



### THE MYTHIC WORLD OF OLDSKULL

## <u>Book I:</u> Oldskull Warriors

#### A Basic / Expert / Advanced

Classic Rules Supplement For Fantasy Role-Playing Games

V1.0

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## <u>Chapter I:</u> Description

Wonderland Imprints is proud to present the first volume in the Mythic World of Oldskull series, providing the advanced modular rules developed for author Kent David Kelly's epic campaign adventure game. These volumes are designed to integrate perfectly with one another if you collect them all, or to stand alone if you prefer to pick and choose aspects from the Oldskull campaign that you're personally intrigued by. If you're looking for universal and directly compatible old school materials to bridge the original game editions created by Arneson and Gygax (1974-1985), Holmes (1977), Moldvay and Cook (1981), Mentzer (1983-1986), and other luminaries of TSR (1974-1989) into a single refined system, you've come to the right place.

This detailed volume features the fully refined and corrected classes of the warrior archetype: the doughty Fighter (with clarified rules for weapon specialization), the revised Oldskull Barbarian, the intrepid Hunter, and the deadly Ranger of Queen's Cambria. All classes have been fully integrated with world mythology, folklore, weird fiction, and detailed campaign notes from the author's campaign that will bring your warrior characters alive in the World of Oldskull. All of the classes and rules have been reimagined and updated throughout with extensive sagely advice along with out-of-print magazine and newszine errata, supplemented by notes and musings derived from E. Gary Gygax in accordance with his vision for his never-attained Advanced Second Edition.

Twenty of the new elements and systems you will find herein include: extensive themes and evocative level titles for all classes, social standing guidelines by level, freehold guidelines for fighter lords, fighter command ranks, fighter morale and loyalty effects on soldiers, corrected and more intuitive weapon specialization, jumping rules, non-thief climbing rules, rebalanced barbarian role-playing guidelines, 11 iconic Oldskull barbarian tribes (the Amazons, Cimmerians, Stygians, etc.), full barbarian skills based on Gygax's hunter notes, snare setting rules, wound binding rules, full hunter skills, beast mastery rules, spirit hounds for high-level hunters, free-from-problematic-IP background lore for the ranger class, fully corrected and justified ranger spell casting rules for druidic and magical powers, corrected tracking rules (following from the Unearthed paradigm), and rebalanced and fairer thematic disadvantages for the ranger class.

I hope you enjoy this celebration of the old school TSR tradition. Be sure to watch for future volumes in this series which will detail the full array of character classes, new classes and races, adventuring rules, campaign setting details, and much more. Another fine gaming supplement from Kent David Kelly and Wonderland Imprints, *Only the Finest Works of Fantasy*. (141 pages, 41,200 words.)











## <u>Chapter II:</u> The Fighter Class

#### **Overview of the Fighter Class**

**Description:** Fighters, sometimes termed fighting men and women, are the finest stouthearted warriors, footmen, guardsmen, and soldiers of the realms. They trust their strength, bravery, and mastery of weapons to win the day. To that end, they practice endlessly with their weapons, providing them with battle provess that few others can match.

The fighters prefer brute force over uncertain magical forces, and so they have no spell casting capability. At low levels, fighters tend to be more powerful than spell casters, and the party may rely on them to serve as guardians, defenders, and monster slayers whenever a furious melee is underway. Other classes have more special abilities, certainly, but when the fighter's combat ability is combined with leadership and their rapid progression (due to low experience requirements for the higher levels), there are few nemeses who can stand before them.





The play style associated with fighters is one of direct solutions and physical prowess. Fighters tend to act first and think later, bashing down doors, killing enemies, destroying obstacles and intimidating doubters. This is not to say that they are all unintelligent, but they can be exceedingly rash when their blood is up ... which is often. Other PCs might need to intervene when subtler methods are required.

**Fighters of Renown:** Famed fighters from history in the World of Oldskull include Achilles (the Greek hero), Aeneas (Roman), Alexander (Macedonian), Beowulf (the Geatish champion and king), Gilgamesh (Sumerian), King Leonidas (Spartan), Sigurd (Norse), Sir John Hawkwood of the White Company (English), Spartacus (Thracian), and many others. Fighters are among the most commonly encountered Non-Player Characters.

**Immortal Fighters:** War deities are the most powerful fighters in existence. Many fighters worship the war gods as a matter of course. Well-known examples include Andraste (a Gaulish battle goddess), Anhur (Egyptian, most commonly worshipped by male fighters), Ares (Greek), Belonna (Roman, worshipped by female fighters), Mars (Roman, worshipped by male fighters), the circle of the Seven Sebitti (Babylonian), Sekhmet (Egyptian, worshipped by female fighters), Tyr (Norse), and other martial demigods and deities far and wide.

#### **Becoming a Fighter**

**Alignment:** A fighter may be of any alignment.

Ancestral Limitations: All ancestries can adopt the fighter class.

Minimum Ability Scores: STR 9+, DEX 6+, CON 7+, INT 3+, WIS 6+, CHA 6+.

**Social Standing:** Fighters have no social standing requirements; their standing is randomly generated during the character creation process. As a baseline, level 1 or 2 human fighter NPCs tend to belong to the Upper Lower Class (ULC-3). More experienced NPC fighters are typically Lower Middle Class (LMC-4) for levels 3 to 5, Middle Class (MMC-5) for levels 6 to 8, Upper Middle Class (UMC-6) for levels 9 to 11, Lower Upper Class (LUC-7) for levels 12 to 14, and Middle Upper Class (MUC-8) for levels 15 and up.

#### Archetypal Considerations for the Fighter

**Combat Prowess:** As warriors, fighters have the most efficient combat prowess progression rate in the game. They gain power through weapon specialization and multiple attacks.

**Hit Dice:** Fighters roll D10s for hit points (with constitution modifiers applying to each die), up through experience level 9. Beyond level 9, they gain +3 hit points per level (with constitution modifiers no longer applying).

Iconic Armor: Fighters can wear any type of armor, and can also use any type of helm and shield.

**Iconic Arms:** Fighters can wield any type of weapon.

**Prime Requisite:** The prime requisite for a fighter is strength. Fighters with STR 16+ gain a +10% bonus to all experience point marks earned.





**Saving Throws:** Fighters tend to have relatively poor saving throws. They are most resistant to paralyzation, poison, and death magic, and most vulnerable to breath weapons and spells.



#### **Fighter Progression**

**Class Level Limit:** Fighters have no class-imposed maximum experience level.

**Non-Human Level Limit:** Ancestral level limits, however, will still apply to demi-human and half-human fighters. Refer to the appropriate ancestry for details.

Human Level Limit: Human fighters can attain any experience level.

**Pace of Progression:** The fighter class has an average pace of progression in relation to other classes. Fighters who attain 25 XP are level 3, and those with 50 XPM are level 4. Those with 100 XPM are level 5, those with 250 XPM are level 6, and those with 500 XPM are level 8. In consideration of higher experience levels, those with XPM 1,000 are level 9, those with XPM 2,500 are level 10, those with XPM 5,000 are level 13, and those with XPM 10,000 are level 18.





**TABLE 1:** 

#### **Experience Progression for the Fighter Class**

Experience Point Marks	Experi ence Level	Earned HD / hp	Cumulative HD / hp	Exemplary Title	
0 to 7.99	1	1D10 hp	1D10 hp	Armsman / Armswoman	
8 to 15.99	2	+1D10 hp	2D10 hp	Sergeant	
16 to 31.99	3	+1D10 hp	3D10 hp	Lieutenant	
32 to 69.99	4	+1D10 hp	4D10 hp	Swordmaster / Swordmistress	
70 to 139.99	5	+1D10 hp	5D10 hp	Captain	
140 to 279.99	6	+1D10 hp	6D10 hp	Veteran Captain	
280 to 499.99	7	+1D10 hp	7D10 hp	Captain of Arms	
500 to 999.99	8	+1D10 hp	8D10 hp	Elite Captain	
1,000 to 1,999.99	9	+1D10 hp	9D10 hp	Lord / Lady	
2,000 to 2,999.99	10	+3 hp	9D10+3 hp	High Lord / Lady	
3,000 to 3,999.99	11	+3 hp	9D10+6 hp	Warlord / Lady of War	
4,000 to 4,999.99	12	+3 hp	9D10+9 hp	Marshal	
5,000 to 5,999.99	13	+3 hp	9D10+12 hp	Lord Marshal / Lady Marshal	
6,000 to 6,999.99	14	+3 hp	9D10+15 hp	Overlord / Dame Overlord	
7,000 to 7,999.99	15	+3 hp	9D10+18 hp	Grand Overlord / Grand Dame Overlord	
8,000 to 8,999.99	16	+3 hp	9D10+21 hp	Supreme Overlord / Dame Overlord	
9,000 to 9,999.99	17	+3 hp	9D10+24 hp	Glorious Overlord / Dame Overlord	
10,000 to 10,999.99	18	+3 hp	9D10+27 hp	Exalted Overlord / Dame Overlord	
11,000 to 11,999.99	19	+3 hp	9D10+30 hp	Overlord Illustrious / Dame Overlord Illustrious	
12,000 to 12,999.99	20	+3 hp	9D10+33 hp	Sovereign Overlord / Dame Overlord	
13,000 to 13,999.99	21	+3 hp	9D10+36 hp	Overlord Imperious / Dame Overlord Imperious	
14,000 to 14,999.99	22	+3 hp	9D10+39 hp	Mythic Overlord / Dame Overlord	
15,000 to 15,999.99	23	+3 hp	9D10+42 hp		
16,000 to 16,999.99	24	+3 hp	9D10+45 hp	Unconquerable Overlord / Dame Overlord	
17,000 to 17,999.99	25	+3 hp	9D10+48 hp	Immortal Overlord / Dame Overlord	
(+1,000)	(+1)	+3 hp	(+3 hp)	(Unique)	

**Experience Point System Conversion Note:** For conversion purposes, when using older game supplements, the Game Master can consider an experience point mark (XPM) to be equivalent to approximately 250 experience points (XP) in the older rules. Therefore, XP totals in older rules can be divided by 250 and then reduced to two decimal places as an XPM conversion.

For example, an orc that is worth 15 XP in the old system would be worth 0.06 XPM; a potion of healing worth 200 XP would be worth 0.80 XPM; a trove of 2,367 gold pieces worth 2,367 XP would be worth 9.47 XPM; and so forth.





#### TABLE 2:

#### Suggested Level Titles for Fighters

Fighter's Experience Level	Recommended Level Titles
1	Amazon (female only), Armsman / Armswoman, Brawler, Footman / Footwoman, Guardsman / Guardswoman, Petty Sergeant (if a leader of men-at-arms), Sentry, Trooper, Veteran (if hailing from a background with experience as a man-at-arms)
2	Battler, Hoplite, Junior Lieutenant (if a leader of men-at-arms), Legionnaire, Ruffian (if of neutral or evil alignment), Sergeant (if a leader of men-at-arms), Shield Brother / Sister, Warrior, Watchman / Watchwoman
3	Lieutenant (if a leader of men-at-arms), Senior Sergeant (if a leader of men-at-arms), Skull Crusher (if evil), Swordsman / Swordswoman
4	Antihero / Antiheroine (if evil), Challenger, Gladiator / Gladiatrix (if an arena fighter), Hero / Heroine (if good), Senior Lieutenant (if a leader of men-at-arms),



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	Sergeant of Arms (if a leader of men-at-arms), Steward (if presiding over a lord's
	manor), Swordmaster / Swordmistress
5	Bladesman / Bladeswoman, Captain (if a leader of men-at-arms), Castellan (if presiding over a lord's stronghold), Duelist, High Steward (if presiding over a lord's manor), Victorious Gladiator / Gladiatrix (if an arena fighter)
6	Chief Steward (if presiding over a lord's manor), Grand Castellan (if presiding over a lord's stronghold), Master Bladesman, Myrmidon, Veteran Captain (if a leader of men-at-arms)
7	Captain of Arms (if a leader of men-at-arms), Champion, Vaunted Captain (if a leader of men-at-arms), Vaunted Chief Steward (if presiding over a lord's manor), Vaunted Grand Castellan (if presiding over a lord's stronghold)
8	Anti-Superhero / Anti-Superheroine (if evil), Elite Captain (if a leader of men-at- arms), Entrusted Chief Steward (if presiding over a lord's manor), Entrusted Grand Castellan (if presiding over a lord's stronghold), Superhero / Superheroine (if good)
9	Baronet (if the ruler of a freehold), Lord / Lady
10	Baron / Baroness (if the ruler of a freehold), High Lord / Lady
11	Arch-Baron / Arch-Baroness (if the ruler of a mid-sized freehold), General, Vice Marshal, Warlord / Lady of War
12	Marshal, Vaunted Warlord / Lady of War, Viscount / Viscountess (if the ruler of a large freehold)
13	High Warlord / Lady of War, Count / Countess (if the ruler of a large freehold), Lord Marshal / Lady Marshal
14	Grand Marshal, Marquis / Marchioness (if the ruler of a very large freehold), Overlord / Dame Overlord
15	Duke / Duchess (if the ruler of a very large freehold), Grand Overlord / Grand Dame Overlord
16	Archduke / Archduchess (if the ruler of a great freehold), Supreme Overlord / Supreme Dame Overlord
17	Archon Overlord, Glorious Overlord / Dame Overlord, Revered Archduke / Archduchess (if the ruler of a great freehold)
18	Exalted Archduke / Archduchess (if the ruler of a great freehold), Exalted Overlord / Dame Overlord, High Archon Overlord
19	Grand Archon Overlord, Lord Dominus / Lady Domina (if the ruler of a great freehold), Overlord Illustrious / Dame Overlord Illustrious
20	High Lord Dominus / High Lady Domina (if the ruler of a great freehold), Sovereign Overlord / Dame Overlord, Supreme Archon Overlord
21	Exalted Archon Overlord, Overlord Imperious / Dame Overlord Imperious, Warlord Dominus / Domina (if the ruler of a great freehold)





22	High Warlord Dominus / Domina (if the ruler of a great freehold), Mythic Archon Overlord, Mythic Overlord / Dame Overlord
23	Legendary Archon Overlord, Legendary Overlord / Dame Overlord, Overlord Dominus / Domina (if the ruler of a great freehold)
24	Unconquerable Archon Overlord, Unconquerable Overlord / Dame Overlord
25	Immortal Archon Overlord, Immortal Overlord / Dame Overlord



#### **Powers and Advantages of the Fighter Class**

**Bardic Warrior Potential:** Truly exceptional human and half-elven fighters might have the option of becoming bardic warriors later in the campaign with further experience progression. This potential only applies to fighters with the following minimum ability scores: STR 15+, DEX 15+, INT 12+, WIS 15+, CON 10+, CHA 15+. Refer to the bardic warrior class description for further details.

**Battle Mastery:** Mid- and high-level fighters gain additional melee (but not missile or thrown) attacks<sup>1</sup> per round as summarized below. These attack rates apply against all foes of hit dice (HD) 1 or experience level 1, or higher. Compare with Merciless Onslaught (below).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Refer to the September 1982 newszine.





TABLE 3:

#### Melee Attack Rates for Fighters (without Weapon Specialization)

Fighter's Experience Level	Melee Attack Rate	Notes
1 to 6	1/1 (1 melee attack per round)	Normal attacking ability (akin to the prowess possessed by non-fighter characters).
7 to 12	3/2 (3 attacks every 2 rounds)	The fighter attacks once in the first round that he or she engages in combat. Then, on even-numbered engagement rounds (2, 4, 6, etc.) he or she attacks twice in the same round.
13 or higher	2/1 (2 melee attacks per round)	The fighter can attack twice every melee round.

Note that if a fighter is wielding two weapons (such as a short sword in the main hand and a dagger in the off hand), the battle mastery advantage only applies to the main hand weapon. Therefore, in this example a level 7 fighter would in the odd combat rounds attack once with the sword, and once with the dagger. In the even combat rounds, she would attack twice with the sword and once with the dagger. Attack rate with the off-hand dagger, in other words, would never increase.<sup>2</sup>

**Claiming a Freehold:** At experience level 9 or higher, a fighter can opt to create a freehold. This is a highly ambitious endeavor that involves venturing forth beyond the borderlands and into the wilderness, clearing an area of hostile monsters, and establishing a tower or stronghold of some kind. The GM will likely note – as a matter of background behind the scenes – that a named local noble has given the fighter free reign to clear the hostile area within reason, since a diminishment of monsters in the nearby wilderness will always result in a significant improvement of regional stability and peacefulness in the nearby realm(s).

To establish a freehold, the fighter must decide upon an approved suitable area and then build a new stronghold, employing the use of laborers, allies, architects, engineers, and a considerable amount of gold. Nearby monsters within a 20-mile radius will likely be made aware of the fighter's activities in the region. Evil monsters would likely attack given the opportunity, while good monsters might even offer a tentative alliance while the stronghold construction is underway. Powerful and intelligent creatures such as dragons might require a delicate hand or perhaps a payment of tribute to avoid hostilities, dependent upon alignment differences between the monster and the fighter. Construction of a stronghold might well take a game year or two before the structure is complete. The GM should encourage the adventuring party to encamp and use the nascent freehold as their base of operations, so that dungeon and wilderness adventures can continue while the fighter works to establish a partially-constructed yet defensible tower, moathouse, or keep.

Once the stronghold is in a habitable state, the fighter must then explore the surrounding region, killing or driving off any dangerous creatures that reside there. The area must be at least 20 miles in

<sup>2</sup> Refer to the Dragonsfoot Gygax Q&A V, January 10th, 2006.





radius from the stronghold, and could be up to 50 miles. Some of the monsters in the area will have certainly made their presence known prior to this expedition, but this phase is much more ambitious because it involves the fighter (and likely, PC allies) establishing dominance over the entire area with no unknown regions left remaining.



A 20-mile radius has an area of about 1,250 square miles; a 50-mile radius is about 7,850 square miles. The amount of land explored and cleared will be reliant upon the fighter's long-term ambitions, as well as the threat level of any random monster lairs discovered in the area. The fighter's player decides when the conquest expedition is "complete", and then followers will arrive. If the radius is later expanded, proportionally more new colonists will be attracted to the area over time.

Once the land has first been cleared and proclaimed as such by the fighter, the fighter is awarded 200 experience point marks in addition to all earlier rewards for monsters vanquished and treasures





gathered. Over the next 1D6 weeks, settlers (perhaps 1,000-6,000 initially, depending upon the radius of land that was cleared) will begin to move into the area to establish homesteads, farms, mining operations, trading posts, and so forth. They will be accompanied by a fair number of NPC mercenary men-at-arms led by a captain, who will be eager to serve the fighter as fairly-paid soldiers. These soldiers are determined by the GM using the standard Advanced rules system.

Note too that under the inspiring presence rules (described later in this section), these mercenaries will experience an immediate improvement to their morale score in the fighter's service, and after a month's time – if treated well – they will have a loyalty bonus toward the fighter as well.

The fighter will be able to collect taxes and tariffs amounting to 7 silver pieces from each settler and soldier monthly, which will amount to a meager monthly passive income of 350 to 2,100 gold pieces for the fighter for as long as the freehold is protected and maintained. This bare sum can be massively increased over time if the player wishes to engage the fighter in concerted actions within the freehold and its surrounding dangerous borderlands.







The following table summarizes GM recommendations for the varying types and sizes of freeholds that a fighter might choose to establish.

#### TABLE 4:

#### **Relative Standing of Freeholds for Fighter Lords**

Hierarchy	Freehold Standing	Radius Cleared	Approximate Freehold Area	Initial Colonists	Bonus to GM's Mercenary Roll	Total Yearly Tariffs
I	Tenuous	20 miles	1,250 sq. mi.	1,000	(None)	4,200 gp
II	Founded	25 miles	1,960 sq. mi.	1,500	+10	6,300 gp
III	Proven	30 miles	2,830 sq. mi.	2,000	+20	8,400 gp
IV	Impressive	35 miles	3,850 sq. mi.	3,000	+40	12,600 gp
v	Imposing	40 miles	5,030 sq. mi.	4,000	+60	16,800 gp
VI	Baronial	45 miles	6,360 sq. mi.	5,000	+80	21,000 gp
VII	Arch-Baronial	50 miles	7,850 sq. mi.	6,000	+100	25,200 gp

The furtherance of freeholds beyond arch-baronial status is dependent upon not only the size of the freehold, but also the fighter's experience level, social standing, and efforts made to further glorify the region and its defenders over years of game time.

**Commanding Ranks:** If the fighter is a leader of men-at-arms – either hired mercenaries, or mercenaries beckoned to a freehold, as described prior – the fighter character's leadership capacity also comes into play.<sup>3</sup>

Most adventuring low- and mid-level PC fighters will only hire small groups of men-at-arms, at most; but if a player expresses a willingness to command a fair number of troops, or establishes a freehold, note that fighters have a special ability – through discipline, command, martial experience, and orders – to simultaneously control more men-at-arms than a mere charisma score might dictate.

This command ability only applies to men-at-arms. Other level 0 troops (peasant militia, for example) lack the discipline to be properly commanded, and level 1+ NPCs will refuse to act as mere rank and file soldiers.

The solo command ability of a fighter (without consideration of subordinate officers, who can supplement command ability at higher levels), by the fighter's experience marks, experience level, and charisma (CHA) score, can be categorized as follows:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> This system is derived and extended from the entries detailing mercenary soldier commanders in the 1979 GM's Guide. Other influences include Sir John Hawkwood and also *The White Company*, a medieval adventure novel by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.





TABLE 5:

#### **Command Ability for Fighters Leading Men-at-Arms**

Minimum Experience Point Marks	Fighter's Experience Level	Common Oldskull Command Rank Nomenclature	Maximum Simultaneous Command (CHA 6-14)	Maximum Simultaneous Command (CHA 15+)	
0	1	Petty Sergeant	8 men-at-arms	10 men-at-arms	
8	2	Sergeant	10 men-at-arms	12 men-at-arms	
12	2	Junior Lieutenant	12 men-at-arms	15 men-at-arms	
16	3	Senior Sergeant	16 men-at-arms	20 men-at-arms	
24	3	Lieutenant	30 men-at-arms	36 men-at-arms	
32	4	Sergeant of Arms	50 men-at-arms	60 men-at-arms	
48	4	4 Senior Lieutenant 80 men-at-arms		100 men-at-arms	
70	5	Captain	100 men-at-arms	120 men-at-arms	
140	6	Veteran Captain	120 men-at-arms	140 men-at-arms	
280	7	Captain of Arms	140 men-at-arms	160 men-at-arms	
420	7	Vaunted Captain	aunted Captain 160 men-at-arms 180		
500	8	Elite Captain	180 men-at-arms 200 men-at-		
1,000	9	Lord	200 men-at-arms	250 men-at-arms	
2,000	10	High Lord	250 men-at-arms	350 men-at-arms	
3,000	11	Vice Marshal	350 men-at-arms	500 men-at-arms	
4,000	12	Marshal	500 men-at-arms	750 men-at-arms	
5,000	13	Lord Marshal	750 men-at-arms	1,000 men-at-arms	
6,000	14	Grand Marshal	1,000 men-at-arms	1,500 men-at-arms	
(+1,000)	(+1)	(Unique)	(+500)	(+1,500)	

**Inspiring Presence:** More so than any other character class, the fighter is a "local boy (or girl) gone strong" ... a veteran man-at-arms who gains significant proficiency and who rises through the ranks of power through sheer steadfastness, along with fearless determination. "Normal" (level zero) men and women know this; they either remember the fighter character from time spent in the guard or footman ranks, or they can sense the warrior's innate mettle and common martial origin. This aura effect is very similar to the way that charisma can be felt between strangers, in some cases even before a word is ever spoken.

As such, fighters inspire any NPC men-at-arms who are allied with the adventuring party. This effect does not apply to NPCs of level 1+, or to Player Characters under any circumstances.

The following table shows the degree to which a fighter increases morale and possibly loyalty. Morale bonuses apply to all men-at-arms present, while loyalty bonuses only apply to those who are employed in the long term – at least a month – and are directly commanded by the fighter. The morale and loyalty bonuses are always higher if the fighter character is the commander, as opposed to merely being present.

Therefore, if Lucretia the fighting woman and Malachai the magic user are allied together in a party, and Malachai hires men-at-arms for a month, these soldiers will gain morale simply from Lucretia's presence, but they will not gain loyalty because they are employed by Malachai, not by Lucretia. Unless Malachai is exceptionally charismatic, he would be wise to relinquish command to Lucretia in





this instance, so that the men-at-arms gain both significant morale and loyalty, thereby increasing the entire party's survival odds.

TABLE 6:	
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Inspiring Presence Morale Modifiers for Party Men-at-Arms							
Fighter Character's Experience Level	Morale Modifier (if Fighter is Present)	Morale Modifier (if Fighter is Commander)	Loyalty Modifier (if Fighter is Present)	Loyalty Modifier (if Fighter is Commander)			
1	0%	+3%	0%	0%			
2	+3%	+6%	0%	+2%			
3	+6%	+9%	0%	+4%			
4	+9%	+12%	0%	+6%			
5	+12%	+15%	0%	+8%			
6	+15%	+18%	0%	+10%			
7	+18%	+21%	0%	+12%			
8	+20%	+24%	0%	+14%			
9	+22%	+27%	0%	+16%			
10	+24%	+30%	0%	+18%			
11	+26%	+33%	0%	+20%			
12	+28%	+36%	0%	+22%			
13	+30%	+39%	0%	+24%			
14	+32%	+42%	0%	+26%			
15	+34%	+45%	0%	+28%			
16	+36%	+48%	0%	+30%			
17	+38%	+51%	0%	+32%			
18	+40%	+54%	0%	+34%			
19	+42%	+57%	0%	+36%			
20	+44%	+60%	0%	+38%			
21	+46%	+63%	0%	+40%			
22	+48%	+66%	0%	+42%			
23	+50%	+69%	0%	+44%			
24	+52%	+72%	0%	+46%			
25	+54%	+75%	0%	+48%			

Note that an NPC's base loyalty rate is equal to 50% at the start of employment, modified by the employing character's charisma. Loyalty affects decisions made by NPCs in non-violent situations, such as when offered a bribe by a rival, or ordered to surrender a discovered treasure.

