EFFORT)

You must throw your full strength into your maneuver, causing you to lose your balance and end in an awkward position. You lose your Dexterity bonus to AC until your next action even if you have class abilities that normally allow you to avoid this state.

Modifier: Reduce the penalty on your attack roll by 5.

Usage: This drawback is a good fit for a maneuver that leaves the attacker in an awkward position.

OVERWHELMING EFFORT (EFFORT)

A maneuver with this drawback requires such tremendous effort that you must throw yourself into it with reckless abandon. After attempting it, you fall prone in your current space.

Modifier: Reduce the penalty on your attack roll by 5.

Usage: Use this drawback for daredevil maneuvers that require leaps or acrobatics to complete. A barbarian might leap from a balcony to crack a troll over the head with his greatclub. While the barbarian gains extra damage, he flops to the ground at the end of his leap.

REFLECTIVE ATTACK (COUNTER)

This drawback places you at a temporary disadvantage. If you fail to complete your maneuver, your target immediately can attempt to inflict the maneuver's effect on you. You may make any saving throws or opposed ability checks normally associated with the maneuver to avoid this fate. If you fail the save or check, or if the maneuver allows no save or check, your foe makes an attack against you using the maneuver. If he succeeds, you suffer the maneuver's full effect.

Modifier: Reduce the penalty on your attack roll by 5.

Usage: Some attacks require you to put yourself in a position where the defender can turn the tables on you. In slashing at an opponent's weapon to disarm him, you might tangle your weapons and lose yours instead.

REFLECTIVE EFFECTS (COUNTER)

When you attempt a maneuver with this drawback, you must suffer the effect of the maneuver, including damage, as well as your opponent. In order to inflict a penalty or condition on your opponent, this drawback requires you to inflict it upon yourself also, regardless of the maneuver's outcome.

Modifier: Reduce the penalty on your attack roll by 10.

Usage: With this drawback, a character inflicts a maneuver effect on himself at the same time he inflicts it upon his foe. A warrior might leap down from horseback to tackle a foe standing on the ground, causing both of them to become prone.

SAVING THROW (DEFENSE)

Your opponent has one final chance to resist the effect you are trying to inflict. He receives a saving throw to avoid the maneuver's effect, with the type of save depending on the maneuver's key ability.

- *Strength or Constitution:* Fortitude save.
- *Dexterity:* Reflex save.
- *Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma:* Will save.

The Difficulty Class of this save equals 10 + half your base attack bonus + your key ability modifier. On a successful save, the target takes damage from your attack as normal but avoids any of the maneuver's special, nondamaging effects. You can also choose to apply a save to only one or a few of a maneuver's effects. In this case, the penalty reduction cannot exceed the total penalty generated by the effects that the save applies to.

Modifier: Reduce the penalty on your attack roll by 5.

Usage: This drawback, along with the Opposed Check drawback, is a versatile tool in designing maneuvers. A defender may be able to avoid or shrug off many of the maneuver effects described in this chapter because of his reflexes, willpower, or stamina.

SELECTING DRAWBACKS

As a rule of thumb, you should at least consider adding an Attack of Opportunity, Target Only drawback and either a Saving Throw or Opposed Check drawback to each maneuver. Not only does this reduce the attack roll penalty to a manageable level, but in most cases these drawbacks provide a good fit for a maneuver. If, when thinking over how a maneuver works, you can't come up with any good drawbacks for it, default to the suggestions given here. That way, a maneuver has a tangible drawback that offsets its benefits and gives the target the opportunity to avoid its effects. (See also "Working With Maneuver Drawbacks" on page 21.)

COMBINING MANEUVER EFFECTS

The heart of these rules lies in the flexibility and adaptability they offer. When building a maneuver, you can link together as many maneuver effects as you want. Simply combine their effects and penalties using the following guidelines.

If more than one effect requires the same skill check, ability check, or saving throw, you suffer a −2 penalty on that check or save for each one after the first. Your opponent gains a +2 bonus per check or save he must make after the first. You resolve these multiple checks with a single die roll using the relevant modifiers. These modifiers also apply in the case of an opposed check. Remember that you gain only half the normal attack penalty reduction for using the same drawback more than once.

For example, a maneuver might be built with three effects that all require Strength checks. That's two checks after the first one, leading to a −4 penalty on your check and a +4 bonus for your opponent. You make one roll, as does your opponent, and you apply the result to all of the effects.

Use the standard rules for stacking multipliers, penalties, and bonuses. If you combine two effects that inflict a morale penalty, use the most severe penalty on your opponent.

If your maneuver requires multiple checks, your DM chooses the order in which you resolve them. Any penalties or damage you inflict take effect after you have completed the entire maneuver.

As usual, the DM is the final judge on whether effects can be combined.

Designing a Maneuver

A maneuver should never exist in a vacuum. The effects are intentionally generic to allow you to apply them in the widest range of situations possible, but any actual maneuver you design should have some link to an action that a character can take in combat. Inflicting a circumstance penalty requires doing more than simply waving your weapon at a foe, making an attack, and slapping a modifier on his actions. You, or your DM, must create a framework for a maneuver.

The rest of this section directly addresses the DM. If you're a player, keep that in mind as you read. Remember, your DM has final say in how these rules apply, how they are interpreted, and how they will be used in the campaign.

Preconstructed Maneuvers

Using maneuvers that have been built ahead of time is the best option for DMs who want to keep the game moving, who would prefer to look over a rule and okay it before adding it to the game, and in games where the DM or the players are relatively inexperienced. In this situation, you or your players come up with a set of maneuvers that anyone can attempt, and you treat them just like the special combat actions from the core rules, such as sunder, disarm, and trip.

This method is perhaps the best way to use these rules when you first add them to your game. It gives you a chance to sort through them, try a few combinations, and identify the effects you find balanced for your game and the ones you think might cause trouble.

Customized Maneuvers

This option provides greater player access to the maneuver design rules. In essence, you or your players create maneuvers designed for specific monsters or characters. A beast with a long tail could gain an area attack, while the party's cunning duelist learns a variety of defensive moves. In this case, you allow a wider range of maneuvers but restrict their availability. Allow your players to design two or three maneuvers for each of their characters. This gives them some exposure to the system, lets you see what they would like to do with it, and helps keep the game moving by granting each player's character only a few extra maneuvers rather than a huge number of them. You can also create maneuvers for your monsters and NPCs, adding another element of the unknown and unexpected to the game. Over time, you can learn the system well enough that you don't need to look up the rules for many of the effects.

When your players design their maneuvers, have them select the benefits they want to gain. Once they are done, sit down with each of them and pick out drawbacks that reduce the total penalty to at least −5. It is important to show players the sort of drawbacks their maneuvers will incur. If they consider the drawbacks too harsh, they may never use their maneuvers. On the other hand, as DM, you have final say in the drawbacks. Try to keep the players happy, but don't let them dictate your final decision. Keep in mind that the drawbacks are balanced. An end penalty of −5 is usually equivalent regardless of how you came to it. Sometimes, the drawbacks aren't applicable to certain cases. An attack of opportunity means little to a character who fights with a spiked chain and is beyond his target's reach. If a maneuver works best against a single target, pick drawbacks that work well for one opponent. If it is designed to affect multiple foes, the Attack of Opportunity, Total, drawback is an excellent choice. In this case, the drawback becomes more daunting as the maneuver becomes more useful.

Free-Form Maneuvers

Under this option, anything goes. Your players can build maneuvers on the fly to reflect the environment, tactical circumstances, and any cool actions that spring to mind based on your description of the scene. If you or the players can envision an action in your minds, you can use the maneuver effects rules to recreate it at the gaming table.

This option opens up some exciting vistas but has some disadvantages, too. First and foremost, it could slow down the game. If players have to look over a list of effects and drawbacks, juggle the benefits and penalties in their heads for a minute or two, then decide that they just want to use a normal attack anyway, the play around the table might come to a screeching halt.

The maneuver cheat sheets available as a free web enhancement from our website <www.montecook.com/BOIM> can help you flesh out maneuvers on the fly.
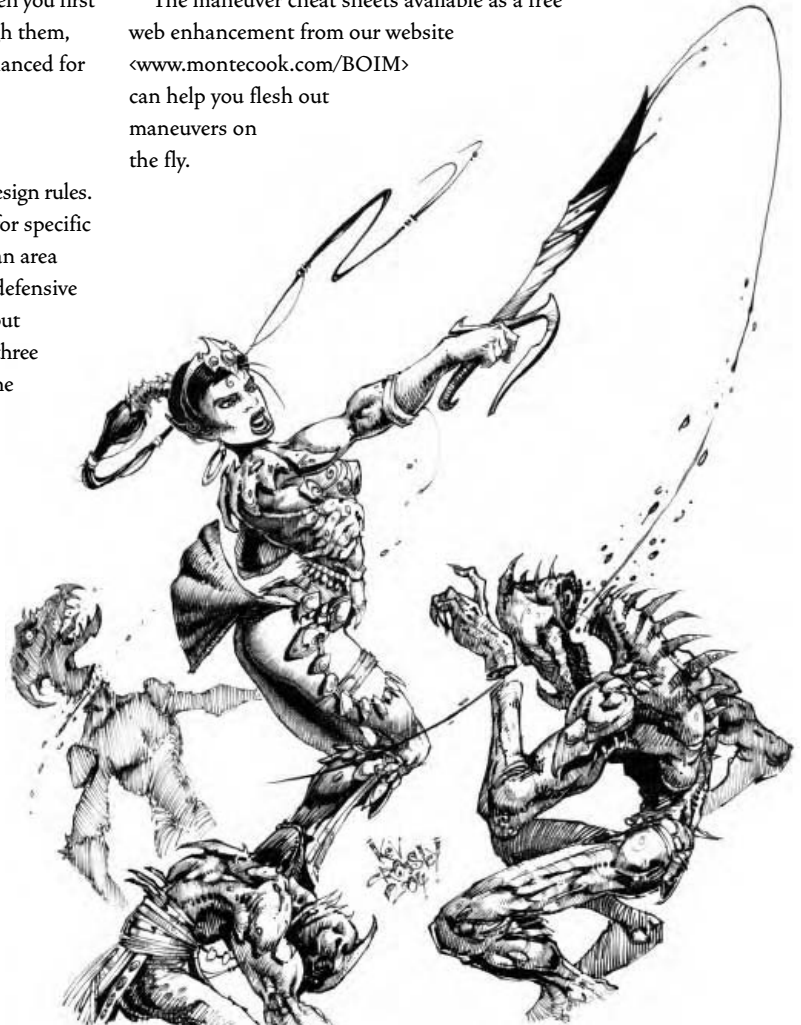
Even under this option, you as DM have the final say in choosing drawbacks. The drawbacks should have a direct effect on the game—it is all too easy for the players to choose ones that, in the current encounter or situation, have little effect. You can also limit the players to one benefit per maneuver to speed things up. That way, the players don't have to spend as much time juggling all their options. They can choose one benefit, you can select a drawback or two, and you're ready to resolve the attack.

CREATING MANEUVERS STEP BY STEP

Building a maneuver involves more than simply putting together a combination of effects and drawbacks. In many ways, it is more of an art than a craft. Creating a maneuver requires you to break down the logical outcome of an action, including its drawbacks, and then combine all of the action's components to produce an effect. However, the big list of effects and drawbacks might seem intimidating at first. This section is designed to walk you through the process and give you insight into how it can work.

Remember that bringing an arbitrary set of rules into a unified system might yield maneuvers that work differently from the ones in the core rules. As DM, you can rule that a maneuver already described in the core rules trumps one that was designed using this system. For example, you might use the core rules for a disarming attempt instead of rebuilding the maneuver from scratch if you are happy with that rule as is. Remember, just because an option is available doesn't mean you have to use it.

In the steps described below, you'll see the process for designing a maneuver that could serve as a called shot—an attack aimed at a specific portion of a foe's anatomy—to the head.

STEP 1: WHAT DOES THE MANEUVER DO?

This is the most important step in this process, and it requires a fair amount of judgment and thought. Look over all the maneuver effects presented earlier, and identify the ones that apply to the maneuver you want to design. The key to this step lies in figuring out the logical outcome of an attack. The easiest way to do this is to picture a successful maneuver in your mind. What happens to the defender?

Example: For an attack directed at a creature's head, we would expect a few effects. First, the head is a vulnerable area, so the attack should deal extra damage. Some players might see an attack to the head as an easy way to score a one-shot, decapitating kill, but such results play havoc with game balance. A bonus on damage (which might still result in a kill) is a good way to model this sort of effect. In addition, it makes sense that an attack to the head could send a target reeling; even if the attack isn't instantly fatal, it might leave the target dazed.

STEP 2: TRANSLATE ENGLISH INTO RULES

Once you have figured out the effects an attack should have, look over the list of effects and pick ones that provide the best match. In some cases, you may have to pick from several options that seem similar. For instance, Daze Attack, Stagger, and Stun all seem to have the same basic effect, but they offer several shades of the same result. A dazed target loses his actions but retains his defenses. A staggered target can attack on his next action, or he can move, but not both. A stunned target loses his actions, drops his weapon (perhaps causing him to waste an action on his next turn reclaiming it or drawing a new one), and is easier to hit. As you can see, these are perhaps subtle but nonetheless important differences.

If you want to provide special attacks for a wide variety of levels, you can create a multitude of effects that offer varying penalties. Low-level fighters might opt for a head shot that staggers a foe, while more skilled ones try to stun their foes. On the other hand, you might find it unrealistic that a warrior could so precisely select his effects. In this case, you would build and offer only one type of head shot maneuver.

Example: As I picture it, a called shot to the head relies on raw, brute force, making Strength its key ability. Since I want head shots to inflict extra damage and hinder a foe, I pick Bonus Damage (+4) and Stagger. I want a head shot to be a relatively simple tactic with a low total attack roll penalty and correspondingly diminished attacks. It's a good way for lower-level characters to attempt a lucky shot in my game. Right now, the attack roll penalty for this maneuver is −20, including a −10 penalty for the +4 damage and a −10 penalty for the stagger effect.

STEP 3: WHAT HAPPENS TO THE ATTACKER?

At this stage, you need to consider the drawbacks that an attacker might endure when performing a maneuver. Once again, picture the attack in your mind and think about the barriers that make it difficult to accomplish. Go through each effect you assigned in Step 2 and, ignoring game mechanics, think about the obstacles that could prevent success.

Example: A head shot inflicts extra damage and staggers its target. The extra damage comes from hitting a vulnerable spot, but attacking the head is never easy. Most warriors wear helms and take care to protect their faces, making the head a tough place to land a good hit. The Stagger effect, if the attack hits, depends on the quality of the hit and the target's toughness. A big, mean troll might shrug off a hit to the head, while a frail sorcerer might sustain a concussion.

STEP 4: ASSIGN DRAWBACKS

With the results of Step 3 fresh in your mind, find the best match for the drawbacks you envisioned from among those described earlier in this chapter. Perhaps the attack roll penalty associated with a maneuver already provides the effect you want. In such a case, you don't need to use any of the drawbacks. You may find that some of the drawbacks fit for purely game-mechanics reasons. A maneuver might be so powerful that it carries a tremendous penalty on the attack roll, even after reducing that penalty by means of logically applicable drawbacks. Attacks of opportunity are always a good choice for a pure mechanics-based penalty reduction, since the maneuvers built into the core rules (grapple

and trip, for instance) already make use of them. Your players probably are already accustomed to their characters being targeted by attacks of opportunity in exchange for a benefit, making it a good choice.

Example: Looking over the effects of a called shot to the head, it seems we have already compensated for the bonus damage by the attack roll penalty. After all, a creature's head is a small, well-defended target. The Saving Throw drawback is a perfect fit to account for the Stagger effect, reflecting the fact that tougher creatures can shrug off this effect. Adding a saving throw against the Stagger effect leaves the total attack roll penalty for a called shot to the head at –15. After giving it some more thought, I decide that the Full-Round Action drawback also looks like a good fit. I want this called shot to be a viable tactic at low levels. If one can undertake the maneuver only as a full-round action, it becomes a bad choice for higher-level fighters, since they lose their multiple attacks. Thus, the final attack roll penalty for this maneuver is –10.

Step 5: Finishing Up

Once you have picked out the effects, you need to combine them using the rules provided earlier in this chapter. It helps to keep a list of the different factors used to create a maneuver. That way, you can later modify it without having to start from scratch. For example, I might modify the called shot to the head as the characters grow more powerful, giving them the option to daze or stun a target, or perhaps drop the Full-Round Action drawback to allow high-level characters to make their multiple strikes. If I have everything organized with all the relevant modifiers noted, I can easily swap parts in and out to achieve a new effect.

Example: The final called shot to the head maneuver is described on page 22 ("Called Shot: Glancing Blow to Head"), along with some other sample maneuvers. Notice how the listing breaks down all the component parts. You can easily modify it, and it's simple to reference the attack's effects.

Step 6: The Art of the Maneuver

At this point, look at the finished product and decide how it fits into your game. The most important question to ask yourself is this: Does this maneuver always provide a better option than a normal attack? If the answer is yes, it's back to the drawing board. If you can't think of a good reason why the average character or monster would decide not to use a maneuver, it might be too good. Beware of maneuvers that have a total attack roll modifier of +0 and do not provoke attacks of opportunity or otherwise imperil the attacker. These are good candidates for a second visit to the drawing board.

MANEUVERS AND YOUR CAMPAIGN

The process of introducing and using maneuvers in your campaign requires forethought, planning, and careful consideration. The maneuver system introduces a tremendous level of flexibility into the campaign, but that flexibility could be prone to abuse. Many of the maneuver drawbacks inflict a penalty based on the situation in your game. The Attack of Opportunity, Total, drawback is deadly if six or seven creatures threaten a character's space. It is an easy, harmless restriction if one or even none threaten it.

This section gives additional advice on how to incorporate maneuvers into your game. If Chapter One is a new tool for your game, this section is the user's manual that explains how to make it work. Some extra advice and insight into the system can go a long way to keeping a gaming group happy. This section discusses each of the maneuver drawbacks and shows you how best to apply them.

USING MANEUVERS

The maneuver drawbacks are the most important tool you have to make this system a balanced but usable part of your game. If you ignore the drawbacks, the maneuvers you design may have such crippling attack penalties that the PCs can never succeed at them. If you apply drawbacks without thinking of the game situation, you might create maneuvers that are too easy on the characters and clearly superior to a normal attack. Picking the right drawbacks helps place a maneuver in that perfectly balanced position between

an impossible attack and a clearly broken game option.

If you want to make consistent use of maneuvers in your game but keep the action moving fast while avoiding any chance of unbalancing things, focus on maneuvers that you create ahead of time to simulate various actions. Tie these maneuvers to encounter areas or opponents and present them as added options the PCs can attempt in specific situations. In this case, you control how maneuvers affect the game while gradually introducing them to the campaign. Later, you might feel comfortable with a more open approach. You can then allow the players to describe their actions to you, then apply the maneuver effects and drawbacks that you see as appropriate. You should let the players have full access to the rules to build their maneuvers on the fly only if they can do so without bogging down the game. Some players may endlessly plot out the most advantageous maneuvers, while others might be paralyzed by all the options before them. By slowly introducing things, you give the players time to learn the rules without overwhelming them.

In any case, the final decision on maneuver drawbacks rests with you. As DM, you have the final say in what happens in your game and how things work. Even if you let the players construct maneuvers on the fly, you must retain the final decision on drawbacks. Let the player select the maneuver effects, then you pick drawbacks that reduce the total penalty to −5. The drawbacks you pick should always be based on the situation the characters face. Try to avoid making a canonical, final decision on a maneuver built on the fly. Even in the case of maneuvers that you build ahead of time and introduce to the game as new combat options, you should reserve the right to revisit them and make changes.

The important thing to remember is that any changes you make should reflect the reality of the game and everyone's level of fun. If the players like using a maneuver and it has no unbalancing effect on the game, don't simply change it to ruin their fun. Part of the excitement of roleplaying games lies in coming up with creative solutions to daunting problems. If you simply nullify the PCs' abilities, the game isn't much fun for them. Players build their characters as a means of expressing what they want to do in the game. If you simply forbid options, or change them in the middle of the game, your players might feel unhappy, angry, and betrayed. When you must make a change, sit down with your players and talk it over

with them. Communication can go a long way to soothing hurt feelings and keeping everyone involved in the campaign.

Working With Maneuver Drawbacks

Each of the maneuver drawbacks has certain strengths and weaknesses in balancing an attack. These different facets are discussed below. The key thing to remember is that, if the person using the maneuver doesn't feel its effects, it isn't an effective drawback.

Attack of Opportunity, Target Only: This choice is a reliable way to inflict a drawback in return for a better chance to hit, but it is also the easiest one to abuse. The most obvious situation is a case where a character attacks an NPC who is unarmed or carries a missile weapon. In that case, the PC doesn't have to worry about incurring the attack of opportunity. Characters who use reach weapons also can avoid this drawback. These warnings go double for attacks of opportunity that can ruin the PC's attacks if they hit.

This drawback is a good penalty to a maneuver. Aside from the situations outlined above, you should use it as a standard way to reduce a maneuver's penalty.

Attack of Opportunity, Total: The advice given above for the normal attack of opportunity applies doubly so to this choice. In addition, you should only use it in situations where the person using the maneuver is likely to face multiple opponents. An Area Attack is a great example of a natural fit for this drawback. Otherwise, this drawback is best used in specific situations to model the difficulties of a maneuver that requires on-the-fly drawbacks. It works very well in some situations, but in many others it becomes a free, low-risk method to make a maneuver easier.

Effects Only: At first glance this might seem like an excellent way to limit an attack's effects, but it is easily abused. A player character with a poor Strength or one who fights with a dagger, whip, or other light weapon may find that sacrificing a point or two of damage is a small price to pay for a maneuver. This drawback works best with maneuvers that apply to heavy weapons or that benefit from the attacker's high Strength score. Use it to build maneuvers that punish low-Strength-score characters and light weapons. Otherwise, save it for drawbacks that you build on the fly.

Free Strike: This is another drawback that can be either devastating or weak, depending on the game's circumstances. A Free Strike from a wizard is far less daunting than one from an ancient red dragon. This drawback is best used for maneuvers that prove more useful against opponents skilled in combat than against weaker or punier creatures. The general advice given above for attacks of opportunity also applies here. Since Free Strike provides a significant reduction to a maneuver's penalty, you should restrict it to situations where you select drawbacks to fit a specific situation as you or the players build a maneuver on the fly.

Full-Round Action: This drawback is easy to use. In general, it hurts high-level characters who gain multiple attacks and means little to fighters, paladins, barbarians, and rangers below 6th level and other characters below 8th. These characters have only one attack per round, making a full-round action for an attack a small sacrifice. However, in many cases these characters lack the base attack bonus-

es to reliably succeed at maneuvers. This drawback is best used with maneuvers whose success is tied to a character's total base attack bonus, whether it is used as part of an opposed check or to calculate a saving throw Difficulty Class.

Opposed Check: Generally speaking, this is a good way to balance a maneuver. There will be times when a PC simply has an overwhelming advantage in the Opposed Check. That's just part of the game. However, this drawback illustrates why the DM should choose drawbacks. It's easy for the players, especially if they create maneuvers on the fly, to match up against an opponent's worst stats. A swashbuckler could use an opposed Intelligence check against a troll, then switch to a Strength check against a puny wizard. This doesn't meant you should always call for a check based on the PC's worst attribute, but it does show why it's important for the DM to make these decisions. If a situation logically calls for an Opposed Check, let the dice fall where they may.

Overpowering Effort: This drawback is best saved for PCs who rely on speed or in situations where an opponent can take advantage of the PCs' situation. Try not to use it with maneuvers that inflict conditions that prevent the target from making a counterattack, such as blindness or stun. If the maneuver succeeds, the attacker has earned a free pass that makes this disadvantage evaporate.

Overwhelming Effort: The advice given above for Overpowering Effort applies here, too.

Reflective Attack: Like an attack of opportunity, this is a reliable, useful way to make a maneuver dangerous but easier to complete. The advice given under that drawback applies here.

Reflective Effects: Generally, this drawback is best used for situations where the players face multiple foes. Against a single enemy, one PC becoming stunned to stun the lone foe is a good trade-off. While that character is out of the fight, the rest of the party can beat up on the villain. Reserve this drawback for assigning hindrances on the fly.

Saving Throw: This is perhaps the most reliable drawback in the system. A saving throw is an excellent choice for maneuvers that you build and incorporate into your game, and it is also a good first choice for maneuvers built on the fly.

Sample Maneuvers

This final section gives you a number of sample maneuvers, for both characters and monsters, to show you how to use this system to add more variety to your game. Each maneuver description includes a summary of its various elements. Where applicable, these samples include commentary on how and why they were designed the way they were, to give you some insight into the process.

Character Maneuvers

These sample maneuvers include a number of called shots, an old standby of many game systems and gaming groups. A called shot is an attack against a specific body part or portion of a foe's anatomy. The called shot maneuvers given here show you how to transform the descriptive elements of an attack into game mechanics.

CALLED SHOT, ARM STRIKE (STRENGTH)

Effect: Inflict Penalty (−2 on attacks): −20
Drawback: Attack of Opportunity, Target Only: +5
Drawback: Saving Throw (Fortitude, DC 10 + half base attack + Strength modifier): +5
Net Effect: Total attack roll penalty: −10

You slash at an opponent's arm, tentacles, or another body part that it uses to make attacks. The pain of the injury and the damage you deal to its tendons and muscles cause a −2 penalty on all its attacks.

CALLED SHOT, GLANCING BLOW TO HEAD (STRENGTH)

Effect: Bonus Damage (+4): −10
Effect: Stagger: −10
Drawback: Saving Throw (Stagger, Fortitude, DC 10 + half base attack + Strength modifier): +5
Drawback: Full-Round Action: +5
Net Effect: Total attack roll penalty: −10

This attack is meant to model a careful, deliberate strike. The maneuver avoids provoking attacks of opportunity by waiting for the proper moment to strike (hence the full-round action), but it comes at a cost. This attack can only stagger a foe, since it lacks the wild strength of the other called shots.

CALLED SHOT, HAND (STRENGTH)

Effect: Disarming Attack: −20
Drawback: Effects Only: +5
Drawback: Saving Throw (Fortitude, DC 10 + half base attack + Strength modifier): +5
Net Effect: Total attack roll penalty: −10

You smash your foe's weapon and hand, causing stinging pain and forcing him to drop his weapon. This attack focuses on brute force to knock a weapon away. Compare it to the standard disarm attack from the core rules to see how the maneuver system can use a different path to achieve a similar end. This attack forgoes dealing normal damage to reflect the fact that it is a strike against a weapon and hand, and to keep the attack roll penalty manageable.

CALLED SHOT, LEGS (DEXTERITY)

Effect: Movement Damage: −10
Drawback: Saving Throw (Reflex, DC 10 + half base attack + Dexterity modifier): +5
Net Effect: Total attack roll penalty: −5

You slash at your opponent's legs, wings, or other body parts associated with movement, slicing tendons and muscle to slow him down. This relatively low-risk maneuver proves useful for capturing opponents or for slowing down a mighty foe who could pursue you if you attempted to flee.

CALLED SHOT, VITALS (INTELLIGENCE)

Effect: Bonus Damage (+2): −5
Effect: Stun: −30
Drawback: Attack of Opportunity, Total: +10
Drawback: Full-Round Action: +5
Drawback: Saving Throw (Stun, Will, DC 10 + half base attack + Intelligence modifier): +5
Net Effect: Total attack roll penalty: −15

You land a blow at a sensitive portion of an opponent's anatomy. This maneuver shows how Intelligence can serve as a key ability. It relies on knowing where to strike rather than striking with tremendous force. The attack of opportunity drawback is a great leveler, making this maneuver most useful in one-on-one fights where the attacker doesn't have to worry about multiple attacks of opportunity.

GLOWERING DISPLAY (CHARISMA)

Effect: Forced Movement: −10
Drawback: Full-Round Action: +5
Net Effect: Total attack roll penalty: −5

You make a show of easily knocking aside an opponent's attacks before easily breaking through his defenses. Daunted by your skill, your opponent steps away from you.

JAWBREAKER (STRENGTH)

Effect: Disable Natural Attack: −20
Drawback: Free Strike: +10
Drawback: Saving Throw (Fortitude, DC 10 + half base attack + Strength modifier): +5
Net Effect: Total attack roll penalty: −5

As a monstrous foe snaps at you with its bite attack, you slam its jaw, shattering teeth and bone.

JOINT-PIERCING STRIKE (WISDOM):

Effect: Disable Natural Attack: −20
Drawback: Attack of Opportunity, Target Only: +5
Drawback: Effects Only: +5
Drawback: Full-Round Action: +5
Net Effect: Total attack roll penalty: −5

You carefully study a creature's moves, seeking the one perfect place to strike it to ruin a joint and disable one of its natural attacks. Contrast with jawbreaker, above.

OVERPOWERING STRIKE (STRENGTH)

Effect: Bonus Damage (+10): −25
Drawback: Attack of Opportunity, Target Only: +5
Drawback: Overwhelming Effort: +5
Net Effect: Total attack roll penalty: −15

This wild shot represents a hurried strike aimed at a foe. It has little chance of hitting a competent foe, but when it strikes, it can be devastating, making it the preferred attack of the desperate, the crazed, or the lucky. Unfortunately, the attacker loses his guard (provoking the attack of opportunity), and the wild, uncontrolled swing sends him tumbling to the ground. This maneuver puts the attacker

in a bad position after his strike. Hopefully for him, it's the last attack he needs to make against this foe. Otherwise, he's in trouble.

POWER HAMMER (STRENGTH)
Effect: Knockback: −10
Effect: Knockdown: −20
Drawback: Attack of Opportunity, Target Only: +5
Drawback: Full-Round Action: +5
Drawback: Reflective Effects: +10
Net Effect: Total attack roll penalty: −10

This maneuver is useful against smaller foes that have superior combat training and are outnumbered. By throwing yourself at your opponent, you send him reeling backward and off his feet. While your leap also leaves you knocked back and prone, your allies are in a good position to step in and finish off your now very vulnerable foe.

TAUNTING DEFENSE (CHARISMA)
Effect: Inflict Penalty (−2 to attacks): −10
Drawback: Full-Round Action: +5
Net Effect: Total attack roll penalty: −5

Using your skill at arms and your natural ability to manipulate others, you deliver a series of stinging blows that enrages your opponent and makes him take wild, poorly aimed attacks.

THROW DEBRIS (DEXTERITY)
Effect: Inflict Penalty (−3 to AC): −15
Drawback: Effects Only: +5
Drawback: Full-Round Action: +5
Net Effect: Total attack roll penalty: −5

You grasp a fistful of dirt, sand, or some other debris and cast it at your opponent's face. While he coughs and wipes at his eyes, you can take advantage of the distraction.

WEAPON LOCK (STRENGTH)
Effect: Disarming Attack: −20
Drawback: Effects Only: +5
Drawback: Opposed Check (Strength): +5
Drawback: Reflective Attack: +5
Net Effect: Total attack roll penalty: −5

You lock your opponent's weapon with your own, tangling it on your pommel or blade. The two of you struggle for a moment, giving you the opportunity to tear your foe's weapon from his grasp.

CREATURE MANEUVERS
The following maneuvers illustrate how you can use these rules to spice up monsters and give them more options in a fight. Take advantage of the rules to create vivid, dangerous encounters where the PCs' enemies use their natural abilities and attacks in new, interesting ways. If you build unique maneuvers for certain foes, you can develop signature moves for them that make your villains unique and memorable.

While these maneuvers are tied specifically to dragons, you can easily adapt them to other creatures. They serve as examples of how you can sculpt maneuvers to fit a specific creature's anatomy, style, and background.

CRUSHING BITE (STRENGTH)
Effect: Ability Score Damage (Constitution): −20
Drawback: Attack of Opportunity, Target Only: +5
Drawback: Full-Round Action: +5
Drawback: Saving Throw (Fortitude, DC 10 + half base attack + Strength modifier): +5
Net Effect: Total attack roll penalty: −5

A dragon or other massive creature with a bite attack can clamp down on a smaller opponent, crushing him in its jaws and leaving him horribly injured.

This maneuver shows how drawbacks can play a much larger role than does a simple attack penalty for a maneuver. An attack that requires a full-round action limits a dragon's abilities, as it can normally use a variety of attack forms, but the benefits of inflicting Constitution damage can stop a PC dead in his tracks. A barbarian's rage drops by 1 round, and any character loses the equivalent of 1 hit point per level.

DRACONIC TAIL SWEEP (STRENGTH)
Effect: Area Attack: −5 per 5-foot square
Effect: Knockdown: −20
Drawback: Attack of Opportunity, Total: +10
Drawback: Saving Throw (Knockdown, Fortitude, DC 10 + half base attack + Strength modifier): +5
Net Effect: Total attack roll penalty: −5 to attack, −5 per target square

With a mighty sweep of its tail, a dragon can send the entire party tumbling to the ground. Dragons use this maneuver when faced with a large number of smaller, humanoid opponents.

Note that this maneuver makes use of the Attack of Opportunity, Total, drawback. A dragon is most likely to use it against multiple foes, making that drawback a good choice. Each target has the chance to strike the dragon as it completes the maneuver. A Fortitude save models a character's ability to absorb the shock of the dragon's tail. In most cases, it is simply too big for a character to duck beneath or leap over.

DRACONIC WING STRIKE (STRENGTH)
Effect: Stun:−30
Drawback: Full-Round Action: +5
Drawback: Overpowering Effect: +5
Drawback: Saving Throw (Fortitude, DC 10 + half base attack + Strength modifier): +5
Net Effect: Total attack roll penalty −15
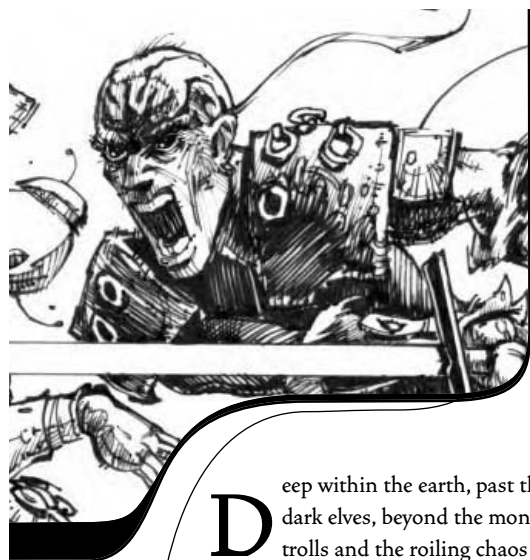
A dragon can swipe at an opponent using its wings, hammering a single foe with concussive, stunning force. The dragon rises into the air and slams its wings together on an opponent, pummeling him into submission.

The penalty to this attack, along with the save it allows, makes the wing strike ideal against spellcasters. For that reason, this maneuver avoids attacks of opportunity as a balancing mechanism. Instead, the dragon must leave itself vulnerable to other attackers.

The Ironborn

The ironborn arose in the darkest, most forbidding recesses of the world. Created by a madman who preferred the quiet, unswerving loyalty of machines to living beings, they have slowly spread to the surface. While rare, they have the potential to alter the course of history—whether for good or ill remains to be seen.

Deep within the earth, past the shadowed cities of the dark elves, beyond the monstrous caverns of the cave trolls and the roiling chaos of their mad gods, beneath the tunnels bored by the Great Earth Serpent, stands the Tower Esoteric. Suspended within a sphere of magical force that floats in a sea of lava, the Tower was once the domain of the dwarf archmage Storstrup Gerringsen. He traveled many worlds, gathering magical artifacts for his hoard and claiming whatever wealth his eternally greedy hands could grasp. In time, he came to distrust the few apprentices and friends who had gathered around him. He banished them from his domain, leaving them to face the long trek back to the surface without the protection of his magic. He forswore all contact with outside realms and, using the collected might of the relics he had gathered, he cast his tower into the heart of the world, where it still rides the fiery currents to this day.

Some say that the artifacts he claimed drove him mad, warping his view of reality. Others theorize that the magical power he gained caused him to see the world with a new clarity, and to realize that his supposed allies and friends had plotted against him to gain his wealth. For whatever reason, Storstrup went to work replacing his flesh-and-blood allies with constructs and mechanical substitutes. He crafted the first shield guardians and charged them with defending his lair against the efreet and salamanders that sometimes assailed it. Many sages accept that his theories and designs gave rise to iron golems and other constructs that are now part of established magical tradition. Yet these achievements pale next to his greatest creation, the ironborn. By fusing organic and artificial components into a single, humanoid whole, Storstrup crafted truly loyal warriors and defenders rather than mindless automatons. His new war machines, while lacking a golem's strength and raw power, were flexible, cunning, and intellectually independent.

The first ironborn was christened Firstborn. It served as Storstrup's closest companion and apprentice. Firstborn helped him design the next generation of ironborn, tactically skilled warriors who would command the shield guardians and golems arrayed to defend the Tower Esoteric against the shadowy legions that grew in Storstrup's paranoid mind. In time, Storstrup progressed deeper and deeper into dementia. The many artifacts he had gathered wore away at his psyche, taking a tremendous toll in exchange for the might they offered. With his attention distracted, Storstrup gave Firstborn limited freedom. The first of the ironborn devoured the books in its master's library and researched the processes behind its own creation.

Using the lore it uncovered, Firstborn crafted an ironborn entirely on his own. He then commanded the new construct to build another one, and so forth. Together, these first ironborn created a variety of new intellects, personalities, and forms for the next generation of warriors. Some were excellent combatants who could stand against any foe; others were cunning scouts who could spend months alone in the passages and caves near the Tower Esoteric. In time, Firstborn's progeny became able to produce ironborn capable of nearly any martial vocation that a human, elf, or dwarf could follow. Drawing on a collection of dwarven holy texts that Storstrup kept in his library, Firstborn's children forged divinely inspired ironborn who offered prayers to the gods. In battle, their healing prowess proved valuable. These clerics erected a small chapel to the dwarven gods of war. Others followed in Firstborn's footsteps and became wizards and sorcerers, tapping into their fundamentally arcane nature to wield potent spells.

In time, Storstrup passed away. Before he died, Firstborn and the most skilled divine and arcane spellcasters among the growing number of ironborn worked to restore their creator's mind. They cast many of his most baleful artifacts into the lava, destroying them and freeing Storstrup from their influence. Rational once again, Storstrup bade the ironborn leave the Tower Esoteric and seek their fortune in the world. He saw in his creations a potential for tremendous good, as they mirrored his fundamentally benevolent soul. Firstborn stayed behind to guard the remaining artifacts, along with a few of the older ironborn, but the rest made their way to surface. Some carried copies of the *Codex Ferranium*, a thick tome that told the method of their creation.

Many of the ironborn never made it to their destination. Some of those who carried the *Codex* were ambushed and slain by the dark things that lurk deep within the world—dark elves, trolls, purple worms, and other terrible creatures. The secret of manufacturing ironborn passed into the hands of dark elves, evil dwarves, and others who corrupted it to their own ends. An ironborn always reflects the ethos and morality of the one who crafted it; a few evil spellcasters took advantage of this fact to build small cadres of them, but limits on the process prevent most mortals from assembling large groups of these constructs. In the places where ironborn reached the surface, they faced ostracism and suspicion because of their unheralded arrival and strange nature. In this way, the surface-dwelling ironborn have been pushed to the edge of society, while deep within the earth a few ambitious mages slowly build small cadres of these tireless warriors. Increasing numbers of dark elf and duergar mages

Ironborn paladin

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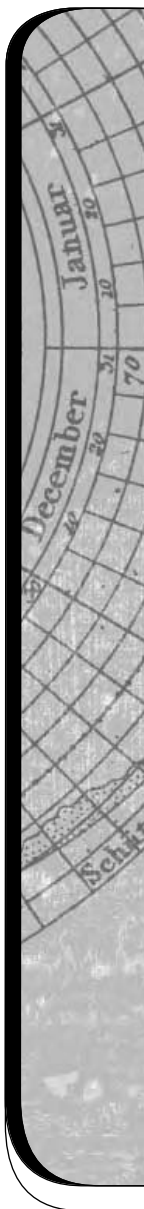
forged loyal ironborn bodyguards who would fight to the death for their creators. Nevertheless, some of these evil constructs have escaped their masters, whether by design or by accident. Now, in isolated, forgotten caverns around the world, tiny enclaves of evil, conquest-minded ironborn have begun to take root.

Ironborn Characters

Some ironborn have taken up the adventuring life. These characters have come to the surface or found solace in the subterranean fortresses of dwarves and gnomes within the past few years. Many people have never heard of these creatures, and few who know of them trust them. The ironborn are known for their dedication, stunning array of body forms, varied personalities, and intense curiosity about the world. After all, as the youngest of the intelligent races, the mundane or normal seems wondrous and fresh to them.

Personality

Ironborn are as varied in personality, aptitude, and ambition as humans. Each of them was crafted for some specific purpose, and many pursue their vocations with a focused, passionate intensity. An ironborn warrior may practice its parries and strikes for days on end, never pausing to rest or sleep. An ironborn wizard might speak under only the most important circumstances, since it is too absorbed in pondering the mysteries of arcane magic or carefully reflecting on its prepared spells. An ironborn paladin may never question the moral weight of its actions. It merely assumes that, since it is a tool of the gods, all of its decisions are guided by a higher power. The concept of moral fallibility is alien to it. These ironborn turn their intrinsic curiosity inward, using it to find the utmost limits of their potential.

Not all ironborn exhibit such a mechanical fixation on the task they were designed to perform. Some question the method of their creation. They wonder if they are truly alive, or if they have only the illusion of free will or consciousness. They delve into philosophy and seek to become part of society, and in so doing learn what it means to be alive. These ironborn try to learn from humans and other intelligent beings. They might even select a gender, take a name that fits the local culture, and wear local clothing styles in an attempt to fit in. They are the most likely of all ironborn to feel the sting of rejection if they are cast out or unwanted. These ironborn focus their curiosity on society and the interplay between living things. Some of them have spurned civilization, living as barbarians and rangers among wolves and other wild animals.

Most ironborn lie somewhere between these two extremes in personality and outlook. Each of these "moderates" has a fundamental confidence in its vocation—it simply feels right to follow the prescribed path. Other intelligent beings fascinate them. They see themselves as equal to organic beings, but in many ways wholly distinct. These ironborn are the most likely to form settlements of their own and remain forever separate from other cultures. They hold no malice toward other races but recognize that they may never enjoy full acceptance from elves, halflings, or humans. While other ironborn may seek to fit into the world or remain aloof and test the limits of their abilities, these constructs attempt to find a stable, harmonious relationship between their manufactured nature and the organic world around them.

Physical Description

While other folk fall into standard ranges of height, weight, and size, ironborn face no such restrictions. Each one was crafted to fulfill a specific purpose. Warriors might be as much as 8 feet tall, with massive barrel-shaped torsos and hulking, spiked arms. A scout or explorer might be no taller than a halfling, with nimble hands and strong legs that allow it to outrun bigger folk.

Most ironborn are crafted from iron, steel, and bronze. They have humanoid shapes and durable bodies built to withstand punishment. In all other respects, their shapes and forms are as varied as their personalities and vocations.

RELATIONS

As newcomers who have yet to earn the world's trust, ironborn have few friends and many potential enemies. They can sometimes perform evil or reckless actions out of ignorance. An ironborn warrior might save a thief from his pursuers, wrongfully assuming that one man being chased by twenty must be an innocent victim. Ironborn tend to get along well with half-orcs and half-elves, because those races also know what it feels like to be an outsider. Because of the dwarves' involvement with their creation, ironborn have a natural bond with that race. Halflings sometimes adopt ironborn into their settlements and caravans, seeing them as wayward children in need of guidance. Since these "children" can sometimes lift hundreds of pounds and take on difficult physical jobs, they are handy to have around when the big folk cause trouble.

Overall, ironborn have the easiest time fitting in with residents of borderland areas, wilderness outposts, and other places where toughness, hard work, and reliability can mean the difference between ruin and prosperity. Such folk might be slow to trust others, but they never turn away someone who proves himself a worthy friend. In more civilized areas, ironborn are likely to face suspicion and fear from those who see them as an unknown, possibly threatening presence to the established order.

ALIGNMENT

An ironborn has the same alignment as its creator. The mystic rituals and spells used to create them forge a strong bond between creator and created. The ironborn who can trace their ancestry to Storstrup and Firstborn are lawful good. As the *Codex Ferranium* has spread through the caverns below and the lands above, ironborn of all alignments have emerged.

IRONBORN LANDS

Ironborn tend to cluster in forbidding, desolate areas that other intelligent creatures find unsuitable. Since ironborn eat and drink less than other creatures, they can survive on the scant resources that rocky foothills, sandy wastelands, and other treacherous areas offer. By settling in these regions, ironborn hope to avoid contact with those who may fear or despise them.

An ironborn village or town is a mishmash of architectural styles. Many of the buildings are rudely built shelters, little more than logs or stones piled up to provide shelter from wind and rain. Those ironborn who are curious about civilization adopt the structural styles of the cities they have seen in an attempt to create "proper" cities—though they may not realize that architecture and design arise from a culture's heritage and values, rather than the other way around. Some ironborn go so far as to mimic the conventions of civilized life, building "stores" that offer rocks, driftwood, and other junk to customers who pay for their goods with pebbles or even coins they have managed to collect. At the end of the day, the ironborn return the goods they purchased and reclaim their money. The next day, they go through the elaborate pantomime once again. By imitating these aspects of civilization, the residents of isolated ironborn settlements hope to understand the societies of humans, dwarves, and elves.

In some cases, members of other races may settle among the ironborn and teach them the ways of the world. Such characters are revered as sages, even though they may not deserve the title—but at the same time, ironborn are not fools. Would-be tricksters and con men often discover that ironborn are not simple children or bumbling dupes.