Morale, on the other hand, affects decisions made in violent situations, with successful morale checks indicating the NPC continues to fight, and failed checks indicating surrender or retreat.





An NPC's base morale rate is 50%, +5% for each experience level. Therefore a level 1 man-at-arms has loyalty 50% and morale 50%, before charisma and a fighter's inspiring presence are considered.<sup>4</sup>

Loyalty and morale ratings can be higher than 100%, which indicates fanaticism (for loyalty) or fearless zealotry (for morale). Circumstantial negative modifiers – such as harsh treatment, or nearby allies who are retreating – can temporarily reduce 100%+ scores to below 100%, depending on the exact circumstances.



**Merciless Onslaught:** When facing minor foes in melee, the fighter's superior mastery allows him or her to attack a number of times per round equal to experience level. In other words, a level 7 fighter would be able to attack 7 times per round, but only against minor foes. An attack against another type of foe would fall under the Battle Mastery advantage instead, as described above.

The onslaught fighting technique can only be used in melee, not with ranged attacks.

Minor creatures are level 0 characters such as normal men and men-at-arms, and also any monsters with fewer than 1 full hit die (1D8). Monsters with HD 1/8 (1 hp), 1/4 (1-2 hp), 1/2 (1-4 hp), 1/2+1

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> These details, while not fully explained or frequently utilized, are hidden away in the 1979 GM's Guide.





(2-5 hp), 1D6 (1-6 hp), or HD 1-1 (1-7 hp) are considered minor creatures. This classification includes bats, giant rats, goblins, kobolds, rats, and so forth.



**A Panoply of Arms:** Fighters begin play with 4 weapon proficiencies. Due to their upbringing of training as men-at-arms in various disciplines, they can become proficient in any type of weapon before the game begins. This means that the player can select all four weapon types according to his or her preferences and envisioned tactics. A good mix generally involves a powerful melee weapon (such as a sword or pole arm), a melee/thrown weapon (perhaps a spear), a missile weapon (perhaps a bow), and a concealable backup weapon such as a dagger.

However, for single-classed fighters the best approach typically involves weapon specialization, which will limit the number of available weapon proficiencies at the beginning of the game.

**Weapon Specialization:** The primary and most complex ability of the fighter class is weapon specialization, which is detailed in the next section.

#### Limitations and Disadvantages for the Fighter Class

**Martial Obsession:** Fighters do not have any spell casting ability. They can use many types of magic items however, including all weapons and armor.





**Reliance upon Magical Power:** In the early game, parties rely heavily upon fighters to battle in the front ranks, protecting spell casters and other specialists. Later in the game, however, fighters tend to lag behind spell casters in power as they become more reliant upon magic items and armor to sustain themselves.

Access to magic weapons can dictate how effective a high-level fighter can remain in the campaign, as giants, dragons, demons, and even more fearsome foes emerge as mortal enemies. A fighter's long-term goal should be to possess an intelligent magical weapon with powers and interests that are concordant with the fighter's alignment.







## <u>Chapter III:</u> Weapon Specialization

#### **Defining Weapon Specialization**

Weapon specialization is a very powerful martial ability, which allows characters to focus on the use of a single preferred weapon type to the exclusion of others.

This ability is defined here, because it is the core ability of the fighter class.<sup>5</sup> However, Game Masters will also want to review bow mastery (which is accessible to fighters and also the ranger class), as well as the general rules for weapon proficiencies.

There are four tiers of weapon skill that are defined in different ways. In order of increasing skill, they are: [1] non-proficiency (lack of skill), [2] proficiency (a basic degree of skill achievable by any character), [3] weapon mastery (available only to single-classed fighters and single-classed rangers), and [4] supreme mastery (available only to single-classed fighters).

There are six kinds of weapon specialization, each with separate rules and special abilities:

- > Melee Weapon Specialization (for fighters)
- Supreme Melee Weapon Mastery (for fighters)
- Bow Mastery (for fighters)
- Bow Mastery (for rangers)
- Crossbow Mastery (for fighters)
- Missile Weapon Mastery (for fighters)

#### **Restrictions on the Adoption of Weapon Specialization**

Only single-classed fighters and single-classed rangers can use weapon specialization. Characters who do not belong to either the fighter class or the ranger class cannot use weapon specialization. Multi-classed fighters, dual-classed fighter champions, multi-classed rangers, and dual-classed ranger champions cannot use weapon specialization either.

If a Player Character is going to engage in weapon specialization, that decision must be made by the player during character creation. No character can ever engage in weapon specialization later in the game, if the decision to specialize was not made and acted upon during the character generation process. This is because weapon specialization is a lifelong training activity.

Each character can only specialize in a single weapon type. An example selection is the long sword, which excludes mastery of other types of swords (such as short swords, broad swords, bastard swords, two-handed swords, and so forth). Another example selection is the short bow, which

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> In clarifying and refining the weapon specialization rules, the author also considered Len Lakofka's archer class – which brought the possibilities of weapon specialization to Gary's attention – and the introduction of the Gygaxian specialization system as featured in the October 1982 magazine.





excludes mastery of other types of bows (such as composite short bows, long bows, composite long bows, or crossbows).

A character can only remain specialized in the chosen single weapon type, regardless of other skills and proficiencies learned over time. The weapon type chosen during character creation cannot ever be changed. Although other standard weapon proficiencies can be learned, a high-level character cannot (for example) be specialized in both the two-handed sword and the long bow. The entire point of weapon specialization is that it focuses upon a warrior achieving martial mastery through neverending practice with a singular weapon type. If a player has chosen specialization in the *long* sword, and his or her character later discovers a very powerful magical *two-handed* sword as treasure, the character cannot "change" specialization from long sword to two-handed sword on the spot. At best, the character can learn normal proficiency with the two-handed sword (provided an open weapon proficiency slot exists), while remaining specialized in the long sword.



#### **Champions and the Loss of Weapon Specialization**

Importantly, note that if a human character with weapon specialization later becomes a champion (a character with two classes), and adopts the desired second class, that character immediately loses weapon specialization and all of its benefits. This is because the character is no longer single-classed, and is no longer singularly focused on a single masterful profession.





#### **Fighter Options for Weapon Specialization**

Fighters can adopt one of the following types of weapon specialization: [1] melee weapon specialization, [2] supreme melee weapon mastery, [3] bow mastery, [4] crossbow mastery, or [5] missile weapon mastery. All of these forms are separate and exclusive to one another. Options [1], [3], [4], and [5] are available during character creation. Option [2] however is an outgrowth from option [1], and cannot be earned by the fighter before experience level 4.



#### The Fighter with Melee Weapon Specialization

This option is only available to fighters.

Melee weapon specialization is a rank of prowess above normal weapon proficiency, and below supreme mastery. Players might choose this relatively cautious option if they want to their fighter to be powerful with a favored type while still having a decent number of secondary weapon skills available at lower experience levels.





Melee weapon specialization requires 2 of the fighter's 4 initial weapon proficiency slots. This means that the player can choose 1 specialized weapon, and also 2 normal weapon proficiencies. For example, the player might opt to create a fighter who is specialized in the battle axe, and also proficient with the long sword and the light crossbow.

This type of mastery can only be used with melee weapons, not with missile weapons. Hurled melee weapons can be specialized in, however.

The type of melee weapon selected must be perfectly distinct. A fighter cannot specialize with a "sword", for example; the player would need to choose between specialization with a short sword, or a broad sword, scimitar, long sword, bastard sword, etc. These are separate and distinct types of melee specialization.

Fighters with melee weapon specialization gain bonuses of +1 to hit and +2 to damage with the specialized weapon type (only), in addition to any other bonuses for superior strength, magical weaponry, etc. If the weapon type can be hurled, the +1 to hit bonus does apply in that instance. Therefore if a fighter is specialized in the hand axe, the to hit bonus will apply when the weapon is used in melee, and also when it is thrown. However, the damage bonus will *not* apply to a throw.

The fighter will also gain an increased rate of melee attacks per round when attacking with the specialized melee weapon type, as will be detailed at the end of this chapter.

#### The Fighter with Supreme Melee Weapon Mastery

This option is only available to fighters, of experience levels 4 or higher. Melee weapon specialization, described above, is a mandatory prerequisite.

Supreme melee weapon mastery – or "supreme mastery", for short – is the highest possible level of skill that a mortal can possess. This is a more aggressive play option, which gives the fighter major advantages with one melee weapon type at the risk of being caught in a helpless situation from time to time. For example, a low-level fighter with supreme long sword mastery will be deadly in hand-to-hand combat, but might be quite useless against a flying and fire-breathing dragon! The player will need to balance supreme mastery carefully with additional weapon proficiency.

In the World of Oldskull campaign, supreme mastery *cannot* be attained during character generation. It can only be attained during play, as a fighter with melee weapon specialization (above) gains experience levels and expertise.<sup>6</sup>

When the specialized fighter gains a new weapon proficiency slot at experience level 4, the player can then opt to upgrade that character's melee weapon specialization (tier I) to supreme mastery (tier II). This will upgrade the fighter's +1 to hit bonus to +3, and the +2 damage bonus to +3. These bonuses are gained with the mastered weapon type only. If the mastered weapon can be hurled, the +3 to hit

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Note that this seemingly innocuous limitation is only revealed by a strict reconsideration of the 1985 Gygaxian rules, along with a careful reading of Len Lakofka's analysis of the escalating design issue that was inflicted upon existing campaigns by the later introduction of double specialization. This limitation is, however, extremely important, because double weapon specialization is truly overpowered (trust me on this!) if it is granted to a low-level fighter. The GM should never lift this restriction upon the early adoption of double weapon specialization, unless he knows EXACTLY what he is doing to the game's inherent balance. Remember that hostile NPC fighters will certainly be utilizing weapon specialization too!





bonus does apply in that instance, but the +3 damage bonus does not. The weapon type that was previously chosen for specialization cannot be changed.





Due to the blinding speed of required maneuvers and techniques, weaponry mastery cannot be adopted for the largest melee weapons. To be specific, this means that lances, pole arms, and two-handed swords cannot be chosen for mastery. However, weapons such as the spear (a lighter quasipole arm) or the bastard sword (the next-largest sword type) *can* be mastered. If a player wishes to master a melee weapon, care must be taken during the selection of an initial specialization (tier I) to ensure that the weapon type can be mastered later on (tier II).

**Delayed Attainment of Supreme Mastery:** If, upon attaining level 4, the fighter's player chooses not to master the weapon type that is already specialized (and thereby chooses to gain proficiency with another weapon type instead), the attainment of mastery is delayed. For example, if a fighter is specialized (tier I, +1/+2) in the footman's flail, and he then attains level 4, but the player decides instead to take on a new and different weapon proficiency (such as the heavy crossbow) due to a magic weapon being discovered during play, then mastery of the flail (tier II, +3/+3) cannot yet occur, because the available proficiency slot has already been expended in learning use of the crossbow. When the attainment of supreme mastery is delayed in this manner, the player can later opt to master the specialized weapon whenever a new proficiency slot is earned. This means that the choice can be reconsidered when the fighter attains experience levels 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, etc.

#### Fighters and Rangers with Bow Mastery

This option is open to fighters, and also to rangers. This is the only type of weapon specialization that rangers can ever attain.

Fighters and rangers with bow specialization – termed master archers – must select one of the four types of bow to master. The available types are the short bow, composite short bow, long bow, or composite long bow. Each of these bow types have differing draw strengths, bowstring lengths, range classifications, and direct and indirect firing techniques. Mastery with one bow type does not confer mastery with another type.

Bow mastery can only be selected during character generation. It requires 3 weapon proficiency slots.

For a fighter, this means that the character will be a master of one bow type, and will also have 1 extra proficiency slot remaining for any other type of weapon (melee or missile) that the player desires.

For a ranger, the selection of bow mastery is a bit more nuanced, because (a) rangers only have 3 weapon proficiency slots at level 1, and (b) rangers must train with a bow before other weapon types can be considered. This means that a ranger with bow mastery will only be able to effectively wield the selected bow type. The character will have no proficiency with melee weapons, or with any other ranged weapon type, until a new weapon proficiency slot is gained at experience level 4. Just like any other character, the ranger can attack with a weapon he or she is not proficient with, but doing so comes with an accuracy penalty (-2 to hit) for every attack. Refer to the ranger class description for further limitations upon a ranger's weapon selections beyond the bow.

After weapon proficiency slots have been considered, the rules for master archers are identical, whether the archer is a fighter or a ranger.

When using the preferred bow type, the character gains an additional range category, point blank. The point blank range category runs from 6' to 30' in interior and subterranean areas, and from 6 yards to 30 yards in outdoor areas. Attack ranges of less than 6' (interior) or 6 yards (exterior) fall into a dead zone, where the master archer cannot fire a bow effectively.





Within this dead zone, the master archer can attack with a melee weapon, or can – in desperation – use an arrow in an impaling melee attack. Arrows used in this manner have a maximum range of 5', are at -2 to hit, inflict 1D4 damage with no strength bonuses applied, and any successful hit causes the arrow to break.

Arrows fired by a master archer are treated as follows:

**Point Blank Arrow Shots:** The master archer gains a +2 bonus to hit vs. targets at point blank range. An arrow fired at point blank range inflicts 2D6+4 damage, and strength and magic bonuses can also apply. (This is a rare instance where strength confers a damage bonus to a missile weapon, as a direct result of the archer's lifelong training).

**Short Range Arrow Shots:** The master archer gains +1 to hit and +1 damage vs. targets at short range. Magic bonuses can also apply, but strength bonuses do not. This range category is longer for a master archer than it is for a normal attacker, as shown in the table below.

**Medium Range Arrow Shots:** The master archer gains no significant bonuses at these ranges; their shots are at the standard -2 to hit for medium range.

**Long Range Arrow Shots:** The long range (-5 to hit) category that applies to all other characters does not apply to master archers. Read a different way, this means that a master archer's range category will never be worse than "medium", regardless of the target's distance.

**Arrows Nocked and Ready:** If a master archer begins the first round of a battle with an arrow nocked and ready on the bowstring, the archer will then be able to fire one arrow in the first segment of the round, regardless of any and all initiative rolls. A second arrow can also be fired during the initial round, but the timing of the second shot is dependent upon initiative. This special ability only applies in the first round of a battle, and only if the archer is able to remain ready to fire with the bowstring drawn. As a conditional example, an archer could not both open a door and ready an arrow to be nocked and ready in the same round; a companion would need to open the door while the archer remains prepared to fire.

The details for bows used by master archers are summarized here:

Bow Range Categories for Master Archers							
Master Archer's Bow Type	Dead Zone (No Firing)	Point Blank Range	Short Range	Medium Range	Long Range		
Short Bow	0 to 5	6 to 30	31 to 100	101 to 150	N/A		
<b>Composite Short Bow</b>	0 to 5	6 to 30	31 to 100	101 to 180	N/A		
<b>Composite Long Bow</b>	0 to 5	6 to 30	31 to 120	121 to 210	N/A		
Long Bow	0 to 5	6 to 30	31 to 140	141 to 210	N/A		

#### TABLE 7:





#### The Fighter with Crossbow Mastery

This option is only available to fighters.

Fighters with crossbow specialization – termed master arbalesters – must select either the light crossbow or the heavy crossbow to master. Mastery of the hand crossbow is allowed to dark elven (drow) NPC fighters only, because at the beginning of the campaign these weapons are only available within the drowic homeland.

Crossbow mastery can only be selected during character generation. It requires 3 weapon proficiency slots.

When using the preferred crossbow type, the character gains an additional range category, point blank. The point blank range category runs from 6' to 60' in interior and subterranean areas, and from 6 yards to 30 yards in outdoor areas. Attack ranges of less than 6' (interior) or 6 yards (exterior) fall into a dead zone, where the master arbalester cannot fire a bow effectively.

Within this dead zone, the master arbalester can attack with a melee weapon, or can – in desperation – use a quarrel (crossbow bolt) in an impaling melee attack. Bolts used in this manner have a maximum range of 5', are at -2 to hit, and any successful hit causes the bolt to break. Damage inflicted – with no strength bonuses applicable – will be 1D2 for a hand quarrel, 1D3 for a light quarrel, or 1D4 for a heavy quarrel.





Bolts fired by a master arbalester are treated as follows:

**Point Blank Bolt Shots:** The master arbalester gains a +2 bonus to hit vs. targets at point blank range. A hand bolt fired at point blank range inflicts 2D3+4 damage. A light bolt fired at point blank range inflicts 2D4+4 damage. A heavy bolt fired at point blank range inflicts 2D4+6 damage. Strength and magic bonuses can also apply.

**Short Range Bolt Shots:** The master arbalester gains +2 to hit and +1 damage vs. targets at short range. Magic bonuses can also apply, but strength bonuses do not. This range category is longer for a master arbalester than it is for a normal attacker, as shown in the table below.

**Medium Range Bolt Shots:** The master arbalester gains no significant bonuses at these ranges; their shots are at the standard -2 to hit for medium range.

**Long Range Bolt Shots:** The long range (-5 to hit) category that applies to all other characters does not apply to master arbalesters. Read a different way, this means that a master arbalester's range category will never be worse than "medium", regardless of the target's distance.

**Bolts Cocked and Ready:** If a master arbalester begins the first round of battle with a bolt nocked and ready on the crossbow, the arbalester will then be able to fire one bolt in the first segment of the round, regardless of initiative. This special ability only applies in the first round, and only if the arbalester is able to remain ready. (See the archer readiness conditional description above.)

The details for crossbows used by master arbalesters are summarized here:

<b>Crossbow Range Categories for Master Arbalesters</b>							
Master Archer'sDead ZonePointShortMediumLongCrossbow Type(No Firing)BlankRangeRangeRangeRange							
Hand Crossbow*	0 to 5	6 to 60	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Light Crossbow	0 to 5	6 to 60	61 to 120	121 to 180	N/A		
Heavy Crossbow	0 to 5	6 to 60	61 to 160	161 to 240	N/A		

#### TABLE 8:

#### \* Only single-classed dark elven (drow) fighter NPCs are capable of hand crossbow mastery.

#### The Fighter with Missile Weapon Mastery

#### This option is only available to fighters.

Rarely, a fighter might choose to specialize in another type of missile weapon that is not a bow or crossbow. These skirmish specialists are sometimes termed *Velites* (plural, singular *Veles*). The Veles character must choose one of the following weapon types for mastery: [1] atlat1 and javelin, [2] dart, [3] hurl-hammer, [4] sling, [5] staff sling, [6] throwing axe, [7] throwing dagger, [8] thrown javelin, or [9] throwing knife. Potential strategic advantages include weapon concealability, magical weapon use, and rate of fire.





Mastery of one of these missile types does not confer any melee advantage to the Veles-oriented fighter. For example, an atlatl and javelin master – mastery [1] as listed above – would not have any special advantages for wielding a javelin in melee, or when hand-throwing a javelin; the bonuses would only apply when hurling a javelin with an atlatl. By contrast, a javelin throwing master – mastery [8] listed above – would not have any special advantages for wielding a javelin in melee, or when using an atlatl; the bonuses would only apply when throwing a javelin by hand. Similarly, mastery a throwing dagger confers bonuses only when daggers are thrown, not when they are wielded in melee. Each style of weapon use has its own limited mastery specialization.

Missile weapon mastery can only be selected during character generation. It requires 2 weapon proficiency slots, not 3.

Missiles hurled by a Velite master are treated as follows:

**Point Blank Missiles:** The point blank range category does not apply with these weapon specialization options. In other words, the "short" range category is the best that can be attained for non-bow missile weapon.

**Short Range Missiles:** Missiles of the appropriate type at short range will be at +1 to hit and +2 damage.

**Medium Range Missiles:** Missiles of the appropriate type at medium range will be at no penalty to hit, but will also have no damage bonus.

**Long Range Bolt Shots:** The long range (-5 to hit) hurling category that applies to all other characters does not apply to Velites for the purposes of the mastered weapon. Read a different way, this means that a Veles fighter's range category will never be worse than "medium" when using the mastered weapon, regardless of the target's distance.

Strength bonuses to melee weapon damage do not apply to hurled weapons.

The details for missile weapons used by Veles-oriented fighters are summarized here. As a reminder, units are measured in feet for interior settings, or in yards for exterior settings.

#### TABLE 9:

#### Hurled Missile Range Categories for Fighter-Velites

Veles-Oriented Fighter's Mastered Weapon Type	Dead Zone (No Hurling)	Point Blank Range	Short Range	Medium Range	Long Range
Atlatl and Javelin	0 to 5	N/A	6 to 40	41 to 90	N/A
Dart	0 to 5	N/A	6 to 30	31 to 45	N/A
Hurl-Hammer	0 to 5	N/A	6 to 20	21 to 40	N/A
Sling with Bullet	0 to 5	N/A	6 to 100	101 to 200	N/A
Sling with Stone	0 to 5	N/A	6 to 80	81 to 160	N/A
Staff Sling with Bullet*	0 to 14	N/A	15 to 45	46 to 90	N/A
Staff Sling with Stone*	0 to 14	N/A	15 to 45	46 to 90	N/A
Throwing Axe	0 to 5	N/A	6 to 20	21 to 40	N/A
Throwing Dagger	0 to 5	N/A	6 to 20	21 to 40	N/A
Throwing Knife	0 to 5	N/A	6 to 20	21 to 40	N/A





Veles-Oriented Fighter's Mastered Weapon Type	Dead Zone (No Hurling)	Point Blank Range	Short Range	Medium Range	Long Range
Thrown Javelin	0 to 5	N/A	6 to 30	31 to 60	N/A

\* Normally, the minimum range of a staff sling is 30, due to its indirect firing (lobbing) technique. For a master staff slinger (called a *Fustibulator*), this minimum lob range is reduced to 15, but it is still an indirect-fire weapon.





The following terms can be used to distinguish Velites of various specializations, particularly in regards to fighter NPCs:

- > Atlatl and Javelin: Amentator. In the World of Oldskull, NPC amentators are typically cavemen, tribesmen, or denizens of Aztlan.
- > **Dart:** Plumbator. NPC plumbators are sometimes encountered in Tyrrhenia.
- > Hurl-Hammer: Master Smiter. NPC master smiters are most commonly dwarves.
- Sling: Master Slinger. NPC master slingers are most commonly half-orcs or halflings, although some human slinters hail from the Baleares islands or Iberia.
- > **Staff Sling:** Fustibulator. NPC fustibulators are rare, but are sometimes found in siegeoriented mercenary companies.
- > **Throwing Axe:** Franciscator, or Axe Thrower. NPC franciscators are occasionally found in Gaul or Aquitania.
- > **Throwing Dagger:** Dagger Thrower. NPC dagger throwers are most commonly gnomes or halflings.
- > **Throwing Knife:** Knife Thrower. NPC knife throwers are most commonly half-orcs.
- > **Thrown Javelin:** Peltast. NPC peltasts are sometimes encountered in Achaea, Thracia, or Tyrrhenia.




## Number of Attacks per Round for Weapon Specialists

For all weapon specialists, regardless of weapon type, there are more generous rules applied for the number of attacks that can be made per round. These attack rate rules supersede the standard attack rate rules for non-specialized fighters and rangers. The specifics are dependent upon the weapon type and the specialist's experience level, as shown below.

Note that for melee weapons, the attack rates listed below apply whether the character is merely a specialist (+1/+2 bonuses) or a supreme master (+3/+3 bonuses).

Attack Rates for Fighter and Ranger weapon Specialists							
Weapon Type	Specialist Experience Levels 1 to 6	Specialist Experience Levels 7 to 12	Specialist Experience Level 13+				
Atlatl and Javelin	3 attacks every 2 rounds	2 attacks per round	5 attacks every 2 rounds				
Bow (Any)	2 attacks per round	3 attacks per round	4 attacks per round				
Dart	4 attacks per round	5 attacks per round	6 attacks per round				
Hand Crossbow	1 attack per round	3 attacks every 2 rounds	2 attacks per round				
Heavy Crossbow	1 attack every other round	1 attack per round	3 attacks every 2 rounds				
Hurl-Hammer	3 attacks every 2 rounds	2 attacks per round	5 attacks every 2 rounds				
Light Crossbow	1 attack per round	3 attacks every 2 rounds	2 attacks per round				
Melee Weapon (Any)3 attacks every 2 rounds		2 attacks per round	5 attacks every 2 rounds				
Sling	3 attacks every 2 rounds	2 attacks per round	5 attacks every 2 rounds				
Staff Sling	g 1 attack per round 3 attacks every 2 rounds		2 attacks per round				
Throwing Dagger	3 attacks per round	4 attacks per round	5 attacks per round				
Throwing Knife	4 attacks per round	5 attacks per round	6 attacks per round				
Throwing Axe	3 attacks every 2 rounds	2 attacks per round	5 attacks every 2 rounds				
Thrown Javelin	3 attacks every 2 rounds	2 attacks per round	5 attacks every 2 rounds				

#### Attack Rates for Fighter and Ranger Weapon Specialists

**TABLE 10:** 







<u>Chapter IV:</u> The Barbarian Sub-Class



# **Overview of the Barbarian Class**

**Description:** Barbarians are not simply "fighters who get angry". They are primitive and cunning tribal warriors, born to the hardships of life in the wilderlands. Most have trained with hand and missile weapons since the age of five; many hunt their first beast alone by seven, and more than half will kill their first humanoid or "civilized" human victim in hand-to-hand combat before their seventeenth year. As such, barbarians have significant survival skills, battle prowess, and exceptional endurance. However, as adventurers they first emerge into civilization carrying a load of deeply-held traditions, prejudices, and superstitions. The Player Characters that play alongside a newly-welcomed





barbarian will be in for an interesting time as tenets of the wilderland and kingdom cultures clash against one another during early party dynamics.<sup>7</sup>

The barbarian is a complex class option, and players should read this section carefully before proceeding with character generation. Players who are seeking a simpler and more straightforward warrior class should likely adopt the fighter class instead.