RELIGION

Ironborn tend to worship the dwarven pantheon, because Storstrup's library held numerous religious texts describing the worship of those deities. When left to their own devices, ironborn sometimes seek out gods of metal, earth, and creation to find a religious doctrine that better suits their experiences. A few ironborn pursue an exhaustive study of the gods and their teachings. Driven by the belief that their creation was divinely inspired, they seek out the god that first gave Storstrup a vision of their creation. These ironborn, known as the seekers, believe that they may be the followers of a god long ago lost in the mists of history. They believe that if they can reconnect with that deity and establish a new religion, they might finally learn something of their role in the world.

A few ironborn pray to Storstrup, feeling that their creator should be treated as a god. The ironborn clerics who follow this emerging faith gain access to the domains of Fire, Magic, and Protection. They hold the heavy mace as a favored weapon. It is unclear if Storstrup has ascended into divinity or if some intermediary provides these followers with divine magic.

LANGUAGE

Ironborn speak Common and whatever language their creators use. A few of them have attempted to create a new language called Metereon, which uses Dwarven runes arranged in long columns rather than horizontal lines. The speakers and writers of this language use it to communicate messages meant only for others of their kind. It is most commonly used to leave signs and signals, such as directions to a nearby ironborn settlement or warnings about a hostile town or village.

NAMES

Ironborn tend to receive nicknames from their creators, usually ones that describe their function or unique traits. When an ironborn creates one of its own kind, the naming process either follows this approach or makes use of a name from some other race that the new ironborn likes or thinks is particularly apt. Many of them select a single descriptive word that summarizes their personality and attitude, or one that reflects on their creator.

Sample Names: Arrogance, Cloud Chaser, Deepthought, Haste, Lightbearer, Longrunner, Noble, War Bearer.

ADVENTURERS

Few ironborn enjoy a wholly simple, civilian life. All of them were designed for some duty, and though they can deny this calling for long periods of time, eventually they must give in to it. An ironborn built as a fighter could try to lead a sedentary life, spending only an hour of each day in sword practice, but that activity is not enough to slake its

Ironborn fighter

inborn desire for combat. The ironborn call this compulsion their "burden," and it drives most of them to go out adventuring. Even those who have relatively undemanding burdens are still pushed by their innate curiosity and industriousness to take their abilities to their limit.

Racial Characteristics

Unlike other player character races, ironborn are designed and built to fulfill a specific role. If you play an ironborn character, you must first determine how and why your character was built. These decisions will shape your character's racial drawbacks and benefits. In addition, you must pick your character's burden and establish some information regarding its creator. These aspects of an ironborn's past play an important role in shaping the character as a person.

Ability Score Modifiers

Ironborn display a wide range of physical and mental abilities. Some of them are built for combat, while others are designed for reconnaissance or duty as battle wizards. Thus, their ability scores tend to reflect their intended role.

When building your character, you may give a +2 racial bonus to any ability score other than Strength in return for a –2 penalty to any other score. Or, if you want a +2 bonus to Strength, you must assign –2 penalties to two other scores. You do not have to take any ability score modifiers if you do not wish to.

Size

Most ironborn are Medium, but a few are built for roles where a larger or smaller size would be advantageous. Ironborn of a size other than Medium tend to have fewer special abilities relating to their mechanical heritage.

Medium: Ironborn of this size gain no disadvantages due to size. They enjoy the full range of benefits from the ability packages described on the next page. A Medium ironborn's base land speed is 30 feet.

Small: Ironborn of this size are built as scouts or rogues. Most of them are designed to take advantage of their size to sneak past their enemies or remain hidden in battle. A Small ironborn gains all the standard benefits for this size: +4 size bonus on Hide checks, +1 size bonus on attack rolls, and a +1 size bonus to Armor Class. Its base land speed is 20 feet. A Small ironborn may opt for a –2 penalty to Strength, or it can drop its ability package's secondary feature. See the next page for more information on ability packages.

Large: Ironborn of this size are invariably built for war. They use their great bulk to wield heavy weapons and slam opponents before they can draw near. A Large ironborn gains a natural reach of 10 feet, but takes a –4 size penalty on Hide checks and a –1 size penalty on attack rolls and AC. Its base land speed is 30 feet, and its space is 10 feet rather than 5 feet for Small and Medium characters. (In terms of the v. 3.0 version of the rules, its facing remains 5 feet by 5 feet.)

A Large ironborn does not gain its ability package's secondary feature. Also, a Large ironborn takes a –2 penalty to Dexterity due to its ponderous bulk. Large ironborn are too heavy and unwieldy to move with the agility of their smaller brethren.

Ironborn Traits

All ironborn share the following traits and features:

Ironborn Subtype: Ironborn have the humanoid creature type with the ironborn subtype. This categorization indicates their partial, but not complete, artificial nature. Ironborn are, in essence, beings with the outer body of a construct but the inner workings of an organic creature.

The following traits are shared by all humanoids with the ironborn subtype: Ironborn do not need to sleep and are immune to all sleep-based spells, poisons, and other attacks. They need one-quarter of the food and water required by other creatures of their size; as a rule of thumb, multiply the days' worth of food and water that an ironborn carries by 4 to determine how long it can make its supplies last. Unless otherwise noted, ironborn do not gain any of the other standard construct traits, such as immunity to critical hits.

Immortal: As artificial creatures, ironborn suffer none of the drawbacks and gain none of the benefits of aging. They never die of natural causes, and they are immune to any attacks or effects that age a character.

Natural Armor: All ironborn have heavy, metallic bodies. They gain a +1 natural armor bonus to Armor Class.

Rust Vulnerability: An ironborn suffers damage from a rusting attack, as it disintegrates its body. Use the damage value given for the spell or effect if one is mentioned. If a damage value is not given, the ironborn makes a save using the Difficulty Class and save type

indicated for the effect, if any. If no save is allowed or if the save fails, the ironborn takes 1d6 points of damage for each of its Hit Dice, with half damage on a successful save.

Humanoid: Unless otherwise noted, an ironborn is treated as a humanoid creature. For example, it falls below 0 hit points, stabilizes, and dies using the same rules as any other creature and has no other vulnerabilities or immunities based on its type and subtype.

Skills: Ironborn are ignorant of the ways of society and other creatures. They are born as adults and have few of the social skills that other intelligent beings take for granted. They take a −2 racial penalty on all Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, and Sense Motive checks.

Favored Class: An ironborn's favored class fits whatever role it was built to fulfill. You may choose any class as an ironborn's favored class, and once you make this choice you cannot change it.

Ability Packages

In addition to the traits described above, ironborn have other abilities based on their purpose. An ironborn crafted to serve as a cleric might be covered in holy runes, while one built as a warrior could have a thick, heavy layer of armor. These specialized abilities are organized into a series of packages. You may choose one ability package for a Medium ironborn character. Each package comes with a primary ability and a secondary ability. Once you have chosen a package, you cannot switch to a new one.

Acrobat: With its slender, long limbs, sleek chassis, and elegant design, an ironborn with this ability package can move with a speed and agility that belie the image of constructs as shambling, creaky machines. This set of features is most common in ironborn designed as monks, scouts, and other warriors who rely on mobility rather than heavy armor and brute strength.

Enhanced Agility (Primary Ability): Your slender but strong limbs and intricately designed joints allow you to perform difficult feats of agility and acrobatics with ease. You gain a +2 racial bonus on all Escape Artist, Jump, and Tumble checks.

Enhanced Mobility (Secondary Ability): With your long, powerful legs and efficiently designed frame, you move faster than normal. You gain a +5 foot increase to base land speed.

Centurion: This package is normally used for warriors and other ironborn meant to take a direct hand in fighting. It is easily the most common package, reflecting the fact that most ironborn are crafted for use in war.

Armored Body (Primary Ability): The centurion's body includes a number of heavy plates, reinforced joints, and additional shielding. This protection provides a +8 armor bonus to Armor Class, a +1 maximum Dexterity bonus to Armor Class, a −6 armor check penalty, and a 35 percent arcane spell failure chance, and you reduce your speed as normal for wearing heavy armor. You gain these attributes in addition to the +1 natural armor bonus to Armor Class that all ironborn enjoy. Note that if you lack proficiency with heavy armor, you apply your armor check penalty to attack rolls and all skill checks involving movement. You can add magical abilities and enhancement bonuses to this armor as if it were any other suit of armor. You cannot remove this armor, nor can you wear armor over it.

Ironborn monk

Tough as Iron (Secondary Ability): The thick armor plating that covers a centurion helps shield it from critical hits. There is a 25 percent chance that any critical hit against a centurion deals only normal damage.

Divine Mark: Your body is covered in religious icons and holy symbols. You have been blessed by your creator, soaked in holy or unholy water, and consecrated within your faith's sacred chapels. You are a living divine artifact. When you select this package, pick an alignment opposed to your own. Your abilities help you defeat followers of that ethos.

Divine Vengeance (Primary Ability): You can channel your divine energy in several different ways. If you have the ability to turn or rebuke undead, you can augment your ability with your body's divine energy. You gain a +2 bonus on all turning or rebuking checks. You can create a surge of divine power to harm your enemies, sheathing your weapon or fist in a nimbus of energy that grants you a +2 bonus on damage rolls against enemies that have your chosen opposing alignment as a subtype. Choose a single alignment subtype, such as chaotic, evil, or good. Against opponents that have that subtype, you gain a +2 bonus on damage rolls. For example, if you chose evil, you would gain this bonus against a vrock because its subtype is evil.

Blessings of the Divine (Secondary Ability): You gain a +1 bonus on all saving throws against spells cast by someone of your chosen

opposing alignment. Your patron god's protective energy wards danger away from you.

Iron Heart: Unlike other ironborn, you have only the slightest shred of an organic component. You were built to serve as an obedient warrior or soldier. Your intellectual abilities were given only passing attention, but the magical processes that power you are too strong to keep your personality and mind dormant. You have phenomenal toughness and durability thanks to your manufactured nature.

Machine Body (Primary Ability): You are immune to poison and do not need air to breathe, allowing you to survive indefinitely underwater. Your natural armor bonus increases to +2.

Machine Mind (Secondary Ability): You are immune to all mind-affecting effects, since your mechanical mind is simply too alien for such spells and magical attacks to affect it.

Shadow Friend: Your mechanical form was crafted from the solid stuff of shadow contained within a metallic shell. You can command the shadow to seep from your body and cover an area, allowing you to conceal your approach or escape under cover of darkness.

Shadow Master (Primary Ability): You can bind and fold a thick veil of shadowy darkness that cloaks your presence and confuses your enemies. You gain a +2 bonus on all Hide checks. In addition, you gain a +4 bonus on Bluff checks made to create a diversion that allows you to hide. You create a sudden surge of shadows that allows you to divert your opponent's attention while you slip into the darkness.

Darkvision (Secondary Ability): Your close attunement to shadow allows you to see through even the deepest darkness. You gain darkvision with a range of 60 feet.

Slayer: You were designed to use stealth and cunning to defeat your enemies. Many of the evil folk who have learned the secret of the ironborn prefer this set of abilities, because it produces an efficient, loyal assassin.

Blood Seeker (Primary Ability): You can see and smell the blood that flows through your enemies, allowing you to make a deadly strike when their guard is relaxed. You gain a +2 bonus on melee attack rolls against opponents that you flank or that have lost their Dexterity bonus to Armor Class. You do not gain this bonus against foes that are immune to sneak attacks.

Weapon Spike (Secondary Ability): You have a short blade that can retract into your hand, leaving you armed and ready for combat at all times. This weapon is a dagger of the appropriate size. It cannot be disarmed, and a Search check (DC 25) is required to notice it if you leave it sheathed. You ready it like any other weapon. This blade can receive magical abilities just like a normal dagger and be upgraded to masterwork status. If it is sundered, use the standard price for a dagger of its size and features to determine the repair time and cost.

Spellmaster: Your outer shell is augmented with a lattice of carefully worked metals enchanted with arcane energy. Lead, copper, silver, and other metals treated by an alchemical process turn your body into a magnet for magic. This lattice makes it easier for you to use and focus magic, allowing you to handle spells with greater precision. Ironborn created to serve as wizards and sorcerers commonly have this set of features, though many clerics built for combat also feature it.

Spell Precision (Primary Ability): When drawing magical energy and shaping it into a spell, you can direct it with greater precision than normal. You gain a +1 competence bonus on attack rolls with spells that require attack rolls of any kind, such as touch spells.

Spell Durability (Secondary Ability): The arcane lattice in your body absorbs and holds magical energy even when you are on the verge of losing it. Once per day, if you fail a Concentration check when attempting to cast a spell, you can opt to reabsorb the spell's energy into your body before you lose control of it. You do not lose the spell's slot and can attempt to cast it again later.

Trailblazer: Your chassis was designed to withstand the elements, allowing you to endure extreme temperature, heavy rains, and other hazards of the natural world. You survive on the water and nutrients available in the environment around you, allowing you to spend months in the wilds without supplies. Ironborn created to serve as druids and rangers are usually built with this ability package, as are scouts who spend months seeking out enemy units and pathways through difficult terrain.

Survivor (Primary Ability): You gain resistance to cold 2 and fire 2. In addition, you no longer need to eat or drink.

Scion of Nature (Secondary Ability): Your mechanical body is laced with tiny plants and soil and rock blessed by a druid. These modifications grant you an innate affinity for the natural world. You gain a +2 bonus on all Handle Animal and Survival checks. You can feel the ebb and flow of natural energies, granting you an almost intuitive sense of nature.

Ironborn wizard

ORIGIN AND CREATOR

All ironborn were built for a purpose and designed by another person, be it a wizard interested in copying Storstrup's work or an ironborn interested in spawning another member of its race.

All ironborn have an innate connection to their creators. They share their builder's alignment as a consequence of the magical rituals required to give them life. An ironborn must make a Will save (DC 10) to disobey any direct order it receives from its creator. The ironborn automatically succeeds at this save if the order would destroy it or is suicidal in nature. Otherwise, anything goes. An ironborn's creator can choose to forgo this control at any time, and once he does so, his hold over his creation is forever broken. Many ironborn who build descendants use their power over their children to help them learn of the world and adapt to it. At the coming-of-age ceremony, usually held two or three years after an ironborn's creation, its creator relinquishes this hold.

These stipulations serve to add some color and weight to an ironborn's background. The save Difficulty Class is low enough that high-level characters can ignore potentially harmful instructions

Ironborn cleric

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most of the time. Since an ironborn shares its maker's alignment, it usually obeys reasonable orders without question.

For DMs, using this feature requires some care. It is all too easy to have an ironborn's creator show up and force it into undertaking an adventure or performing tasks like a pet or slave. This weakness should be used rarely—perhaps only once in an entire campaign, if at all. The player should decide if her PC's creator would abuse this power, since this feature serves as a roleplaying and plot device, not a mechanical balance to the ironborn's racial abilities.

AN IRONBORN'S BURDEN

All ironborn have what they call a burden, which is the role or position they were created to fulfill. The magical process used to create them uses this overriding purpose to help give an ironborn's nascent personality the force and will it needs to achieve true life.

An ironborn must engage in activities relating to its class each day, whether it simply practices its skills or uses them to accomplish a task. For example, an ironborn fighter might have to engage in combat, whether a mock fight or a real one, each day. For each day an ironborn fails to exercise its abilities, it slowly becomes more irritable, angry, and prone to lashing out with its talents in order to use them. At the start of each new day, an ironborn must make a Will save with a DC equal to 10 + the number of consecutive days it has been unable to use its abilities. If it fails this save, at some point during the day the ironborn loses control and makes use of its abilities regardless of the situation. If it cannot do so for any reason, such as if the proper materials are not available or it is physically restrained from exercising its abilities, it lashes out at the nearest living creature, attacking by any means available for 2d6 rounds. At the end of this time, it returns to normal. If no foes are present, it vents its rage against inanimate objects. An ironborn that lashes out in this manner must still make another save the next day, since it has not yet fulfilled its burden.

This drawback is intended as a piece of background color to illustrate an ironborn's mechanical nature. All of these creatures were built for a purpose, and they pursue it with a focus that is at times maniacal. Most PC ironborn can easily get around this drawback, and it does not serve as a balance against the benefits of the ironborn's abilities. Instead, DMs can use it as a part of an adventure or as part of a story in the game. For example, an ironborn paladin might be thrown in jail by suspicious townsfolk. When the jailers stop him from praying each day, he may go berserk and make it that much harder for the other PCs to convince the mayor to release their friend.

IRONBORN IN THE CAMPAIGN

Compared to the other races available in the game, ironborn offer flexibility and options that make them suited to almost any class. Dwarves might make poor sorcerers, and halflings are typically poor fighters, but an ironborn can be altered to excel in almost any area. While this overall versatility reflects their manufactured nature—after all, someone had to build and design them for a specific purpose—the campaign might feature an entire party of ironborn

Ironborn barbarian

if the players like the concept. Regardless of their expertise, ironborn are poorly suited for the bard, paladin, and sorcerer classes. Their abilities also make them inferior to other races when it comes to the ranger and druid classes. Not all of the ability packages are equally useful. This was an intentional design decision; ironborn can perform almost any function, but they are better at some than others.

When the DM introduces ironborn into the campaign, he must consider the role and frequency of such creatures in the setting, particularly with respect to the local area where the PCs' adventures take place. If ironborn are rare, a single member of this race traveling with elves, humans, or gnomes might not draw much attention aside from curiosity. The townsfolk may assume that the ironborn is a servant or comrade of the party and react appropriately.

Trouble may arise when ironborn appear in greater numbers. Where a single construct is a curiosity, a few dozen might seen as a threat. An ironborn PC might not be allowed inside a settlement, or it could be required to give up its weapons. The local governments are likely to see ironborn in a light similar to any other race from the underground realms—they are enemies until they conclusively prove themselves otherwise. In a campaign where dark elves, duergar, and other races produce ironborn servitors, a single incursion from beneath the earth could forever ruin the reputation of all ironborn.

Always remember that roleplaying restrictions should never serve to balance out mechanical benefits. The benefits of being an iron-

born are balanced against the benefits afforded to other races in the core rules. The unique background and uncertain status of ironborn is meant to give the DM fodder for adventures, roleplaying, and a context to fit them into the campaign. Ironborn are not meant to be used as an excuse to make life difficult for the players.

Ironborn Details

The following information allows a player to fill out the final details of an ironborn character. It provides a range of heights, weights, and ages that can be used as examples or as a method to randomly generate such values. Note that ironborn tend to be only a few years old when they start their adventuring careers. Their masters build them, train them for a few months, and then either set them to their tasks or allow them to wander the land. Since ironborn are built rather than born, they are created with many of the basic skills and abilities that organic creatures need years to master.

Ironborn Age

Ironborn do not age physically, but as a naïve, young race they tend to look up to the elders among them with tremendous respect and admiration. The table below is meant to give you a sense of how ironborn view others of their kind in terms of age. As the campaign progresses, these values might change as the eldest ironborn survive through the years. As you can see, ironborn have existed for a time period shorter than the life span of an elf or dwarf.

Ironborn Age	Value
Starting Age	1d4+1
Middle Age	15
Old	30
Venerable	60
Maximum Age	—

Height and Weight

An ironborn's height and weight are determined by its size. Since these creatures can be built Small, Medium, or Large creatures, there is tremendous overall variation in their height and girth.

Size	Height	Weight
Small	3 feet + 2d6 inches	40 + 2d20 lbs.
Medium	6 feet + 2d10 inches	200 + 5d20 lbs.
Large	8 feet + 2d10 inches	400 + 4d100 lbs.

Creating Ironborn

Crafting an ironborn is a short and simple process. As part of the process, the creator must donate a small shard of his or her life force and personality to give the ironborn vitality. Because this investment of energy is taxing to the creator's psyche, a single individual can never create more than one ironborn. While ironborn can produce others of their kind, they too must obey this stricture. Even if an ironborn dies, its creator cannot build another one to take its place. This deep connection between creator and created explains why an ironborn shares its creator's alignment.

Many spellcasters and warlords who wish to amass small groups of ironborn order their created minions to produce more of their kind. The expertise needed to make more ironborn takes time to develop, making this an inefficient way to build up an army. Ironborn may exist in small, elite units, but beyond that, the process is simply too slow to enable the building of entire legions.

From a game design perspective, creating an ironborn is similar to gaining the service of a cohort through the Leadership feat. A loyal ironborn, with its close ties to its creator's ethos, fills almost the same role as a trusted follower. In order to produce an ironborn, you must take the Craft Ironborn feat, which draws on many of the rules that cover the use of the Leadership feat.

CRAFT IRONBORN (ITEM CREATION)

You have learned the mystic secrets of creating an ironborn. When you have gathered the proper raw materials, you can craft a mechanical being that will serve you as a friend, comrade, and trusted ally.

Prerequisites: Craft (metalworking, blacksmithing, or similar skill) 10 ranks, caster level 1st or ironborn race. You must also have iron, powdered gems, and other raw materials totaling 1,000 gp in value along with a copy of the *Codex Ferranium*. It takes one week of work to produce an ironborn.

Benefit: You create an ironborn that has a character level as determined by the table below. Your construct score equals your character level + your Intelligence modifier. As you can see, this produces an ironborn of the same level as a cohort you would gain with the Leadership feat.

Your ironborn minion gains experience for participating in adventures as normal and gains levels at the standard rate. You create every aspect of the ironborn, from its ability scores and name to its personality and appearance. The ironborn you create never abandons you or betrays your trust, and it serves you to the best of its abilities. An ironborn can create an additional follower for itself, which you can command by proxy. Keep in mind that even ironborn need the minimum ranks in an appropriate Craft skill in order to create another of their kind, perhaps requiring an ironborn to gain several levels before it can create a new follower.

Construct Score	Ironborn Level	Construct Score	Ironborn Level
1	—	13	9th
2	1st	14	10th
3	2nd	15	10th
4	3rd	16	11th
5	3rd	17	12th
6	4th	18	12th
7	5th	19	13th
8	5th	20	14th
9	6th	21	15th
10	7th	22	15th
11	7th	23	16th
12	8th	24+	17th

Ironborn rogue

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IRONBORN FEATS

The following feats are designed specifically for ironborn. They draw on these characters' unique origins and artificial nature to grant them expanded abilities.

All of these feats are marked with the ironborn feat type, which indicates that only members of that race are eligible to select them. An ironborn can take one of these feats as a bonus feat gained from a class feature, such as from the fighter or wizard class. The class feature that grants the extra feat must be referred to as a "bonus feat" in the class' level progression table. Otherwise, you cannot use this opportunity to select an ironborn feat. For example, the ranger gains combat styles that provide the equivalent of a feat, but that class feature is not specifically called a bonus feat.

HOLY ICON (IRONBORN)

You have a specially wrought holy symbol mounted on your chest, forehead, or some other part of your body. This icon allows you to channel divine energy with increased focus and power.

Prerequisite: Divine caster level 1st. (You must purchase a masterwork holy symbol if you take this feat after 1st level.)

Benefit: You may use your divine spells to augment your turning attempts. By spending a spell slot, you gain a bonus on your turning check equal to the level of the spell slot. This bonus does not allow you to turn undead that have more Hit Dice than you can normally affect, usually your effective cleric level + 4.

Improved Natural Armor (Ironborn)

Your metal skin is thick and durable, allowing you to shrug off hits that otherwise would injure you.

Prerequisite: You must spend 100 gp on raw materials, including iron, bronze, and similar metals, to reinforce your chassis if you take this feat after 1st level.

Benefit: You increase your natural bonus to Armor Class by 1. You may take this feat only once.

Intricate Joints (Ironborn)

You can turn and rotate your torso and arms along several joint lines not normally found in humanoid creatures. This ability allows you to face attacks that come from several directions, making it impossible to flank you.

Prerequisites: Dexterity 15, Spring-Loaded Reflexes. (You must spend 400 gp on raw materials, including iron, bronze, and similar metals, to improve your chassis if you take this feat after 1st level.)

Benefit: You can no longer be flanked. This benefit denies a rogue the ability to sneak attack you by flanking, unless the attacker has at least four more rogue levels than you have character levels.

Memory Bank (Ironborn)

Your mind can alter and shift its contents to suit your needs, drawing on the artificial nature of your consciousness to shape and mold it. In essence, you can hold more memories than a living mind can normally process. By shifting and changing your mental focus, you can gain and lose access to portions of the abilities you have learned.

Prerequisite: Intelligence 13.

Benefit: When you take this feat, you gain a +2 competence bonus on checks involving a single class skill of your choice. Once per day you can select a different skill to gain this feat's benefit.

Spell Runes (Ironborn)

You scribe the text of several spells onto your body, allowing you to study them without the use of a spellbook. In addition, you modify your body to better collect and focus the energies required for those spells.

Prerequisites: Arcane caster level 1st, ability to prepare spells. (You must spend 800 gp on raw materials, including iron, bronze, and similar metals, to alter your chassis if you take this feat after 1st level.)

Benefit: Select any three spells you can prepare and cast. Those spells are scribed on your body. You can prepare them even if you lose access to your spellbook. When you cast one of these spells, you gain either a +1 bonus to its save DC or a bonus on the spell's damage equal to your Intelligence modifier. You make this choice at the time of casting, and you can change the benefit from one casting to the next.

Spring-Loaded Reflexes (Ironborn)

Your joints have a set of heavy springs and flexible, high-tension connections and lines. You react quickly to danger, allowing you to defend yourself even when an opponent has the drop on you.

Prerequisites: Dexterity 13, Dodge, Improved Initiative. (You must spend 100 gp on raw materials, including iron, bronze, and similar metals, to improve your chassis if you take this feat after 1st level.)

Benefit: You gain the uncanny dodge ability. You retain your Dexterity bonus to Armor Class even if you are caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. However, you still lose your Dexterity bonus to Armor Class if you are immobilized.

Weaponized Limb (Ironborn)

One of your arms has been replaced with a sword blade, axe, mace, or similar weapon. As an extension of your body, it is easier to wield than a standard weapon.

Prerequisite: You must purchase a masterwork weapon of the appropriate type for your arm if you take this feat after 1st level.

Benefit: Select a melee weapon that you can wield one-handed. This is the weapon installed on your arm. This masterwork weapon cannot be disarmed. Like any other masterwork weapon, you can enhance it with magical properties as normal.

When using this weapon, you gain a bonus on damage rolls equal to 1.5 times your Strength bonus, the same as if you wielded the weapon with two hands. Since the weapon is part of your body, you can put more weight behind it than normal, and you have superior leverage with it.

Special: You can take this feat only once. When you do so, you lose the ability to use the hand on your weaponized arm as a hand (see below). You cannot use a double weapon with this feat. You otherwise gain the benefits of all feats and abilities relating to this weapon as normal.

Since you have only one hand after you take this feat, you suffer penalties in some situations. You take a −2 penalty on all grapple checks unless your weaponized arm has a light weapon. You take a −2 competence penalty on all Climb, Craft, Disable Device, and Open Lock checks. In addition, the DM can assess a −2 competence penalty in any situation when your lack of a hand is a drawback. Your remaining hand is considered your off hand, and you may suffer any relevant penalties for using it as normal.

IRONBORN FEATS		
Name	Prerequisites	Benefit
Holy Icon	Divine caster level 1st	Spend spell slot to improve turning
Improved Natural Armor	100 gp	Increase natural AC by +1
Intricate Joints	Dex 15, Spring-Loaded Reflexes, 400 gp	You can no longer be flanked
Memory Bank	Int 13	Can swap +3 bonus among skills
Spell Runes	Arcane caster level 1st, ability to prepare spells, 800 gp	You gain +1 DC to three spells
Spring-Loaded Reflexes	Dex 13, Dodge, Improved Initiative, 100 gp	You gain uncanny dodge
Weaponized Limb	Masterwork weapon	Deal 1.5 times damage bonus with weapon

Feats of Iron Might

Feats are the backbone of any fighter character. Members of that class excel in battle because of their variety of combat-related abilities, from Combat Expertise to Power Attack.

This chapter introduces several new feat types to expand the talents available to any fighter. These new feats are meant to push the boundaries of what a feat can be. A discussion of each of the new types includes commentary on how the feats work and what you can do to add them to your game. The new types are as follows.

Arcane Battle Feats: These feats allow you to create combatants (particularly fighters) who use arcane magic to improve their abilities.

Battlemind Feats: Requiring a level of dedication and study far beyond the norm, battlemind feats are advanced combat abilities available only to characters who engage in the most rigorous training.

Fighting Style Feats: Available only at 1st level, these feats define a character's preferred method of fighting and grow with her as she progresses in level.

Arcane Battle Feats

The spellcasting warrior is a common motif in fantasy, yet without a prestige class it is difficult to model this character type using the core rules. Arcane spells are difficult to cast in armor, and most of them replace rather than augment a warrior's efforts. In essence, you lose a lot more than you gain from mixing a fighting class with a spellcasting one. Your spells don't necessarily do much to improve your combat ability, while many of the key advantages offered by a combat-skilled class run directly into an arcane caster's weaknesses.

Arcane battle feats seek to bridge the gap between warrior and spellcasters. They provide supernatural abilities to combatants that allow them to use magical power to augment their fighting talents. Rather than work within the bounds of the class, spell level, and spell slot system, it uses a series of feats that each present a discrete magical ability. As a consequence, these talents are best suited to fighters, which makes sense considering that fighters are supposed to be the most combat-focused class in the game.

An elf fighter might use Combat Expertise and Weapon Finesse to become a daring swashbuckler. A burly half-orc could use Power Attack and Cleave to turn his greataxe into a devastating weapon. By the same token, a dwarf might tap into the power of magic to turn his flail into a deadly weapon. The fighter class encompasses a broad variety of characters. The arcane battle feats simply make another fighter archetype, the warrior-mage, possible under the core rules.

General Rules

The arcane battle feats are supernatural abilities. They function the same as other supernatural abilities with a few exceptions noted below and, in some cases, in the individual feat descriptions. Unless otherwise noted, an arcane battle feat may be activated as a move action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. Count a character's base attack bonus as his caster level for purposes of spell resistance, *dispel magic*, and any other effects that require that value.

A fighter or wizard can select any arcane battle feat with the bonus feats his class offers.

When you use an arcane battle feat, it ends with your current action unless otherwise noted with a duration expressed in rounds, minutes, or some other time unit. You cannot activate one of these feats at the end of your current action and then gain its benefits on your next action.

You may only activate one arcane battle feat on your action.

The saving throw for most effects produced by an arcane battle feat equals 10 + half your base attack bonus + your Intelligence modifier. This reflects that your skill with this ability is closely tied to your martial prowess. Just as an archer learns to fire with greater accuracy, an arcane fighter learns to focus his magical talent as he improves his skills with swords, axes, crossbows, and other weapons.

Most arcane battle feats can be used only a limited number of times per day, based on your base attack bonus. A separate entry under such feats shows you how to determine how many times you can invoke your feat's magical powers each day. Usually, you divide your base attack bonus by another number to arrive at this value.

Magic Items and Arcane Battle Feats

You can create magic items that grant these feats to their user if you possess the appropriate feat and Craft Magic Arms and Armor. A weapon or suit of armor with one of these feats grants its user the appropriate feat even if he lacks the prerequisites.

The cost to add an arcane battle feat to a weapon or suit of armor is equal to the base attack bonus required to gain the feat multiplied by 2,000 gp. Any save Difficulty Classes use the minimum Intelligence score required to gain the feat. You can increase the base attack bonus used to determine this cost. If you do so, the feat operates at that improved bonus.

You can place multiple arcane battle feats in a weapon or suit of armor. Determine the full cost of each as described above.
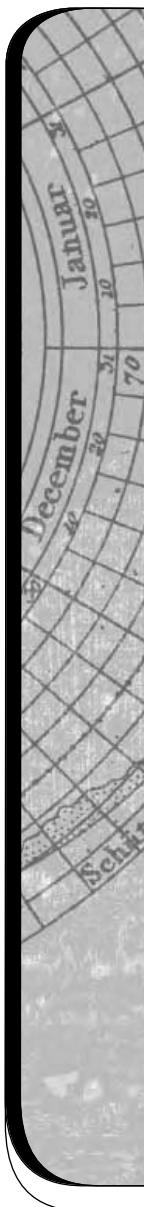
ARCANE BATTLE FEATS		
Name	Prerequisites	Benefit
Arcane Battle Mastery	Int 13, base attack bonus +1	Gain Concentration, Knowledge (arcana), and Spellcraft as class skills
Animate Weapon	Arcane Battle Mastery, Summon Spectral Squire, base attack bonus +12	You animate a weapon to fight for you
Arcane Weapon	Arcane Battle Mastery, base attack bonus +1	Grant a weapon an enhancement bonus
Aspect of Battle	Arcane Battle Mastery, Mind Strike, Serpent-Eyed Strike, Cha 13, base attack bonus +12	Grant your enemies a penalty to attacks
Augment Physical Prowess	Arcane Battle Mastery, base attack bonus +3	Gain +2 bonus to either Str, Dex, or Con for a short time
Bounding Step	Arcane Battle Mastery, Fleet-Footed Charge, Vertical Step, base attack bonus +8	Soar through the air with long, easy leaps
Dance of a Feather's Step	Arcane Battle Mastery, Bounding Step, Fleet-Footed Charge, Vertical Step, base attack bonus +16	Stand on thin air
Death Strike	Arcane Battle Mastery, Arcane Weapon, base attack bonus +16	Gain extra damage, cause Str and Con damage with necromantic energy
Energy Burst	Arcane Battle Mastery, Arcane Weapon, Energy Sheath, Energy Shield, base attack bonus +12	Create burst of energy that fills the area around you
Energy Sheath	Arcane Battle Mastery, Arcane Weapon, base attack bonus +4	Inflict extra energy damage with a weapon
Energy Shield	Arcane Battle Mastery, Arcane Weapon, Energy Sheath, base attack bonus +8	Gain resistance to an energy type
Energy Web	Arcane Battle Mastery, Arcane Weapon, Energy Burst, Energy Sheath, Energy Shield, base attack bonus +16	Surround your weapon in a net of energy that can grasp and burn an opponent you strike
Flattening Strike	Arcane Battle Mastery, Arcane Weapon, Knockback Strike, Power Attack, base attack bonus +8	Knock an opponent prone with a magically enhanced attack
Fleet-Footed Charge	Arcane Battle Mastery, base attack bonus +1	+10 feet bonus to speed
Force Armor	Arcane Battle Mastery, base attack bonus +1	Gain a deflection bonus to AC
Hellfire Charge	Arcane Battle Mastery, Fleet-Footed Charge, Rhino's Charge, base attack bonus +10	You become a blazing, living projectile
Knockback Strike	Arcane Battle Mastery, Arcane Weapon, Power Attack, base attack bonus +3	Your powerful blow sends your foe stumbling backward
Launching Strike	Arcane Battle Mastery, Arcane Weapon, Flattening Strike, Knockback Strike, Power Attack, base attack bonus +16	You use your magic to knock an opponent high into the air
Mind Strike	Arcane Battle Mastery, Serpent-Eyed Strike, Cha 13, base attack bonus +8	Your attacks slice into your opponent's psyche
Rhino's Charge	Arcane Battle Mastery, Fleet-Footed Charge, base attack bonus +5	You deal extra damage, knock your foe prone with a charge
Serpent-Eyed Strike	Arcane Battle Mastery, Cha 13, base attack bonus +1	You weave a mystic pattern with your weapons that leaves a foe flat-footed
Storm of Arrows	Arcane Battle Mastery, Point Blank Shot, base attack bonus +8	You make an area attack with a single arrow
Summon Spectral Shield Bearer	Arcane Battle Mastery, base attack bonus +5	You call a magical being to defend you
Summon Spectral Squire	Arcane Battle Mastery, Quick Draw, base attack bonus +1	You call a mystic helper who carries your weapons and keeps them ready
Thousand Blade Strike	Arcane Battle Mastery, base attack bonus +4	You cause one foe to become flanked
Vertical Step	Arcane Battle Mastery, Fleet-Footed Charge, base attack bonus +4	You can walk up walls
Wave of Mutilation	Arcane Battle Mastery, Power Attack, base attack bonus +8	You turn a single melee strike into a cone-shaped area attack
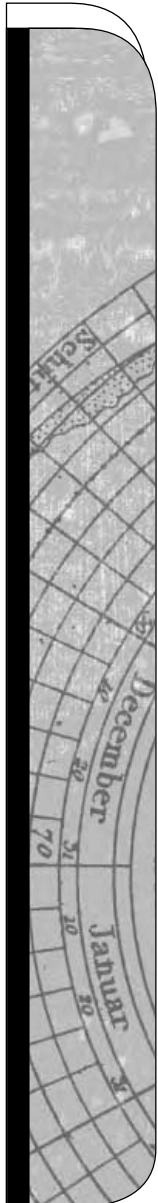
ARCANE BATTLE FEATS IN THE CAMPAIGN

Your DM may require you to undergo special training or seek out an NPC master to teach you the basics of the arcane battle feats before you can select one. After all, they represent a rather specialized form of fighting. Unlike other feats, they cover a body of talents and knowledge that not just anyone can acquire. In game mechanics terms, they lack the clear grouping and sense of identity that a prestige class confers, but they are too varied and flexible to easily fit into such a rules construct.

From a design standpoint, these feats are built to cover a broad array of fighting styles that could be augmented with magical abilities. They don't present a single, clear path. Instead, they show how an arcane martial tradition could arise in a world where swordplay, archery, and magecraft blend together. The more advanced arcane battle feats, the ones that produce flashy or powerful effects, require several other feats in this category as prerequisites. Thus, only fighters who dedicate themselves to this path can achieve its upper ranks. Other characters might dabble in it, but none can achieve the same level of expertise as a fighter who focuses on arcane combat styles. Thus, you don't have to worry about any balance issues with characters who take one or two of these feats to gain magical powers. The arcane battle feats are scaled and balanced with the other options out there. They simply use a different explanation to frame their capabilities. They tend to produce more spectacular, showy effects, restricted by the number of times per day you can use them.

ARCANE BATTLE FEAT DESCRIPTIONS

There are two ways you can gain arcane battle feats. Fighters and members of other classes that have no access to arcane spells must choose the Arcane Battle Mastery feat in order to start selecting them. That feat gives you access to several skills that reflect the training and study you must undergo in order to master these feats' capabilities.

ARCANE BATTLE MASTERY (ARCANE BATTLE)

You have been initiated into the mysteries of battle magic, allowing you to create a variety of effects with the simple, focused spells of this school. In many ways, this tradition represents a style and method of casting utterly unlike the arcane or divine bodies of magic. Your spells focus exclusively on improving your fighting ability and creating effects that draw on the chaos and energy of combat.

    Prerequisites: Intelligence 13, base attack bonus +1.

    Benefits: You gain Concentration, Knowledge (arcana), and Spellcraft as class skills. This feat is a prerequisite for all other arcane battle feats. It represents the benefit of the specialized training, meditation, and study that you must undergo to unlock the mysteries of this rare fusion of magical talent and martial study.

Wizards and other arcane spellcasters have a greater command of magic, but they lack combat training. Any spellcaster who can prepare or cast 1st-level arcane spells, has an Intelligence of 13 or

higher, has Concentration, Knowledge (arcana), and Spellcraft as class skills, and has a base attack bonus of +1 gains the Arcane Battle Mastery feat automatically.

ANIMATE WEAPON (ARCANE BATTLE)

You create a nimbus of magical force around a single melee weapon that allows it to move and fight on its own. This force draws on your intellect and combat skill, allowing the animated weapon to fight with talent equal to your own.

    Prerequisites: Arcane Battle Mastery, Summon Spectral Squire, base attack bonus +12.

    Uses/Day: One.

    Duration: A number of rounds equal to your base attack bonus.

    Benefit: You imbue a single weapon you hold in your hand with the ability to fight on its own. The weapon deals its standard damage, including any bonuses and abilities it gains from magical enchantments. It strikes with a base attack bonus equal to your base attack bonus + your Intelligence modifier. If your attack bonus is high enough for you to gain multiple attacks, the weapon gains these multiple attacks as well. The weapon never gains a flanking bonus, nor does it provide one for another attacker, and your feats do not aid its attacks. It acts on your initiative count.

The weapon can fly at a speed of 30 feet with perfect maneuverability. It must remain within 100 feet of you. You can direct it to attack a foe as a free action when you first use this ability to animate the weapon, but on subsequent rounds you must use a move action to set it against a new foe. If its current foe is defeated, the weapon automatically moves to attack the closest enemy. The weapon never willingly attempts to move farther than 100 feet from you.

The weapon's Armor Class, hit points, and hardness are as normal for its size. It does not gain attacks of opportunity, nor does it provoke them, unless an opponent tries to grapple it. In that case, it gains an attack of opportunity against any would-be grapplers. The weapon gains one attack of opportunity against an opponent that tries to initiate a grapple against it. There is no limit on the number of attacks of opportunity it makes in total each round, but it can only attack a specific would-be grappler once. If grappled, the weapon makes grapple checks as normal for its base attack bonus and size. It gains no Strength bonus or penalty.

If an opponent dispels this effect, the animated weapon falls to the ground.

ARCANE WEAPON (ARCANE BATTLE)

Drawing upon the power of magic, you imbue your weapon or fist with an arcane aura that allows you to strike with greater accuracy and to inflict superior damage.

    Prerequisites: Arcane Battle Mastery, base attack bonus +1.

    Uses/Day: Your base attack bonus divided by 3, rounded down, +1.

    Duration: A number of rounds equal to your base attack bonus.

    Benefit: You grant a single weapon (ranged or melee weapon) or other missile that you grasp an enhancement bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls. It is considered a magic weapon for the

purpose of overcoming damage reduction. The weapon's enhancement bonus depends on your base attack bonus:

Base Attack Bonus	Enhancement Bonus
+1 to +4	+1
+5 to +8	+2
+9 to +12	+3
+13 to +16	+4
+17 to +20	+5

Aspect of Battle (Arcane Battle)

You gather the psychic energy you have learned to manipulate in battle and form it into a mantle of power that strikes terror into your foes. In their minds, they see a horrifying war master poised to strike them down in his wrath.

Prerequisites: Arcane Battle Mastery, Mind Strike, Serpent-Eyed Strike, Charisma 13, base attack bonus +12.

Uses/Day: One.

Duration: A number of rounds equal to half your base attack bonus, rounded down.

Benefit: While this ability is active, all opponents within 60 feet of you suffer a –2 morale penalty on attack rolls, checks, and saves. Creatures with fewer Hit Dice than you gain no saving throw against this ability. Those with Hit Dice equal to or greater than yours can avoid the effect with a Will save (DC 10 + half your base attack bonus + your Intelligence modifier).

Augment Physical Prowess (Arcane Battle)

You draw upon your magical abilities to strengthen your limbs, sharpen your reflexes, or enhance your toughness.

Prerequisites: Arcane Battle Mastery, base attack bonus +3.

Uses/Day: Your base attack bonus divided by 5, rounded down, +1.

Duration: A number of rounds equal to your base attack bonus.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution. You choose which ability to increase when you use this feat.

Bounding Step (Arcane Battle)

With a single, seemingly effortless push off the ground, you glide through the air. In essence, you can fly for short distances merely by invoking the power of this feat.

Prerequisites: Arcane Battle Mastery, Fleet-Footed Charge, Vertical Step, base attack bonus +8.

Uses/Day: Your base attack bonus divided by 4, rounded down.

Duration: A number of rounds equal to your base attack bonus.

Benefit: When you move, you are considered to be flying through the air. At the end of your movement, you land, and you gain no special bonus to speed unless you have other active arcane battle feats. You can choose to take a double move when you use this feat, and you can move directly up, or horizontally from the roof of one building to another, or across a castle's moat. The total distance you move cannot exceed your total movement allowance, but you can go in any direction you want. You can even jump safely down. If you

are not over a solid surface when your movement ends, you fall as normal. You may use the run action in conjunction with this feat.

Dance of a Feather's Step (Arcane Battle)

You literally become light as a feather, allowing you to stand in mid-air and fight an opponent with little effort. You gain no special ability to fly, forcing you to leap or use your other abilities to move up and down, but once you are airborne you are difficult to knock from the sky.

Prerequisites: Arcane Battle Mastery, Bounding Step, Fleet-Footed Charge, Vertical Step, base attack bonus +16.

Benefit: Once per round you can avoid falling; this is not an action, thus you enjoy this benefit even if it is not your turn. Thus, as long as you are active and aware, you should not have to worry about falling. If for some reason you cannot take a free action to maintain this ability, you fall as normal. You can run, jump, and move as normal while in the air, but you cannot run "upward" through the air. You can move down a total distance of up to your base land speed, and you can descend as part of a normal move at no cost. For example, a character with a speed of 30 feet could move downward as much as to 30 feet in addition to any other movement he can normally make.

Death Strike (Arcane Battle)

You imbue your weapon or fist with a shimmering halo of black, necromantic energy, allowing you to disrupt your opponent's life force. This energy is also baneful to undead creatures, allowing you to destroy them with a single, savage blow.

Prerequisites: Arcane Battle Mastery, Arcane Weapon, base attack bonus +16.

Uses/Day: Your base attack bonus divided by 8, rounded down.

Benefit: You deal an extra 2d6 points of damage with your next attack as the necromantic energy weakens your living foe. In addition, your opponent must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half your base attack bonus + your Intelligence modifier). On a failed save, the opponent takes 1d6 points of temporary damage to Strength and Constitution. This is a negative energy effect

An undead creature struck by Death Strike does not suffer the effects described above. Instead, it must make a Will save (DC 10 + half your base attack bonus + your Intelligence modifier) or be immediately destroyed.