**Barbarians of Renown:** Famed barbarians from centuries past in the World of Oldskull include the Amazons (Greek), Arminius (of the Cherusci), the Berserkers of the Midgardian lands, Crom-Ya (the ancient chieftain deified as Crom Cruach), Genghis Khan, King Attila the Hun, Merovech, the Pictish lords and battle maidens, Queen Boudica (Welsh), Queen Hippolyta (Amazonian), and King Vercingetorix of Gaul. The history of the Oldskull barbarians includes not only conquerors and tyrants, but also valorous warrior-chieftains who fought to protect their homelands from the incessant encroachment of the Empyrean civilization.

**Immortal Barbarians:** Barbarian demigods and deities include the deified Crom, Mixcoatl (of the Aztec mythos), Nemain the Frenzied (of the Irish Celtic mythos), Phobos and Deimos (Horror and Dread, the sons of Ares), and Sandraudiga, She Who Dyes the Sands in Crimson (Germanic).

## Being Born a Barbarian

**Alignment:** Barbarians value freedom – either from oppression, or from the domineering laws of civilization – above all else. Therefore they cannot be lawful, but can belong to any chaotic or neutral alignment (CE, CG, CN, NE, NG, or TN)

**Ancestral Limitations:** Only humans can be born into the barbarian class. Other ancestries (such as half-ogres and half-orcs) might well behave in a barbarous fashion, but they are not traditional wilderlanders who are born into the lineage of the barbaric human deities (Crom, Nemain, Phobos, and so forth).

**Minimum Ability Scores:** STR 15+, DEX 14+, CON 15+, INT 6+, WIS 6+, CHA 6+. Uniquely, barbarians must in the end remain true to their superstitious nature, lest they lose their inherent belief in the dominance of the untamed spirit (barbarism). As such they cannot have wisdom scores above 16. Generated barbarian characters with WIS 17+ must reduce their WIS score to 16 before play begins.

**Social Standing:** Barbarians have no social standing requirements; their standing is randomly generated during the character creation process. Due to their utter disregard for societal rules and civilized follies, barbarians never attain significant social standing. They are, by definition, in defiance of civil propriety (which they regard as a form of spiritual corruption). Barbarians can certainly earn the steadfast respect of their followers and companions over time, but unless they become truly mighty, only their own wilderland peoples will ever accept them as noble rulers.

As such, level 1 to 3 barbarian NPCs tend to belong to the Middle Lower Class (MLC-2). More experienced NPC barbarians are typically Upper Lower Class (ULC-3) for levels 4 to 6, Lower Middle

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> For the early origins of the barbarian class, refer to the article entitled *Conanl* by Gary Gygax, as featured in the April 1980 magazine. The concept was then depersonalized and further developed in the July 1982 magazine, prior to full publication in the 1985 Unearthed hardcover. The version provided in this volume is significantly more detailed and thoroughly developed, with stronger mythic and folkoric themes offered, and many problematic areas clarified and resolved.





Class (LMC-4) for levels 7 to 9, Middle Class (MMC-5) for levels 10 to 13, Upper Middle Class (UMC-6) for levels 14 to 17, and Lower Upper Class (LUC-7) for levels 18 and up.







# Archetypal Considerations for the Barbarian

**Combat Prowess:** As warriors, barbarians have excellent combat skills. However, they advance more slowly in experience progression, which means that in a long-term party any fighters that are present will gradually gain martial expertise over the barbarian. The specialized combat roll of the barbarian is arcane monster slaying, which allows them to attack and kill magical creatures (such as demons and shape-shifters) that other warriors cannot withstand.

**Hit Dice:** Barbarians roll D12s for hit points up through experience level 8, and gain exceptional constitution bonuses for endurance as well. This makes them the most formidable survivalists in the game. Beyond level 8, they gain +4 hit points per level (with constitution bonuses no longer applying).

**Iconic Armor:** Barbarians can wear any type of armor, and can also use any type of helm and shield. However, they do not fully trust the notion of armor. They believe that their physical prowess is of paramount importance, and any fools who rely on armor instead of their own agility are exhibiting a reliant weakness that will eventually lead to their own demise. As such, barbarians drill and train for battle while wearing non-bulky armor, light armor, or even no armor at all. This training, along with ultimate conviction, gives the barbarian a significant battle advantage when he or she is not weighed down by heavy armor.

**Iconic Arms:** Barbarians can wield any type of weapon, although due to their tribal background they begin play with preferred proficiency in the spear, hand axe, and knife.

**Prime Requisite:** Due to their three needed exceptional ability scores (STR, DEX, and CON), barbarians have no principal ability. This means that they cannot gain a bonus to experience point marks that are earned.

**Saving Throws:** Barbarians have saving throws that are similar to fighters, but due to their warlike spirits and incredible endurance they are exceptionally more resistant to death magic, paralyzation, petrification, and poison. Like fighters, they are most vulnerable to spells, particularly at low experience levels. A gradual resistance to spells builds over time.

## **Barbarian Progression**

**Class Level Limit:** Barbarian have no class-imposed maximum experience level, but their slow experience progression limits their ultimate realization of mastery.

**Pace of Progression:** The barbarian class has a very slow pace of progression in relation to other classes. This means that they are relatively overpowered at the beginning of the game, and then they find themselves more limited as their companions further their individual powers. Barbarians who attain 25 experience point marks (XPM) are level 2, and those with 50 XPM are level 3. Those with 100 XPM are level 4, those with 250 XPM are level 5, and those with 500 XPM are level 6. In consideration of higher experience levels, those with XPM 1,000 are level 7, those with XPM 2,500 are level 9, those with XPM 5,000 are level 10, and those with XPM 10,000 are level 13 (comparing to a fighter of identical experience, who would be level 18 at XPM 10,000).





TABLE 11:

# **Experience Progression for the Barbarian Class**

Experience Point Marks	Experience Level	Earned HD / hp	Cumulative HD / hp	Exemplary Title
0 to 23.99	1	1D12 hp	1D12 hp	Outcast
24 to 47.99	2	+1D12 hp	2D12 hp	Wolfling
48 to 95.99	3	+1D12 hp	3D12 hp	Wolf Berserker
96 to 189.99	4	+1D12 hp	4D12 hp	Lone Wolf
190 to 299.99	5	+1D12 hp	5D12 hp	Warmonger
300 to 599.99	6	+1D12 hp	6D12 hp	Tribal Hero / Heroine
600 to 1,199.99	7	+1D12 hp	7D12 hp	Tribal Champion
1,200 to 1,999.99	8	+1D12 hp	8D12 hp	Barbarian Champion
2,000 to 3,999.99	9	+4 hp	9D12 hp	Barbarian Lord / She-Devil
4,000 to 5,999.99	10	+4 hp	9D12+4 hp	Barbarian High Lord / Becrimsoned She-Devil
6,000 to 7,999.99	11	+4 hp	9D12+8 hp	Barbarian Warlord / Lady of War
8,000 to 9,999.99	12	+4 hp	9D12+12 hp	Barbarian Conqueror
10,000 to 11,999.99	13	+4 hp	9D12+16 hp	Barbarian Overlord
12,000 to 13,999.99	14	+4 hp	9D12+20 hp	Barbarian Prince / Princess
14,000 to 15,999.99	15	+4 hp	9D12+24 hp	Barbarian King / Queen
16,000 to 17,999.99	16	+4 hp	9D12+28 hp	Savage Barbarian King / Queen
18,000 to 19,999.99	17	+4 hp	9D12+32 hp	Blood-Wrought Barbarian King / Queen
20,000 to 21,999.99	18	+4 hp	9D12+36 hp	Defiant Barbarian King / Queen
22,000 to 23,999.99	19	+4 hp	9D12+40 hp	Glorious Barbarian King / Queen
24,000 to 25,999.99	20	+4 hp	9D12+44 hp	Exalted Barbarian King / Queen
26,000 to 27,999.99	21	+4 hp	9D12+48 hp	Imperious Barbarian King / Queen
28,000 to 29,999.99	22	+4 hp	9D12+52 hp	Mythic Barbarian King / Queen
30,000 to 31,999.99	23	+4 hp	9D12+56 hp	Legendary Barbarian King / Queen
32,000 to 33,999.99	24	+4 hp	9D12+60 hp	Unconquerable Barbarian King / Queen
34,000 to 35,999.99	25	+4 hp	9D12+64 hp	Immortal Barbarian King / Queen
(+2,000)	(+1)	+4 hp	(+4 hp)	(Unique)





The following level titles are recommended for barbarians in the Castle Oldskull campaign. A slash indicates differing titles for male and female characters; parentheses indicate a situational qualifier of some kind.

Barbarians can also have special titles in their native tongue, if the player would like to research equivalents. Tribes potentially include the Amazons, the Berserkers, the Cimmerians, the Cyrenaicans, and the Gauls among many others.

For a PC barbarian, the player can choose from among the suggested level titles freely, or with GM consultation.

#### **TABLE 12:**

#### Suggested Level Titles for Barbarians

Barbarian's Experience Level	Recommended Level Titles
1	Amazon (if female), Barrens Strider, Berserker Minion, Nomad, Outcast, Savage (if of evil alignment), Tribesman / Tribeswoman
2	Amazon Skirmisher (if female), Berserker, Boar Warrior, Raider, Tribal Hunter / Huntress, Wild-Wanderer, Wolfling
3	Amazon Warrior (if female), Barbarian Wilderlander, Bear Warrior, Marauder, Shield Biter, Tribal Warrior, Wild Berserker, Wolf Berserker
4	Amazon Spear Maiden (if female), Bear Berserker, Great Wolf Berserker, Howler, Lone Wolf, Shield Breaker
5	Amazon Blood Maiden (if female), Destroyer, Great Bear Berserker, Warmonger, White Wolf
6	Amazonian Heroine (if female), Mage Slayer, Rager, Tribal Hero / Heroine (if returned to the tribe)
7	Amazon Champion (if female), Blood Rager, Hewer, Sub-Chieftain / Sub-Chieftess (if a leader of NPC barbarians), Tribal Champion (if returned to the tribe)
8	Amazonian Chieftess (if female), Barbarian Champion, Berserker Champion, Chieftain / Chieftess (if a leader of NPC barbarians)
9	Barbarian Lord (if male), Berserker Lord, High Amazonian Chieftess (if female), Horde Bringer, She-Devil (if female), War Chieftain / Chieftess (if a leader of NPC barbarians)
10	Barbarian High Lord (if male), Becrimsoned She-Devil (if female), Berserker High Lord, Great War Chieftain / Chieftess (if a leader of NPC barbarians)
11	Barbarian Warlord / Lady of War, Becrimsoned Amazonian Chieftess (if female), Berserker Warlord / Lady of War
12	Amazonian War Chieftess (if female), Barbarian Conqueror, Berserker Conqueror
13	Amazonian Heiress (if female), Barbarian Overlord, Berserker Overlord
14	Amazonian Princess (if female), Barbarian Prince / Princess, Berserker Prince / Princess
15	Barbarian King / Queen, Berserker King / Queen
16	Savage Barbarian King / Queen
17	Blood-Wrought Barbarian King / Queen

18	Defiant Barbarian King / Queen
19	Glorious Barbarian King / Queen
20	Exalted Barbarian King / Queen
21	Imperious Barbarian King / Queen
22	Mythic Barbarian King / Queen
23	Legendary Barbarian King / Queen
24	Unconquerable Barbarian King / Queen
25	Immortal Barbarian King / Queen

**Wolves in Guards' Clothing:** At lower experience levels, young barbarians encountered in the city states might well possess fighter titles if they are serving as troops and attempting to "blend in". Low-level NPC barbarians in groups are sometimes found serving temporarily as mercenaries, and – when their "masters" are wise – the mercenaries are extremely well paid. Their ramshackle barracks areas in cities and dungeons will be replete with feast halls, ale and mead storerooms, treasure chambers, wenches (or man-thralls), armories, dueling pits, trophy halls, and the like. Such characters might well have level titles pertaining more properly to the fighter class (sergeant, lieutenant, etc.).

# Powers and Advantages of the Barbarian Class

Barbarians have an extraordinary array of skills and powers, which collectively account for their significantly slowed progression.

**Arcane Monster Slaying:** Due to their unbroken blood lineage to their ancestral and tribal spirits, barbarians are capable of striking and wounding monsters that are normally immune to non-magical attacks. This includes the power to harm extra-planar and even non-corporeal monsters. Such an attack is known as a "spirit strike". A spirit strike is not a magical attack in and of itself; it represents the channeling of an ancestral spirit's wrath.

A summary of this power is provided as follows:

## TABLE 13:

#### Power of Barbarian Spirit Strikes by Experience Level

Barbarian's Experience Level	Spirit Strike Able to Harm Monsters with Special Defense	Examples of Monsters in Hierarchy
1 to 3	(No effective spirit strike)	N/A
4 or 5	+1 or better weapon to hit	Balor demons, gargoyles, groaning spirits, horned devils, liches, lycanthropes, manes demonlings, Mariliths (serpentine demonesses), Nalfeshnee (boar demons), perytons, salamanders, shadows, spectres, succubi, vampires





**The Barbarian Horde:** This cultural power is only attained at experience level 8. At that time, or any time thereafter, a barbarian champion can attempt to summon a barbarian horde. Barbarian hordes are temporarily-established NPC armies that will do the PC barbarian champion's bidding ... with significant caveats, of course.

To summon a horde, the barbarian champion must first make a return to the homeland. Hordes cannot be raised in the homelands of foreign tribes. Therefore a Midgardian champion would need to return to Midgard (the Norse lands far to the north), a Stygian champion would need to return to Stygia (in Africa south of civilized Egypt), and so forth. Companions can journey with the barbarian, and the GM might well make the homecoming a thematic outdoor adventure for a time.

The barbarian must travel to the homeland, signal or approach NPC tribe members there, parley successfully, and then receive an audience with the tribal king or queen. The ruler will be an NPC devised by the GM, with an experience level between 15 and 20 (1D6+14, or determined by the GM). The barbarian must make a good impression, and challenges of courage, valor, or wilderland skill might be demanded of the outland-returned champion. Further, the barbarian must offer (non-magical!) treasures in tribute to the ruler with a value of at least 25,000 gold pieces.

The barbarian can then state the need for the horde to arise. This is actually quite easy, because the barbarians have been seeking a grand realm-wide purpose for centuries, and horde-raising is a morale-boosting ritual that significantly increases tribal morale. In fact, it is significantly harder to stop the formation of a barbarian horde than it is to begin one!

The horde will demand a worthy purpose to unite around, as exhorted by the barbarian champion in keeping with the character's goals, personality, and alignment. Role-playing is encouraged. Example purposes might be to "Destroy the undead Empyrean lich and his minions", or to "Raze the corrupt, city of Anshara to the ground", or even to "Save Crown Prince Xavier from the wrath of the hobgoblin legions". The strategic particulars and other nuances will remain vague, while the impassioned intent of the horde's purpose will be made very clear to all.

After proper challenges and tribute have been rendered by the champion and companions, the ruler will proclaim that the horde can be raised. The gathering of the horde will require 1D6+4 days' time, with a portion of the horde arriving each day.

The number of barbarians that will be gathered is equal to the number of experience point marks (XPM) the barbarian champion has achieved, divided by 4. Therefore a newly level 8 barbarian (XPM 1,200) would be able to gather 300 NPC barbarians to his or her cause, while a level 14 barbarian with XPM 13,000 could gather 3,250.







Nearly all of the NPC barbarians will be level 1. Their individual alignments will be random, although good champions will not ever attract evil NPCs to their cause, and evil champions will not attract good NPCs to their cause either. The champion will serve as the horde's commander. There will be two NPC subcommanders, one male and one female, with an experience level equal to the champion's level, divided by two, rounded up. Therefore a level 13 barbarian PC summoning a horde would be served by two level 7 sub-commanders (traditionally, the Black Hand and the Crimson Hand). The subcommanders will serve to give the champion's orders to the assembled barbarians, either male or female as appropriate. Each subcommander will have 2 level 2 command assistants (the Eyes), and 1 level 3 personal assistant (the Will).

The barbarian king or queen will condone the horde assemblage, but will not join the horde under any circumstances.

While battles may be won or lost, the horde will persist and journey toward its goal. Looting, pillaging, and murders will not occur if the champion does not will such, or forbids the behaviors in question. The horde will remain together for 14 days at most, plus 1 day per charisma point of the champion. For example, a barbarian with charisma 13 could keep a horde together for up to 27 days. Beginning on the fifteenth day, 5% of the horde will desert daily, until the evening of the final day, when any remaining horde members will disperse and return to the homeland.







If the barbarian champion leads the horde in a fair manner with boldness, charisma, generosity (keeping no more than 10% of treasures won) and relative haste, there will be no serious issues encountered even if the ultimate mission fails. The NPC barbarians will act in good faith to fulfill the champion's mission, even if they are suffering heavy losses as a direct result. Deviating from the purpose will result in desertions, or even a complete collapse and scattering of the horde, as determined by the GM (and the severity of the deviation). All scattering NPCs will return to the homeland, and the champion will not be able to effectively raise a new horde there for at least 1 game year's time.

If the horde's mission is successful, the champion will be welcome to raise another horde (for any justifiable purpose) at any time. However, no PC barbarian can ever raise a horde more than 3 times in his or her lifetime.

**Blur of Blood and Steel:** Mid- and high-level barbarians gain additional melee (but not missile or thrown) attacks<sup>8</sup> per round as summarized below. These attack rates apply against all foes of HD 1 or experience level 1, or higher. Compare with Merciless Onslaught (below).

Barbarian's Experience Level	Melee Attack Rate	Notes
1 to 5	1/1 (1 melee attack per round)	Normal attacking ability (akin to the prowess possessed by non-fighter characters).
6 to 10	3/2 (3 attacks every 2 rounds)	The barbarian attacks once in the first round that he or she engages in combat. Then, on even- numbered engagement rounds (2, 4, 6, etc.) he or she attacks twice in the same round.
11 or higher	2/1 (2 melee attacks per round)	The barbarian can attack twice every melee round.

# TABLE 14:Melee Attack Rates for Barbarians

**Defiant Saving Throws:** Barbarians have fighter-like saving throws, dependent upon their experience level. However, they gain special bonuses to all categories, as follows:

- **Breath Weapon:** +2.
- > Paralyzation or Death Magic: +3.
- > **Petrification or Polymorph:** +3.
- Poison: +4.
- **Rod, Staff, or Wand:** +2.

<sup>8</sup> Refer to the September 1982 newszine.





Spell: No bonus for experience levels 1-4; +1 for levels 5-8; +2 for levels 9-12; +3 for levels 13-16; +4 for levels 17-20; +5 for levels 21-24; +6 for levels 25+.

**Destroyers of Witcheries:** Tribal barbarians, raised on tales of ancestors slain by foul magics and terrible curses, are taught to destroy magic items whenever they can. This is not simply a tribal teaching, however; it is an instinctive urge that is fell within the blood and in echoes of the barbarian's ancestral spirit. Over time, barbarians learn that such items have a worthy place in the world ... namely, being used to save one's life, or to crush one's enemies. But learning to master the echoes of the spirit takes time.

In game play terms, this means that any PC barbarian who is adventuring with companions will urge the destruction of a discovered magic item. The other players' characters are under no compulsion to act as the barbarian wishes, and arguments within the party will not escalate to the point of violence.

If a barbarian destroys a magic item of any kind, he or she gains experience point marks equal to award value of the item. However the bonus is not awarded if the item in question belongs to another PC, or has been awarded to another PC besides the barbarian.

**Distrust of the Weirding Ways:** Barbarians, due to their heightened senses, possess an innate resistance to illusion spells and illusion-related powers. Normally, for an illusion to be disbelieved the player must state that disbelief is being attempted, the character concentrates for 1 round, and then a saving throw vs. spells is allowed. Success results in the illusion being dispelled, while failure results in the Game Master telling the player that the effect is real. Naturally, a disbelief roll is rolled in secret by the GM, not by the player, so that uncertainty will always remain.

For barbarian characters however, there is an additional level of protection. After disbelief is stated, and before the saving throw is rolled, the GM rolls percentile dice. The target score is equal to 5% per experience level of the barbarian, to a maximum of 75%. Therefore, a level 9 barbarian would have a 45% chance to disbelieve an illusory effect.

If the percentile dice roll succeeds, the illusion is disbelieved with no saving throw required. If the roll fails, the GM then makes a saving throw vs. spells for the barbarian as described above.

Note that disbelief is never passive. The attempt to disbelieve must always be stated by the player, and only the GM knows if the effect in question is real or an illusion before disbelief occurs.

**Familiarity with the Wilderlands:** When play begins, a barbarian will only be familiar with his or her own homeland (Amazonia, Midgard, Rus, Scythia, etc.). Over time, the character will gain familiarity with other lands throughout the World of Oldskull. The time required is 30 days' worth of outdoor adventuring, or more, in the land in question. After 30 days, the explored land can be permanently added to the barbarian character's list of known and familiar lands.

Familiarity affects several other barbarian skills and abilities, as listed hereafter.









**Feral Senses:** Barbarians have a reduced chance of being surprised by encountered monsters and NPCs. In familiar lands and outdoor settings, the barbarian is only surprised 1 time in 20 (5%). In all other circumstances (including unfamiliar lands and all subterranean areas), the barbarian is only surprised 1 time in 10 (10%). See Familiarity with the Wilderlands, above.

**Indomitable Spirit:** All barbarians gain an exceptional number of hit points per experience level. The hit points gained are +2 per level for CON 15, +4 per level for CON 16, +6 per level for CON 17, or +8 per level for CON 18. Note that these bonuses only apply for experience levels 1 through 8. This ability gives a significant survival advantage to level 1 barbarians, but over time other PC companions will gain levels more quickly, causing this relative advantage to diminish over time. The table below summarizes the barbarian's starting hit dice at level 1.

## TABLE 15:

## Indomitable Spirit and Hit Point Bonuses for Barbarians

Level 1 Barbarian's CON Score	Barbarian's Hit Dice at Level 1	Minimum Starting Hit Points	Maximum Starting Hit Points
15	1D12+2	9	14
16	1D12+4	11	16
17	1D12+6	13	18
18	1D12+8	15	20





**Journeyers of Many Lands:** Despite their limited initial repertoire of known languages, barbarians can learn additional languages over time, just as other characters can. Such knowledge however can only be received over time during game play; the barbarian cannot learn foreign languages before the game begins at level 1. The GM will likely place restrictions on the languages that can be learned, depending on willing mentors, travels through unfamiliar lands, and encounters with various cultures and creatures throughout the campaign.

**Leadership of the Pack:** When a barbarian is dealing with other (NPC) barbarians, there is a significant leadership advantage that is gained. Barbarians will consider one another as kindred spirits, even if they hail from different lands. This effect gives the PC barbarian a special charisma (CHA) bonus toward NPC barbarians, where the Player Character's effective CHA score is equal to CHA + experience level to a maximum of 25. Therefore, a level 8 PC barbarian with CHA 13 would have a CHA score of 13 toward non-barbarians, and a leadership CHA score of 21 toward NPC barbarians.

Note that this aura is not influenced by comeliness (COM), which means that first impressions will still be dictated by COM and appearance. Only reaction rolls after the first encounter will be affected by this ability.





**Leaping and Springing:** Barbarians (along with hunters, monks, and swashbucklers) can jump farther than other characters can. This ability is summarized in the table below.

A non-barbarian character's jumping ability score (JAS) is equal to STR+DEX+CON. Therefore, a character with STR 10, DEX 11, and CON 14 would have a jumping ability score of 35. Note that due to their ability score requirements, all barbarians have a JAS of at least 44 (STR 15, DEX 14, CON 15).

Jumping Addity for Barbarians and Non-Barbarians						
Type of Jump	Distance Achieved for a Normal Character	Distance Achieved for a Barbarian or Swashbuckler				
Running and	<b>JAS 9 to 19:</b> 7+1D2 feet	▶ JAS 44-49: 15+1D6 feet				
then Leaping	JAS 20 to 32: 10+1D3 feet	> <b>JAS 50+:</b> 16+1D6 feet				
Forward	JAS 33 to 43: 13+1D4 feet					
	> <b>JAS 44+:</b> 15+1D6 feet					
Running and	> <b>JAS 9 to 19:</b> 3 feet	> <b>JAS 44-49:</b> 3+1D3 feet				
then Springing Upward	> JAS 20 to 32: 2+1D2 feet	> <b>JAS 50+:</b> 3+1D4 feet				
opwaru	JAS 33 to 43: 2+1D3 feet					
	> <b>JAS 44+:</b> 3+1D3 feet					
Standing Jump	> <b>JAS 9 to 19:</b> 1 foot	> <b>JAS 44-49:</b> 3 feet				
Backward	> <b>JAS 20 to 32:</b> 1D2 feet	> <b>JAS 50+:</b> 2+1D2 feet				
	> <b>JAS 33 to 43:</b> 1+1D2 feet					
	> <b>JAS 44+:</b> 3 feet					
Standing Jump	> <b>JAS 9 to 19:</b> 4+1D2 feet	> <b>JAS 44-49:</b> 8+1D2 feet				
Forward	> JAS 20 to 32: 5+1D2 feet	> <b>JAS 50+:</b> 9+1D2 feet				
	> <b>JAS 33 to 43:</b> 6+1D2 feet					
	> <b>JAS 44+:</b> 7+1D2 feet					
Standing Jump	> JAS 9 to 19: 1 foot	➢ JAS 44-49: 3 feet				
Upward	> JAS 20 to 32: 1D2 feet	➢ JAS 50+: 2+1D2 feet				
	> <b>JAS 33 to 43:</b> 1+1D2 feet					
	> <b>JAS 44+:</b> 3 feet					

# TABLE 16: Jumping Ability for Barbarians and Non-Barbarians

Note that this table does not consider varying heights and ancestries, encumbrance, slippery floors, armor, or other factors which will affect jumping ability.





Very generally, if the GM dictates that a character is disadvantaged (shorter than a human, heavily encumbered, on a slippery surface, and/or in metal armor) then a disadvantaged roll is made, which means that the jump distance is rolled for twice and the worse total is accepted.