Energy Burst (Arcane Battle)

You focus your arcane power into your weapon, drawing upon energy that you can barely control. With a single, jarring impact, you unleash a burst of fire that consumes your enemies.

Prerequisites: Arcane Battle Mastery, Arcane Weapon, Energy Sheath, Energy Shield, base attack bonus +12.

Uses/Day: One.

Benefit: You create a burst of energy that fills a 30-foot spread centered on you. This energy is of the same type as the energy created by your Energy Sheath feat. This burst of energy deals damage dictated by your base attack bonus, as indicated below. Anyone in this area must make Reflex saves (DC 10 + half your base attack bonus + your

Intelligence modifier) for half damage. You do not take damage from the effect yourself, as the energy surges around and outward from you.

Base Attack Bonus	Burst Damage
+12 to +15	6d6
+16 to +19	8d6
+20	10d6

Energy Sheath (Arcane Battle)

You summon arcane power to bathe your weapon—or even your bare fists—in energy, allowing you to deal extra energy damage with your strikes.

Prerequisites: Arcane Battle Mastery, Arcane Weapon, base attack bonus +4.

Uses/Day: Your base attack bonus divided by 4, rounded down.

Duration: A number of rounds equal to half your base attack bonus, rounded down.

Benefit: When you choose this feat, select one of the following energy types: acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic. Your attacks now deal extra damage of that type, the amount depending on your base attack bonus:

Base Attack Bonus	Extra Damage
+4 to +8	1d4
+9 to +14	1d6
+15 to +20	1d8

Special: The energy type you choose also applies to the following feats if you select them: Energy Burst, Energy Shield, and Energy Web. When you gain one of those feats, you automatically use the energy type chosen for this feat. You can select Energy Sheath, Energy Burst, Energy Shield, or Energy Web multiple times, specifying a different energy type each time.

Energy Shield (Arcane Battle)

Your mastery of energy control allows you to resist an attack form involving your specified energy type. You create a field of energy that surrounds you and counters such attacks.

Prerequisites: Arcane Battle Mastery, Arcane Weapon, Energy Sheath, base attack bonus +8.

Uses/Day: Your base attack bonus divided by 4, rounded down.

Duration: A number of rounds equal to your base attack bonus.

Benefits: You gain resistance to the energy type you chose for the Energy Sheath feat. The value of this resistance is determined by your base attack bonus, as indicated below.

Base Attack Bonus	Resistance
+8 to +11	5
+12 to +15	10
+16 to +19	15
+20	20

Energy Web (Arcane Battle)

You create a tangible web of searing energy that wraps and tangles around your weapon. When you attack, this web clings to your opponent and continues to damage him for several agonizing seconds.

Prerequisites: Arcane Battle Mastery, Arcane Weapon, Energy Burst, Energy Sheath, Energy Shield, base attack bonus +16.

Uses/Day: Your base attack bonus divided by 10, rounded down.

Duration: A number of rounds equal to half your base attack bonus, rounded down.

Benefit: You create a web of pure energy that can burn, shock, or freeze an opponent. This web's energy is of the same type as that created by your Energy Sheath feat. If you make a successful melee attack before this ability's duration ends, you transfer the web of energy to your opponent. He takes an amount of extra energy damage determined by your base attack bonus in each round, at the start of your turn, until this ability's duration ends. You also gain this extra damage on the attack that transfers the web to the target.

Your opponent may make a Reflex save (DC 10 + half your base attack bonus + your Strength modifier) to avoid the web. If he

succeeds, you deal the extra energy damage with your attack but he avoids becoming trapped in the web and does not take any further damage from it.

A creature caught in an energy web can escape by taking a move action and making a successful Dexterity check or Escape Artist check against a Difficulty Class equal to the Reflex save DC needed to avoid it.

Base Attack Bonus	Web Damage
+16 to +19	6d6
+20	8d6

FLATTENING STRIKE (ARCANE BATTLE)

You hammer your foe with a concussive strike that sends ripples of raw, arcane energy through him, forcing him to tumble to the ground.

Prerequisites: Arcane Battle Mastery, Arcane Weapon, Knockback Strike, Power Attack, base attack bonus +8.

Uses/Day: Your base attack bonus divided by 4, rounded down.

Benefit: You slam an opponent with waves of power in addition to dealing normal damage with your next attack. The target must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half your base attack bonus + your Intelligence modifier) or be knocked prone. If your strike misses, this use of the ability is wasted.

FLEET-FOOTED CHARGE (ARCANE BATTLE)

You call upon arcane power to strengthen your legs and improve your agility, allowing you to maneuver with increased speed.

Prerequisites: Arcane Battle Mastery, base attack bonus +1.

Uses/Day: Your base attack bonus divided by 3, rounded down, +1.

Duration: A number of rounds equal to your base attack bonus.

Benefit: You gain a +10 foot enhancement bonus to your speed. Note that you do not need to charge in order to use this ability. Rather, the feat's name merely reflects most fighters' attitude toward combat.

FORCE ARMOR (ARCANE BATTLE)

You create a sheath of magical force that protects you from harm. Arrows, sword strokes, and axe strikes all rebound from it.

Prerequisites: Arcane Battle Mastery, base attack bonus +1.

Uses/Day: Your base attack bonus divided by 5, rounded down, +1.

Duration: A number of rounds equal to your base attack bonus.

Benefit: You gain a deflection bonus to Armor Class determined by your base attack bonus, as indicated below. Note that this bonus stacks with the enhancement bonuses provided by armor and shields, but not with other deflection bonuses.

Base Attack Bonus	Deflection Bonus
+1 to +5	+1
+6 to +10	+2
+11 to +15	+3
+16 to +20	+4

HELLFIRE CHARGE (ARCANE BATTLE)

When charging, you turn yourself into a living projectile that blasts your opponent with a jolt of arcane power.

Prerequisites: Arcane Battle Mastery, Fleet-Footed Charge, Rhino's Charge, base attack bonus +10.

Uses/Day: Your base attack bonus divided by 10, rounded down.

Benefit: When you use the charge action to attack an opponent, you hurl yourself through the air like a living projectile. The tremendous magical force you call upon creates a blazing shield of energy around you that scorches your foe. Make a charge as normal. If your attack hits, you deal an extra 5d8 points of force damage in addition to your attack's normal damage, and your foe must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half your base attack bonus + your Intelligence modifier) or be blinded for 2d4 rounds. This extra damage is not multiplied on a critical hit or a similar effect.

When making this charge, you are considered to be flying. You can move over pits and other hazards, but you land in the space where your charge ends and suffer any drawbacks for standing there after resolving your attack.

KNOCKBACK STRIKE (ARCANE BATTLE)

You summon a burst of kinetic energy to augment your attack, allowing you to deliver a mighty jolt that knocks an opponent backward.

Prerequisites: Arcane Battle Mastery, Arcane Weapon, Power Attack, base attack bonus +3.

Uses/Day: Your base attack bonus divided by 3, rounded down.

Benefit: Your mighty attack sends your foe reeling. You must decide to use this ability before attempting a single attack. If your attack hits, your foe must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half your base attack bonus + your Intelligence modifier). If this save fails, you knock your opponent backward a number of feet equal to the points of damage your attack inflicted. If your attack misses, this use of the ability is wasted.

LAUNCHING STRIKE (ARCANE BATTLE)

You draw magical power to yourself and focus it on your weapon, transforming it into a powerful surge of raw force as you slam an opponent with a vicious uppercut strike, sending him soaring into the air.

Prerequisites: Arcane Battle Mastery, Arcane Weapon, Flattening Strike, Knockback Strike, Power Attack, base attack bonus +16.

Uses/Day: Your base attack bonus divided by 8, rounded down.

Benefit: You must decide to use this ability before making a single attack. If your attack hits, your foe must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half your base attack bonus + your Intelligence modifier). If this save fails, your foe flies straight up a number of feet equal to double the points of damage you inflicted. He immediately falls, landing prone in the space he occupied before you launched him, and suffers falling damage as normal. If your attack misses, this use of the ability is wasted.

MIND STRIKE (ARCANE BATTLE)

You focus the power of your psyche into an energy sheath that surrounds your weapon, allowing you to strike at a foe's intellect.

Prerequisites: Arcane Battle Mastery, Serpent-Eyed Strike, Charisma 13, base attack bonus +8.

Uses/Day: Your base attack bonus divided by 5, rounded down.

Duration: A number of rounds equal to half your base attack bonus, rounded down.

Benefit: Your weapon hums and glows with an aura of psychic energy. Once per round, you disrupt your foe's mind and personality with your attack. Before making an attack, you may declare that you are expending your use of this ability for the round. If you hit and damage your target with that melee or ranged attack, he must make a Will save (DC 10 + half your base attack bonus + your Charisma modifier) or take 1 point of temporary damage to Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma (your choice) in addition to the normal damage from the attack. You can use this feat once per round. Activating it is a free action. You choose which ability score you want to damage when you activate this feat and, once chosen, you cannot alter it for the ability's duration.

RHINO'S CHARGE (ARCANE BATTLE)

As you rush forward in a charge, you create a crackling wedge of energy in front of you that can knock aside a foe and shock him with force.

Prerequisites: Arcane Battle Mastery, Fleet-Footed Charge, base attack bonus +5.

Uses/Day: Your base attack bonus divided by 5, rounded down.

Benefit: When you use the charge action to attack an opponent, you deal an extra 2d8 points of force damage on a successful attack. In addition, your foe must make a Reflex save (DC 10 + half your base attack bonus + your Intelligence modifier) or be knocked prone by the concussive force. If your attack misses, your foe does not have to make the save to remain standing, and this use of this ability is wasted.

SERPENT-EYED STRIKE (ARCANE BATTLE)

You twirl your blade or other melee weapon in a hypnotic pattern, weaving an arcane matrix that lulls your foe into quite a state of distraction. With his defenses down, you can strike him more easily.

Prerequisites: Arcane Battle Mastery, Charisma 13, base attack bonus +1.

Uses/Day: Your base attack bonus divided by 5, rounded down, plus one.

Benefit: You use this ability by taking a standard action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity. Choose a single target that you can see. This foe must make a Will save (DC 10 + half your base attack bonus + your Charisma modifier) or lose his Dexterity bonus to Armor Class against your attacks (and only your attacks) for 1d6 rounds. This is a mind-affecting ability.

STORM OF ARROWS (ARCANE BATTLE)

You enchant your arrow so that it bursts into dozens of smaller missiles, filling an entire area with a deadly hail of fire.

Prerequisites: Arcane Battle Mastery, Point Blank Shot, base attack bonus +8.

Uses/Day: Your base attack bonus divided by 4, rounded down.

Benefit: By taking a full-round action and choosing to use this feat, you transform one of your ranged attacks into an area attack with a 30-foot radius and a range equal to 10 times your weapon's range increment. Roll damage as normal. Targets in the affected area can make Reflex saves (DC 10 + half your base attack bonus + your Intelligence modifier) for half damage.

SUMMON SPECTRAL SHIELD BEARER (ARCANE BATTLE)

You call into being a squat, powerfully muscled being made of force. It carries a heavy shield, also of force, and uses it to block attacks made by one of your enemies.

Prerequisites: Arcane Battle Mastery, base attack bonus +5.

Uses/Day: Your base attack bonus divided by 5, rounded down, +1.

Duration: A number of rounds equal to your base attack bonus.

Benefit: Your spectral shield bearer blocks attacks from a single opponent of your choice. Against that foe, you gain a +2 bonus to Armor Class against melee attacks and a +4 bonus against ranged attacks. You can switch the shield bearer's target as a free action.

The shield bearer has AC 20, hit points equal to twice your base attack bonus, and ability scores and saving throw bonuses equal to your own. It always remains with you, in the space you occupy, regardless of your speed or movement mode. Only force effects can damage a spectral shield bearer. It appears as a shimmering humanoid shape. The shield bearer takes no actions other than providing you with an Armor Class bonus.

SUMMON SPECTRAL SQUIRE (ARCANE BATTLE)

You create a vaguely humanoid body of force that remains close to you and can hold your weapons, shields, and other equipment in battle.

Prerequisites: Arcane Battle Mastery, Quick Draw, base attack bonus +1.
Uses/Day: Your base attack bonus divided by 4, rounded down, +1.
Duration: A number of minutes equal to your base attack bonus.
Benefit: The spectral squire appears as soon as you call it and provides a number of benefits. It remains in your space but never hinders your attacks, nor does it aid your efforts. However, if you drop any weapons, shields, or similar items, you can command the squire (with a free action) to carry such items for you. You can use your Quick Draw feat as a free action to ready any item, including a shield, that the squire carries. You can use up to four free actions per round to drop and ready equipment with the squire.

A spectral squire has AC 10, hit points equal to your base attack bonus, and ability scores and saving throw bonuses equal to your own. It always remains with you in the space you occupy, regardless of your speed or movement mode. It appears as a shimmering humanoid-shaped being of pure energy. The spectral squire is an incorporeal creature for the purposes of determining whether and how an attack or effect can damage it. Anyone other than you must attempt a Strength check (DC 20) to take an item from it. It cannot take actions beyond those described in this feat.

THOUSAND BLADE STRIKE (ARCANE BATTLE)

When you strike at your foe, you produce a powerful illusion that makes him see duplicates of you surrounding and attacking him. He twirls around in a panic, unsure which one of you to defend against.

Prerequisites: Arcane Battle Mastery, base attack bonus +4.
Uses/Day: Your base attack bonus divided by 4, rounded down.
Duration: A number of rounds equal to half your base attack bonus, rounded down.
Benefit: When you use this feat, the next foe you attempt to attack must make a Will save (DC 10 + half your base attack bonus + your Intelligence modifier). If this save fails, your foe sees several duplicates of you surrounding him and attacking as one. When you strike him, he is considered flanked. This is a mind-affecting ability and an illusion (phantasm) effect.

VERTICAL STEP (ARCANE BATTLE)

You can walk up walls or along the surface of a tree trunk with ease. You imbue your feet with a magical energy that allows you to treat any vertical surface as a horizontal one.

Prerequisites: Arcane Battle Mastery, Fleet-Footed Charge, base attack bonus +4.

Uses/Day: Your base attack bonus divided by 4, rounded down.

Duration: A number of rounds equal to your base attack bonus.

Benefit: You can walk up vertical surfaces at your base land speed. You do not gain the ability to hang upside down, making it impossible for you to move along any surface that is more than a 90-degree slope with respect to the ground. You cannot run when moving in this manner. If you do not end your move on a horizontal surface, you fall as normal. You suffer attacks of opportunity and other effects for moving along a surface as normal.

WAVE OF MUTILATION (ARCANE BATTLE)

You speak words of arcane power, elemental steel, and destruction, transforming a single cut of your blade into a scything wave of energy that tears through your enemies' ranks.

Prerequisites: Arcane Battle Mastery, Power Attack, base attack bonus +8.

Uses/Day: Your base attack bonus divided by 8, rounded down.

Benefit: You unleash magical power in a single sweep of your weapon, projecting metal shards, concussive force, and slicing energy in a 30-foot cone. Roll damage for your attack as normal and apply it to all targets in the cone's area. Your opponents can make Reflex saves (DC 10 + half your base attack bonus + your Intelligence modifier) for half damage. Using this feat requires a full-round action that includes making the attack that delivers its effect.

BATTLEMIND FEATS

Many folk assume that a warrior needs only to exercise and hone his body, developing the strength and speed necessary to master a variety of strikes, blocks, feints, and other moves. While raw physical talent can indeed allow a warrior to excel at the most basic martial arts, a true master knows that the mind and body must work together. A warrior must see his opponent's moves before they happen, analyze a tactical situation and decide on a course of action in the space of a heartbeat, and learn from his past experiences to build on new techniques and abilities.

Battlemind feats represent this focus on the intellect to inform and guide the body. Fighters may select battlemind feats as bonus feats.

Most of these feats have a prerequisite involving an ability score not normally associated with fighters—Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma. Monk, paladin, and ranger characters are a natural fit for these feats, as are fighters who stray from the stereotype of a big, dumb warrior.

These feats are not meant to represent abilities that a warrior merely decides to pick up. Instead, they require study, dedication, and practice to master. One does not simply wake up, decide to follow the piercing strike school of combat, and learn its tenets in the space of a week. Gaining a battlemind feat requires more dedication than that, but such devotion can result in greater than normal rewards.

BATTLEMIND FEAT DESCRIPTIONS

To gain a battlemind feat, you must fulfill two requirements. You must train under a master who can show you the methods and exercises needed to gain the feat's benefit. This master should be an NPC that your DM creates. He might be the teacher who originally trained you in the fighting arts, or he could be an ancient master who resides in a remote monastery or isolated mountain lair. Your master might require you to spend time under his tutelage, he could demand that you defeat him in a duel (perhaps fighting until one of you drops to half hit points), or complete a quest to prove your dedication. Once you have completed this task, you may gain the feat as normal when you become entitled to gain a new feat.

DMs should keep in mind that this "story" requirement is meant to give battlemind feats a clear place in the campaign that makes them distinct from Power Attack or Combat Expertise. They are meant to have a mythic feel, one that helps distinguish a character who takes them as someone who has fully dedicated himself to the fighting arts. Use them to add to your campaign's current plot lines. Perhaps the master that Niandra seeks is held prisoner by an evil warlord, and by rescuing the old warrior she can gain his trust and free the land from a tyrant who serves as a major villain's puppet.

The second requirement for gaining a battlemind feat is grounded in game mechanics. You must choose to acquire a battlemind feat at least two levels before you would normally gain it. This early decision illustrates your dedication to the battlemind path. This stricture does not apply at 1st and 2nd level, but it does apply for feats you plan to take at 3rd level and beyond.

In return for this dedication, you gain a minor ability at the level before you gain the full benefits of a battlemind feat. This ability is called a method, and you continue to enjoy its benefit after you gain the feat's full effects. A method plays into the theme of dedication and focus, as it illustrates your drive to achieve a battlemind feat.

You gain a method's benefit whether or not you have found a master to teach you a feat.

For example, Boris the Bold dedicates himself to studying his foes while he fights them, learning their maneuvers and using that knowledge against them. When he is 4th level, he decides that he will take Eye of the Warmaster at 6th level. He gains that feat's method at 5th level, and acquires its full benefits at 6th level. Once he makes that decision at 4th level, he cannot change his mind and opt for a different feat.

Avatar of Carnage (Battlemind)

You scream, howl, and foam at the mouth during battle, striking terror into your enemies' hearts. Using the raw force of your personality, you turn your foes into a panicked mob.

Prerequisites: Charisma 15, Intimidate 8 ranks, base attack bonus +5.

Benefit: You whip yourself into a howling frenzy, transforming into a figure of overwhelming menace. Your face contorts, your mouth foams, and you screech like a madman. All foes within 60 feet of you suffer an effect based on their Hit Dice. Enemies who have more Hit Dice than you suffer a −1 morale penalty on attack rolls and checks. Opponents with Hit Dice less than or equal to your own total suffer a −2 morale penalty on attack rolls and checks. Any foe with half your Hit Dice or less is affected as if by *cause fear* in addition to the −2 morale penalty. All the targets of this ability may make Will saves (DC 10 + half your HD + your Charisma modifier) to negate its effects.

Uses/Day: A number of times equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum one).

Duration: A number of rounds equal to 5 + your Charisma modifier.

Method: You gain a +2 competence bonus on Intimidate checks.

Clarity of the Warrior's Mind (Battlemind)

You have trained yourself to calm your mind in combat, allowing you to act with clarity and focus. When in this state, you set aside the fear, panic, and confusion that can cloud a warrior's mind.

Prerequisite: Wisdom 13.

Benefit: As a standard action, you can enter a meditative state that allows you to fight with the ruthless precision and fearless determination of a cold-minded war machine. You gain immunity to all fear and mind-affecting effects.

Uses/Day: A number of times equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum one).

Duration: 5 rounds.

Method: You gain a +2 competence bonus on all saves against fear effects. You gain this bonus at all times, not just when you use this feat.

EYE OF THE WARMASTER (BATTLEMIND)

You watch an opponent in battle, analyzing his maneuvers, tactics, and stance to learn his combat style. Once you have broken down a foe's methods, you can present him with tactics that defeat his style.

Prerequisites: Combat Expertise, Intelligence 13, base attack bonus +6.

Benefit: Once per round, you can specify a single foe as the target of this feat. If this opponent attacks you, you gain a +1 competence bonus on attack rolls against him. This bonus increases by 1 for each consecutive round he attacks you while you use this feat (to a maximum of +5). You lose this accumulated bonus when combat ends or if you choose to target a different foe with this feat.

Method: If you spend a full-round action to study a single opponent, you gain a +1 competence bonus on all attack rolls against him for the rest of the encounter. You can use this ability against multiple foes, though it requires a full-round action each time.

RESOLVE OF THE STEEL MIND (BATTLEMIND)

You are always ready for combat. You use a series of exercises, intense training, and mental focus to create a combat routine that allows you to reliably respond to any threat.

Prerequisites: Intelligence 13, base attack bonus +3.

Benefit: You can focus yourself and react to an opponent while using superior speed and reflexes. When determining initiative, you roll d20 twice and take the higher result.

Method: Once per day, you can count your d20 roll for initiative as a 10 before adding any relevant modifiers but after you see your roll's result.

STANCE OF THE PROWLING TIGER (BATTLEMIND)

You are always ready for combat. Your training and meditation have taught you to hear the coming thunder of battle. When you are near the site of a major battle, you sense the pain, fear, and elation of battles fought in the past and those that await in the future. When you are on the verge of battle, its echoes reach your ears and allow you to prepare for it.

Prerequisites: Wisdom 13, Talent of the Poised Strike.

Benefit: You may add half your base attack bonus to any initiative check in place of your standard initiative modifiers, such as Improved Initiative and Dexterity bonus. You have drilled in the art of war and meditated on its mysteries to give yourself an intuitive, mystical sense of combat. You simply know when a battle draws near, though this awareness is too limited to benefit anyone other than you.

Method: You can automatically sense whether a battle has taken place in an area if it occurred within a period of time based on your base attack bonus, as indicated below.

Base Attack Bonus	Period of Time
+1 or +2	1 day
+3 or +4	1 week
+5 or +6	1 month
+7 or +8	1 year
+9 or +10	5 years
+11 or +12	10 years
+13 or +14	20 years
+15 or +16	50 years
+17 or +18	100 years
+19	1,000 years
+20	10,000 years

BATTLEMIND FEATS		
Name	**Prerequisites**	**Benefit**
Avatar of Carnage	Cha 15, Intimidate 8 ranks, base attack bonus +5	You enter a frenzied state that terrifies your foes
Clarity of the Warrior's Mind	Wis 13	You empty your mind, gaining immunity to fear and a bonus on attacks
Eye of the Warmaster	Combat Expertise, Int 13, base attack bonus +6	You gain a bonus to attack a foe by studying him
Resolve of the Steel Mind	Int 13, base attack bonus +3	Take higher of two rolls on initiative checks
Stance of the Prowling Tiger	Wis 13, Talent of the Poised Strike	Gain a bonus on initiative checks equal to half your base attack bonus
Strike of Perfect Clarity	Int 13, Combat Expertise, Eye of the Warmaster, base attack bonus +12	Gain attacks of opportunity against those who strike you
Strike of Persistent Sundering	Wis 13, Power Attack, Improved Sunder	Objects take damage on subsequent rounds if you hit them
Tactics of the Mind's Eye	Int 13, Combat Expertise, base attack bonus +12	Counter an opponent's maneuver as a free action once per round
Talent of the Poised Strike	Wis 13	Gain your base attack bonus as a bonus on Listen and Spot checks

You gain a sense of the battle's general size—number of combatants, roughly how many of them died, and how long the battle lasted—but you learn nothing of the participants' identity. If multiple battles took place at a site during the period of time you can sense, you gain this information about each battle as well as the order in which the battles occurred.