If the GM dictates that a character is advantaged (a taller than average human, unencumbered, on a descending surface, and/or not wearing armor) then an advantaged roll is made, which means that the jump distance is rolled for twice and the better total is accepted.

If both disadvantages and advantages apply, the effects cancel each other out, and only a single jump roll is made instead of two.

**Longstriders:** Unlike other humans (who have a base movement rate of 120'), barbarians have a base movement rate of 150', which means they are 25% faster over both short and long distances ... but only when they are carrying very little equipment.

Non-barbarian characters have 4 movement rate classifications based upon their burden and encumbrance, while barbarians have 5 movement rate classifications. These details are summarized below.

#### **TABLE 17:**

#### Movement Rates for Barbarian and Non-Barbarian Humans

Character's Current Burden	Non-Barbarian Movement Rate	Barbarian Movement Rate
0-10% of Maximum Weight Allowance	Full (120')	Full (150')
11-25% of Maximum Weight Allowance	Full (120')	Impeded (120')
26-50% of Maximum Weight Allowance	Encumbered (90')	Encumbered (90')
51-75% of Maximum Weight Allowance	Half (60')	Hindered (60')
76-100% of Maximum Weight Allowance	Slowed (30')	Slowed (30')

**Merciless Onslaught:** When facing minor foes in melee, the barbarian's superior mastery allows him or her to attack a number of times per round equal to his or her experience level. In other words, a level 5 barbarian would be able to attack 5 times per round, but only against minor foes. An attack against another type of foe would fall under the Blur of Blood and Steel advantage instead, as described above.

The onslaught fighting technique can only be used in melee, not with ranged attacks.

Minor creatures are level 0 characters such as normal men and men-at-arms, and also any monsters with fewer than 1 full hit die (1D8). Monsters with HD 1/8 (1 hp), 1/4 (1-2 hp), 1/2 (1-4 hp), 1/2+1 (2-5 hp), 1D6 (1-6 hp), or HD 1-1 (1-7 hp) are considered minor creatures. This classification includes bats, giant rats, goblins, kobolds, rats, and so forth.





**Predator's Guard:** Barbarians have a sixth sense ability which allows them – at times – to detect attacks from behind. This ability can even thwart attacks from silent, undead, or invisible monsters, or backstab attempts by thieving characters, or from-behind assassination attempts by assassins.

The chance for a back attack to be detected in this manner is 5% per experience level of the barbarian, to a maximum of 75%.





If the guard roll fails, the barbarian is attacked from behind. If the guard roll succeeds, the attack is not prevented, but the attack does become a normal attack. This means that the attacker loses all to hit and damage bonuses that would have resulted from an attack from behind, and the barbarian is able to use his or her dexterity as a factor included in armor class.

In addition, the barbarian is allowed an immediate retaliatory attack against the ambusher, even if the ambusher missed in the attack. This single bonus attack by the barbarian can be made even if the barbarian has already moved or attacked or otherwise acted in the current round.





**Scaling Perilous Surfaces:** Barbarians are able to climb trees, cliffs, and mountain ledges more capably than other non-thieving characters. Their skill in this regard is equal to a thief's unmodified Climb Walls skill.

This means that their Climb Sheer Surfaces skill rating, by experience level, is as follows: at experience level 1, 85%; level 2, 86%; level 3, 87%; level 4, 88%; level 5, %; and so forth. This skill applies to natural surfaces only, trees, cliffs, and mountain ledges.

At the beginning of play, barbarians do not possess a thief's Climb Walls (vertical surfaces) ability. However, during play they can attempt to climb such surfaces in order to gain mastery. The attempt will automatically fail early on, but the resultant fall will only inflict 1D2 points of damage on the barbarian.

For each failed attempt on a wall type, there is a percentage chance (listed below) based on surface difficulty that the barbarian will have a moment of ancestral recollection and thereby learn to climb that wall type. Despite the number of such attempts made, or the number of surfaces attempted, the barbarian can only experience such a recollection – at most – once per week. Therefore it would require (at the very least) 12 weeks of adventuring to master all of the various surface types.

Once mastery of a wall type is learned, the barbarian can then forever after scale that type of surface as a thief of the same experience level.

Vertical Surface Type	Example	Chance for the Barbarian to Attain Mastery
Very Rough, Non-Slippery	Cavern wall	80%
Very Rough, Slightly Slippery	Damp cavern wall	40%
Very Rough, Slippery	Slimy cavern wall	20%
Rough, Non-Slippery	Collapsing ruin wall	60%
Rough, Slightly Slippery	Collapsing ruin wall in the mist	30%
Rough, Slippery	Collapsing ruin wall in the rain	15%
Smooth and Cracked, Non-Slippery	Dungeon wall	40%
Smooth and Cracked, Slightly Slippery	Damp dungeon wall	20%
Smooth and Cracked, Slippery	Slimy dungeon wall	10%
Very Smooth, Non-Slippery	Castle wall	20%
Very Smooth, Slightly Slippery	Caste wall in the mist	10%
Very Smooth, Slippery	Castle wall in the rain	5%

## **TABLE 18:**

#### Wall Climbing Skill Mastery for Barbarians

**Silent Ambushers:** Barbarians have an increased chance to surprise opponents. In familiar lands and outdoor settings, the barbarian can surprise opponents 4 times in 6 (66.7%). In all other circumstances (including unfamiliar lands and all subterranean areas), the barbarian can nevertheless surprise opponents 3 times in 6 (50%). See Familiarity with the Wilderlands, above.







**Souls of War:** Barbarians gain an increased armor class bonus when they are both relatively unencumbered (carrying less than 50% of their maximum weight allowance) and also wearing non-bulky armor.

The non-bulky armor types are leather armor and elfin chain mail. Bucklers and small shields are considered non-bulky as well. Other mundane types of armor (studded leather, non-elfin mail, plate, etc.) are not non-bulky. Many types of magical armor are non-bulky, including padded armor +1, studded leather armor of enchantment +1 or higher, ring mail +2 or higher, scale mail +3 or higher, chain mail +4 or higher, plate mail +5 or higher, medium shields +1 or higher, and large shields +2 or higher.

If unencumbered and all armor used is non-bulky (or if the barbarian is not wearing any armor at all), the barbarian gains the souls of war AC bonus.

The bonuses are based on DEX, as follows:

- **DEX 14:** No bonus to AC for bulky armor; +1 for non-bulky armor.
- **DEX 15:** +1 bonus to AC for bulky armor (the normal bonus); +2 for non-bulky armor.
- **DEX 16:** +2 bonus to AC for bulky armor; +4 for non-bulky armor.
- **DEX 17:** +3 bonus to AC for bulky armor; +6 for non-bulky armor.
- **DEX 18:** +4 bonus to AC for bulky armor; +8 for non-bulky armor.

**Suspicion of the Arcane:** In addition to their ability to detect illusions, barbarians have the power to detect (but not comprehend) other kinds of magic. This ability is similar to the use of a detect magic clerical spell in regards to range and effect, but is not magical. It is rather yet another aspect of the barbarian's ancestral superstition and heightened senses.

To use this ability, the barbarian's player must state that the power is being used. The character must then concentrate for 1 round. Every item, spell, or effect within range (up to 30' in interior areas, up to 30 yards outdoors) that the barbarian does not know about is then checked for potential detection. In other words, there is no need to check the barbarian's magical items, the known magical items carried by companions, and so forth; only unknown effects will be assensed. Items and effects that are completely out of sight (buried, in containers, behind walls, etc.) cannot be detected, but items that are partially out of sight of hidden (veiled in shadow, invisible, covered by vines, etc.) can be detected.

The chance of detection, per effect or item, is 25% at experience level 1. For each of the barbarian's levels above 1, the chance increases by 5%, to a maximum of 90%.

When an effect is detected, the barbarian will know the effect's item, area, or similar locus. The type magic however (alteration, divination, evocation, etc.) will not be known, nor will any of the precise powers. Of course, the player and barbarian will be immediately suspicious of the detected effect, as well they should be.

**Wolves in the Shadows:** When not surprised, barbarians have the ability to hide outdoors. This skill can be used when the barbarian knows or suspects that enemies are near, but only in outdoor environments.

The skill is similar to a thief's Hide in Shadows ability in regards to skill chance and limitations; for example, an opponent's darksight (infravision) will spoil a barbarian's attempt to hide in darkness.





The barbarian may gain a bonus to this skill based on their DEX. There is no bonus for DEX 14 to 16, a +5% bonus for DEX 17, and a +10% bonus for DEX 18.

In familiar lands, the barbarian's chance to hide outdoors is equal to a thief of the barbarian's experience level, +3 levels. Therefore, the chance is 25% at level 1, 31% at level 2, 37% at level 3, 43% at level 4, and so forth.

In unfamiliar lands, the barbarian's chance to hide outdoors is equal to a thief of the same experience level. Therefore, the chance is 10% at level 1, 15% at level 2, 20% at level 3, 25% at level 4, and so forth.

## Skills of the Wilderlanders

Barbarians have eleven potential skill sets, some of which they can master over time. The skill sets that are available to any one barbarian are dependent upon his or homeland, as well as the choices made by the player. The barbarian skill sets are: Beast and Bird Mimicry, Beast Handling, Horse Mastery, Prey Stalking, Smoke Signaling, Snare Building, Sprinting, Survivalism, Watercraft Handling, Wisdom of the Wilds, and Wound Binding and Setting.

At experience level 1, before play begins, the barbarian knows five of these skill sets. Over time – through travels and learning the lore of cultures – the barbarian will learn new skill sets as desired by the player. A sixth skill set is learned at experience level 4; a seventh at level 7, and an eight at level 10.

The initial skill sets known are determined by the barbarian's homeland and tribal background:

## **TABLE 19:**

## The Major Barbarian Tribes

## Barbarian Tribes of the Occidental World of Oldskull

**Amazonian Barbarians (the Women Warriors):** The player chooses four of the following skills, as desired: Beast Handling, Horse Mastery, Smoke Signaling, Wisdom of the Wilds, and/or Wound Binding and Setting The fifth skill is determined randomly by 1D6: [1] Beast and Bird Mimicry, [2] Prey Stalking, [3] Snare Building, [4] Sprinting, [5] Survivalism, [6] Watercraft Handling.

**Cimmerian Barbarians (the Mistlanders):** The player chooses four of the following skills, as desired: Prey Stalking, Snare Building, Sprinting, Survivalism, and/or Wound Binding and Setting. The fifth skill is determined randomly by 1D6: [1] Beast and Bird Mimicry, [2] Beast Handling, [3] Horse Mastery, [4] Smoke Signaling, [5] Watercraft Handling, [6] Wisdom of the Wilds.

**Cyrenaican Barbarians (the Viper Tribes):** The player chooses three of the following skills, as desired: Prey Stalking, Snare Building, Survivalism, and/or Wound Binding and Setting. The fourth and fifth skills are determined randomly by 1D8, with duplicate results being rerolled: [1] Beast and Bird Mimicry, [2] Beast Handling, [3] Horse Mastery, [4] Smoke Signaling, [5] Sprinting, [6] Watercraft Handling, [7-8] Wisdom of the Wilds.





**Gaulic Barbarians (the Ever-Defiant):** The player chooses three of the following skills, as desired: Beast Handling, Horse Mastery, Sprinting, and/or Survivalism. The fourth and fifth skills are determined randomly by 1D8, with duplicate results being rerolled: [1] Beast and Bird Mimicry, [2-3] Prey Stalking, [4] Smoke Signaling, [5] Snare Building, [6] Watercraft Handling, [7] Wisdom of the Wilds, [8] Wound Binding and Setting.

**Hibernian Barbarians (the Emerald Spirits):** The player chooses three of the following skills, as desired: Beast and Bird Mimicry, Beast Handling, Horse Mastery, and/or Watercraft Handling. The fourth and fifth skills are determined randomly by 1D8, with duplicate results being rerolled: [1] Prey Stalking, [2] Smoke Signaling, [3] Snare Building, [4] Sprinting, [5] Survivalism, [6] Wisdom of the Wilds, [7-8] Wound Binding and Setting.

**Kushite Barbarians (the Jungle Stalkers):** The player chooses three of the following skills, as desired: Beast and Bird Mimicry, Prey Stalking, Sprinting, and/or Watercraft Handling. The fourth and fifth skills are determined randomly by 1D8, with duplicate results being rerolled: [1] Beast Mastery, [2] Smoke Signaling, [3-4] Snare Building, [5-6] Survivalism, [7] Wisdom of the Wilds, [8] Wound Binding and Setting. Note that Kushite barbarians cannot know Horse Mastery at the beginning of the game.

**Midgardian Barbarians (the Ice-Maned Ones):** The player chooses three of the following skills, as desired: Sprinting, Survivalism, Watercraft Handling, and/or Wisdom of the Wilds. The fourth and fifth skills are determined randomly by 1D8, with duplicate results being rerolled: [1] Beast and Bird Mimicry, [2] Beast Handling, [3] Horse Mastery, [4] Prey Stalking, [5] Smoke Signaling, [6] Snare Building, [7-8] Wound Binding and Setting.

**Pictish (the Highland Stalkers):** The player chooses three of the following skills, as desired: Beast and Bird Mimicry, Prey Stalking, Snare Building, and/or Wound Binding and Setting. The fourth and fifth skills are determined randomly by 1D8, with duplicate results being rerolled: [1] Beast Handling, [2] Horse Mastery, [3] Smoke Signaling, [4] Sprinting, [5] Survivalism, [6] Watercraft Handling, [7-8] Wisdom of the Wilds.

**Rus-Lander (the Frost-Landers):** The player chooses three of the following skills, as desired: Horse Mastery, Survivalism, Wisdom of the Wilds, and/or Wound Bidding and Setting. The fourth and fifth skills are determined randomly by 1D8, with duplicate results being rerolled: [1] Beast and Bird Mimicry, [2-3] Beast Handling, [4] Prey Stalking, [5] Smoke Signaling, [6] Snare Building, [7] Sprinting, [8] Watercraft Handling.

**Scythian (the Horse Rovers and Kurgan Nomads):** The player chooses four of the following skills as desired: Beast Handling, Horse Mastery, Smoke Signaling, Sprinting, and/or Wisdom of the Wilds. The fifth skill is determined randomly by 1D6: [1] Beast and Bird Mimicry, [2] Prey Stalking, [3] Snare Building, [4] Survivalism, [5] Watercraft Handling, [6] Wound Binding and Setting.

**Stygian (the Undying Ones):** The player chooses four of the following skills, as desired: Prey Stalking, Smoke Signaling, Snare Building, Sprinting, Survivalism, and/or Wisdom of the Wilds. The fifth skill is determined randomly by 1D6: [1] Beast and Bird Mimicry, [2-3] Beast Handling, [4]





Horse Mastery, [5-6] Wound Binding and Setting. Note that Stygian barbarians cannot know Watercraft Handling at the beginning of the game.

#### **Barbarian Skill Levels**

For the five skill sets known at experience level 1, each skill begins at Mastery Level (ML) 1 (detailed hereafter). At experience level 4, the barbarian learns a new sixth skill set of his or her choice, and that skill begins at ML 1. New skill sets are learned at experience levels 7 and 10, with the new seventh and eighth skills always beginning at ML 1. With each experience level gained, all masteries increase by +1 level. To clarify any confusion, refer to the following table:

Barbarian's	1 <sup>st</sup> Skill	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Skill	4 <sup>th</sup> Skill	5 <sup>th</sup> Skill	6 <sup>th</sup> Skill	7 <sup>th</sup> Skill	8 <sup>th</sup> Skill
		Z <sup>nu</sup> Skill						
Experience	Set		Set	Set	Set	Set	Set	Set
Level	D/T 1	Set	<b>N</b> (T 1	<b>N</b> (T 1	<b>N</b> (T 1			
1	ML 1	ML 1	ML 1	ML 1	ML 1	-	-	-
2	ML 2	ML 2	ML 2	ML 2	ML 2	-	-	-
3	ML 3	ML 3	ML 3	ML 3	ML 3	-	-	-
4	ML 4	ML 4	ML 4	ML 4	ML 4	ML 1	-	-
5	ML 5	ML 5	ML 5	ML 5	ML 5	ML 2	-	-
6	ML 6	ML 6	ML 6	ML 6	ML 6	ML 3		_
7	ML 7	ML 7	ML 7	ML 7	ML 7	ML 4	ML 1	-
8	ML 8	ML 8	ML 8	ML 8	ML 8	ML 5	ML 2	-
9	ML 9	ML 9	ML 9	ML 9	ML 9	ML 6	ML 3	-
10	ML 10	ML 10	ML 10	ML 10	ML 10	ML 7	ML 4	ML 1
11	ML 11	ML 11	ML 11	ML 11	ML 11	ML 8	ML 5	ML 2
12	ML 12	ML 12	ML 12	ML 12	ML 12	ML 9	ML 6	ML 3
13	ML 13	ML 13	ML 13	ML 13	ML 13	ML 10	ML 7	ML 4
14	ML 14	ML 14	ML 14	ML 14	ML 14	ML 11	ML 8	ML 5
15	ML 15	ML 15	ML 15	ML 15	ML 15	ML 12	ML 9	ML 6
16	ML 16	ML 16	ML 16	ML 16	ML 16	ML 13	ML 10	ML 7
17	ML 17	ML 17	ML 17	ML 17	ML 17	ML 14	ML 11	ML 8
18	ML 18	ML 18	ML 18	ML 18	ML 18	ML 15	ML 12	ML 9
19	ML 19	ML 19	ML 19	ML 19	ML 19	ML 16	ML 13	ML 10
20	ML 20	ML 20	ML 20	ML 20	ML 20	ML 17	ML 14	ML 11
21	ML 21	ML 21	ML 21	ML 21	ML 21	ML 18	ML 15	ML 12
22	ML 22	ML 22	ML 22	ML 22	ML 22	ML 19	ML 16	ML 13
23	ML 23	ML 23	ML 23	ML 23	ML 23	ML 20	ML 17	ML 14
24	ML 24	ML 24	ML 24	ML 24	ML 24	ML 21	ML 18	ML 15
25	ML 25	ML 25	ML 25	ML 25	ML 25	ML 22	ML 19	ML 16
(etc.)	ML 25	ML 25	ML 25	ML 25	ML 25	(+1 ML)	(+1 ML)	(+1 ML)

#### **TABLE 20:**

#### **Skill Set Mastery Levels for Barbarians**





Mastery level 25 is the maximum level of prowess for any barbarians skill(s).

The percentage chance of success for any used skill set is dependent upon the skill's mastery level and the barbarian's familiarity with the area, as follows:

## **TABLE 21:**

## **Skill Levels and Success Chances for Barbarians**

Skill Set's Mastery Level	Barbarian Skill Level	Base Chance of Success in Familiar Lands	Base Chance of Success in Unfamiliar Lands
1	Rudimentary	15%	1%
2	Crude	20%	5%
3	Unpracticed	24%	10%
4	Flawed	28%	15%
5	Inexpert	32%	20%
6	Inexpert	36%	24%
7	Practiced	40%	28%
8	Practiced	44%	32%
9	Capable	48%	36%
10	Capable	52%	40%
11	Seasoned	56%	44%
12	Seasoned	59%	48%
13	Proficient	62%	52%
14	Proficient	65%	56%
15	Accomplished	68%	59%
16	Accomplished	71%	62%
17	Cunning	74%	65%
18	Cunning	77%	68%
19	Talented	80%	71%
20	Talented	83%	74%
21	Wood-Wise	86%	77%
21	Wood-Wise	88%	80%
22	Expert	90%	83%
23	Gifted	92%	86%
24	Master	94%	88%
25	Grand Master	96%	90%

The Game Master can apply up to a -40% penalty to the chance for skill use success if preparations are hasty or inadequate, or the environment is unknown (such as a dungeon). Similarly, he or she can apply up to a +40% bonus (to a maximum of 99%) if the barbarian uses clever planning, camouflage, distractions, carefully-made materials, or whatever else is appropriate to the situation. The barbarian class rewards creative play, and the GM should consider providing at least a +5% bonus if the player is being clever and tactical while not "gaming the system".





# The Barbarian Skill Sets

Barbarian tribes are either partially or fully nomadic due to grim necessity and frequent hardships caused by weather, kingdom incursions, humanoid raids, powerful monsters, or ancient magic. They tend to roam within the wilderness and borderlands of their ancestral homeland. This gives Player Character barbarians an array of choices of homeland (as described earlier), with associated sets of tribal knowledge.<sup>9</sup>

## **Beast and Bird Mimicry**

This skill allows the barbarian to mimic the sounds of regional birds or animals (but not monsters). The skill can be used to lure creatures for hunting or taming purposes; to signal other nearby barbarians – known or unknown – using a highly limited code-language; or to frighten nearby intruders, for example by making them believe that a wild boar is about to charge.

The barbarian can mimic the call of any type of common or uncommon, non-magical bird or beast that is known to live in the land.

If the skill roll is successful, the call is believed. This would mean that an animal comes close enough to be tamed or hunted; allied tribesmen understand the call and respond in kind; or intruders might even need to make a morale check in order to keep from withdrawing from the area.

If the skill roll is unsuccessful, the call is not believed. Nearby animals would be warned to stay away; NPC tribesmen might suspect the caller of being an interloper; or intruders would be instantly on guard, and therefore incapable of being surprised.

## **Beast Handling**

The barbarian can attempt to tame an animal for purposes of domestication. Unlike hunters, who establish strong empathic bonds with animals, barbarians can only seek to tame animals to serve as guards and companions. The beasts will not follow significant commands, but will otherwise learn to act as a domesticated dog would, staying with the barbarian (in outdoor areas only) and fighting alongside the barbarian when both are threatened.

The barbarian can, if able, use the Beast and Bird Mimicry skill to attract a single animal for taming. Otherwise, a single wild animal in a peaceful encounter can be tamed.

The barbarian will need to make initial contact, and then the skill roll is made. The animal will then depart. If the skill roll is successful, the animal will return in 1D6+1 days, and will choose to stay with the barbarian for as long as it is fed and treated well. If the roll fails, the animal will not return.

A tamed animal can be given to the tribe (in the barbarian's homeland), or more commonly can be kept as a companion for 5D20 days. A barbarian can keep up to three tamed animals at once, but all must be of the same species, and each must be separately tamed and cared for. If the barbarian leaves the outdoors by remaining in a city or dungeon for more than a few hours, the animal will depart and will not be seen again.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> For Game Masters who want to know more about the barbarian homelands and tribal life, refer to the detailed article found in the April 1983 magazine.





Animals which can be tamed by barbarians are as listed below. The GM will need to note whether the animal can be found in the current region's climate and terrain, in accordance with the bestiary entry for that creature.

### **TABLE 22:**

### Animals That Can Be Tamed by Barbarians

Barbarian's Experience Level	New Animals That Can Be Tamed			
1	Jackal (HD 1D4, INT 3), Raven (HD 1D2, INT 5), Weasel (HD 1D2, INT 1)			
2	Hawk (HD 1-1, INT 1), Otter (HD 1-1, INT 1)			
3	Falcon (HD 1, INT 1), Owl (HD 1, INT 1), Small Herd Animal (HD 1, INT 1), Wildcat (HD 1, INT 1)			
4	Badger (HD 1+2, INT 3), Eagle (HD 1+3, INT 1), Wild Dog (HD 1+1, INT 4), Wild Pony (HD 1+1, INT 1), Wild Ram (HD 2, INT 1)			
5	Herd Animal (HD 2, INT 1), Wild Horse (HD 2, INT 1)			
6	Large Wild Dog (HD 2+2, INT 4), Wolf (HD 2+2, INT 4)			
7	Hyena (HD 3, INT 1), Large Herd Animal (HD 3, INT 1), Stag (HD 3, INT 1), Warthog (HD 3, INT 1)			
8	Very Large Herd Animal (HD 4, INT 1), Wild Boar (HD 3+3, INT 3), Wild Camel (HD 3, INT 4)			
9 or higher	Giant Stag (HD 5, INT 1), Huge Herd Animal (HD 5, INT 1)			

In addition to the above options, at barbarian experience levels 9 and above, an encountered wild giant eagle, giant lynx, or giant owl might express an interest in joining a barbarian as an intelligent companion. These creatures are termed "Seeking Spirits" by the barbarian tribes. The chance would be dependent upon initial treatment and a reaction roll, and giant lynxes and giant owls will not bond with an evil-aligned person. Giant eagles will only bond with good-aligned barbarians. Such creatures will only remain as companions for 2D12+6 days, and only one such companion can be present at any given time.

## Horse Mastery

Barbarian riders are not quite as skilled and disciplined as cavaliers and paladins are, but nevertheless they have strong bonds with tamed equine creatures.

When examining any horse or pony (tamed or wild), a successful skill roll will allow the barbarian to determine whether the creature is of low worth, average worth, or high worth. Ponies are considered low worth if they have 2 or 3 hit points, of average worth if they have 4 to 6 hit points, and of high worth if they have 7 to 9 hit points. Horses are considered low worth if they have less than 33% of their maximum possible hit points, or high worth if they have more than 66% of their maximum possible hit points, with all other specimens being deemed average. If this type of skill roll fails, the GM will simply state that the barbarian cannot make an accurate appraisal of the steed's potential worth.





A separate type of successful skill roll will allow a barbarian to turn a handled (newly-tamed) horse or pony into a permanent companion. Only one such roll is allowed per tamed creature.

When fighting from horseback, a successful skill roll will allow the barbarian a +1 bonus to hit on the current attack. If the skill roll fails, a normal attack can still be made with no such bonus.



#### **Prey Stalking**

This skill is identical to a ranger's tracking skill, but can only be used successfully in outdoor environments. Refer to the ranger class section for further details.

#### Smoke Signaling

This ability allows the barbarian to communicate with NPC barbarians, or barbarian-led fellowships, at a considerable distance. Signals can be seen up to 50 miles away on a clear and windless day. Non-barbarians might know the meaning of an observed signal, but they will not have the ability to





send an effective reply or to pursue the signalers effectively. Signaling is only effective outdoors. It requires a hot smoky fire, which is usually prepared with damp green branches and fuel (such as a flask of oil).