Strike of Perfect Clarity (Battlemind)
While battle rages around you, you achieve a state of perfect clarity. In this rarefied mental state, you see the ebb and flow of a single foe's movements. When the slightest gap appears in his defenses, such as when he commits to an attack against you, you strike to kill.

Prerequisites: Intelligence 13, Combat Expertise, Eye of the Warmaster, base attack bonus +12.

Benefit: You can assume a defensive, watchful stance as a standard action. If the foe you are watching attacks you before your next action, you can make an attack of opportunity against him before he resolves his strike. If you hit, you deal triple damage.

Method: Specify a single opponent as the target of this ability. You must spend a full-round action while in the area this foe threatens, doing nothing but watching him as he fights. On your next action, you deal double damage with any successful attacks you make against him. You can use this ability once per encounter.

Strike of Persistent Sundering (Battlemind)
You have studied the energies that flow through objects, allowing you to recognize the exact spot to attack an item with respect to the energy that resides within it. Not all fighters have an enlightened view of this feat's origins. In their parlance, this ability simply enables them to break things with ease.

Prerequisites: Wisdom 13, Power Attack, Improved Sunder.

Benefit: You strike an object in such a way as to produce destructive harmonics through its structure. Each time you hit an object with a melee attack and successfully damage it (in other words, any time your damage exceeds its hardness), you reduce its hardness by 1 for an hour. You cannot reduce an object's hardness below 0.

Method: You gain a +1 bonus on all damage rolls against objects.

Tactics of the Mind's Eye (Battlemind)
You can study an opponent's talents and create counterstrategies that leave him almost defenseless. You focus your concentration, enter an almost meditative state, and take action to foil him.

Prerequisites: Intelligence 13, Combat Expertise, base attack bonus +12.

Benefit: You enter a battle trance as a free action, allowing you to anticipate an opponent's maneuvers before he can attempt them. While in this state, you can counter an opponent's maneuver as a free action once per round. You may make an attack opposed by the result of your opponent's attack, a disarm attempt, a touch attack made to trip, or a touch attack made to initiate a grapple. If your attack result is greater than your foe's result, his attack misses. In essence, your attack result becomes the Armor Class that your foe's attack must hit.

You must threaten the target of this ability, but you can choose to ruin an attack made against you or an ally. You do not damage your opponent with this maneuver. Instead, you move to block his strike or otherwise foil his attack.

Uses/Day: A number of times equal to your Intelligence modifier (minimum one).

Duration: A number of rounds equal to your Intelligence modifier (minimum one).

Method: At the start of a fight, pick a single foe that you can see. After attacking or being attacked by that opponent for a number of rounds equal to 5 minus your Intelligence modifier (minimum 1 round), you immediately determine which of the following feats (if any) he possesses: Combat Expertise, Improved Grapple, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, or Weapon Focus.

TALENT OF THE POISED STRIKE (BATTLEMIND)

You have developed an uncanny sense for danger. When you have a weapon readied, you react to danger before your conscious mind can process what happened. Your intense training and focus brought on by meditation allow you to react to the ebb and flow of threats before they come to pass.

Prerequisite: Wisdom 13.

Benefit: If you must make a Listen or Spot check to determine whether you are surprised, add your base attack bonus (but not any modifiers you would normally gain on an attack roll) to your d20 roll in addition to the usual modifiers.

Method: You gain a +1 bonus on Listen and Spot checks.

FIGHTING STYLE FEATS

Fighting style feats are abilities that define your character's combat prowess on a basic level. They are designed for fighters, barbarians, and other characters who rely on weapons. You must have a base attack bonus of +1 to select one.

Once you have taken a fighting style feat, you gain the use of new techniques related to it as your combat ability increases. Unlike with other abilities, the number of techniques you master with a fighting style feat is determined by your base attack bonus rather than your total character level. This means that in order to gain the most from a fighting style feat, you must progress in classes that improve your combat ability.

A fighter may select a fighting style feat with his bonus feat selection at 1st level.

FIGHTING STYLE FEAT DESCRIPTIONS

Unless otherwise noted in a feat's description, you gain a new technique related to a fighting style feat whenever your base attack bonus reaches +5 or any multiple of +5 (in other words: +5, +10, +15, and +20). When you gain a new technique, select one of the options described for your feat. In most cases, you can choose a technique only once, but some fighting styles grant added benefits for choosing the same technique several times. (These exceptions are noted in the feat descriptions to which

they apply.) Some fighting style feats, such as Iron Hide, use a different progression to determine when you gain new techniques.

Fighting style feats represent a long commitment to the study and mastery of a particular method of fighting. You gain the greatest benefit from them by selecting them at 1st level, but you can take them at any time. If you select a fighting style feat after 1st level, you do not gain the benefits listed for having a base attack bonus below the bonus you have when you select the feat. For example, if you selected a fighting style when you had a base attack bonus of +6, you would not gain the new techniques for having an attack bonus of +1 or +5. However, when you first select the feat you always gain at least one new technique. Thus, characters who have a base attack bonus of +6 when they acquired the feat could choose a technique when they gained the feat and would receive new ones at +10, +15, and +20.

This option should be available only to characters who had a base attack bonus of +1 at 1st level. Fighting style feats are meant to represent options and abilities open to combat-focused characters. Allowing PCs to take them after 1st level should not make it possible for wizards, rogues, and other noncombat-oriented characters to select them.

ARCHER (FIGHTING STYLE)

In your hands, a bow transforms from a simple weapon into the tool of a master artisan. You can attempt a variety of trick shots that illustrate your phenomenal skill while catching your opponents by surprise.

Prerequisites: Dexterity 13, base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: You can attempt trick shots when fighting with any bow, crossbow, or sling. These trick shots do not apply to thrown weapons. Your DM may also allow these trick shots to apply to other ranged weapons, such as firearms, that are used in the campaign.

As your base attack bonus increases, you can select from the following techniques to represent your growing talents.

Arrow Feint: You can use this technique when you provoke an attack of opportunity for attempting a ranged attack. You may count your ranged weapon as a melee weapon (though you still use your modifiers for a ranged attack) to strike an opponent who made an attack of opportunity. Your target loses his Dexterity bonus to Armor Class against your attacks. If your opponent decides to forgo his attack of opportunity, you cannot use this ability. You must make all your attacks against foes who used attacks of opportunity against you. You stab at them with your arrows or make point blank shots that take advantage of their swings. For example, you might wait until a dragon is about to snap its jaws around you before firing a volley down its throat.

Covering Fire: You send a volley of arrows into an area, using a burst of projectiles to force your opponents to change their tactics. This technique uses five arrows, bolts, or sling stones and requires a full-round action. You may specify up to five different 5-foot

FIGHTING STYLE FEATS		
Feat	**Prerequisites**	**Benefit**
Archer	Dex 13, base attack bonus +1	You can attempt a variety of trick shots
Battle Captain	Cha 13, base attack bonus +1	In combat, your leadership inspires your allies
Brawler	Str 13, Improved Unarmed Strike, base attack bonus +1	Your bare hands are deadly weapons
Fencer	Dex 13, Combat Expertise, base attack bonus +1	You are skilled in using light, fast weapons
Heavy Weapon Fighting	Str 15, base attack bonus +1	You are a master of heavy weapons
Iron Hide	Con 13, base attack bonus +1	You gain an armor bonus while unarmored
Shield Bearer	Dex 11, Shield Proficiency, base attack bonus +1	You wield your shield with supreme mastery
Spiker	Str 13, Armor Proficiency (heavy), base attack bonus +1	Armor spikes are your chosen weapon
Tactical Genius	Wis 13, base attack bonus +1	None can match your ability to predict your foes' moves
Weapon Master	Int 13, Weapon Focus, base attack bonus +1	Few can match your skill with your chosen weapon

squares as your targets, and each of the squares must be adjacent to at least one other square you target. Make a single attack with a −4 penalty against any opponents you can see within this area, ignoring any Armor Class bonuses due to cover that they may receive. Hitting a target with this effect lowers its initiative count by 4 points. The creature hesitates before acting, as your fire distracts it. A target can suffer the effects of this technique more than once. Reduce its initiative by 4 each time, with no lower limit.

Dead-Eye Shot: With focus and careful aim, you can hit almost anything within range. You could shoot a gold coin from a gnome's hand, or a put an arrow through a small hole in a wall that a goblin uses for cover. As a full-round action, you can choose to make a single ranged attack that ignores either a target's size bonus or cover bonus to Armor Class.

Ranged Disarm: You fire an arrow at an opponent's weapon, tearing it from his grasp or stinging his hand so that he drops it. You may attempt a disarm action as a ranged attack, with a −4 penalty on the attack roll. The Improved Disarm feat, and any other bonuses to a disarm attempt, apply as normal to this attack.

Ranged Sunder: You can attempt to slice apart any small, light object. You can make a sunder attempt, but only against objects with a hardness of less than 5, such as items made of leather, paper, or rope. Items made of wood and other tougher materials are not affected by this technique. You must otherwise follow all the restrictions for making a sunder attempt. This technique is useful for slicing an opponent's pouches, belt, or some other item of clothing or gear. If you destroy an armor strap, belt, or similar article of clothing, your target suffers a −1 competence penalty on attack rolls and checks until he takes a move action to adjust his clothing.

Ricochet Shot: You fire an arrow, bolt, or sling bullet so that it rebounds off a hard surface and streaks toward your target from an unexpected direction, causing your opponent to lose his Dexterity bonus to Armor Class against the attack. There must be a surface or object nearby that you can bounce the shot off, such as a wall or a piece of heavy furniture. You take a −6 penalty on this attack roll. The range of this attack equals the distance from you to the spot where you want the ricochet to occur plus the distance from that point to your target.

Battle Captain (Fighting Style)

You are a natural leader. While your fighting skills make you a formidable opponent, you are at your best when commanding others in battle. Your ferocity and strong leadership make others fight hard on your behalf.

Prerequisites: Charisma 13, base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: You gain several new combat techniques that you can use to inspire others to great feats of bravery.

As your base attack bonus increases, you can select from the following techniques to reflect your growing stature as a war leader.

Challenging Presence: Not only does your spirit and air of command aid your allies, but it also draws the attention of your enemies. You can make a Diplomacy check as a standard action to challenge an opponent. This foe must have an Intelligence score, and he should be able to understand the language you use, though if your check result is 30 or higher your intent is so clear that you can transcend any language barriers. The target of this ability must make a Will save against a Difficulty Class equal to your skill check result. If the save fails, the target directs all its attacks against you, including spells and other special abilities. It gains a +1 morale bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls, because it is enraged at your attempt to call out its pride and skill. It continues to attack until you leave its line of sight, until it can no longer make attacks against you, or until the DM judges that the creature would be foolish to continue attacking you. For example, if you have a powerful defense against fire attacks, a goblin wizard with several fire spells prepared would not be compelled to waste its magic on you. You can use this ability to draw opponents away from your allies.

Commanding Aura: Once per battle, you can use a full-round action to deliver a rousing speech to your allies. Make a Diplomacy check. You may designate a number of allies equal to your Charisma bonus within 60 feet who can hear you. Each ally can choose to use your check result in place of a single Will save it must make during the

fight. You must already be engaged in combat to use this technique; only in battle does the true power of your personality shine through. You cannot use this ability on yourself.

Heroic Rally: Your presence on the battlefield helps allay your friends' fears. As a standard action, you can grant a single ally a +4 morale bonus against fear effects. If your ally is already subject to a fear effect, he can make another save (using this +4 morale bonus) to throw off the effect. You can use this technique multiple times in an attempt to allow an ally to shed a fear effect.

Inspiring Battle Cry: You whoop and yell in celebration, inspiring allies as you hack through the enemies' ranks. After dropping an opponent, you can choose to inspire one ally within 30 feet as a free action on your next turn. This ally gains a +1 morale bonus on his next attack roll, provided he makes an attack during his next turn.

Steadying Influence: Your advice and support help steady an ally's nerves, allowing him to succeed where he otherwise might fail. In combat, you can take a move action to offer verbal support to an ally. On that ally's next action, he gains a +2 morale bonus on any skill check he attempts. This bonus applies only during combat.

War Leader: In battle, you grant any allies who have less than half your levels or Hit Dice a +1 morale bonus on attack rolls and saves. Your ferocious manner and inspiring presence make those who follow you fight harder on your behalf.

BRAWLER (FIGHTING STYLE)

You have studied wrestling, boxing, and other unarmed fighting styles with the same dedication that others put into training with swords, axes, bows, and similar weapons.

Prerequisites: Strength 13, base attack bonus +1, Improved Unarmed Strike.

Benefit: You gain several new combat techniques you can use when fighting with your bare hands.

Arm Lock: When wrestling, you know how to lock your opponent's arm in place to injure him and to prevent him from using a weapon against you. After you have already initiated a grapple and pinned a foe, you may make an opposed grapple check against him. If you succeed, you twist his arm into a painful hold. Your opponent automatically takes 1d4 points of damage at the start of your turn if you still hold him pinned. In addition, he suffers a −2 circumstance penalty on grapple checks against you until your pin ends. Note that your Strength bonus and other modifiers do not apply to this damage. Like a sneak attack, it represents your knowledge of anatomy and submission holds, not your brute strength.

Jab: You strike a quick jab with your off hand, distracting your opponent as you follow up with a mighty blow from your primary hand. You take an aid another action with your off hand first, treating it as if it were a light weapon you wielded in your off hand. You may choose to grant the aid another action's bonus to yourself. Resolve your primary attack as normal. You must spend a full-round action to use this technique. If you normally gain more than one attack with your primary hand, you may attack only once at your highest base attack bonus.

Leaping Tackle: By throwing yourself into the air, you can hammer into an opponent and knock him to the ground, making it easier to use your unarmed strikes to pummel him into submission. When charging, you may opt to make a Jump check (opposed by your opponent's Strength check) in place of an attack. You gain a +2 bonus on your check. Your opponent gains bonuses to his check as if you had targeted him with a bull rush. If you succeed, you and your opponent fall prone in his space.

Low-Down Fighter: You are adept at fighting while prone, since you have trained relentlessly in wrestling and other forms of unarmed fighting. When you are prone, you threaten the squares immediately adjacent to you, regardless of your reach. You may make unarmed strikes or trip attacks as your attacks of opportunity. You may not use other attack types, such as armed strikes or disarm attempts.

One-Two Punch: You fight with both your hands in closely coordinated flurries of strikes. You may use your off hand as a light melee weapon. When you take a full attack action, you can attack once with your off hand and as many times with your primary hand as your base attack bonus allows. You do not gain the benefits of Two-Weapon Fighting or any other feat unless you already have the feat. This technique simply allows you to fight with both fists. You may also use your off hand to attack when you wield a weapon in your primary hand.

Fencer (Fighting Style)

You are an expert with light weapons designed for quick, light strikes as opposed to ponderous battleaxes, longswords, and similar weapons. You rely on speed and agility instead of brute force.

Prerequisites: Dexterity 13, base attack bonus +1, Combat Expertise.

Benefit: You gain new combat techniques when fighting with a light, one-handed weapon such as a rapier or dagger. As your base attack bonus increases, you can select from the following combat techniques.

Advancing Attack: You are light on your feet, allowing you to maneuver with a single opponent as he tries to evade your attacks. On your action, you can choose a single target of this technique as a free action. If that foe takes a 5-foot step, you can move 5 feet for free. You can move in any direction, but you must end the move with your foe still adjacent to you. This move never provokes attacks of opportunity.

Daring Maneuver: You commit a heedless stunt, such as fighting with your left hand when you are in fact right-handed, to showcase both your talent and your panache. Describe the sort of risk you want to take. It should be some sort of heroic stunt, such as diving from a balcony onto a crowd of opponents below. You must then make a Charisma check opposed by a Charisma check from an opponent of your choice with an Intelligence of 3 or higher. This check and the stunt together count as a standard action. If this check succeeds, your opponent suffers a −2 morale penalty on your choice of attack rolls, Armor Class, or checks as your display of skill fills him with doubt and fear. However, if your check fails, your opponent gains a +2 morale bonus on the DM's choice of attack rolls, Armor Class, or checks as he is convinced that you are a showoff with little true skill.

Humiliating Strike: This technique is effective only against an opponent with an Intelligence of 3 or higher. You slash at your foe, perhaps slicing apart a symbol or heraldic device he wears or scarring his face. Make a single attack at your full base attack bonus as a full-round action. Your opponent must make a Will save against a Difficulty Class equal to your attack roll result. If the save fails, he suffers a −1 morale penalty on attack rolls against you as your display of unrivaled talent unnerves him.

Vexing Defense: You parry your opponent's strikes while taunting him, causing him to lose his cool slowly as his efforts prove fruitless. If you use the total defense action, and you have not been denied your Dexterity bonus to Armor Class, you gain a +2 bonus on your next round's attack rolls against an foe who attacks and misses you.

Whirling Strike: You attack in a flurry of steel as you slash wildly at your opponent, cutting him a dozen times with a series of light, rapid attacks. While these attacks have little effect on him in terms of injuries, since your light cuts barely draw blood, they force him back into a defensive posture. Make a standard attack roll opposed by your foe's attack roll. If you succeed, your opponent must fight defensively if he chooses to attack on his next turn. He gains the penalty to attack rolls and the bonus to Armor Class as normal.

Heavy Weapon Fighting (Fighting Style)

You have trained relentlessly with heavy swords, hammers, axes, and clubs. Your strong arms and well-honed sense of balance allow you to wield a two-handed weapon with ease.

Prerequisites: Strength 15, base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: You gain expanded abilities with two-handed weapons. You can handle them with the same grace that a skilled duelist uses to wield a rapier or a rogue her daggers.

Giant Blade Wielder: With your phenomenal strength and talent for using heavy weapons, you can bear a weapon made for a larger creature with the same ease as a normal sword or axe. You reduce the penalty for using a weapon that is larger than your standard size by 2, but you must wield the weapon with two hands to gain this benefit. You cannot use weapons that are too large for you to handle, but you are better at handling Large greatswords and similar weapons.

Hammering Strike: While others use finesse and specially designed weapons to make trip attacks, you can crush an opponent with a blow so fierce that he falls to his knees. You may make a trip attack with the following changes. Your opponent never has a chance to trip you, but you must make a regular melee attack rather than a touch attack to trip him. In place of an opposed Strength check, your target must make a Strength check to remain standing, with a Difficulty Class equal to your weapon's damage roll. Your target does not take any damage from this attack.

Slaughtering Sweep: You twirl your two-handed weapon over your head, duck down, and deliver a sweeping attack that chops through your opponents. This reckless attack leaves you off balance, but it can potentially devastate your foes. Make an attack as normal and roll your damage. You can decide to distribute your damage among as many foes in your threatened area as you wish, but the total damage you inflict cannot exceed your damage result. Use your attack roll result to determine if you hit each foe you try to injure. Using this technique requires a full-round action, and you suffer a −2 penalty to Armor Class until your next action.

Thunderous Slam: With a great war cry, you slam your weapon into your opponent and send him reeling backward. As a full-round action, you make an attack against your foe with a two-handed weapon at your best base attack bonus. If you hit, your opponent suffers damage equal to your Strength bonus. In addition, roll your damage die (or dice) opposed by the target's Strength check as if he had been targeted by a bull rush. If the target fails his check, you move your target 5 feet (1 square) directly away from you.

Whirling Uppercut: You deliver a savage upward strike to your opponent that might send him flying through the air. As a full-round

armor check penalty. Heavy armor makes it difficult for you to move and absorb attacks.

The natural armor bonus provided by this feat starts at +1 and increases by 1 for every 3-point improvement in your base attack bonus: +2 natural armor at +4 base attack bonus, +3 natural armor at +7 base attack bonus, and so on, to a maximum of +7 natural armor at +19 base attack bonus.

If you select this feat after 1st level, you gain the increase to its benefits when your base attack bonus improves by +3 over what it was when you selected the feat, and every additional +3 afterward.

This feat is best for barbarians who wade into combat wearing little more than a loincloth, or duelists and other warriors who rely on speed, agility, and their fencing talents to defeat their enemies.

Shield Bearer (Fighting Style)
Your fighting style involves extensive use of a shield as both a defensive measure and an unexpected weapon. You are most at ease when carrying a shield in addition to a one-handed sword, axe, or similar weapon.

Prerequisites: Dexterity 11, base attack bonus +1, Shield Proficiency.

Benefit: You gain expanded abilities with a shield. Long hours of training allow you to coordinate your shield and weapon with precise timing.

Several of the techniques described below make use of your shieldless Armor Class. If an opponent would have hit you if you were not carrying a shield, his attack is considered to have struck your shield, and that may allow you to use a technique. Keep track of both your full Armor Class and your Armor Class without your shield to remind yourself when this happens.

Active Defense: You maintain a nearly impenetrable defense with your shield. You crouch behind it, deflecting your opponent's strikes. As a standard action, you focus on battering aside a single foe's attacks. Each time he tries to attack you, you can make an opposed attack roll with your shield, using your best base attack bonus. Use the higher of your standard Armor Class or the result of this attack roll as your Armor Class against his current attack. You must reroll each time he tries to attack you.

Power Deflect: You slam your shield into your opponent's weapon and body, throwing him off balance, when he hits your shield. If your opponent hits your shield in combat, you may use one of your attacks of opportunity to make an immediate opposed Strength check against him. Your foe gains a +4 size bonus to this check for every size category he is larger or a −4 size penalty for every category he is smaller than your own. If this check succeeds, your foe suffers a −2 competence penalty on attack rolls and Armor Class until the start of his next turn as he recovers his balance.

Shield Push: You slam your shield into your opponent, knocking him off balance and making your subsequent attacks more accurate. In place of an attack, including a single strike made as part of a full attack, resolve a shield push with your normal base attack bonus and any other relevant modifiers. If you hit, you lose your shield bonus until your next action but your foe suffers an Armor

action, make an attack with a two-handed weapon at your highest base attack bonus. This attack provokes an attack of opportunity. If you hit, your opponent must make a Strength check opposed by your total damage result. He suffers a −4 penalty for every size category he is smaller or a +4 bonus for every size category he is larger than your own. If he fails this check, he flies through the air a number of 5-foot squares equal to your damage divided by 5, rounded down. He suffers no additional injuries from the fall.