Smoke signaling is not a language. There are only a few different types of signals that can be made: beckoning, passage, seeking, or warning.

If the skill roll is successful, NPC barbarians in the area will see the signals if they are present. The chance of barbarians being present is really up to the Game Master, and dependent upon more variables than can be easily considered here. But as a general rule of thumb, the author recommends a 20% chance of barbarian presence in the wilderness, a 10% chance in the borderlands, and a 5% chance in tamed lands. Within barbarian homelands, these chances are replaced with a flat 50% chance, regardless of the wildness of the signaler's surrounding terrain.

**Beckoning:** A beckoning signal will draw a party of 1D4+2 NPC barbarians, of experience levels 1D6 each. They will all be of the same random alignment. They will either be from the nearest tribe (if the signaling occurs near or within a barbarian homeland), or a completely random tribe. The barbarians will not necessarily be friendly, but by tradition they will not be violent while meeting under signal, and will be willing to at least grudgingly entertain invitations for trade. For example, a wounded PC barbarian might be able to signal NPC barbarians to barter carried treasure for healing herbs or food or pure water if needed.

**Passage:** A signal of passage will simply indicate to nearby barbarians that the signaler is passing through in peace. As a result, all reaction rolls with NPC barbarians in the area will confer a +15% bonus to the signaler and his or her party. This bonus will persist for 1D4 days.

**Seeking:** A signal of seeking will encourage other barbarians in the area to return-signal their presence, but not to make contact unless further communication is made. If barbarians are in the area, they will signal back from a random direction, and they will currently be situated  $(1D4+1) \times 10$  miles away from the signaler. Not all barbarians in the area will reply, although they will indeed see the signal. If a signal of seeking is made and then a signal of beckoning is made on the following day, the odds of barbarians being present and coming forth will increase to 30% in the wilderness, 20% in the borderlands, or 15% in tamed lands. Within a barbarian homeland, the chance would increase from 50% to 70%.

**Warning:** A signal of warning could mean several things, but will usually be interpreted as indicating that the signaler wants his or presence to be known, but for all other barbarians to stay away due to grave or imminent danger. If NPC barbarians are present in the area, they will be encouraged to clear dangerous animals and monsters from the region. This will have the indirect effect of decreasing the number of dangerous random encounters (for the signaler and companions) by 10% for 1D3 days. Therefore if there was a 25% regional chance of a random encounter according to the GM's notes, the 25% chance would be reduced to 15%. Of course, if no barbarians are present in the area to heed the signal of warning, this decrease will not take place.

Amazonian, Kushite, Scythian, and Stygian barbarians can also conduct long-range signaling with drums, but doing so requires massive drums and percussors. It is also a technique that adventurers tend to loathe, because it significantly increases the chance of encountering wandering monsters. As such, drum signaling is typically only performed by NPC barbarians in well-protected tribal villages.





#### **Snare Building**

This skill allows the barbarian to build traps outdoors (but not in dungeons, caves, or other environments). The snare will be built from available surrounding and natural materials. The use of some kind of axe or other appropriate tool (pick, shovel, etc.) will be required. Rope can be used, otherwise vines or flexible roots will suffice.

This skill also allows the barbarian to detect and avoid (but not disarm) snares made by monsters, hunters, wild elves, or other barbarians.

When creating a snare, the barbarian will likely want to lie in wait nearby (or up in a tree), so that strangers can be warned, or a trapped victim can be killed before an escape occurs.

Snares are usually built along paths or animal tracks. Wandering humanoids, monsters, or innocent travelers along the path might well fall prey to the snare.

Beginning at experience level 10, all times required to construct traps are cut in half (round up to the nearest minute).

The chance that victims will fail to detect the snare is equal to 10%, plus 5% per experience level of the barbarian, to a maximum of 90%. Snares can be detected by effective spells (such as detect snares, or find traps) 100% of the time.

If the snare is not detected, the chance that it will function properly is dependent upon the barbarian's mastery level for this skill.

The complexity of the snare that can be built is dependent upon time, preparations, and the barbarian's experience level, as follows:

#### **TABLE 23:**

#### Snare Types and Game Effects

Barbarian's Experience Level	Snare Type	Creation Time	Base Amount of Damage	Notes
1+	Foot Snare	30 Minutes	None	A victim must save vs. death, or be trapped and hobbled by the snare. Intelligent or strong creatures will break the snare rather quickly. A new saving throw attempt is allowed every round.
1+	Spring Trap Sapling	15 Minutes	1D4	A victim must save vs. death to avoid being hit and stunned for 1D2 rounds.
2+	Shallow Pit Trap	2 Hours	1D6	A victim must save vs. death to avoid falling into the 10'-deep pit. Leaping animals will make their way out fairly quickly, unless badly wounded.





3+	Noose Snare	30 Minutes	1D4 per round	A victim must save vs. death, or be trapped and choked by the snare. A new saving throw attempt is allowed every round.
3+	Pit Trap	4 Hours	2D6	A victim must save vs. death to avoid falling into the 20'-deep pit. Animals that are powerful jumpers (such as jaguars or tigers) might manage to barely escape, unless wounded.
4+	Spring Trap Branch	30 Minutes	2D4	A victim must save vs. death to avoid being hit and stunned for 1D4 rounds.
4+	Deep Pit Trap	6 Hours	3D6	A victim must save vs. death to avoid falling into the 30'-deep pit.
5+	Shallow Spiked Pit Trap	3 Hours	1D6 + Variable	As for a shallow pit trap, but animals will not escape. Additionally, the victim will be struck by 1D4 spikes, for 1D4 additional damage each.
5+	Spring Trap Sapling	45 Minutes	3D4	A victim must save vs. death to avoid being hit and stunned for 1D4+1 rounds.
6+	Spiked Pit Trap	5 Hours	2D6 + Variable	As for a pit trap, but animals will not escape. Additionally, the victim will be struck by 1D4 spikes, for 1D4 additional damage each.
7+	Deadfall	1 Hour	4D6	A victim must save vs. death to avoid taking full damage from the log or falling tree, but even a successful save will only cut the damage in half.
8+	Deep Spiked Pit Trap	7 Hours	3D6 + Variable	As for a deep pit trap, but animals will not escape. Additionally, the victim will be struck by 1D4 spikes, for 1D4 additional damage each.
9+	Heavy Deadfall	2 Hours	8D6	A victim must save vs. death to avoid taking full damage from the logs or collapsing trees, but even a successful save will only cut the damage in half.

## Sprinting

This skill allows the barbarian to move at an accelerate rate in an outdoor environment.





If the skill roll fails, no significant advantages are given, and another skill attempt cannot be made for at least 72 hours.

If the skill roll succeeds, the barbarian will be able to move overland at double normal speed. The barbarian will still need to sleep normally, but he or she will effectively cover twice as much as distance normal during a travel day. Barbarians of CON 15 can maintain this pace for 1 day. Those of CON 16 can run for 2 days, with of course a night of rest in between. Those of CON 17 can run for 3 days, and those of CON 18 can run for 4 days. After having run for the maximum length of time, the barbarian must "rest" by moving at normal (not double) speed for 1 day. If this is done, the barbarian is rested and another sprinting skill roll can then be made for future travel if desired.

Sprinting prevents mapping attempts, and is therefore best conducted in familiar areas. Sprinting does not increase the chances of a random encounter in the wilderness. Any companions of the barbarian, however, will not be able to keep up the pace.

In a pursuit and evasion scenario, if a barbarian is alone and fleeing an encounter, the chance of evading pursuit is increased by 25% by a successful sprinting skill roll. Similarly, if the barbarian is alone and is chasing after fleeing NPCs or monsters, the chance of re-engaging is increased by 25%.

Even if the barbarian has slower companions, trail-signs quickly left by the barbarian will allow companions to enjoy a partial bonus of this nature. If a barbarian is with companions and fleeing an encounter, the chance of the group evading pursuit is increased by 10% if the barbarian has a successful sprinting skill roll. Similarly, if the barbarian is with companions and is chasing after fleeing NPCs or monsters, the chance of re-engaging is increased by 10%, but the barbarian will be alone (and waiting for companions to catch up) for 3D20 turns once the quarry is found.

#### Survivalism

This skill set gives the barbarian a more-than-normal chance to master abilities that are needed to survive while under duress in the wilderness.

Since the rules for outdoor survival in the Castle Oldskull game are somewhat abstract and limited (favoring Game Master rulings, not rules), the GM will need to determine what can and cannot be done with survivalist skill use. Very generally, valuable crafted items (fine clothing, holy water, etc.) cannot ever be made with these skills; but attempts to survive or creature a survival advantage will typically succeed if they are modest and the skill roll is a success.

The sub-skills in this skill set are as follows:

**Create Fire:** The ability to create a fire without equipment, improvising the equivalents of flint, steel, and tinder.

**Determine Direction Outdoors:** The ability to determine the direction that one is facing during daylight hours. A failed roll will result in incorrect information being provided by the GM.

**Find Drinkable Water:** The ability to find relatively pure freshwater outdoors, if freshwater can be found. This ability cannot defeat the essential nature of the environment, however; a dry desert will not have any water to be found, nor will a completely frozen and ice-covered mountaintop.

**Find or Build Shelter:** The ability to find, or make, temporary shelter to survive the current environmental conditions (cold, rain, wind, etc.).

Make Crude Clothing: The ability to improvise clothing that is appropriate to survival in the current





terrain (head coverings and body shade in a desert, water-resistant clothing to reduce the chance of parasitic infection in a swamp, warmish clothing in a cold region, etc.).

**Scout for Danger:** The ability to remain camouflaged and hidden while moving alone ahead of a group. This skill is passive, and success is checked for whenever the barbarian encounters monsters. When the skill is successful, the barbarian will remain undetected unless he or she chooses to attack (from ambush) or to step out and make contact.



## Watercraft Handling

This skill allows the barbarian to build a crude canoe, hide boat, or raft over 48 man hours' time. (Therefore the barbarian and one companion could complete the work in 24 hours, three people could complete the work in 16 hours, four people could complete the work in 12 hours, and so forth.) Up to 16 hours in a 24-hour day can be spent in such labor. A craft can be designed to hold 1 or 2 people.




One built for three, four, five, or six people will require +6 hours of work per additional person. Larger craft cannot be made by a barbarian.

Sailed vehicles cannot be crafted in this manner, but rudimentary poles and/or paddles can be. The existence of sufficient raw materials, rope, and axes must be assumed; without these materials the skill attempt will automatically fail.

Unfortunately, in building a watercraft the skill roll is not made until movement over water begins. If the roll succeeds, the craft will remain water-worthy for 2D6 weeks. If the roll fails, it will almost immediately sink, so such things are best tested in safe and shallow water.

A successful skill roll will also allow the barbarian to avoid a capsizing event. If for example there are rapids on a river, and the GM has noted that any craft moving through has a 50% chance of capsizing, the barbarian could make a watercraft handling skill roll to avert this danger. If the roll succeeds, the rapids are successfully navigated. Even if the roll fails, the barbarian would still have the given 50/50 chance of success to determine what happens next.

### Wisdom of the Wilds

In the same spirit as survivalism (above), this abstract set of related skills gives the barbarian a betterthan-normal chance to master abilities that are needed to survive while under duress in the wilderness. These skills are classically used in forested areas (hence the name), but can actually effective in any wilderness environment.

Based on the homeland chosen by the player, the barbarian can enjoy a permanent +10% bonus to woodcraft skill attempts in one of the following climate types, OR one of the following terrain types. Only one climate or one terrain type can be chosen; the barbarian cannot gain an advantage in both a climate and favored terrain. The possibilities are: cold, forest, hills, mountains, plains, sub-arctic, sub-tropical, swamp, temperate, tropical, or wasteland.

The sub-skills in this skill set are as follows:

**Animal Identification:** The chance to correctly identify a creature of nature, as described in the savage warrior ability section. Successful identification will only result in knowing the monster's name, but not any in-game abilities. A failed roll will simply result in a GM response of "You're not certain what it is". This skill is limited to 3 uses a day, for the GM's sanity.

**Fishing:** The ability to automatically catch enough fish (using improvised hook and line, a spear, or even bare hands) to provide a meager meal for the barbarian and his or her companions. Only enough to survive for the day will be gathered, with no excess. The time expended per skill attempt is 30 minutes per character; therefore a barbarian would need to fish for 90 minutes to feed himself and two companions. This skill can only be attempted on or near sufficient freshwater; barbarians do not have saltwater or underwater fishing skills.

**Foraging:** The ability to automatically find enough roots, herbs, mushrooms or similar to provide a meager meal for the barbarian and his or her companions. Only enough to survive for the day will be gathered, with no excess. The time expended per skill attempt is 1 hour per character; therefore a barbarian would need to hunt for 4 hours to feed herself and three companions. Unlike fishing and hunting, this skill can be used underground.

**Habitat Identification:** The chance to correctly identify the blood, dung, fur, leavings, or tracks of a creature of nature that lives in the area but is not currently present. If no such traces exist, the skill





cannot be used. A failed roll will result in the GM stating that the leavings are of uncertain nature. Also, the GM should secretly roll even if there is no chance that the skill will be successful (for example, the traces are from a monster or undead) so that the barbarian will not be able to discern unfairly-acquired knowledge, such as the fact that tracks were made by an unnatural creature.

**Hunting:** The ability to automatically hunt and kill enough animals to provide a meager meal for the barbarian and his or her companions. Only enough to survive for the day will be found, with no excess. The time expended per skill attempt is 1 hour per character; therefore a barbarian would need to hunt for 6 hours to feed himself and five companions.

**Pathfinding:** The ability to find the best route through the wilderness on any given day. This skill is automatically used at the beginning of every day in the wilderness. A successful roll will have one of the following effects, as chosen by the player: [1] a -10% reduction to the day's required travel time to cover a normal distance for the barbarian and his or her party; [2] a +10% increase to distance travelled that day for the barbarian and his or her party, in the usual amount of time; or, [3] a -10% reduction to the chances for random monster encounters during the next 24 hours.

**Plant Identification:** The chance to correctly identify any non-magical plant or tree (not fungus). This is not the ability to find plants, it is simply the ability to know what a barbarian is looking at. A failed roll will simply result in a GM response of "You're not certain what it is". This skill is limited to 5 uses a day, for the GM's sanity.

**Predict Weather:** A skill best used at daybreak. The chance to successfully predict the day's weather, as per the spell of the same name. Failure will result in a reasonable but wrong conclusion (predicting dryness instead of rain, calmness instead of wind, etc.).

### Wound Binding and Setting

This skill can be used every time the barbarian himself or herself, or a companion, suffers nonmagical damage. Barbarians cannot heal damage caused by magical monsters, spells, or spell-like effects.

Note that if a barbarian is treating someone with suspicion and silence (an untrusted spell caster), he or she will be unwilling to bind wounds for that individual. Trust will be gained over experience level progression, and the barbarian's player should role-play such incidents effectively given the barbarian's nature, ancestral background, and suspicion.

Each attempt to bind and set wounds requires 1 turn's worth of time, per person. (In a dungeon or other highly dangerous setting, this time will quickly add up, resulting in numerous wandering monster checks.)

If the skill fails, there is no effect.

If the skill succeeds, the treated person benefits, but no character or creature can benefit from the barbarian's tending more than once per day.

If the skill is successful, the recipient heals a number of hit points that is dependent on the barbarian's mastery level, as listed below. If a wounded person is successfully treated by a barbarian, they will also gain a long-term healing effect.





TABLE 24:

**Wound Setting Abilities for Barbarians** 

Barbarian's Wound Binding and Setting Mastery	Immediate Healing	Long-Term Healing Effect	
Level ML 1	1 point of damage	For the next 1 day, heal +1 point of damage above and beyond any other normal or magical healing, even if engaged in strenuous activity (not resting). This effect is non-cumulative; each day the subject either enjoys long-term healing from a barbarian, or does not. There is no doubling or tripling for additional barbarians' care, or overlapping care from the same barbarian over time.	
ML 2	1 point of damage	As above, healing +1 point of damage daily for 2 consecutive days.	
ML 3	1D2 points of damage	As above, healing +1 point of damage daily for 3 consecutive days.	
ML 4	1D2 points of damage	As above, healing +1 point of damage daily for 4 consecutive days.	
ML 5	1D2 points of damage	As above, healing +1 point of damage daily for 5 consecutive days.	
ML 6	1D3 points of damage	As above, healing +1 point of damage daily for 6 consecutive days.	
ML 7	1D3 points of damage	As above, healing +1 point of damage daily for 7 consecutive days.	
ML 8	1D3 points of damage	As above, healing +1 point of damage daily for 8 consecutive days.	
ML 9	1D2+1 points of damage	As above, healing +1 point of damage daily for 9 consecutive days.	
ML 10	1D2+1 points of damage	As above, healing +1 point of damage daily for 10 consecutive days.	
ML 11	1D2+1 points of damage	As above, healing +1 point of damage daily for 11 consecutive days.	
ML 12	1D2+2 points of damage	As above, healing +1 point of damage daily for 12 consecutive days.	
ML 13	1D2+2 points of damage	As above, healing +1 point of damage daily for 13 consecutive days.	
ML 14	1D2+2 points of damage	As above, healing +1 point of damage daily for 14 consecutive days.	
ML 15	4 points of damage	As above, healing +1 point of damage daily for 15 consecutive days.	
ML 16	4 points of damage	As above, healing +1 point of damage daily for 16 consecutive days.	
ML 17	4 points of damage	As above, healing +1 point of damage daily for 17 consecutive days.	





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ML 18	4 points of	As above, healing +1 point of damage daily for 18
	damage	consecutive days.
ML 19	4 points of	As above, healing +1 point of damage daily for 19
	damage	consecutive days.
ML 20	4 points of	As above, healing +1 point of damage daily for 20
	damage	consecutive days.
ML 21	5 points of	As above, healing +1 point of damage daily for 21
	damage	consecutive days.
ML 22	5 points of	As above, healing +1 point of damage daily for 22
	damage	consecutive days.
ML 23	5 points of	As above, healing +1 point of damage daily for 23
	damage	consecutive days.
ML 24	5 points of	As above, healing +1 point of damage daily for 24
	damage	consecutive days.
ML 25	5 points of	As above, healing +1 point of damage daily for 25
	damage	consecutive days.
ML 25	-	

# Limitations and Disadvantages for the Barbarian Class

There are two counters to the barbarian's vast array of special abilities: slow experience progression, and inherent disadvantages. Some of these disadvantages involve game rules, while others involve the role-playing skills of the barbarian's player. Game Masters should be somewhat lenient in the application of role-playing disadvantages in the name of adventuring party camaraderie, but the disadvantages should never be dismissed out of hand.

**Born to Illiteracy:** Barbarians, regardless of intelligence, do not know how to read or write. They are simply not taught these skills by their tribes, as knowledge is passed on through spirits and mentorship, not writing. And as adventurers, the barbarians do not sit and learn in classrooms; they learn these skills gradually through exposure to companions' literacy, signs in cities, encountered runes and sigils, furtive attempts at interpretation while alone, and so forth.

The Game Master should consider PC barbarians to be capable of reading monosyllabic words at experience level 2, words of two syllables at level 3, and all words at level 4.

Similarly, the barbarian will be able to write simple runes and marks at experience level 2, monosyllabic words at level 3, words of two syllables at level 4, and all words at level 5.

**Distrust of the Totems of Witchery:** Barbarians will not use magic items at low experience levels, regardless of the player's wishes. Their innate superstitious fear is simply too strong to overcome. However, fear diminishes over time as they are exposed to new friends, cultures, and mysterious ways.

These rules are open to exploitation and interpretation. For example, a level 1 barbarian would not allow herself to be administered a potion of healing; she would swat it away (perhaps destroying it) if a companion forced it on her. But if she was unconscious, a companion could administer the draught and she would (to her great distress) gain its magical effects. As a Game Master rule of thumb, if the





players are attempting an in-game action simply to justify conferring a magic item to the barbarian as a dodge around the rules, the action should be prevented.







The gradual acceptance of magic items by the barbarian is simulated by experience progression, as follows:

#### **TABLE 25:**

#### Acceptance of Magic Items by Barbarians

Barbarian's Experience Level	Acceptance of Magic Items
1 or 2	Will never willingly use magic items.
3	The barbarian will willingly use magic potions.
4	The barbarian will also willingly use magic weapons.
5	The barbarian will also willingly use magic armor and shields.
6	The barbarian will also willingly use armor-like miscellaneous magic items (for example, a helm of telepathy).
7	The barbarian will also willingly use weapon-like miscellaneous magic items (for example, javelins of lightning).
8	The barbarian will also willingly use protective miscellaneous magic items (for example, rings or protection).
9	The barbarian will also willingly use scrolls of protection.
10	The barbarian will also willingly use other magic items that are usable by warriors (for example, magical rings, rods of lordly might, gauntlets of ogre power, etc,).
Special	Barbarians will never use artifact or relics, regardless of experience level.

If a barbarian unknowingly uses a magic item (for example, a magic sword is discovered and is used in combat), the barbarian will forsake the item as soon as the current battle or dangerous circumstance is resolved. Other characters of course will then be able to claim the magic item for themselves; the barbarian will either not want the item, or will seek to destroy it.

Note further that if a barbarian suffers from the effects of a cursed item (ring of contrariness, helm of opposite alignment, cursed berserking sword, etc.), at least one month's game time will pass where the barbarian will only accept currently used and worn (trusted) magic items, and will not accept, use, or experiment with new magical items of any kind.

**Forever a Barbarian:** Regardless of ability scores or player intent, a barbarian can never become a character with two classes. This is because barbarians are born and bred to the tribal ways, and although they become more world-wise over time, they never evolve to such a degree that they would be willing or even able to adopt a second profession.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Refer to the November 1982 magazine.





**Grave Superstition:** Barbarians also have an inherent distrust of spell casters (clerics, druids, illusionists, magic-users, and so forth). At low experience levels they will not willingly seek out the company of NPC spell casters. In regards to PC spell casters, the barbarian will not attack companions outright, but the player will be encouraged to role-play the character in a distrustful manner. Distrust will involve not speaking to spell casters, insisting on staying awake for guard duty if a spell caster is on watch (possibly spoiling a good night's sleep and healing), attempting to destroy newly-discovered magic items before they can be granted to a spell caster, etc.<sup>11</sup>

As with all matters involving role-playing in good faith, if the player refuses to honor the nature of their character, no experience points will be earned by the barbarian during that play session. Poor role-playing in this regard would mean arguing with the GM over the nature of the barbarian's limitations, asking for beneficial spells to be cast on the barbarian, communicating freely with spell casters, serving as a bodyguard for spell casters, and so forth.

Barbarians trust priests (clerics, druids, and mystics) more than they do mages (illusionists, magicusers, and savants), because of the ancient shamanic nature of the tribes. Barbarian tribes rarely have shamanic clerics in the current age of the World of Oldskull, but such traditions did exist prior to the Empyrean invasions, and these traditions are remembered with grudging reverence.

The following table provides guidelines for interactions between barbarians and spell casters:

Barbarian's Experience Level	Nature of Superstition	Role-Playing Notes
1	Fear and Paranoia	<ul> <li>NPC mages will be shunned if brought into the party by other companions. Violence may occur.</li> </ul>
		PC mages will be met with silence.
		> NPC priests will be met with silence.
		> PC priests will be observed with silent curiosity.
2	Fear and Distrust	<ul> <li>NPC mages will be met with silence if brought into the party by other companions. Threats or intimidation may occur.</li> </ul>
		> PC mages will be met with silence.
		NPC priests will be accepted if brought into the party by other companions.
		PC priests will be accepted, and communication, spell casting, and teamwork can occur normally from this point forward.

# TABLE 26:

#### Acceptance of Spell Casters by Barbarians

 $<sup>^{11}</sup>$  Refer to commentary in the Dragonsfoot Gygax Q&A, May 3rd, 2005.



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3	Distrust and Suspicion	<ul> <li>NPC mages will be met with silence if brought into the party by other companions.</li> </ul>
		PC mages will be met with silent curiosity.
		NPC priests will be accepted, and communication, spell casting, and teamwork can occur normally from this point forward.
4	Wariness	NPC mages will be somewhat accepted if brought into the party by other companions, with occasional teamwork if absolutely necessary.
		PC mages will be somewhat accepted, with teamwork when necessary.
5	Waning Distrust and	NPC mages will be somewhat accepted, with teamwork when necessary.
	Wariness	PC mages will be mostly accepted, but the barbarian will still not allow spells to be cast upon him.
6	Skepticism	<ul> <li>NPC mages will be mostly accepted, but the barbarian will still not allow spells to be cast upon him.</li> </ul>
		PC mages will be accepted, and communication and teamwork can occur normally from this point forward.
		PC mages can cast spells on the barbarian if absolutely necessary.
7	Grudging Acceptance	NPC mages will be mostly accepted, and the barbarian can bring NPC mages into the party as companions.
		NPC mages can cast spells on the barbarian if absolutely necessary.
		PC mages can cast spells on the barbarian when necessary.
8	Hesitant Acceptance	NPC mages will be mostly accepted, and the barbarian can hire NPC mages as henchmen.
		NPC mages can cast spells on the barbarian when necessary.
		PC mages can cast spells on the barbarian at any time, if the barbarian grants permission.
9	Acceptance	> NPC mages will be accepted as companions.
		NPC mages can cast spells on the barbarian at any time, if the barbarian grants permission.
		> PC mages can cast spells on the barbarian at any time.





**Limited Languages:** Unlike other characters, barbarians begin the game knowing only a tribal language (Amazonian, Midgardian, Scythian, etc.) and the common tongue. Barbarians disavow the use of sacred and unholy languages, which means that they do not know or speak their alignment tongue, and they will never do so. They are utterly disassociated from the gods and immortals that confer ancestral knowledge of the alignment languages.

Refer also to the Journeyers of Many Lands advantage for notes on barbarians learning additional normal languages (elvish, orcish, etc.) during play over time.

**Martial Obsession:** Barbarians do not have any spell casting ability. They can use many types of magic items however, including all weapons and armor.







**Matriarchal Cultures:** For the Amazonian barbarian tribe (only), note that only women can become barbarians. Male Amazons are kept within the tribal circle as guarded servants to the matriarchal warrior order. For the Scythian barbarian tribe, women warriors are more common than men, but there is no restriction upon male Scythian barbarians being played.

**Tribal Traditions of Arms (Limitation):** Barbarians begin play with the most weapon proficiencies of any class, with six weapon skills known at experience level 1. Due to the necessities of tribal life, all barbarians begin play being proficient with the hand axe, knife, and spear. The fourth and fifth weapon types are dependent upon the barbarian's tribal background, as selected by the player from the options listed below. The sixth weapon type can be chosen freely by the player.

The tribal weapons, by barbarian homeland in the World of Oldskull, are as follows:

- > Amazonian: Broad Sword, Composite Long Bow, Composite Short Bow, Javelin, or Short Bow
- > **Cimmerian:** Bastard Sword or Broad Sword
- > Cyrenaican: Khopesh Sword, Scimitar, or Sling
- ➢ Gaulic: Battle Axe, Broad Sword, Hammer, or Sling
- > **Hibernian:** Dagger, Dart, or Javelin
- > Kushite: Atlatl and Javelin, Blowgun, Club, or Staff Sling
- > Midgardian: Battle Axe, Broad Sword, Footman's Mace, or Short Bow
- > **Pictish:** Club, Short Sword, or Spiked Buckler
- > Rus-Lander: Bardiche, Battle Axe, Broad Sword, or Glaive
- > Scythian: Battle Axe, Club, Horseman's Mace, Horseman's Military Pick, Javelin, or Short Bow
- Stygian: Blowgun, Dagger, or Khopesh Sword

Note that regardless of training or experience level a barbarian never attains weapon specialization, as those formal disciplines of mastery are only learned through dedicated (and civilized!) mentored training conducted throughout a lifetime by specialized fighters and rangers.<sup>12</sup>



<sup>12</sup> Refer also to the November 1982 magazine.







<u>Chapter V:</u> The Hunter Sub-Class



# **Overview of the Hunter Class**

**Description:** Followers of the hunter class are survivalists, born and raised in small hunter-thorps (hut, longhouse, or shelter circles) along the edges of the wilderness. They frequently trade hides and furs in exchange for refined goods in more civilized villages and trading posts, but find themselves greatly uncomfortable when forced to reside in labyrinthine castles or sprawling cities. This is a fairly complex and advanced class, for players who enjoy resourceful and skill-intensive play.

In some ways hunters are similar to rangers, but they are not solely born of elven or highland culture; they do not hail from a lost royal house; and despite their tracking skills, they focus their preystalking on beasts, rather than evil humanoids and giants. Also, hunters do not always trust themselves to a good alignment. Hunters also differ from barbarians in that they harbor no deep superstitions, are more civilized and comfortable in cities, are rarely tribal, and do not fear the use of





magic. Hunters and barbarians do have contact with one another, and groups sometimes form temporary alliances of convenience in the name of mutual survival against grim or overwhelming odds.

The hunter class was originally devised by Gary Gygax and published in the fall of 1988, some three years after his ouster from TSR.<sup>13</sup> It has been greatly elaborated upon and refined for inclusion in the Castle Oldskull game. This class as envisioned by Gygax was never made part of the official corporate game. It has been refined from its first appearance by the author of this volume.

**Hunters of Renown:** Famed hunters from the World of Oldskull include Actaeon the Accursed, Atalanta of Calydon, Heimdall of the Gjallarhorn, the huntresses of Artemis, King Agememnon, Orion the Giant-Born, Sir Pellinore (seeker of the Questing Beast), and the minions of Lord Herne, Master of the Wild Hunt.

**Immortal Hunters:** Deific hunters and huntresses are many, and they include Artemis (Greek), Bendis (Thracian), Cernunnos (Celtic), Herne (Germanic and Norse), Neith (Egyptian), Nodens (Celtic and Lovecraftian), Ullr (Norse), and others. Uniquely among the warrior classes, worshipful and reverent hunters in the World of Oldskull are more frequently female than they are male.

# **Being Born a Hunter**

**Alignment:** Hunters respect (but do not worship) the druidic values of the Earth Mother, equilibrium, and the necessary balance between predators and prey. As such, they are always neutral in alignment (being either CN, LN, NE, NG, or TN).

**Ancestral Limitations:** Humans, sylvan elves, wild elves, half-elves of sylvan descent, or half-orcs can become hunters. All other ancestries have tradesmen and warriors who hunt, but the specific borderland lifestyle that leads to the archetypal hunter's power and skill set is only archived by the above-listed races.

Minimum Ability Scores: STR 15+, DEX 15+, CON 15+, INT 12+, WIS 12+, CHA 6+.

**Social Standing:** Hunters have no social standing requirements; their standing is randomly generated during the character creation process. Due to their lack of concern for urban and noble life, they have relative standing than fighters; but due to their lack of disdain and superstition, they are more able to advance in standing than barbarians are.

As such, level 1 human hunter NPCs tend to belong to the Middle Lower Class (MLC-2). More experienced hunters are typically Upper Lower Class (ULC-3) for levels 2 to 4, Lower Middle Class (LMC-4) for levels 5 to 7, Middle Class (MMC-5) for levels 8 to 10, Upper Middle Class (UMC-6) for levels 11 to 14, and Lower Upper Class (LUC-7) for levels 15 and up.

# Archetypal Considerations for the Hunter

**Combat Prowess:** Hunters, as members of the warrior archetype, are very capable in combat. Their abilities however are somewhat constrained by the fact that they spend their early lives mastering the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> For some brief insights from Gary on play testing this class with his son Luke, refer to the Dragonsfoot Q&A V, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2006.





skills of battling beasts, rather than humans or intelligent monstrous opponents. This innate reluctant to slay intelligent creatures reflects itself in a lifelong penalty against a hunter's combat prowess toward anthropomorphic foes. Refer to the Savage Warrior advantage, and the Martial Inexperience disadvantage as described hereafter.

**Hit Dice:** Hunters roll D10s for hit points up through experience level 9, with constitution bonuses always applying due to their CON 15+ ability requirement. Beyond level 9, they gain +3 hit points per level (with constitution bonuses no longer applying).

**Iconic Armor:** Hunters can wear any type of armor, and can also use any type of helm and shield. However, at the beginning of the game (experience level 1) they will only have access to wooden shields, padded armor, leather armor, or studded leather. After play begins, and possibly before the first dungeon adventure, hunters will be in the city with their other Player Character companions and can either purchase or trade for metal armor. However, hunters prefer and excel in non-bulky armor – much like hunters do – due to their training as young adults.

**Iconic Arms:** Hunters can wield any type of weapon, although due to their wilderness background they begin play with preferred proficiency in weapons such as the atlatl, blowgun, bow, hand axe, harpoon, javelin, knife, lasso, and/or sling.

**Prime Requisite:** Do their three needed exceptional ability scores (STR, DEX, and CON), hunters have no principal ability. This means that they cannot gain a bonus to experience point marks that are earned.

**Saving Throws:** Hunters have the same saving throws as fighters do. See however their Grim Survivalist advantage, described later in this section.



# **Hunter Progression**

**Class Level Limit:** Hunters have no class-imposed maximum experience level, but their progression is slowed somewhat in comparison to the fighter class.

**Pace of Progression:** The barbarian class has a slightly slowed pace of progression in relation to other classes. Hunters who attain 25 experience point marks (XPM) are level 3, and those with 50 XPM are level 4. Those with 100 XPM are level 5, those with 250 XPM are level 6, and those with 500





XPM are level 7. In consideration of higher experience levels, those with XPM 1,000 are level 8, those with XPM 2,500 are level 10, those with XPM 5,000 are level 11, and those with XPM 10,000 are level 14 (comparing to a fighter of identical experience, who would be level 18 at XPM 10,000).

### **TABLE 27:**

**Experience Progression for the Hunter Class** 

Experience Point	Experience	Earned HD	Cumulative	Exemplary Title	
Marks	Level	/ hp	HD / hp	Daemplary Incle	
0 to 11.99	1	1D10 hp	1D10 hp	Wilderlander	
12 to 23.99	2	+1D10 hp	2D10 hp	Blooded Wilderlander	
24 to 49.99	3	+1D10 hp	3D10 hp	Hound Master / Mistress of Hounds	
50 to 99.99	4	+1D10 hp	4D10 hp	Wilderland Guide	
100 to 199.99	5	+1D10 hp	5D10 hp	Huntsman / Huntswoman	
200 to 399.99	6	+1D10 hp	6D10 hp	Proven Huntsman / Huntswoman	
400 to 749.99	7	+1D10 hp	7D10 hp	Master Huntsman / Huntswoman	
750 to 1,199.99	8	+1D10 hp	8D10 hp	Hunter / Huntress	
1200 to 1,999.99	9	+1D10 hp	9D10 hp	Beast Master / Mistress of Beasts	
2,000 to 3,999.99	10	+3 hp	9D10+3 hp	Great Huntmaster / Huntmistress	
4,000 to 5,999.99	11	+3 hp	9D10+6 hp	Master / Mistress of the Hunt	
6,000 to 7,999.99	12	+3 hp	9D10+9 hp	Great Master / Mistress of the Hunt	
8,000 to 9,999.99	13	+3 hp	9D10+12 hp	Grand Master / Mistress of the Hunt	
10,000 to 11,999.99	14	+3 hp	9D10+15 hp	Brother / Sister of Lord Herne	
12,000 to 13,999.99	15	+3 hp	9D10+18 hp	Blood Brother / Sister of Lord Herne	
14,000 to 15,999.99	16	+3 hp	9D10+21 hp	Chosen of Lord Herne	
16,000 to 17,999.99	17	+3 hp	9D10+24 hp	Heir / Heiress to Lord Herne	
18,000 to 19,999.99	18	+3 hp	9D10+27 hp	Untamed Heir / Heiress to Lord Herne	
20,000 to 21,999.99	19	+3 hp	9D10+30 hp	Blood-Wrought Heir / Heiress to Lord Herne	
22,000 to 23,999.99	20	+3 hp	9D10+33 hp	Exalted Heir / Heiress to Lord Herne	
24,000 to 25,999.99	21	+3 hp	9D10+36 hp	Imperious Heir / Heiress to Lord Herne	

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26,000 to 27,999.99	22	+3 hp	9D10+39 hp	Mythic Heir / Heiress to Lord Herne	
28,000 to 29,999.99	23	+3 hp	9D10+42 hp	Legendary Heir / Heiress to Lord Herne	
30,000 to 31,999.99	24	+3 hp	9D10+45 hp	Unconquerable Heir / Heiress to Lord Herne	
32,000 to 33,999.99	25	+3 hp	9D10+48 hp	Immortal Heir / Heiress to Lord Herne	
(+2,000)	(+1)	+3 hp	(+3 hp)	(Unique)	







The following level titles are recommended for hunters in the Castle Oldskull campaign. A slash indicates differing titles for male and female characters; parentheses indicate a situational qualifier of some kind.

For a PC hunter, the player can choose from among the suggested level titles freely, or with GM consultation.

#### **TABLE 28:**

#### **Suggested Level Titles for Hunters**

Hunter's Experience Level	Recommended Level Titles
1	Beast Handler, Falconer (if a tamer of birds of prey), Hound Tamer (if a tamer of dogs), Wilderlander
2	Adept Falconer (if a tamer of birds of prey), Blooded Wilderlander, Horse Tamer (if a tamer of horses and ponies), Hound Keeper (if a tamer of dogs), Tracker, Wilderland Survivor
3	Herdhand, Hound Master / Mistress of Hounds (if a tamer of dogs), Master Falconer (if a tamer of birds of prey), Wilderland Tracker, Wolf Tamer (if a tamer of wolves)
4	Bear Tamer (if a tamer of bears), Huntsman's / Huntswoman's Prentice, War Hound Master (if a tamer of dogs), Wilderland Guide, Wolf Keeper (if a tamer of wolves)
5	Bear Keeper (if a tamer of bears), Beast Keeper, Huntsman / Huntswoman, Wolf Master / Mistress of Wolves (if a tamer of wolves)
6	Lion Tamer (if a tamer of lions), Master / Mistress of the Bear (if a tamer of bears), Prey Chaser, Prey Pacer, Proven Huntsman / Huntswoman, Tiger Tamer (if a tamer of tigers), Veteran Huntsman / Huntswoman
7	Lion Keeper (if a tamer of lions), Master Huntsman / Huntswoman, Prey Stalker, Quarry Master / Mistress, Tiger Keeper (if a tamer of tigers)
8	Beast Trainer, Dire Beast Tamer, Hunter / Huntress, Master / Mistress of Lions (if a tamer of lions), Master / Mistress of Tigers (if a tamer of lions), Master Prey Stalker
9	Beast Master / Mistress of Beasts, Dire Beast Trainer, Huntmaster / Huntmistress, Wild Runner
10	Great Huntmaster / Huntmistress, Lord / Lady of the Wilds, Supreme Beast Master
11	Grand Huntmaster / Huntmistress, Master / Mistress of the Hunt
12	Great Master / Mistress of the Hunt, Lord Huntmaster / Huntmistress
13	Child of Lord Herne, Grand Master / Mistress of the Hunt
14	Brother / Sister of Lord Herne
15	Blood Brother / Sister of Lord Herne, Champion of Lord Herne
16	Chosen of Lord Herne
17	Heir / Heiress to Lord Herne
18	Untamed Heir / Heiress to Lord Herne





20	Exalted Heir / Heiress to Lord Herne
21	Imperious Heir / Heiress to Lord Herne
22	Mythic Heir / Heiress to Lord Herne
23	Legendary Heir / Heiress to Lord Herne
24	Unconquerable Heir / Heiress to Lord Herne
25	Immortal Heir / Heiress to Lord Herne

# Powers and Advantages of the Hunter Class

Hunters have an excellent array of skills and powers, which overlaps to a degree with barbarians. Hunters are unique however in their mastery of beasts and overall self-sufficiency, with fewer disadvantages or role-playing constraints.

**Celerity of Lord Herne:** In a manner similar to fighters, mid- and high-level hunters are able to make multiple melee attacks per round. Their mastery of such techniques is slower, however, with increased attack rates not emerging until experience level 8.

Hunter's Experience Level	Melee Attack Rate	Notes
1 to 7	1/1 (1 melee attack per round)	Normal attacking ability (akin to the prowess possessed by non-fighter characters).
8 to 14	3/2 (3 attacks every 2 rounds)	The hunter attacks once in the first round that he or she engages in combat. Then, on even-numbered engagement rounds (2, 4, 6, etc.) he or she attacks twice in the same round.
15 or higher	2/1 (2 melee attacks per round)	The hunter can attack twice every melee round.

### **TABLE 29:**

#### **Melee Attack Rates for Hunters**

**Grim Survivalist:** Hunters gain a +2 saving throw bonus vs. all non-spell attack forms that are used by an animal or monster. Examples of applicable saving throw categories for this bonus include a poisonous bite, a petrifying gaze attack, a paralyzing touch, or even a dragon's breath weapon. Examples of non-applicable saving throw categories include spells cast by a spell caster, spell-like powers used by a demon, spell-like powers from a foe's magic item, traps, or deadly environmental effects (avalanches, landslides, etc.).







**Hunter's Onslaught:** This minor ability is similar to a fighter's merciless onslaught, but due to the hunter's training background it only applies (at first) to beasts with less than 1 full hit die, and not to men, humanoids, or other monstrous creatures.

When facing minor beasts in melee, the hunter's mastery allows him or her to attack the beasts a number of times per round equal to his or her experience level. Therefore, a level 4 hunter would be able to attack 4 times per round, but only against minor beasts. An attack against another type of foe would fall under the Celerity of Herne advantage instead, as described above.

The onslaught fighting technique can only be used in melee, not with ranged attacks.

Examples of minor beasts include bats, giant rats, hawks, jackals, otters, rats, ravens, skunks, and weasels. Examples of minor foes who cannot be engaged by the hunter in this manner include normal men, men-at-arms, level 0 halflings, goblins, kobolds, and svart goblins.

Beginning at experience level 6, as the hunter gains prowess in fighting other foes, this ability becomes identical to a fighter's merciless onslaught ability, encompassing attacks against men-atarms, goblins, and so forth.

**Leaping and Springing:** Hunters, along with barbarians, monks, and swashbucklers, have enhanced jumping ability that allows them to leap farther and higher than characters of other classes can. Refer to the ability description in the barbarian class section for full details.

**Predator's Guard:** This instinctive ability is identical to the barbarian of the same name. It allows the hunter to sometimes sense and retaliate against attacks that are made against him or her from behind.

**Preternatural Dexterity:** All hunters have dexterity scores of 15+. They also have near-instinctive reflexes due to a youth's worth of training. This means that they gain significantly more advantage from each point of dexterity than other characters do, as follows:

	Preternatural Dexterity Bonuses for Hunters					
Dexterity Score	Surprise Roll Adjustment					
15	+2	+2	+2 (-2 bonus)	+2		
16	+3	+3	+3 (-3 bonus)	+3		
17	+4	+4	+4 (-4 bonus)	+4		
18	+5	+5	+5 (-5 bonus)	+5		

#### TABLE 30:

**Savage Warrior:** Hunters are masters at battling the creatures of nature. The "creatures of nature" include any living non-human creatures that live in our real world, but that do not dwell in the sea.





This includes mammalian creatures such as badgers, bears, and wolves. It also includes alligators for example (freshwater reptilians), but not saltwater crocodiles. It does not include dinosaurs or prehistoric creatures. It does include giant versions of natural creatures (giant beetles, giant lizards, giant spiders, etc.) but not magical beasts or other unusual monsters (land sharks, lycanthropes, owlbears, winter wolves, etc.). The GM may need to adjudicate this distinction on a case-by-case basis in some instances.

Against a creature of nature, a hunter gains a +2 bonus to all melee and ranged to hit rolls. Further, if a natural 20 is rolled as an attack against such a creature, the attack automatically inflicts the maximum possible damage. For example, instead of inflicting 1D6 with a spear, the hunter would inflict the full 6 points of damage without rolling.

**Scaling Perilous Surfaces:** This ability – limited, at first, to trees, cliffs, and ledges – is identical to the barbarian's ability of the same name, including the need to master various surfaces through practice and experimentation over time.

**Self-Reliance and Mastery:** Hunters never need to train to gain experience levels. They also do not even need to return to civilization (a village, town, city, etc.) in order to earn experience point marks. Instead, they earn experience points automatically and can even increase in experience level in during an adventure. Once they earn sufficient experience, the only requirement for level advancement is that they find a place to sleep, rest, and prepare themselves for 24 hours without exertion or combat. Once this 24-period ends, the new experience level is gained.

**The Spirit Hound of Lord Herne:** Although high-level hunters do not attract followers or establish freeholds, they do attain an unusual form of beast mastery. Regardless of their beliefs, alignment, or patron deity, upon attaining experience level 10 they are visited in spirit by Lord Herne, the Master of the Wild Hunt.

When awakening from this vision, the hunter will learn that he or she has been graced with a spiritual presence in the form of a magical hound. This spirit is fearless, and will resist attempts to be fed; it prefers to hunt for itself while the hunter is asleep. It can only be healed through its own regeneration, at a maximum rate of 6 points of damage healed per night.

The spirit will follow the hunter anywhere, even into the netherworld, alternate realities, the Dreamlands, or other Planes of Existence. The spirit can be commanded to depart – temporarily or for years – and it will do so; but if ever called upon again, it will magically appear in an instant and remain with the hunter for as long as desired.

Note that a high-level hunter can still bond with normal beasts (as described in the skills section) while also being attended by a single spirit hound.

Spirit hounds are identical to "normal" monster hounds of the same type, except that they have regeneration, fearless morale, maximum hit points, intelligence 13 (without the ability to speak), 20% magic resistance, poison immunity, and they can only be harmed by spells, magic items, or +1 or better magical weapons. Spirit hounds always have the same alignment as the hunter does.





If a spirit hound is ever slain, it will magically return – completely unharmed – to the hunter's side at the rise of the next full moon. (For those Game Masters who do not track the movements of celestial bodies in the game, the spirit hound will instead return in 3D10 nights' time.)

The type of spirit hound that will be bound to the hunter is dependent upon the hunter's alignment, as follows:

- Chaotic Neutral Hunters: A black hyaenodon (HD 5) with crimson eyes. On an attack roll of 20, the hyaenodon inflicts maximum damage. The hyaenodon is large enough to be ridden, but if the rider (with all equipment) weighs more than 150 lbs. its movement rate will be halved.
- Lawful Neutral Hunters: A hound of the Wild Hunt (HD 4, hp 30, attacking as an 8 HD monster), made from shadow.
- Neutral Evil Hunters: At level 10, the hunter will be attended by a hell hound (HD 4) or shadow hound (HD 4), with a 50% chance of either creature appearing. At experience level 15, the hound will if the hunter wills it permanently morph itself into a crocuta (HD 6+1), ratchet of the Yeth (HD 3+3 with significant special abilities), or winter wolf (HD 6).
- Neutral Good Hunters: A translucent, silver-maned blink dog (HD 4). The blink dog is capable of advanced non-verbal communication, through mind imagery that is shared only with the hunter.
- True Neutral Hunters: A huge white dire wolf (HD 4+4) with emerald eyes. On an attack roll of 20, the wolf inflicts maximum damage. The dire wolf is large enough to serve as a mount, but if the rider (with all equipment) weighs more than 125 lbs. its movement rate will be halved.

**Spirits of the Hunt:** This ability is identical (at first) to the barbarian's Souls of War ability. It allows the hunter to gain agility and a special, additional armor class bonus (+AC) when both lightly encumbered and wearing non-bulky armor.

The bonuses are based on DEX, as follows:

- **DEX 15:** +1 bonus to AC for bulky armor (the normal bonus); +2 for non-bulky armor.
- **DEX 16:** +2 bonus to AC for bulky armor; +4 for non-bulky armor.
- **DEX 17:** +3 bonus to AC for bulky armor; +6 for non-bulky armor.
- **DEX 18:** +4 bonus to AC for bulky armor; +8 for non-bulky armor.

As an additional advantage, however, experienced hunters learn to fight with equal agility in fairly bulky (but not fully bulky) non-magical armor types. This ability is summarized by hunter experience level, as listed below.





# **TABLE 31:**

Hunter Prowess with Bulky Armor Types

Hunter's Experience Level	Ability to Fight with Agility in Armor
1	[1] The hunter can gain agility in non-bulky armor types.
	[2] The non-magical non-bulky armor types are leather armor, elfin chain mail, bucklers, and small shields.
	[3] The magical non-bulky armor types are listed in full in the barbarian class section, under the Souls of War ability.
2	The hunter can also gain agility while using a medium shield.
3	The hunter can also gain agility while wearing padded leather or studded leather armor.
4	The hunter can also gain agility while wearing ring mail, provided his or strength score is 16+.
6	The hunter can also gain agility while wearing scale mail, provided his or her strength score is 17+.
8 or higher	The hunter can also gain agility while wearing chain mail, provided his or her strength score is 18+.

Such agility can never be achieved with non-magical large shields or while wearing heavier and bulkier forms of non-magical armor, such as banded mail, splint mail, plate mail, or plate armor.





# **Skills Of The Prey-Stalkers**

Hunters have eight potential skill sets which they can master over time. The skill sets are: Bond with Beasts, Herbal Remedies, Quarry Tracking, Snare Building, Survivalism, Woodcraft, Wound Setting, and Weapon Crafting.

At experience level 1, the player can choose three of these skill sets as primaries. These skills begin at mastery level (ML) 1 (detailed hereafter). At experience level 2, the hunter learns a new skill set of his or her choice, and that skill begins at ML 1. New skill sets are learned at experience levels 4, 6, 8, and 10, in the order that the player prefers, always beginning at ML 1. With each experience level gained, all masteries increase by +1 level.

To clarify any confusion, refer to the following table:

#### **TABLE 32:**

#### **Skill Set Mastery Levels for Hunters**

Hunter's Experience Level	1 <sup>st</sup> Skill Set	2 <sup>nd</sup> Skill Set	3 <sup>rd</sup> Skill Set	4 <sup>th</sup> Skill Set	5 <sup>th</sup> Skill Set	6 <sup>th</sup> Skill Set	7 <sup>th</sup> Skill Set	8 <sup>th</sup> Skill Set
1	ML 1	ML 1	ML 1	-	-	-	-	-
2	ML 2	ML 2	ML 2	ML 1	-	-	-	-
3	ML 3	ML 3	ML 3	ML 2	-	-	-	-
4	ML 4	ML 4	ML 4	ML 3	ML 1	-	-	-
5	ML 5	ML 5	ML 5	ML 4	ML 2	-	-	-
6	ML 6	ML 6	ML 6	ML 5	ML 3	ML 1	-	-
7	ML 7	ML 7	ML 7	ML 6	ML 4	ML 2	-	-
8	ML 8	ML 8	ML 8	ML 7	ML 5	ML 3	ML 1	-
9	ML 9	ML 9	ML 9	ML 8	ML 6	ML 4	ML 2	-
10	ML 10	ML 10	ML 10	ML 9	ML 7	ML 5	ML 3	ML 1
11	ML 11	ML 11	ML 11	ML 10	ML 8	ML 6	ML 4	ML 2
12	ML 12	ML 12	ML 12	ML 11	ML 9	ML 7	ML 5	ML 3
13	ML 13	ML 13	ML 13	ML 12	ML 10	ML 8	ML 6	ML 4
14	ML 14	ML 14	ML 14	ML 13	ML 11	ML 9	ML 7	ML 5
15	ML 15	ML 15	ML 15	ML 14	ML 12	ML 10	ML 8	ML 6
16	ML 16	ML 16	ML 16	ML 15	ML 13	ML 11	ML 9	ML 7
17	ML 17	ML 17	ML 17	ML 16	ML 14	ML 12	ML 10	ML 8
18	ML 18	ML 18	ML 18	ML 17	ML 15	ML 13	ML 11	ML 9
19	ML 19	ML 19	ML 19	ML 18	ML 16	ML 14	ML 12	ML 10
20	ML 20	ML 20	ML 20	ML 19	ML 17	ML 15	ML 13	ML 11
21	ML 21	ML 21	ML 21	ML 20	ML 18	ML 16	ML 14	ML 12
22	ML 22	ML 22	ML 22	ML 21	ML 19	ML 17	ML 15	ML 13
23	ML 23	ML 23	ML 23	ML 22	ML 20	ML 18	ML 16	ML 14
24	ML 24	ML 24	ML 24	ML 23	ML 21	ML 19	ML 17	ML 15
25	ML 25	ML 25	ML 25	ML 24	ML 22	ML 20	ML 18	ML 16
(etc.)	ML 25	ML 25	ML 25	ML 25	(+1 ML)	(+1 ML)	(+1 ML)	(+1 ML)





Mastery level 25 is the maximum level of prowess for any hunter's skill(s).