Iron Hide (Fighting Style)
You are inhumanly tough, allowing you to fight without armor. Your instincts and durability make it difficult to hurt you.

Prerequisites: Constitution 13, base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: You gain a natural armor bonus of a certain amount, depending on your base attack bonus. If you wear any sort of armor, reduce the benefit this feat provides by the amount of the

Class penalty equal to half your normal shield bonus to Armor Class until the start of his next turn.

Shield Step: When your opponent's attack hammers into your shield, you deflect it upward and step toward him, making it harder for his subsequent attacks to connect. If an opponent hits your shield with an attack, you may opt to use one of your attacks of opportunity to step within his reach. His subsequent attacks against you suffer a −2 penalty until the end of his current turn. Note that as an unnamed bonus this penalty stacks with itself and all other modifiers, allowing you to use this technique against the same opponent multiple times.

Weapon Ward: By keeping your shield aligned with a single foe's weapon, you protect yourself from attacks while sacrificing your ability to defend against other attackers. On your action, designate a single foe. Your shield's bonus to Armor Class increases by +2 against this opponent, but you lose its benefits against all other foes.

Spiker (Fighting Style)

Your armor and shield are studded with vicious spikes, making you a deadly foe even when you are on your guard. You make extensive study of the techniques and skills needed to make the most of your armor.

Prerequisites: Strength 13, base attack bonus +1, Armor Proficiency (heavy).

Benefit: This feat represents your mastery of armor and shield spikes. In many cases, you can turn an unfavorable situation to your advantage.

You can use these techniques only when you are wielding a spiked shield or wearing spiked armor.

Blood-Spined Grasp: When grappling an opponent, you can choose to make a blood-spined grasp in place of the other grappling options. You bear hug your foe and use your armor or shield spikes to tear into him, injuring him and improving your ability to grapple. Make an opposed grapple check, rolling the die appropriate for the damage of your spikes and adding the result as a bonus on your check. If your grapple check succeeds, you inflict your spikes' damage plus your Strength modifier. Until your next turn, you continue to roll your spikes' damage die as a bonus when making grapple checks against the opponent on whom you used this technique.

Impaling Attack: When charging, you can attack with your spikes as per the bull rush combat action. Resolve the bull rush attempt as normal, but you may make a standard melee attack with your spikes in addition to driving your opponent backward. You gain a bonus on the opposed Strength check to drive your opponent backward equal to the result of your spikes' damage roll. Do not add any modifiers to this damage—use only the die result in addition to your standard Strength bonuses.

Spike Fighter: When you make a full attack, you can make an additional attack with your armor spikes (but not shield spikes), even if you fight with two weapons. Your armor spikes attack suffers a −8 penalty, but your other attacks are made normally. You could, for example, attack with a

weapon in one hand, with a spiked shield in the other, and with your armor spikes.

Spiked Rebuke: You maneuver in the grasp of your opponent to tear into his claws or tentacles, making it difficult for him to grab hold of you. When an opponent attempts a grapple against you, you are always allowed an attack of opportunity with your armor or shield spikes even if the opponent has a feat or special ability, such as improved grab, that normally disallows a counterattack. You gain a +2 bonus on the attack roll with your spikes, and if your attack is successful, your opponent's grapple attempt is automatically ruined.

Spiked Wall Defense: When an opponent charges you, you may opt to grant him an additional +2 bonus on his attack roll. In exchange, you may attack him with your armor spikes or shield spikes after he resolves his charge attack. You can use this ability once per round, and it counts as one of your attacks of opportunity. Thus, you do not need to ready an attack to use this technique.

TACTICAL GENIUS (FIGHTING STYLE)

You have an intuitive sense of combat situations, allowing you to make the right choice unerringly when faced with a tactical dilemma. This ability is based on your gut instincts and talent for thinking under pressure rather than on study or training.

Prerequisites: Wisdom 13, base attack bonus +1.

Benefit: This feat represents the development of your tactical instincts and your personal experiences in battle.

Combat Assessment: You have an intuitive sense for knowing when to make a bold strike at your foe. Rising above the swirl and chaos of a fight, you can choose the perfect moment to strike. If you spend a full-round action scanning the battlefield while not occupying any opponent's threatened area, you gain a +2 competence bonus on all attack rolls, checks, and saves until the end of your next turn.

Patient Strike: You stand and wait for your opponent's guard to drop even the slightest bit, relying on your finely honed skills and sense of timing to make a devastating attack. If you ready an action to make a melee attack if and when a designated opponent uses an attack action, you gain a +2 bonus on your attack roll against him. Obviously, if your opponent does not attack, you lose the chance to use this readied action.

Seize the Initiative: You can push yourself to act more quickly than normal in a critical situation, at the cost of leaving yourself vulnerable for a brief moment until you can recover. Once per encounter, at the start of any round after the first, you may gain a +4 bonus to your initiative count. Simply declare you are using this technique, adjust your initiative count accordingly, and act when your turn comes up. For example, you could use this ability to boost your initiative and be able to act before an opponent. However, this technique requires a quick burst of energy that leaves you momentarily winded and off balance. After you act on your new initiative count, you lose your Dexterity bonus to Armor Class until you act again.

Tactical Coordination: If you ready an action to attack the same opponent when a designated ally strikes him, you and your ally gain a +1 competence bonus on attack rolls against your shared target. Your tactical cunning and your ability to coordinate strikes with your ally allow both of you to make a combined attack that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Team Tactics: You are skilled in creating advantages for your allies or taking advantage of the openings they make for you. When you use the aid another action, you grant an additional +1 bonus to Armor Class or attack rolls for your allies. If an ally uses aid another to help you, you increase the bonus the action grants you by 1.

WEAPON MASTER (FIGHTING STYLE)

You have focused on a single weapon with nearly maniacal dedication. To you, fighting with a sword, axe, or hammer is an art form rather than a martial pursuit. You spend countless hours going through a series of grueling exercises to perfect your form. This study is cerebral in nature. While your physical strength is important, your hours of research and meditation play a much greater role in your mastery.

Prerequisites: Intelligence 13, base attack bonus +1, Weapon Focus.

Benefit: This feat represents your continued mastery of a specific weapon. You must choose a weapon for which you already have Weapon Focus. The techniques you gain apply only when you fight with your chosen weapon.

Battle Sage: You watch an opponent's moves and stance, reading his fighting style and making adjustments to your own in response. As a standard action, make an attack opposed by your foe's own attack roll at his best base attack bonus. If you succeed, you learn to exploit your foe's stance, fighting style, and favored tactics. You gain a +1 competence bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls against him for the rest of the encounter. You must be in your opponent's threatened area to initiate the use of this technique.

Defensive Stance: You bat aside attacks with your chosen weapon, putting up a defense that your opponents find difficult to pierce. When you fight defensively or use the total defense action, you gain an additional +1 bonus to Armor Class.

Focused Strike: You concentrate on your opponent's style, analyzing his motions to find one critical weakness that you can exploit. As a full-round action, you can make a single attack at your best base attack bonus with an insight bonus equal to your Intelligence modifier.

Offensive Stance: As a free action, you assume an open stance that leaves you vulnerable to attack but allows you to make more accurate strikes at your enemies. You may simply pay little heed to defense, or you may make wild swings that leave you exposed to a counterattack. You gain a +1 bonus on attack rolls and a −2 penalty to Armor Class until the start of your next turn. This bonus applies to any attacks of opportunity you make until your next turn.

Precise Strike: Your skill with your weapon is so refined that you can judge the force and speed of your attacks expertly. In the heat of battle, a lesser warrior relies on his rote training and instincts to overcome a foe. You use cold, analytical thinking to pick out a weakness and focus on it. As a free action, you can choose to lose your Strength bonus to damage. In return, you gain 1.5 times your Strength modifier as a bonus on your attack roll. For example, Grimbold has 18 Strength. He normally gains +4 on attack and damage rolls. When using this technique, he gains +6 on his attack roll but no bonus on damage.

Skills and Stunts

The Bluff skill proves useful in combat, as a single check can strip away an opponent's Dexterity bonus to Armor Class and leave her vulnerable to a rogue's sneak attack. While other skills can at times prove helpful in combat, such as using Climb to scramble up a tree and escape a rampaging ogre, most of them are reserved for less violent situations. This chapter describes combat-specific uses for many existing skills.

Most of these new uses are designed to mirror Bluff's combat application. In return for a standard action spent to make a skill check, you gain an advantage over an opponent. Most of these skill checks are opposed by a foe's own skill check, usually with a diametrically opposed skill, such as Spot against Hide, or a base attack check.

BASE ATTACK CHECKS

A base attack check works just like a skill check. It is a test of your fighting prowess rather than your expertise in a specific skill. You use your base attack bonus, excluding any bonuses you would normally gain due to Strength, feats, and the weapon you currently have in hand. If for some reason you are unable to make an attack, such as if you are tied up or both your hands are occupied with a heavy load, your base attack check result is 0.

CONJOINED SKILL CHECKS

A conjoined skill check is two skill checks made at the same time in order to complete an action. For instance, if you want to move vertically along a wall briefly, you would attempt a conjoined skill check made up of a Balance check to keep your footing on difficult ground and a Climb check to move up a steep surface. To make the two skill checks at the same time and keep the game moving, you can roll two d20s of different colors, one for each skill check. Usually, if one of the skill checks fails, the entire attempt fails.

NEW AND VARIANT SKILL USES

The following section discusses ways to use specific skill checks or conjoined skill checks to accomplish certain objectives in a combat situation. Some skill checks require you to have feats or other abilities in order to attempt them. For example, using Jump to make a leaping charge is possible only if you have the Run feat. Prerequisites, when they apply, are specified in a skill check's description.

APPRAISE: FIND WEAK POINT

The Appraise skill allows you to determine an item's value as you assess its quality, workmanship, and design. This expertise extends to weapons and armor. You can use this knowledge to identify weak points in a sword or a breastplate when you are engaged with a foe.

Mechanics: As a full-round action, make an Appraise check (DC 20) to pinpoint a weak spot in a foe's weapon.

This foe must stand in your threatened area in order for you to examine her weapon closely enough. If you succeed, you gain a +2 bonus on a sunder attempt against the weapon.

You can also use Appraise against armor. Make an Appraise check (DC 25) against a foe who stands in your threatened area. If you succeed, you gain a +1 insight bonus on attack rolls against this foe for the rest of the encounter. For this check to be effective, your target must have an armor bonus to Armor Class from a physical suit of armor. Your DM may judge that certain protective measures, such as *bracers of armor*, provide an armor bonus but are not subject to this use of Appraise. As a rule of thumb, this Appraise check works only against suits of armor, not magic devices that offer similar protection in a different form.

BALANCE AND CLIMB: VERTICAL RUN

By building up speed and drawing on your Balance and Climb skills, you can run along walls, or even up them, for short distances. (See the illustration on the next page.)

Prerequisite (Feat): Run.

Mechanics: To use your skills in this way, you must first use a move action to move at least half your speed. Then, as a standard action, you can move along a wall for a distance of up to 20 feet or half your movement, whichever is lower. Doing this requires a Balance check (DC 20) and a Climb check (DC 25). You can use the remainder of your movement (if any) to move as normal (across the ground, for instance) If for some reason you try to move a distance of more than 20 feet (or half your movement, if less) along a wall, you fall to the ground. Otherwise, treat your movement on the wall as a regular move for purposes of attacks of opportunity and other hazards.

While running, you can try to run along a wall. You can move up to 20 feet in this manner as part of your move. If you try to move more than 20 feet in this manner, you fall to the ground. You can move along walls that are directly adjacent to the path you would normally have to take in order to run. These walls must be adjacent to the squares that you would normally run through. This movement is part of, not in addition to, your run.

You can extend your vertical movement, but doing so is difficult. For each additional 5 feet you want to move along a wall, the Difficulty Class of your Balance check increases by 5. You cannot move a distance greater than your speed regardless of your ranks in Balance. You must decide how far you want to move along a wall before making your check.
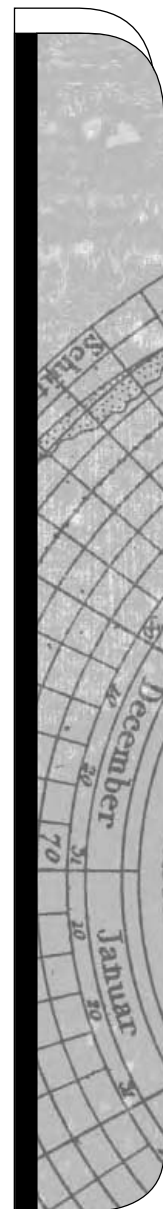
Bluff: Feign Death

You attempt to play dead, absorbing an opponent's attack and tumbling to the ground. With luck, your opponent moves on to a different target.

Mechanics: You ready an action to make a Bluff check the next time you take damage. Make a Bluff check opposed by any interested observer's Sense Motive check. As a rule of thumb, only opponents directly engaged against you should make this check. You automatically fall prone and drop any items you hold. Your DM keeps the result of the Sense Motive check secret, and you lose your Dexterity bonus to Armor Class until your next action. You are not considered helpless, as you can try to dodge a *coup de grace* or similar attack at the last moment.

If you attack an opponent who thinks you are dead, she loses her Dexterity bonus to Armor Class against you until the end of your action. Once your action ends, your foes obviously know that you are alive.

Climb: Scaling Attack

Against a larger opponent, you grab hold of its belt, armor, scales, horned plates, or other footholds to scramble up its body and attack.

Mechanics: Against a creature that is at least two size categories larger than you, you may make a Climb check as a standard action opposed by the foe's base attack check. If you succeed, you climb your opponent as per the Climb skill. You must use one hand to hold on as you take other actions, you cannot use a shield, and you lose your Dexterity bonus to Armor Class The opponent you climbed loses his Dexterity bonus to Armor Class against your attacks. You occupy the same space as your foe. You provoke an attack of opportunity for entering a foe's space. In addition, you suffer a −2 penalty to your Climb check if you have only one free hand.

Your opponent can attempt to knock you loose by making a base attack check opposed by your Climb check. If he succeeds, you fall and take damage as if he hit you with a slam attack (consult the MM for damage for a slam based on the creature's size) and from falling. You land prone in a randomly determined, unoccupied square adjacent to your foe. If all of the adjacent squares are filled, you land in the nearest empty square (determine randomly if necessary).

Concentration: Focused Determination

In times of dire need, you can clear your mind, focusing your attention on a single act, and blotting out any external distractions.

Mechanics: You can temporarily remove the effect of any morale penalties you suffer on attacks, checks, saves, and damage rolls. As a full-round action, you may make a Concentration check with a DC of 15 + the penalty you wish to remove. Do not treat the penalty as a negative number when you add it. If this check succeeds, you ignore the morale penalty until the end of your next action. You can choose to try to ignore only part of a penalty (thereby making the DC lower).

Diplomacy: Call for Truce

Using your skills of persuasion, you call for a temporary halt to the fighting. Your enemies may halt to listen, but they remain alert and ready for a trick.

Mechanics: As a full-round action, you call for an end to the fighting. Make a Diplomacy check with a Difficulty Class as indicated on the table on the next page. If you succeed, your opponents

ready actions to attack when you or your allies attack or take a threatening action. You may then parlay as normal with your foes. Your DM may consider your foes to remain active on their initiative counts. Combat does not end until both sides have stepped down from their alert standing.

CALL FOR TRUCE	
Situation	**DC**
Your foes have the advantage	35
The battle is even	25
Your opponents are losing	15

Your DM may rule that certain foes are immune to this skill use, such as fanatics who are inspired by religious or political fervor, raging barbarians, and other hateful enemies. In addition, you must share a language with your opponents or otherwise have some means of communicating with them.

DISGUISE: DISGUISE WEAPON

You hide a weapon on your person, making it appear as some ornament or other harmless keepsake. When you strike with it, you may surprise your enemy and leave her vulnerable to your attack.

Prerequisite (Feat): Quick Draw.

Mechanics: You may spend 10 minutes hiding a light, one-handed weapon on your body. You may hide only one weapon at a time in this manner. Later, you can use your Quick Draw feat to ready it and attack as normal. When you do so, make a Disguise check opposed by your foe's Spot check. Your opponent also gains her base attack bonus (without modifiers for Strength, feats, magic, and so forth) as a bonus on this check. If your check succeeds, your opponent loses her Dexterity bonus to Armor Class on your next attack.

Anyone who searches you must make a Search check opposed by your Disguise check to find the weapon. They gain no special bonus on this check—unlike with weapons hidden using the Sleight of Hand skill (see next page)—because you have physically modified the weapon in order to disguise it.

HANDLE ANIMAL: MANIPULATE BEAST

Your knowledge of animals allows you to alter their emotions in combat. For example, you might bat at a wolf's head to get its attention and compel it to attack you instead of another target, or you could so enrage an alligator that its attacks become frenzied and clumsy.

Mechanics: You may make a Handle Animal check against an animal or vermin as a full-round action. The Difficulty Class of this check is the creature's Hit Dice + 10. If your check succeeds, you may cause one of the following behaviors:

Anger: The target creature focuses all its attacks on you. It moves toward you if possible, but it does not provoke attacks of opportunity to reach you. If it cannot reach you, it fights as normal. This effect lasts 1d6 rounds.

Calm: If the creature was not trained to fight, not set to guard an area, or not otherwise taught by a master, you can attempt to calm it. If the creature and other members of its pack or other allies are not

subjected to an attack, spell, or other hostile act for 1 full round, it stops fighting. It resumes hostilities if anyone makes an aggressive move toward it.

Rage: The creature thrashes in rage, biting and snapping at its enemies. It suffers a −2 morale penalty on its next attack roll.

HANDLE ANIMAL AND SENSE MOTIVE: STUDY BEAST

Animals rely on relatively simple tactics and maneuvers in combat, allowing you to get a handle on their plans with a close study of their actions and bearing.

Mechanics: You may make a conjoined Handle Animal and Sense Motive check against an animal or vermin as a full-round action. The Difficulty Class of these checks equals the creature's Hit Dice + 5. If both checks succeed, you gain a +1 insight bonus on attack rolls and Armor Class against the creature as you learn to anticipate its actions in combat. In addition, you gain a +4 insight bonus on any Handle Animal, Intimidate, and Sense Motive checks you make against it for the rest of the encounter.

INTIMIDATE: BLOOD-KISSED THREAT

As you cleave through your enemies, you use threats, taunts, and a bloody display of your martial prowess to strike terror into your remaining opponents.

Prerequisites (Feats): Power Attack, Cleave.

Mechanics: If you kill an opponent outright by dropping her from positive hit points to −10 or lower, you may make an Intimidate check against a second foe as a free action. The slain foe must have been able to fight when you cut her down. A paralyzed or otherwise helpless opponent does not qualify for this use of the Intimidate skill. The Difficulty Class of this check is the second foe's Hit Dice + 15. If your check succeeds, the foe becomes shaken. This is a mind-affecting effect.

JUMP: LEAPING CHARGE

As you rush at an opponent, you spring into the air, adding additional momentum to your attack at the cost of accuracy.

Mechanics: When you charge an opponent (see illustration, next page), you can choose to attempt a Jump check to gain additional momentum toward your foe. You lose the standard bonus on attacks after a charge, but you inflict extra damage. Make a Jump check (DC 20) as part of your charge. If you succeed, you inflict +2 damage on your attack. If your check result is 30 or higher, you gain a +4 bonus to damage. Multiply this damage on a successful critical hit. You suffer the standard −2 penalty to Armor Class for charging as normal and end your movement as normal for a charge.

SENSE MOTIVE: PREDICT ACTION

You can sometimes read an opponent's body language and eyes to determine the nature of her next action.

Mechanics: As a move action, you can attempt a Sense Motive check opposed by either your opponent's Bluff check or base attack

check (opponent's choice). If your check succeeds, you learn what your foe plans to do on her next action. You learn only general information, such as whether your foe intends to cast a spell, use a ranged attack against a specific target, or flee. You do not learn exactly which spell she plans to use, but you do know her target. You may then take your standard action as normal. Note that the result of your action, and others' actions, could cause the target to change her mind. You only learn what she is planning to do at the moment you act.

SENSE MOTIVE: READ FOE

You pause to study your opponent, reading her stance, watching how she sets her feet, and interpreting her mood. Using this information, you learn to predict and counter her moves.

Mechanics: As a full-round action, you may make a Sense Motive check opposed by your opponent's base attack check. If your check succeeds, you learn to read your opponent's reactions. You gain a +1 insight bonus on attacks against her and a +1 insight bonus to Armor Class against her attacks until the end of the encounter.

SLEIGHT OF HAND: CONCEAL WEAPON

You keep a dagger or other small weapon concealed in your clothing or even in your hand. If you make a sudden attack with it, you can catch an opponent by surprise.

Mechanics: You may make a Sleight of Hand check, opposed by your foe's Spot check, to ready a weapon in such a way that she fails to note that you are armed. Your foe applies her base attack bonus as a modifier on her Spot check. You may hide only one weapon at a time in this manner. If you then attack with this weapon on your current turn or your next action, your opponent loses her Dexterity bonus to Armor Class.

If you hold onto the weapon for more than 1 round, your opponent gains another Spot check (modified by her base attack bonus) to notice it. You oppose this check with another Sleight of Hand check with a −2 penalty.

The modifiers listed under Sleight of Hand for different weapon sizes, billowing clothes, and so forth apply to checks made to conceal a weapon. Consult the skill's description in Chapter Four of the *Player's Handbook* for more information.

Note that the Disguise skill allows for a similar function (see previous page). The Disguise check takes longer to implement and requires the Quick Draw feat, but it works better when facing someone who may attempt to search you.

SURVIVAL: WILDERNESS TACTICS

Your knowledge of the wilds allows you to turn your surroundings to your advantage. You might pick out just the right spot in a snowbank where you can find a steady position while your foes flail through the snow.

Mechanics: When fighting in any sort of terrain that restricts your movement, you may make a Survival check opposed by your opponent's base attack check as a standard action. This single opponent must be in your threatened area. If your check succeeds, you can opt for one of several effects:

Hindering Terrain: You can confer a –1 circumstance penalty on attacks and Armor Class upon your opponent as long as she is in the difficult terrain. You kick snow at her, shift the stones on a gravel slope so that she loses her balance, and so forth.

Tangle and Drop: You pull on a vine to upset your opponent's footing or hit her at just the right angle to disrupt her balance, causing her to fall prone in her current space.

Terrain Injury: You send a hail of stones, thorns, or some other environmental debris at your opponent. She suffers 1d6 points of damage.

Tumble: Tumbling Strike

You somersault and twist to avoid your opponent's attacks and make a single, critical strike. Your maneuver catches your foe off guard, allowing you to strike her from an unexpected direction.

Mechanics: As a full-round action, you may make a Tumble check with a Difficulty Class equal to your opponent's base attack bonus +5. If your check succeeds, you may make a single attack at your best base attack bonus. Your opponent loses her Dexterity bonus to Armor Class against this attack. If your check fails, you provoke an attack of opportunity from your opponent.

Use Rope: Create Lasso

You can fashion a lasso from a length of rope and use it to rope an opponent. While a lasso can rarely hold a foe in place for long, it can at least temporarily hinder her.

Mechanics: You must spend 10 minutes fashioning a 50-foot or longer length of rope into a lasso. This requires a Use Rope check (DC 20). If this check succeeds, your lasso is prepared for 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, you may make a Use Rope check opposed by your opponent's Strength check or Escape Artist check (opponent's choice). If you succeed, your opponent suffers a –2 penalty on attacks, checks, and Reflex saves. She can escape by making a Strength check or Escape Artist check as a move action opposed by your Strength check. She can move only if she succeeds at an opposed Strength check against you. She drags you along unless you choose to drop the rope, at which point she springs free. Dropping the rope is a free action. While you have an opponent lassoed, you must use a standard action each round to keep her tangled. Otherwise, she immediately breaks free.

Stunts: Free-Form Combat Skill Use

A monk runs up a bent giant's back to leap to the ceiling. A sorcerer slides along a patch of ice to dive beneath an oncoming white dragon. A daring rogue swings on a chandelier to barrel into the corrupt duke's guards. These astounding acts are perfectly at home on the silver screen, where frenetic action and dazzling effects can wow audiences. They can also make a fantasy game more interesting and entertaining. A character can dive from a cliff to tackle a villain, or someone might decide to take falling damage in exchange for flopping prone in front of a dangerous enemy.

The following rules provide for a free-form use of skills to attempt stunts. You might use Balance and Tumble as a conjoined skill check to run along a rope, dive to the courtyard below, and somersault past a guard. You could use Climb and Jump to run up the back of a staggering ogre and leap to the balcony above the creature. Under the rules presented here, you pick out skills, describe what you want to do and the mechanical benefit you gain from it, and your DM gives you a Difficulty Class for the stunt you want to perform.

Mechanics

A stunt is a standard skill check or a conjoined skill check that allows you to make an astounding maneuver to slip past your enemies or attack them in a manner straight out of a high-octane action movie. With a sufficiently high check result, you can pull off a truly amazing act of acrobatics and athleticism.

A stunt usually requires a move action, though an attack stunt (discussed later in this section) is a full-round action. As part of a stunt, you can move a distance of up to your speed as normal. In essence, a stunt combines a standard move with a skill check. For example, you might run across a balcony and flip through the air to land between the evil knight and the helpless old wizard. In this case, your stunt consists of a move followed by a skill check to land safely and to hit the exact spot between the two.

Determining a Stunt's DC

A stunt relies on a few factors to determine its difficulty and the benefit it grants you. A stunt's base DC is 10. When you attempt a stunt, you must describe it to your DM, who assigns it a DC based on what you gain from it. You can attempt to gain more than one benefit at the same time, requiring you to make a conjoined check.

The basic formula for a stunt DC is:

10 + stunt DC modifiers + DM's judgment factor

or

Stunt base DC + DM's judgment factor

If you must succeed at a conjoined skill check to complete a stunt, determine the DCs for each check separately. If everything you want to accomplish uses a single skill, your DM may call for a conjoined skill check involving multiple checks using the same skill for each part of the stunt. For example, if you want to leap to a rope dangling from a ceiling, swing over the room, then leap down to a giant's back, your DM may require two conjoined Jump checks. The first check is for your leap to the rope, the second for the jump down to the giant.

Skills and Stunts

Each different type of stunt is tied to a specific skill. The skills and their related stunts are detailed below, using the following format.

Stunts: Descriptions of effects and DC modifiers for typical stunts.

Failure: What usually happens if you attempt the stunt and fail.

Notes: General advice on how to use this skill if a character wants to attempt a stunt that these rules do not cover.

These rules serve as basic examples of the sorts of stunts that a PC can attempt. You and your DM can use these rules as a basic template for determining other stunts.

BALANCE (DEX)

One type of stunt that uses the Balance skill allows you to move along surfaces that normally would be impossible to walk upon, such as a giant's back or a tightrope. Another allows you to hustle along, using the terrain to increase your speed.

Stunts: The following stunts are possible through the use of the Balance skill.

Daring Run: You move along a horizontal or sloped surface that normally might be impossible to walk along, such as a crouched ogre's back or a collapsing tower—you run along its structure as it leans and falls to the ground. *Modifier:* +5 to check Difficulty Class for each 10 feet moved.

Hustle: You move faster than normal, taking advantage of the environment, such as scurrying down a slope or making a short jump off a ledge, to increase the distance you can move. *Modifier:* +5 to check DC for each additional 5 feet moved.

Failure: If you fail the Balance check to perform a stunt, you fall prone halfway through your move. You might suffer falling damage depending on the circumstances.

Notes: Balance is useful for all stunts that require movement along a sloped or horizontal surface that would normally be impossible to negotiate. Think of it as a character's ability to move from point A to point B with skill and panache.

CLIMB (STR)

The Climb skill is rarely used on its own to complete a stunt. Instead, it serves as a useful skill to conjoin with other attempts. Climb allows you to move vertically, such as scaling a giant's body by grabbing onto its belt, the links of its chainmail, and other convenient handholds.

Stunts: The following stunts are possible through the use of the Climb skill.

Rapid Ascent: With the aid of the terrain or the environment, you make your way up a surface with incredible speed. You can move upward a distance in feet equal to your Climb check result. Note that this stunt assumes you have some method of aiding your ascent, such as handholds or a rope. Otherwise, you probably need to use Jump to move upward.

Rapid Descent: Using a rope or handholds, you scramble down a surface. You can move downward a distance in feet equal to twice your Climb skill check result, though you must move in increments of 5 feet as normal. Round down to the nearest number divisible by 5 to determine how far you can move. Note that this stunt assumes you have some method of aiding your descent, such as handholds or a rope. Otherwise, you probably need to use Jump to move downward.

Failure: If you fail your Climb check by 10 or less, you make no progress. If you fail by more than 10, you fall from your starting position and land prone. If you were standing on the ground, you still fall prone.

Notes: When using it to perform a stunt, the Climb skill works well for any situation in which a character moves straight up or straight down with the assistance of some object or handholds.

JUMP (STR)

If you want to move up or down without the aid of a rope or other piece of equipment, you need to use the Jump skill. Jump also allows you to land with precision. For example, you might want to leap onto a horse's back.

Stunts: The following stunts are possible through the use of the Jump skill.

Downward Leap: You leap down and land in such a way that you keep your feet under you and avoid taking damage. The DC for this Jump check is half the distance you fall in feet, rounded down, +10.

Precise Landing: You try to land in a precise spot, such as on top of an opponent, upon a horse's back, or in a specific location (empty square,) ready to fight. If you want to land in a specific location, the stunt Difficulty Class modifier is +5. If you want to end your jump by landing on a target creature, the stunt Difficulty Class modifier depends on the target's size in relation to yours:

DC Modifier	Target Size
+15	Two or more sizes smaller than you
+10	One size smaller than you
+5	Same size as you
+0	One size larger than you
−5	Two sizes larger than you
−10	Three sizes larger than you
−15	Four or more sizes larger than you

If you want to inflict damage or knock a foe prone with this stunt, you need to consult the "Attack Stunts" section on page 60. Attack stunts allow you to use maneuver effects from Chapter One as part of a stunt. For example, you could jump on someone to knock her prone, stun her, or deny her a Dexterity bonus to Armor Class as you cling to your target's back and hack away.

Upward Leap: An upward leap is difficult but not impossible. You can jump up into the air a distance in feet equal to half your Jump check result. If you have a running start or other source of momentum, such as if you are starting out on the back of a horse, you can jump a distance in feet equal to your check result. As a rule of thumb, if you jump upward at 45 degrees or less, count it as a horizontal jump. If the jump's angle is greater than 45 degrees, it's a vertical jump. Round down the result to the nearest number divisible by 5, to account for the 5-foot spaces on the battle grid.

TUMBLE (DEX)

The basic rules for the Tumble skill already cover its primary use in stunts, which is the ability to move while avoiding attacks of opportunity. You can conjoin a Tumble check with some other skill check to complete a stunt without losing your guard and suffering attacks. For example, you might want to run down the banister of a staircase and past the guards charging up the stairs toward you. You would use Balance to move on the banister and Tumble to avoid the attacks of opportunity. In this case, the stunt allows you to use the lower Tumble DC for avoiding attacks as opposed to the Difficulty Class for moving through an enemy's space.

Tumble is best used for any situation in which other skills don't seem to provide a good fit. It is also the primary skill used to complete most attack stunts, described on the next page.

OTHER SKILLS

You can use other skills to complete stunts, but space and practical considerations prevent this book from examining them all. There's a point at which too many rules make a system unwieldy, slow, and difficult. In general, you can use other skills as they seem appropriate. For example, if a PC wants to stand on his horse and leap from the saddle to grab a flying creature's talon, you might require a conjoined Ride and Jump check. You could also use Balance in place of Ride, but in this case a character's ability to work with his mount is just as important as his ability to keep his feet. A skilled horseman might know his mount well enough to anticipate its moves or train it to run without bucking him. Use the guidelines below under "Free-Form Stunts" for information on setting Difficulty Classes.

FREE-FORM STUNTS

The rules given above for specific stunts are meant as a starting point. Given that a stunt can involve almost any sort of physical activity, cataloging and describing every possible use for every skill would require hundreds of pages and would make these rules cumbersome and slow. Stunts should make the game feel more fluid, freewheeling, and exciting, not slower and more ponderous. This section gives you a basic overview of how to assign check DCs for free-form stunts.

Gauge a stunt's Difficulty Class modifier by its basic difficulty. The judgment factor, discussed below, allows the DM to further adjust a Difficulty Class based on the stunt's applicability and net effect.

+0 DC Modifier/No Check Needed: Stunts in this category allow a PC to take a normal action with panache and style. A character gains no special advantage from these stunts. She could move or use her skills as normal to complete the stunt. A character may want to use her Balance skill to run along a balcony's railing before attacking. The immediate area around the balcony is devoid of obstacles. She could move the same distance on foot, but the player wants her swashbuckling character to make a flamboyant maneuver. Since the character could move the total distance along the balcony with no penalty, either she makes a DC 10 check (a stunt check without a DC modifier) or the DM can allow her to forgo the check entirely.

+5 DC Modifier: A maneuver that grants a PC a small advantage falls into this category. These stunts are possible but require some effort. A fighter wants to cross an area along a balcony's railing to attack an opponent. Since the floor around the balcony is crowded with people, the character decides to run along the railing to get where she wants to go. Because she gains a benefit from this tactic (being able to move through an obstructed area), the +5 modifier fits the situation.

+10 DC Modifier: A stunt in this category requires amazing agility and skill to complete and provides two or more small benefits for performing it. A fighter who wants to swing along the chains from which lanterns dangle above a crowded balcony would use this modifier. The fighter gets to move above the crowd, and she also wants to land behind the opponent.

+15 DC Modifier: A stunt in this category is possible only in a fictional context (movies, comic books, roleplaying games). While impossible to achieve in the real world, it is thrilling and fits the tone of the game. Such a stunt would provide an important tactical advantage if completed. A fighter could try to swing along the chains above a crowded balcony, then use the last chain to swing even higher into the air and land on the railing behind her opponent. Not only does she move above the crowd and set herself up to flank her foe, but she also gains the benefit of being on higher ground when she attacks.

+20 DC Modifier: A stunt in this category is difficult or almost impossible even in fictional worlds. If completed, it would provide four or more minor advantages or a critical edge in a fight. The fighter from our continuing example could swing along the chains, swoop low to clear the area in front of her opponent for her friends to approach, then soar into the air to land on the railing behind the opponent. The fighter moves above the crowd, clears the area in front of the opponent to make this foe vulnerable to other attacks, moves past the opponent into flanking position, and gains higher ground.

As you can see from these examples, in general a +5 DC modifier is used when a stunt provides a single advantage. When assigning DCs on the fly or deciding on them for areas outside of the rules, use that as your rule of thumb. A single advantage is a +5 modifier, and each added advantage increases the DC by another +5.

Attack Stunts

A stunt doesn't always involve a leap from a balcony or some other daredevil act. You can also execute an attack with artistry or in some novel, unexpected manner. For example, you might pick up a barrel and hurl it down an alley to scatter a gang of approaching thugs. This type of stunt allows you to make one attack against many opponents.

Attack stunts use the maneuver system from Chapter One to determine their DCs. You simply pick effects that fit with the stunt's intent, then make a skill check. Your opponent's Armor Class serves as the DC for this check, with the attack modifiers for the effects used to modify the DC. All attack stunts use the same drawbacks to modify their DCs: They are all full-round actions and inflict their effects only, allowing you to reduce the DC by 10. You normally cannot add other drawbacks to reduce the DC. Thus, the base DC for an attack stunt is:

Target's AC − 10 + maneuver penalties − DM's judgment factor

If you want to inflict damage with an attack stunt, you must either use a maneuver as normal if you wield a weapon, or you can attempt an improvised attack stunt (see below).

Base Attack Checks

When PCs attempt an attack stunt, they can use their base attack bonus and whatever ability modifier fits the situation. This is a good option for many attack stunts. For example, a thief may try to throw a sheet over a guard to blind him for the moment she needs to escape. This stunt draws on her ability to throw the sheet with the accuracy needed to drape it over the guard's eyes, using her fighting ability (base attack bonus) and her Dexterity modifier.

Improvised Attack Stunts

Completing an improvised attack stunt involves an improvised weapon, such as a feature of the environment. For example, a strong character could push over a crumbling wall in a ruined castle to make an area attack against the orcs guarding the courtyard. This sort of attack requires a full-round action and an ability check. You also must select the damage you want it to inflict.

Modifier: This stunt's DC modifier is based on the damage you choose to inflict on a successful attack.

Points of Damage	DC Modifier
2d6	+5
3d6	+10
4d6	+15
5d6	+20
6d6	+25

Special: This stunt is designed to model a variety of special attacks a character can gain from the environment. You might design encounter areas that allow the characters to push boulders down on foes or pull a tapestry over a target to blind her—think of this stunt as a utility knife with a variety of applications.

Ability Checks and Stunts

Ability checks are a useful tool to determine the DC of a stunt if a skill check is not applicable. For example, a barbarian may attempt to roll a barrel down an alley as an attack stunt against a gang of orcs. Since this stunt relies on raw physical power to get the barrel rolling, it requires a Strength check. Reduce a stunt's Difficulty Class by 10 if it uses an ability check as opposed to a skill check.

The DM's Judgment Factor

As mentioned earlier, stunts are appropriate for certain types of games, particularly those that focus on swashbuckling, heroic action and creative battles. The tone and feel of the campaign play important roles in determining how stunts should work. Thus, this system uses a DM's judgment factor as part of the calculation of a stunt's Difficulty Class. This factor allows a DM to shift stunt DCs to fit his game. If he wants stunts to be common, he can reduce all DCs by 10 or more. If he wants them to play a small role in the game, he can increase all Difficulty Classes by 5 or more.

Below are several campaign templates the DM can draw upon to help guide him in assigning a judgment factor to a stunt's DC.

Campaign Type	DM's Judgment Modifier
Low stunts	+5
Normal	+0
Action-adventure	−5
Swashbuckling	−10

Low Stunts: In this sort of campaign, realism and plausibility are important parts of the game. Stunts might be possible, provided that a PC has the needed athletic skill.

Normal: This is a good setting for most campaigns. The standard stunt rules are balanced so that PCs who rely on speed and mobility can make use of stunts, but others cannot take advantage of them.

Action-Adventure: This sort of campaign emphasizes high-stakes action. A typical fight looks like something from an action movie, with combatants dashing about and spending as much time attempting cool maneuvers as they do attempting normal attacks.

Swashbuckling: In a swashbuckling campaign, almost everyone uses a stunt at least once per combat encounter. Improvised attacks and daring maneuvers play a key role. If you find that combat in the core rules sometimes becomes a bit predictable, this type of setting lets you introduce a major element of improvisation and wild action.

Descriptions and Stunts

One of the fun things about stunts is that they add a lot of fun visual details to the game. Rather than merely standing still and trading blows, a fighter dives from a balcony to attack a villain, a rogue rolls under a table and springs up to knife an orc, and so on. The descriptions of these maneuvers can add a lot of fun to the game for everyone.

Under this optional rule, the DM can reduce the Difficulty Class for a stunt based on your visual description of it or its plausibility. If you are entertaining, or if you provide a good reason why the stunt should be easier to perform, your DM might reduce its Difficulty Class. This rule doesn't provide an excuse for players to be obnoxious and badger the DM into giving them a bonus. Instead, look at it as a chance to describe your character's skill and panache. As a rule of thumb, any description or justification that takes more than 15 seconds to verbalize is too unwieldy or convoluted to be a practical course of action in a six-second combat round.

Description	DC Adjustment
Entertaining, noteworthy	−5
A logical, plausible description	−5
Worthy of a blockbuster action flick	−10
Sensible and obvious, though daring, course of action	−10
Brilliantly conceived or dramatically appropriate	−15

Common Sense and Stunts

One final piece of advice to the DM: Keep common sense in mind when adjudicating a stunt. When the rules collide with your common sense, your sense should always win out. Stunts cover a staggering array of possibilities. No set of rules could provide contingencies for every action—you must think on your feet sometimes and make snap judgments.

For example, a barbarian drops a ceiling tapestry onto a mob of mercenaries. You judge that this is an attack stunt with the maneuver effects of blinding its targets and knocking them prone. However, common sense tells you the barbarian only needs to cut or loosen the rope that holds the tapestry in place. Thus, instead of forcing him to attempt a stunt that could have a massive DC, you simply allow him a Strength check to destroy the rope or a Use Rope check to untie it. On the other hand, the mercenaries can escape the tapestry as a full-round action. They only need to crawl out to escape.

Optional Stunt Rules

The following optional rules are for DMs who want to encourage stunt attempts and make them a bigger part of the campaign. If you use one of the DM judgment factors that make stunts easier, these options are additional tools that make stunts a valid option for a wider variety of characters. PCs who don't have many skills or those who suffer armor check penalties to Jump, Climb, and similar skills usually fail at the skill check DCs that stunts require.

Battle Stunts (Optional Rule): Stunts are a lot of fun in combat, but you may find that fighters, barbarians, and paladins simply lack the skill ranks needed to be good at many of them. Under this optional rule, any character can substitute her base attack bonus for her ranks in a skill ordinarily needed to pull off a stunt. Use this rule if you want fighters, not just characters with lots of skill ranks, to attempt stunts.

Magic Stunts (Optional Rule): In games that feature lots of stunts, you can allow spellcasters to attempt them using their caster level + their spellcasting key ability modifier in place of the relevant skill modifier. To leap across a gap between two buildings, a sorcerer might tap into his draconic heritage to create spectral wings, while a cleric might invoke her god's name as she lifts a monstrous rock slab and hurls it at a frost giant. Use this rule to give spellcasters a chance to describe mundane actions in terms of magical effects and to make stunts available to them.

The Stunt Skill (Optional Rule): In some campaigns, stunts are as much a part of combat as initiative checks and attack rolls. In such a case, you can simplify things and encourage stunts by replacing the various skills needed to attempt stunts with a single Stunt skill. A character's Stunt skill modifier depends on her class. Fighters, paladins, rangers, and barbarians have a Stunt bonus equal to their base attack bonus. Bards, monks, and rogues have a Stunt bonus equal to their class level + 3. Sorcerers, wizards, clerics, and druids have a Stunt bonus equal to their caster level.

For Stunt checks, spellcasters always use their spellcasting key ability modifier; others use an ability modifier related to the nature of the stunt. A stunt that requires speed and precision draws on Dexterity, while one that demands raw physical power calls for Strength.

A multiclass character determines her Stunt bonus using the class in which she has the most levels. Determine a PC's Stunt bonus as if she had all her levels in that class. For example, a character with 10 levels in fighter and two levels in rogue has a Stunt bonus equal to the base attack bonus she would have if all 12 levels were fighter. If a character has an equal number of levels in two or more classes, the player chooses. When prestige classes are involved, the DM judges which kind of standard class equates with a prestige class. Some of these decisions are logical and easy—treat assassin levels as rogue levels, hierophant levels as cleric levels, and dragon disciple levels as sorcerer or bard levels. However, the number of prestige classes in the game (counting the Core Rulebooks as well as other published works) makes it virtually impossible to slot every prestige class into a particular category.

In addition to these base Stunt modifiers, a character can spend skill points to increase her Stunt bonus to a maximum of her level + 3.

Use this rule if stunts are an important part of your game. With this option, every character has a basic aptitude for stunts.
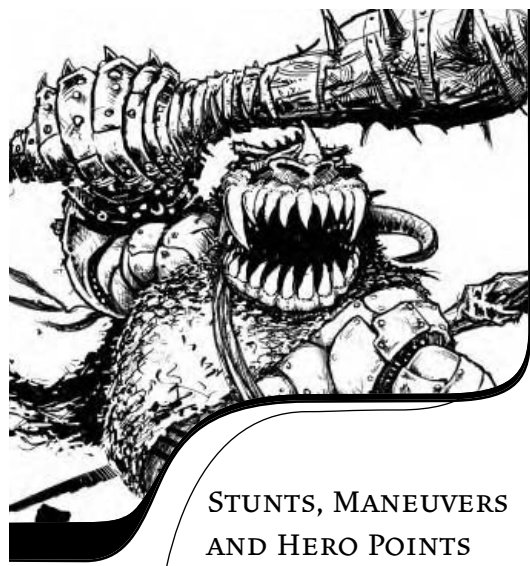
Arcana Unearthed Conversions

Using The Book of Iron Might *with Monte Cook's Arcana Unearthed is easy. This appendix offers notes on how to categorize the new feats from this book and also discusses the role of hero points in stunts and maneuvers.*

STUNTS, MANEUVERS AND HERO POINTS

Stunts and maneuvers are exactly the sort of actions that hero points were tailored to cover. If you spend a hero point, you can create a maneuver or a stunt on the fly. You gain a +20 bonus on the attack roll or skill check you make to complete the action.

THE IRONBORN

The ironborn are not part of the official *Arcana Unearthed* setting, but you can add them to your game using the history and backstory from this book. The ironborn may have been created by a lone spellcaster of indeterminate race. The giants have the same caretaking attitude toward the ironborn as they do toward other races, allowing the ironborn to fit into society with fewer obstacles. However, other races may be less sympathetic. Sibeccai may find them vaguely offensive, since ironborn remind them of their origin as a created race.

FEATS

Each new feat category introduced in this book falls into one of the categories described in *Arcana Unearthed*, with a few exceptions.

Arcane Battle Feats: These count as general feats. Use them unchanged.

Battlemind Feats: These count as ceremonial feats.

Fighting Style Feats: All fighting style feats count as talents. Otherwise, they remain the same. Note that in some cases, existing talents are in essence replaced by these new feats. For example, Natural Archer and Natural Swordsman fill roles similar to particular fighting styles from this book. However, they have fewer prerequisites, which makes them more useful to some characters.

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