The percentage chance of success for any used skill set is dependent upon the skill's mastery level, as follows:

### **TABLE 33:**

### **Skill Levels and Success Chances for Hunters**

Skill Set's Mastery Level	Hunter Skill Level	Base Chance of Success	Chance of Crafted Weapon Breakage
1	Rudimentary	15%	85%
2	Crude	20%	80%
3	Unpracticed	24%	76%
4	Flawed	28%	72%
5	Inexpert	32%	68%
6	Inexpert	36%	64%
7	Practiced	40%	60%
8	Practiced	44%	56%
9	Capable	48%	52%
10	Capable	52%	48%
11	Seasoned	56%	44%
12	Seasoned	59%	41%
13	Proficient	62%	38%
14	Proficient	65%	35%
15	Accomplished	68%	32%
16	Accomplished	71%	29%
17	Cunning	74%	26%
18	Cunning	77%	23%
19	Talented	80%	20%
20	Talented	83%	17%
21	Wood-Wise	86%	14%
21	Wood-Wise	88%	12%
22	Expert	90%	10%
23	Gifted	92%	8%
24	Master	94%	6%
25	Grand Master	96%	4%

The Game Master can apply up to a -40% penalty to the chance for skill use success if preparations are hasty or inadequate, or the environment is unknown (such as a dungeon). Similarly, he or she can apply up to a +40% bonus (to a maximum of 99%) if the hunter uses clever planning, camouflage, distractions, carefully-made materials, or whatever else is appropriate to the situation. The hunter class rewards creative play, and the GM should consider providing at least a +5% bonus if the player is being clever and tactical while not "gaming the system".





#### **Bond with Beasts**

The hunter can attempt to tame an animal, and make a strong bond with it.

Hunters do not have bonded beasts at the beginning of the game.

The first step is simply to attempt to show peaceful intent with an encountered animal or animals, based on reaction roll. If the party's reaction roll indicates friendship, the animals will depart (if more than one is present) while the one animal with the highest hit points remains to contemplate the hunter.

Animals can sense the sincerity of a person's instincts, and the bond – if it occurs – will be a matter of near-instantaneous like, requiring only 1D4 days' worth of interaction. (The curious animal will follow the hunter's party at a near distance over this time, allowing for continual bonding. However the bond will not occur if the hunter does not remain outdoors during this time.)





Bonding can be attempted with any somewhat intelligent wild (not tamed or submissive) animal with hit dice that do not exceed the hunter's experience level. Very intelligent wild animals, such as giant eagles and giant owls, will refuse to be bonded with in this manner. Evil animals (such as intelligent giant spiders and giant wolverines) cannot be bonded either. The following table provides a guide to animals that can bond, based on hit dice:

#### **TABLE 34:**

#### **Overview of Bonding Beasts by Hunter Experience Level** Maximum Hunter's **Examples of Animals That May Bond Animal Hit** Experience Level Dice Falcon (HD 1, INT 1), Giant Rat (HD 1D4, INT 2), Hawk (HD 1-1, INT 1 HD 1D8 1), Jackal (HD 1D4, INT 3), Otter (HD 1-1, INT 1), Owl (HD 1, INT 1), Rat (HD 1D2, INT 1), Raven (HD 1D2, INT 5), Skunk (HD 1D2, INT 1), Small Herd Animal (HD 1, INT 1), Small Wild Cattle (HD 1, INT 3), Squirrel (HD 1 hp, INT 1), Weasel (HD 1D2, INT 1), Wildcat (HD 1, INT 1) 2 or higher Baboon (HD 1+1, INT 5), Badger (HD 1+2, INT 3), Eagle (HD 1+3, HD 2D8 INT 1), Giant Cave Cricket (HD 1+3, INT 1), Giant Firefly (HD 1+4, INT 5), Herd Animal (HD 2, INT 1), Huge Poisonous Toad (HD 2, INT 1), Vulture (HD 1+1, INT 1), Wild Cattle (HD 2, INT 3), Wild Dog (HD 1+1, INT 4), Wild Goat (HD 1+2, INT 1), Wild Horse (HD 2, INT 1), Wild Pony (HD 1+1, INT 1), Wild Ram (HD 2, INT 1), Wild Swan (HD 1+2, INT 1) 3 or higher HD 3D8 Axe Beak (HD 3, INT 1), Cheetah (HD 3, INT 4), Giant Badger (HD 3, INT 3), Giant Crane (HD 3, INT 1), Giant Toad (HD 2+4, INT 1), Giant Vulture (HD 2+1, INT 1), Giant Weasel (HD 3+3, INT 1), Huge Trapdoor Spider (HD 2+2, INT 1), Huge Wolf Spider (HD 2+2, INT 1), Hyena (HD 3, INT 1), Large Herd Animal (HD 3, INT 1), Large Wild Cattle (HD 3, INT 3), Leopard (HD 3+2, INT 4), Mountain Lion (HD 3+1, INT 3), Poisonous Snake (HD 2+1, INT 1), Stag (HD 3, INT 1), Warthog (HD 3, INT 1), Wolf (HD 2+2, INT 4) 4 or higher HD 4D8 Black Bear (HD 3+3, INT 4), Constrictor Snake (HD 3+2, INT 1), Dire Wolf (HD 3+3, INT 4), Giant Beaver (HD 4, INT 6), Giant Goat (HD 3+1, INT 3), Huge Wild Cattle (HD 4, INT 3), Irish Deer (HD 4, INT 1), Jaguar (HD 4+1, INT 4), Very Large Herd Animal (HD 4, INT 1), Wild Boar (HD 3+3, INT 3), Wild Bull (HD 4, INT 3), Wild Camel (HD 3, INT 4) 5 or higher HD 5D8 Ape (HD 4+1, INT 6), Buffalo (HD 5, INT 3), Giant Otter (HD 5, INT 3), Giant Poisonous Snake (HD 4+2, INT 1), Giant Skunk (HD 5, INT 1), Giant Spitting Snake (HD 4+2, INT 1), Giant Stag (HD 5, INT 1), Huge Herd Animal (HD 5, INT 1), Hyaenodon (HD 5, INT 1)





6 or higher	HD 6D8	Brown Bear (HD 5+5, INT 4), Giant Porcupine (HD 6, INT 1), Giant Constrictor Snake (HD 6+1, INT 1), Lion (HD 5+2, INT 4), Tiger (HD 5+5, INT 4)
7 or higher	HD 7D8	Cave Bear (HD 6+6, INT 4), Giant Boar (HD 7, INT 1), Spotted Lion (HD 6+2, INT 3)
8 or higher	HD 8D8	Rhinoceros (HD 8, INT 1), Sabre-Tooth Tiger (HD 7+2, INT 1)
9 or higher	HD 9D8	Huge Cave Bear (HD 8+8, INT 4), Large Rhinoceros (HD 9, INT 1), Polar Bear (HD 8+8, INT 4)
10 or higher	HD 10D8	Asiatic Elephant (HD 10, INT 4), Woolly Rhinoceros (HD 10, INT 1)
11 or higher	HD 11D8	African Elephant (HD 11, INT 4)
12 or higher	HD 12D8	Mastodon (HD 12, INT 3)
13 or higher	HD 13D8	Mammoth (HD 13, INT 3)





The chance of the bond being established is dependent upon the hunter's mastery level with this skill. A +10% bonus chance applies if the hunter's experience level is at least 2 grades higher than the animal's hit dice. For example, if the creature's hit dice are 3+3, a hunter of level 5 would gain the +10% bonus, but a level 4 hunter would not. If the bonding attempt fails, the creature will flee, but not attack unless trapped.

The hunter can only bond with one animal at a time. A bonded animal can be set free in the wilderness if the hunter does not wish to maintain the bond, or wishes to bond with a different animal.

Bonded animals will not enter cities or settlements or dungeons. They will however remain nearby for 3D6 days' time if the hunter remains in such a place. If the hunter returns in time, the bonded animal will still be waiting nearby. Otherwise, the animal will have wandered back into the wild.





The bonded animal will hunt with the hunter, and will defend the hunter to the best of its ability. They are utterly fearless and will continue to fight until the hunter retreats, or the animal is commanded to cease its attacks. Animals can also follow basic commands, based on their intelligence, as follows:

#### **TABLE 35:**

#### **Trainable Commands for Bonded Beasts**

Animal's Intelligence	Command	Description
INT 1	Attack	Attack the indicated foe.
(Animal Intelligence)		
INT 1	Stop	Stop an action, such as attacking, howling, running,
(Animal Intelligence)		etc. This command only has a 50% chance of
		success (and can be attempted once per round).
INT 2	Come	Come from a distance when called.
(Dim Semi-Intelligence)		
INT 2	Heel	Stop attacking the indicated foe.
(Dim Semi-Intelligence)		
INT 2	Sit	Stay in an area, even if the hunter leaves, for 2D6
(Dim Semi-Intelligence)		rounds.
INT 3	Fetch	Bring back a thrown item, or a dropped item that the
(Semi-Intelligence)		animals knows belongs to the hunter.
INT 3	Go	Leave the hunter's presence (perhaps to protect the
(Semi-Intelligence)		animal) for 1D6 hours.
INT 3	Stay	Stay in an area, even if the hunter leaves, for 4D6
(Semi-Intelligence)		rounds.
INT 4	Carry	Carry a small object for the hunter for 1D4 hours,
(Aware Semi-Intelligence)		even if the hunter leaves.
INT 4	Guard	Stay in an area with one of the hunter's companions
(Aware Semi-Intelligence)		(perhaps a wounded ally) for 2D6 hours.
INT 4	Watch	Watch a subdued foe, and attack the foe if an escape
(Aware Semi-Intelligence)		attempt is made.
INT 4	Track	Hunt a regional animal type, if shown spoor, dung,
(Aware Semi-Intelligence)	-	fur, leavings, scent, etc.
INT 5	Away	Leave the hunter's presence for 1D4 days.
(Dimly Low Intelligence)		
INT 5	Find	Find an item of the same type as the one that the
(Dimly Low Intelligence)	<b>m</b> 1	hunter is showing.
INT 6	Take	Carry a small object for the hunter for 1D4 days, and
(Low Intelligence)		go find a creature similar to the hunter (a human or
		demi-human) to bring help.





#### **Herbal Remedies**

To use this skill, the hunter must be in an outdoor environment. Hunters cannot find herbal remedies in interior, dungeon, or netherworld areas. They can likely find remedies in some urban settings, but there will typically be a shop cost involved (in other words, herbal foraging cannot place in towns or cities).

The success chance to locate effective herbs might be modified by terrain and climate. Forests and swamps frequently have more effective herbs than mountains and deserts, but the GM can research real world diseases, infestations, and toxins for more realism if desired.





Herbal remedies will slow, but not cure, the onset of non-magical diseases, non-instant poisons, or parasitic infestations. The hunter can treat himself, an ally, or a bonded beast. Unbonded animals will not sufficiently trust a hunter for treatment, however.

Remedies for Disease: If the skill check is successful, the disease will not have any detrimental effects for a number of days equal to the hunter's experience level. This ability can be used repeatedly as an ongoing treatment, but a failed roll indicates that another attempt cannot be made for 24 hours.

Remedies for Parasitic Infestations: As for disease, above.

Remedies for Poison: Remedies for poisons will likely need to be prepared in advance, because the hunter will not have enough time to forage during a poisoning. A hunter can carry a maximum of 3 fresh doses of poison remedy at any given time; the unused doses will only last for 24 hours each before they are rendered ineffective. If the skill check is successful, and the hunter has a ready dose of anti-poison herbal remedy, the onset of the poison will be delayed by +1 time factor per experience level of the hunter. The time factor is dependent upon the onset time listed for the specific poison type (segments, rounds, or turns). For example, a poison with an onset time of 1 segment that is treated by a level 5 hunter will have its onset time immediately delayed, to 6 segments. As a second example, a poison with an onset time of 1D4+1 rounds that is treated by a level 2 hunter will have a delayed onset time of 1D4+3 rounds. As a third example, a poison with an onset time of 1D4 turns that is treated by a level 10 hunter will have a delayed onset time of 1D4+10 turns. Only one attempt to delay a poison's onset can be made per creature, per instance of poisoning, regardless of the number of doses carried. If a description (of a monster, spell, trap, etc.) does not indicate an onset time for a poison, this means that the poison is instantaneous, and the hunter cannot attempt to prevent the poisoning.

### **Quarry Tracking**

This skill is largely identical to a ranger's tracking skill (refer to the ranger class section for full details).

However, (unlike a ranger) the base chance for tracking success is equal to the hunter's quarry tracking skill mastery level, not experience level.

All of the listed tracking modifiers for rangers, outside of the base tracking chance, apply to the hunter.

In addition to the modifiers listed for rangers, hunters have two additional modifiers that apply due to their beast-specific training. All hunters have a +20% chance to track creatures of nature (as defined in the savage warrior ability section). Hunters also have a -20% chance to track humans, demi-humans, humanoids, and half-humanoids. They have no modifier for tracking other types of monsters.

#### Snare Building

This skill is identical to the barbarian skill of the same name.

#### Survivalism

This skill is identical to the barbarian skill of the same name.





# Weapon Crafting

This skill allows the hunter to fashion temporarily usable weapons from natural materials in the wilderness. The skill is ineffective in interior or underground environments, but crafted weapons can





certainly be carried into those areas after they are made. Any number of weapons can be crafted, given appropriate materials and enough time.

The weapons that are crafted will not be salable, due to their relative (an apparent) inferiority. But they will certainly be deadly, and will suffer no abnormal penalties to accuracy (to hit) or to damage rolls.

If the skill roll succeeds, the weapon is crafted at the end of the required crafting time. If the roll fails, the time is expended but the weapon breaks during testing before it can be used.

Whenever a hunter-crafted weapon is used in combat, there is a chance that it will break. The chance, checked with every attack, is equal to 100% minus the hunter's skill level. Therefore for a hunter of weapon crafting mastery level 13 (62% success chance), there will be a 38% chance per attempted attack that the weapon will be destroyed.

Destroyed bows and arrows will deal no damage. When a crafted bow is destroyed, the arrows will remain intact (only the bow is checked for destruction).

Destroyed melee weapons will, if they hit, inflict full damage on the target before being destroyed.

The weapons that can be crafted are as follows:

weapon claiting Admities for multers			
Weapon Type	Skill Check Modifier for Crafting (But Not for Breakage)	Time Required to Craft	
Arrow	0 (No Modifier)	1 hour (each)	
Club	+20%	10 minutes	
Composite Long Bow	-10%	9 hours (with 3 arrows)	
Composite Short Bow	0 (No Modifier)	6 hours (with 3 arrows)	
Hand Axe	0 (No Modifier)	3 hours	
Knife	+5%	1 hour	
Long Bow	-15%	12 hours (with 3 arrows)	
Short Bow	0 (No Modifier)	6 hours (with 3 arrows)	
Spear	+10%	30 minutes	

### TABLE 36:

### Weapon Crafting Abilities for Hunters

Beginning at experience level 10, all required crafting times for the hunter are reduced by 50%.

#### Woodcraft

This skill is identical to the barbarian's Wisdom of the Wilds skill.

### Wound Binding and Setting

This skill is identical to the barbarian skill of the same name.





# Limitations and Disadvantages for the Hunter Class

**Huntsman's Tradition of Arms (Limitation):** Hunters begin play with three weapon proficiencies. The first proficiency is always the spear. The second can be a weapon of player preference, chosen from the following list: atlatl and hurled javelin, blowgun, composite long bow, composite short bow, hand axe, harpoon, javelin (used in melee and also thrown by hand), knife, lasso, long bow, short bow, of sling. The third proficiency can be for any weapon that is chosen by the player. Experienced hunters gain a new weapon proficiency every 3<sup>rd</sup> level (at levels 4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 19, 22, etc.).

Note that regardless of training or experience level, a hunter never attains weapon specialization (as described for the fighter and ranger classes).

**Limited Forms of Armor:** Hunters only have a few minor types available to them at the beginning of the game, as listed in the Iconic Armor section.

Martial Inexperience: This is the most significant hunter disadvantage. Low-level hunters are not





warlike. Whenever they are fighting a creature that wields weapons, they are at -2 to hit that creature with melee or missile attacks. This category includes all weapon-wielding humanoids, ogres, giants, and so forth. It also importantly includes all weapon-wielding NPCs, regardless of their class.

Beginning at experience level 6 – due to combat mastery gained over time through peril and adventuring – the -2 penalty is reduced to -1. At experience level 11, martial inexperience ends and the penalty is fully removed.

**Predator's Obsession:** Hunters do not have any spell casting ability. They can use many types of magic items however, including all weapons and armor.








# <u>Chapter VI:</u> The Ranger Sub-Class

# **Overview of the Ranger Class**

**Description:** In the World of Oldskull, the rangers are the last proud remnant of the fallen royal House of the Du'un-Aidai. The Du'un-Aidai comprised the Ljosalfar-exiled elven, half-elven, and human alliance that established the age-old Celtic realms of Britannia, Eire, Cambria, and Calydon nearly two thousand years before the Empyrean civilization was born.

Two centuries after the Empyrean withdrawal from Britannia, and Empyrea's eventual collapse under the weight of humanoid hordes from out of the Utter East, the fragmented Du'un-Aidai Kingdoms fell to the treacherous machinations of the netherworldly Drow, the Unseelie Court, the Duergar Hierarchs, and other unholy powers. Drow-instigated humanoid and giant invasions caused the last Du'un-Aidai citadel, the Garde Amaranthine of Queen's Cambria, to fall prey to the ever-corrupting shadow of the Nyarlothian Dreamlands. The resulting defilement of the Obsidian Temple within the Garde led to the banishment of the great god Nodens, the assassination of the Faerie Queen, and the disastrous severance between the High Priests of Dream and the Great Ones of Unknown Kadath. Within a year of the collapse, the last ranger descendants of the royal Du'un-Aidai bloodline were all but wiped out and scattered to the winds.

Centuries of travail and resurgence have resulted in secretive ranger circles that somehow endure in the current age. Far from old Cambria, rangers live a near-nomadic life as they steal through the forests of the northern and central realms. They follow fey spirits and search Du'un-Aidai ruins for sacred relics, defend against netherworld incursions, and form alliances with border lords in the hope of returning the Du'un-Aidai legacy to rightful glory ... someday. Perhaps most importantly, they patrol the borderlands between the human civilizations and the dangerous wilds, tracking and felling humanoids, ogres, trolls, and giants in the name not of vengeance, but rather premonition.

**Rangers of Renown:** Famous rangers of the past include Bellerophon (of secret lineage), Belphoebe Half-Elven, the Counts of Bordeaux, Joachim Cloud-Walker ("Jack the Giant Killer"), King Oberon the Fey, Robyn Hode of Loxley ("Robin Hood"), Skirnir of the Gambantein, and Tiera the Grey and Tireless (the shield-bearer of Lemminkainen).

**Immortals:** Deities that are associated with the rangers include Forseti (Norse), Mielikki (Finnish), the Morrigan (Celtic), Nodens (Celtic / Lovecraftian), Nuada (Celtic), and Vidar (Norse).

# <u>Being Born a Ranger</u>

**Alignment:** Rangers, true to their lost legacy, are always of good alignment. However they can be of any good alignment that the player desires (CG, LG, NG).

Ancestral Limitations: Only elves, half-elves, and humans can be rangers.

Minimum Ability Scores: STR 13+, DEX 6+, CON 14+, INT 13+, WIS 14+, CHA 6+.





**Social Standing:** Although they are more accepting of civilization than hunters (and far more accepting than barbarians are), rangers care little for the admiration of the temporal nobles of the many splintered city states. They believe in the ageless glory of the Du'un-Aidai – despite that royal house's long-ago annihilation – which tends to bristle the younger noble lineages at times. Nevertheless, powerful and pure-hearted rangers are quick to earn respect in human kingdoms.

Level 1 to 3 human ranger NPCs tend to belong to the Lower Middle Class (LMC-4). More experienced rangers are typically Middle Class (MMC-5) for levels 4 to 6, Upper Middle Class (UMC-6) for levels 7 to 10, Lower Upper Class (LUC-14) for levels 11 to 14, and Middle Upper Class (MUC-8) for levels 15 and up.





# Archetypal Considerations for the Ranger

**Combat Prowess:** Rangers, as warriors, are as capable as fighters are in combat. They also have significant bonuses while fighting against humanoids and giants.

**Hit Dice:** Rangers roll D8s for hit points. Uniquely among they classes, they begin play at experience level 1 with two hit dice (2D8) instead of one. The ranger's CON bonus, if any, applies to both hit dice, which results in starting hit point totals as listed below.<sup>14</sup> The most stouthearted rangers can even exceed a barbarian's starting hit points, although this is very rare.

Following after level 1, rangers gain +1D8 hit points per level, with constitution bonuses applying, up through level 11. Thereafter as they focus upon the magical arts they gain only 2 hit points per level.

Level 1 Ranger's CON Score	Ranger's Hit Dice at Level 1	Minimum Starting Hit Points	Maximum Starting Hit Points
14	2D8	9	16
15	2D8+2	11	18
16	2D8+4	13	20
17	2D8+6	15	22
18	2D8+8	17	24

### **TABLE 37:**

### **Starting Hit Points for Rangers**

**Iconic Armor:** Rangers can wear any type of armor, and can also use any type of helm and shield. Those who strictly wander and patrol the borderlands are commonly found wearing lighter armors such as leather, studded leather, ring mail, or elfin chain mail. But those rangers who engage in dungeon expeditions – including virtually Player Characters – tend to garb themselves in the heaviest and most protective armor they can afford.

**Iconic Arms:** Mid- and high-level rangers can wield any kind of weapon. Early on however they preferentially train with axes, bows, daggers, knives, and swords.

**Prime Requisite:** The prime requisites for the ranger class are strength, intelligence, and wisdom. Normally, these diverse requirements would result in a lack of experience point bonus, but due to the grace of the Du'un lineage they are favored by the gods.

As such, rangers can gain a +5% bonus to all experience points earned if they have two of these abilities above 15. In other words they must possess either STR 16+ and INT 16+, STR 16+ and WIS 16+, or INT 16+ and WIS 16+. If all three of these ability scores are in excess of 15, they gain a +10% experience bonus instead.

**Saving Throws:** Rangers, born to a fallen lineage, have the same (relatively poor) saving throws as fighters do.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Refer to the January 1984 newszine.





**Class Level Limit:** Ranger have no class-imposed maximum experience level, but their progression is slightly slowed in comparison to the fighter class.

**Pace of Progression:** The ranger classes has a near-average progression in comparison to other classes. Rangers who attain 25 experience point marks (XPM) are level 3, and those with 50 XPM are level 4. Those with 100 XPM are level 5, those with 250 XPM are level 6, and those with 500 XPM are level 7. In consideration of higher experience levels, those with XPM 1,000 are level 9, those with XPM 2,500 are level 10, those with XPM 5,000 are level 12, and those with XPM 10,000 are level 16 (comparing to a fighter of identical experience, who would be level 18 at XPM 10,000).

Experience Progression for the Ranger Class						
Experience Point Marks	Experience Level	Earned HD / hp	Cumulative HD / hp	Exemplary Title		
0 to 8.99	1	2D8 hp	2D8 hp	Highlander		
9 to 17.99	2	+1D8 hp	3D8 hp	Frontiersman / Frontierswoman		
18 to 39.99	3	+1D8 hp	4D8 hp	Woodsman / Woodswoman		
40 to 79.99	4	+1D8 hp	5D8 hp	Backwoodsman / Backwoodswoman		
80 to 159.99	5	+1D8 hp	6D8 hp	Wilds Walker		
160 to 359.99	6	+1D8 hp	7D8 hp	Ogre Hunter / Huntress		
360 to 599.99	7	+1D8 hp	8D8 hp	Troll Slayer		
600 to 899.99	8	+1D8 hp	9D8 hp	Giant Killer		
900 to 1,299.99	9	+1D8 hp	10D8 hp	Ranger / Rangeress <sup>15</sup>		
1,300 to 2,599.99	10	+1D8 hp	11D8 hp	Ranger / Rangeress Knight		
2,600 to 3,899.99	11	+2 hp	11D8+2 hp	Ranger Champion		
3,900 to 5,199.99	12	+2 hp	11D8+4 hp	Ranger Lord / Lady Rangeress		
5,200 to 6,499.99	13	+2 hp	11D8+6 hp	Ranger High Lord / Lady		
6,500 to 7,799.99	14	+2 hp	11D8+8 hp	Ranger Warlord / Rangeress Lady of War		
7,800 to 9,099.99	15	+2 hp	11D8+10 hp	Ranger Overlord / Dame Overlord		
9,100 to 10,399.99	16	+2 hp	11D8+12 hp	Heir / Heiress to the Du'un-Aidai		
10,400 to 11,699.99	17	+2 hp	11D8+14 hp	Prince / Princess of the Du'un-Aidai		
11,700 to 12,999.99	18	+2 hp	11D8+16 hp	King / Queen of the Du'un-Aidai		

### **TABLE 38:**

**Experience Progression for the Ranger Class** 

<sup>15</sup> The female title of rangeress, as noted by Gygax, is found hidden away in the Advanced game's out of print coloring album (Troubadour Press, 1979).





T T T T T	YYY			
13,000 to 14,299.99	19	+2 hp	11D8+18 hp	High King / Queen of the Du'un-Aidai
14,300 to 15,599.99	20	+2 hp	11D8+20 hp	Overking / Overqueen of the Du'un-Aidai
15,600 to 16,899.99	21	+2 hp	11D8+22 hp	Glorious Overking / Overqueen of the Du'un- Aidai
16,900 to 18,199.99	22	+2 hp	11D8+24 hp	Exalted Overking / Overqueen of the Du'un- Aidai
18,200 to 19,499.99	23	+2 hp	11D8+26 hp	Mythic Overking / Overqueen of the Du'un- Aidai
19,500 to 20,799.99	24	+2 hp	11D8+28 hp	Legendary Overking / Overqueen of the Du'un- Aidai
20,800 to 22,099.99	25	+2 hp	11D8+30 hp	Immortal Overking / Overqueen of the Du'un- Aidai
(+1,300)	(+1)	+2 hp	(+2 hp)	(Unique)

Note that in the current World of Oldskull, there are no NPC rangers above experience level 17. If higher experience levels are ever attained by a powerful layer Character over a considerable amount of play time, there could well be some dangerous and momentous resultant events within the campaign.

The following level titles are recommended for hunters in the Castle Oldskull campaign. A slash indicates differing titles for male and female characters; parentheses indicate a situational qualifier of some kind.

For a PC ranger, the player can choose from among the suggested level titles freely, or with GM consultation.

### **TABLE 39:**

# **Suggested Level Titles for Rangers**

Ranger's Experience Level	Recommended Level Titles
1	Bounder, Forester, Goblin Bane, Highlander, Runner
2	Frontiersman / Frontierswoman, Guardian Forester, Orc Slayer, Strider
3	Forest Strider, Highland Strider, Scout, Woodsman / Woodswoman
4	Backwoodsman / Backwoodswoman, Courser, Veteran Scout
5	Tracker, Trapper, Scout Master, Veteran Courser, Wilds Walker
6	Backwoods Tracker, Backwoods Trapper, Ogre Hunter / Huntress
7	Backwoods Guide, Pathfinder, Stalker, Troll Slayer





$\gamma \gamma \gamma$	
8	Backwoods Pathfinder, Backwoods Stalker, Giant Killer
9	Ranger / Rangeress <sup>16</sup> , Ranger / Rangeress Guardian
10	Ranger / Rangeress Knight, Ranger / Rangeress of the Elven Conclave (if elven or half-elven)
11	Ranger / Rangeress Champion, Ranger / Rangeress of the Elf Lords (if elven or half-elven)
12	Ranger / Rangeress of the Elven Queen (if elven or half-elven), Ranger Lord / Lady Rangeress
13	Ranger High Lord / Lady
14	Ranger / Rangeress Marshal, Ranger Warlord / Rangeress Lady of War
15	Ranger High Warlord, Ranger Lord Marshal, Ranger Overlord / Dame Overlord
16	Heir / Heiress to the Du'un-Aidai
17	Prince / Princess of the Du'un-Aidai
18	King / Queen of the Du'un-Aidai
19	High King / Queen of the Du'un-Aidai
20	Overking / Overqueen of the Du'un-Aidai
21	Glorious Overking / Overqueen of the Du'un-Aidai
22	Exalted Overking / Overqueen of the Du'un-Aidai
23	Mythic Overking / Overqueen of the Du'un-Aidai
24	Legendary Overking / Overqueen of the Du'un-Aidai
25	Immortal Overking / Overqueen of the Du'un-Aidai

# Powers and Advantages of the Ranger

Rangers have access to the following special abilities.

**Animal Companions:** In a manner similar to a hunter's Bond with Beasts skill, a ranger can attempt to form a bond with one small wild animal if desired.<sup>17</sup> This ability is first learned at experience level 3. The chance for success in forming the bond will always be a flat 50%, but the process is otherwise as described in the hunter skill section.

A ranger can never have an animal companion of more than HD 1-1, and the creature cannot be a trickster or aligned at all with evil (which means no jackals, ravens, or dungeon rats).

The following types of creatures can serve as companions: Falcon (HD 1, INT 1), Hawk (HD 1-1, INT 1), Otter (HD 1-1, INT 1), Owl (HD 1, INT 1), Skunk (HD 1D2, INT 1), Squirrel (HD 1 hp, INT 1), Weasel (HD 1D2, INT 1), or Wildcat (HD 1, INT 1).

The animal companion will accept commands to the full capability of its intelligence, as noted in the hunter rules.

<sup>17</sup> Refer to the July 1983 newszine.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> The female title of rangeress, as noted by Gygax, is found hidden away in the Advanced game's out of print coloring album (Troubadour Press, 1979).



Unlike the beast companions for barbarians and hunters, a ranger's companion will contentedly follow the ranger into urban areas, dungeons, or even subterranean realms so long as it is fed and cared for.



**Blood Arts of the Elven Lords:** In a manner similar to fighters, mid- and high-level rangers are able to make multiple melee attacks per round. Their mastery of such techniques is identical to that of hunters, with increased attack rates not emerging until experience level 8. Note that if a ranger possesses weapon specialization, different attack rates will apply as listed in the specialization rules section.





# **TABLE 40:**

# **Melee Attack Rates for Rangers**

Ranger's Experience Level	Melee Attack Rate	Notes
1 to 7	1/1 (1 melee attack per round)	Normal attacking ability (akin to the prowess possessed by non-fighter characters).
8 to 14	3/2 (3 attacks every 2 rounds)	The ranger attacks once in the first round that he or she engages in combat. Then, on even-numbered engagement rounds (2, 4, 6, etc.) he or she attacks twice in the same round.
15 or higher	2/1 (2 melee attacks per round)	The ranger can attack twice every melee round.

**Eternal Vigilance:** Rangers have a reduced chance of being surprised by encountered monsters and NPCs. Regardless of surroundings, rangers are only surprised 1 time in 6 (16.7%).



**Humanoid Hunters and Giant Killers:** As a far more brutal and worldly talent, all rangers are trained from youth to revile, track, hunt, and slay evil humanoids and giants. The result is that with every





melee attack, the ranger will inflict +1 damage (per experience level) on any humanoid or giant target. For example, a level 6 ranger would inflict +6 damage on such a target with every successful attack.

Giant creatures include (among others) all types of giants, cyclopes, ettins, ogre magi, and trolls (of all kinds). Humanoid creatures include (among others) bugbears, gibbering ones, gnolls, goblins, hobgoblins, kobolds, ogres (but not half-ogres), orcs (but not half-orcs), and svart goblins. Most of these creatures are evil, but even if they are neutrally-aligned, the ranger will be able to inflict this extra damage upon them if need be.

This damage bonus does not apply to ranged attacks, spell damage, or non-weapon attacks (such as flaming oil). It only applies to melee attacks.

**Lying in Wait:** Rangers have an increased chance to surprise opponents. The ranger can surprise opponents 3 times in 6 (50%).

**Merciless Onslaught:** This ability is identical to the fighter advantage of the same name.

**Weapon Specialization:** As noted in the weapon specialization chapter, rangers have the option of specializing in a single weapon type if that is the player's preference. Refer to the specialization section for full details.

**Whispers of Nodens (The First Awakening):** After many heroic deeds and personal sacrifices performed in the name of the Du'un-Aidai, high-level rangers will find that the undying spirits of the fey speak to them through fleeting visions and haunting dreams.

This first awakening, and the first realization that the ranger will experience in this regard, is known as the Whispering. This awakening is the result of a profoundly real-seeming dream, in which the god Nodens comes to the ranger during a haunting and fearful journey alone through the enchanted and perilous Dreamlands.

The result of the Whispering is an almost instinctual binding to the druidic spirits of the lost. Therefore, beginning at experience level 8, rangers are capable of casting druid spells. This ability to channel druidic magic was a gift of Nodens that once bound the half-elven lineage in sacredness as a legacy to both elven and human bloodlines, over a thousand years ago.

For characters in the current age, this ability is gained at level 8 whether the ranger is elven, halfelven, or human.

In game terms, there will be a 4-week period of profound and harrowing "many-ness" for the ranger, in which the voices of the dead are heard and echoes of song seem to haunt the times of twilight. The ranger will suffer a -4 WIS penalty during this time, but the distractions will not prevent the ranger from the training and silent vigils that will take the ranger from the end of experience level 7 to the beginning of level 8.

After this time, the druid will have the ability to pray for and receive druid spells, just as a druid does. The ranger can meditate in silence, or pray to his or her patron deity, or even pray to Nodens (who will not seem to answer); in game terms, the resultant daily empowerment of spells will be the same.





A level 8 ranger casts spells as a level 1 druid (for purposes of calculating spell range, duration, damage, and so forth).<sup>18</sup> Thereafter, the ranger gains further druidic spell-casting prowess one experience level at a time. Therefore a level 9 ranger is equivalent to a level 2 druid, a level 10 ranger is equivalent to a level 3 druid, and so forth.

Unlike a druid, the ranger can cast spells while wearing metal armor.<sup>19</sup> Rangers do however need material components to cast the druidic spells which require them, just as druids do.<sup>20</sup>

Unless there is a druid Player Character in the ranger's party, the ranger will probably need to gather his or her own plants of ritual. This will typically mean that the ranger will seek out and harvest holly if it is available, or otherwise resort to the use of druidic essence found in oak leaves. If a PC druid is present, or the ranger has the opportunity to befriend a druid NPC, the ranger will then be gifted with borrowed mistletoe, which is more effective than holly for the purposes of spell casting. Thereafter, the ranger will likely seek to possess a golden or silver sickle, allowing for the harvesting of lesser and greater mistletoe ... which will, in turn, cause the ranger's druidic spells to become ever more powerful.

(Refer to the druid character class description for further details in this regard.)

Note that rangers will never be true druids, regardless of the experience level they eventually attain. They cannot cast druidic spells from spell scrolls.

The following table summarizes the druidic spell acquisition and casting abilities for rangers. As an important aside, note that because rangers belong to the warrior archetype – and not to the priest archetype – they do not gain additional spells for high Wisdom as druids do.<sup>21</sup>

# TABLE 41:

Druidic Spell Casting Addity for Rangers						
Ranger's Experience Level	Equivalent Druid Level	Number of Level 1 Druid Spells Memorizable per Day	Number of Level 2 Druid Spells Memorizable per Day	Number of Level 3 Druid Spells Memorizable per Day		
1 to 7	N/A	(None)	(None)	(None)		
8	1	1	(None)	(None)		
9	2	1	(None)	(None)		
10	3	2	(None)	(None)		
11	4	2	(None)	(None)		
12	5	2	1	1		
13	6	2	1	1		
14	7	2	2	2		
15	8	2	2	2		
16	9	2	2	2		
17 or higher	(+1)	2 (no further gain)	2 (no further gain)	2 (no further gain)		

# **Druidic Spell Casting Ability for Rangers**

<sup>18</sup> Refer to the August 1982 magazine.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Refer to the July 1983 newszine.

 $<sup>^{20}</sup>$  Refer to the August 1982 magazine and the January 1984 newszine.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Refer to the July 1982 newszine, as well as the August 1982 magazine.





**Echoes of the Aidai (The Second Awakening):** Beginning at experience level 9, rangers are capable of casting magic-user spells. This ability to channel arcane (elven) magic has always been present within the bloodline of the Du'un-Aidai, no matter how thinned the blood may be; but the sacred awakening to this degree of power – received through a dream vision of the Faerie Queene – only occurs when a ranger becomes a powerful champion of his or her kind.

This ability is gained at level 9 whether the ranger is elven, half-elven, or human.

In game terms, there will be a 4-week period of intense and studious "inactivity" (from a player's adventuring perspective) between experience levels 8 and 9, while the ranger apprentices himself to a high-level magic-user of good alignment.<sup>22</sup> The ranger must find a PC or NPC mentor who is willing to train the ranger in the arcane arts, and to provide him or her with a spell book.<sup>23</sup>

The costs for such an endeavor are assumed to be part of the ranger's normal training; if the GM decides there is no cost for training, it can be assumed that a good-aligned magic-user who truly believes in the legacy of the Du'un-Aidai has decided to act on the ranger's behalf for no cost whatsoever.

A level 9 ranger casts spells as a level 1 magic-user (for purposes of calculating spell range, duration, damage, and so forth). Thereafter, the ranger gains further arcane spell-casting prowess one experience level at a time. This means that a level 10 ranger is equivalent to a level 2 magic-user, a level 11 ranger is equivalent to a level 3 magic-user, and so forth.<sup>24</sup>

Following the four-week period of apprenticeship to a good wizard, the ranger will have three spells inscribed in their book (one random offensive spell, one random defensive spell, and one random utility spell) in addition to the read magic spell.<sup>25</sup> The spells that can be learned will be determined by the GM, as will the minimum and maximum number of potential spells per level (based on the ranger's intelligence), in the same way that magic-user learning is attended to in the game rules.<sup>26</sup>

Unlike a single-classed magic-user, a ranger can cast spells while wearing metal armor.<sup>27</sup> Rangers do however need material components to cast the magic-user spells which require them, just as magic-users do.<sup>28</sup>

Note that rangers will never be true magic-users, regardless of the experience level they eventually attain. They cannot cast arcane (or any) spells from spell scrolls, or copy spells from such scrolls (or grimoires) into their own spell book. They can use read magic to interpret magic-user scrolls, but they will have only a vague understanding of the discerned spells' capabilities and intent.

High-level rangers will only gain one new magic-user spell (of the player's choice) with each attained experience level, beginning with level 10. If PC magic-users wish to assist the ranger with scribing spells into the ranger's spell book(s), the GM should allow that to occur in accordance with the normal rules for spell inscription. Otherwise, a ranger who is seeking more spells will need to dearly pay, and quest for, non-evil magic-users if they wish to be able to copy spells from an NPC wizard's books.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Refer to the January 1984 newszine.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Refer to the January 1984 newszine.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Refer to the November 1979 magazine, as well as the July 1982 newszine.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Refer to the July 1982 newszine, which supersedes the incorrect ruling made in the January 1980 magazine.

 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 25}$  Refer also to the July 1982 newszine.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Refer to the August 1982 magazine.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Refer to the July 1983 newszine.



The following table summarizes the arcane spell acquisition and casting abilities for high-level rangers as a reference.

# **TABLE 42:**

Magic-User Spell Casting Ability for Rangers
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Ranger's Experience Level	Equivalent Magic-User Level	Magic-User Spells Gained	Number of Level 1 Magic-User Spells Memorizable per Day	Number of Level 2 Magic-User Spells Memorizable per Day
1 to 8	N/A	(None)	(None)	(None)
9	1	4, as part of the ranger's new spell book	1	(None)
10	2	+1 level 1 spell	1	(None)
11	3	+1 level 1 spell	2	(None)
12	4	+1 level 2 spell	2	1
13	5	+1 level 1 or 2 spell	2	1
14	6	+1 level 1 or 2 spell	2	2
15	7	+1 level 1 or 2 spell	2	2
16	8	+1 level 1 or 2 spell	2	2
17	9	+1 level 1 or 2 spell	2	2
18	10	+1 level 1 or 2 spell	2	2
19	11	+1 level 1 or 2 spell	2	2
20	12	+1 level 1 or 2 spell	2	2
21	13	+1 level 1 or 2 spell	2	2
22	14	+1 level 1 or 2 spell	2	2
23	15	+1 level 1 or 2 spell	2	2
24	16	+1 level 1 or 2 spell	2	2
25 or higher	(+1)	+1 level 1 or 2 spell	2 (no further gain)	2 (no further gain)

**Gathering of the Hidden Ones (The Third Awakening):** Once a ranger attains experience level 10, the ancient fey spirits of the fallen Du'un-Aidai will call out to any wild beasts, good-aligned forest dwellers, and faerie creatures that are living in the ranger's immediate region.





Some of these beckoned creatures will choose to reveal themselves to the ranger, each type separately in turn, variously over a ritual period of 1D6+6 nights. Each in its own way will swear allegiance to the ranger in the name of the fallen Garde, and in memory of Queen's Cambria.

These creatures will generally number two dozen or fewer, and will be randomly generated by the GM following certain rules. These followers will serve for life if well-treated, but if slain the losses will never be replaced. (The ranger can of course hire normal mercenaries and henchmen as needed in addition to these summoned followers).

The ranger does not need to build a stronghold or other sanctuary to shelter these creatures – they will create their own dwellings in the ranger's chosen area if need be – but if this is done, it will be a warmly welcomed gesture and the loyalty and morale of the followers will increase considerably.

**Vision-Gifts of the Faerie Queene (The Fourth Awakening):** Due to their ancient linkage to the undying spirit of the last queen of Cambria, rangers of experience levels 10 and higher have the ability to use all magic items that confer powers of clairaudience, clairvoyance, extra-sensory perception (ESP), and/or telepathy. This includes crystal balls, helms of telepathy, medallions and potions of ESP, potions of clairaudience, potions of clairvoyance, some intelligent swords, and potentially other items as well (depending on what is devised by the Game Master).





The signature advantage of the ranger is tracking. This is the ability to follow a creature at an out-ofsight distance without being detected, perhaps even long after the creature has passed. Besides hunting and vengeance, potentially beneficial tracking situations can arise when a ranger follows a monster to its treasure-filled lair, or when prisoners need to be rescued, or even if the party is simply seeking a secret entrance to a dungeon or other hidden place.

Any adventurer worth their salt can follow the stampede marks of a rampaging humanoid horde, but only a ranger can pick up the faintest of tracks that tell the tale of the few who escaped their wrath.

Tracking is possible in outdoor and indoor (or subterranean) settings. It cannot be performed in a city, or at sea, or in an aerial situation – such as attempting to track while flying, or attempting to track a flying creature – because of the obvious lack of signs that give the quarry away.

There are separate rules for outdoor tracking and indoor tracking.

# **Outdoor Tracking**

The ranger's base chance for tracking skill success in outdoor environments is 10%, plus 10% per experience level. Therefore a level 7 ranger's base chance is 80%. The maximum base chance (for level 10+ rangers) is 110%.

The following modifiers apply to outdoor tracking attempts. Only one Subcategory under each Modifier Type should be selected by the GM, with the most negative result being used. Therefore, if the ranger is attempting to track in forest (normally a +10% chance) but it is also windy (0% modifier), the +10% bonus does not apply until the wind subsides. Note that the Quarry Hiding Trail modifier category is special, in that it degrades the tracking terrain modifier to the next lowest category as show below.

		<u>a</u> <u>a</u>	
Modifier Type	Details	Tracking Signs	Tracking Chance Modifier
Quarry Creature Size	Large	Creature is larger than man-sized	+10%
Quarry Creature Size	Medium	Creature is approximately man-sized	0%
Quarry Creature Size	Small	Creature is smaller than man-sized	-5%
Quarry Group Size	1 individual	Fewer tracks and signs	0%

# **TABLE 43:**

### **Modifiers to Outdoor Tracking Chances for Rangers**

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> For Gygax's introduction of the refined and more detailed ranger tracking skill system, refer to the February 1985 magazine.



Quarry Group Size	2 or more creatures	More tracks and signs	+2% per additional creature
Terrain	Track (road, path, trail, etc.)	Obvious signs if the track is left	+30%
Terrain	Soft (desert sand, shallow mud, snow, etc.)	Footprints or pawprints	+20%
Terrain	Forest, Hills, or Plains	Bent blades of grass or broken twigs	+10%
Terrain	Wetland (or windswept terrain)	More infrequent signs of passage	0%
Terrain	Hard (bare ice, bare rock, mountainside, etc.)	All but minutest traces prevented	-50%
Quarry Hiding Trail	On a track (as above)	The +30% terrain bonus listed above is replaced by:	+20%
Quarry Hiding Trail	On soft terrain (as above)	The +20% terrain bonus listed above is replaced by:	+10%
Quarry Hiding Trail	In forest, hills, or plains (as above)	The +10% terrain bonus above is replaced by:	0%
Quarry Hiding Trail	In a wetland (as above)	The 0% terrain modifier above is replaced by:	-50%
Quarry Hiding Trail	On hard terrain (as above)	(Tracking is impossible)	-200%
Time Elapsed Since Quarry's Passage	Very little time (less than 12 hours)	Signs are fresh and easier to track	0%
Time Elapsed Since Quarry's Passage	A sunrise or sunset (12 to 23 hours)	Signs are beginning to fade	-5%
Time Elapsed Since Quarry's Passage	A day (24 to 35 hours)	Signs are affected by the environment	-10%
Time Elapsed Since Quarry's Passage	Nearly two days (36 to 47 hours)	Signs are affected by the environment	-15%
Time Elapsed Since Quarry's Passage	Two days (48 to 71 hours)	Signs are affected by the environment and possibly other passing creatures	-20%
Time Elapsed Since	Each 12-hour period	Signs decay further with	-5% for every full
Quarry's Passage Weather	thereafter Precipitation (rainfall or snow)	every passing day Signs are covered or blotted out by water	12 hours elapsed -25% per hour of precipitation
Weather	Major weather event (flood, tornado, etc.)	All signs are blotted out (Tracking is impossible)	-200%

Note that the only types of quarry that can effectively hide their trail are as follows: barbarians, druids, elves, gnomes, hunters, rangers, and creatures that have exceptional or higher intelligence (INT 15+).





Groups that seek to hide their tracks in this manner cannot travel at a movement rate faster than 60'.



# Indoor and Subterranean Tracking

Indoor tracking is a more limited skill. It is often used to track monsters to their lairs, to pursue fleeing monsters, or to follow monsters through a dungeon environment so that traps and other perils can be avoided during deeper exploration.

The GM should not that there are two classifications of creatures that are very easy or impossible to track.

Creatures that are very easy to track include all of those that leave a highly discernible trail, such as burrowing monsters, slimes, slugs, and worms. These creatures can always be tracked, by a ranger or non-ranger.

At the other end of the spectrum are the creatures that are impossible to track. This classification includes spiders, flying creatures, and non-corporeal creatures (such as ghosts and wraiths). The chance to track all such creatures is always 0% regardless of the ranger's skill unless the GM decides otherwise due to a peculiar circumstance. Do note however that invisible creatures can still be tracked, if they leave either tracks or a discernible trail.

Between these two extremes are all of the other types of monsters, as well as NPCs. For these other creatures, tracking might succeed or fail, which is when the ranger's skill comes into play.

To be effective, the ranger must be familiar with the creature type, having encountered the creature before. All rangers begin the game with familiarity toward humans, demi-humans, and half-humanoids, but not any other creatures. Most low-level rangers will have the goal of identifying the





tracks of various types of humanoids as quickly as possible, but they will not be familiar with such until after they have encountered the creature type in question during an adventure.

If the ranger does not have familiarity with the creature type that he or she wishes to track in a nonoutdoor environment, the ranger must observe and study the exact individual that will be tracked. This observation from a distance can take place at the entrance to a dungeon or ruin, within a passageway, while the ranger is hidden, or some similar circumstance. Once the observed-yetunfamiliar creature is out of sight, the ranger then has 30 minutes at most (or 3 turns, if turn time is being kept) to begin the tracking attempt. If any more time than this expires, the chances for successful tracking fall to zero.

The ranger's base chance for tracking skill success in indoor or subterranean environments is the same as for outdoor tracking, to a maximum of 110%.

The following modifiers apply to indoor tracking attempts:

TABLE 44:	
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### **Modifiers to Indoor Tracking Chances for Rangers**

Modifier Type	Details	Tracking Signs	Tracking Chance Modifier
Quarry Creature Size	Large	Creature is larger than man-sized	+10%
Quarry Creature Size	Medium	Creature is approximately man-sized	0%
Quarry Group Size	1 individual	Fewer tracks and signs	0%
Quarry Group Size	2 or more creatures	More tracks and signs	+2% per additional creature
Floor Surface Conditions	Ideal for tracking (dirt floor, mud, or dust)	More tracks are revealed as a result of the surface	+20%
Floor Surface Conditions	Common (wood floor, tomb, or dirty (dungeon) stone floor)	Fewer tracks and signs	0%
Floor Surface Conditions	Traceless (stone floor that is relatively clean (castle, temple, etc.) or heavily trafficked	Very few signs are evident	-50%
Quarry Hiding Trail	On an ideal surface (as above)	The +20% terrain bonus above is replaced by:	0%
Quarry Hiding Trail	On a common surface (as above)	The 0% terrain modifier above is replaced by:	-50%
Quarry Hiding Trail	On a traceless surface (as above)	(Tracking is impossible)	-200%





Note that a quarry's passage through a concealed or secret door will prevent further tracking, but the trail will "go cold" within 100' of the door in question, which might well lead to the ranger finding the hidden door and picking up the trail again.



# **Tracking Effectiveness and Movement**

These rules apply to both outdoor and indoor tracking attempts.

If the ranger's modified chance to track is currently 100% or higher, this means that no skill roll is required. The ranger can track the creature at a distance, without being detected by the quarry, for as long as the ideal conditions persist.

If the modified chance is less than 100%, the GM makes the percentage dice roll to determine whether the tracking attempt is successful.





The ranger will need to move all the way to the quarry's destination if the player wishes to persist in tracking all the way to the end of the trail of signs. If the trail goes on longer than expected, the ranger can always opt to give up the chase along the way.

The ranger's maximum movement rate during tracking is dependent upon the modified chance to track, as follows:

## **TABLE 45:**

# **Ranger's Maximum Speed During Tracking Attempts**

Ranger's Modified Tracking Skill Chance	Odds of Tracking the Quarry	Maximum Movement Speed
100% or higher	Certain	Full (120')
<b>81 to 99%</b>	Excellent	Full (120')
<b>61 to 80%</b>	Good	Impeded (90')
<b>41 to 60%</b>	Fair	Half (60')
<b>21 to 40%</b>	Doubtful	Slow (30')
1 to 20%	Poor	Very Slow (15')

The movement speeds listed above disregard the ranger's encumbrance. If a ranger is carrying treasure and equipment and is currently slowed to a maximum movement rate of 60', then that is the pace of tracking as well, even if the figures listed in the above table are higher. Similarly, if the ranger is tracking and slower companions are following behind, the ranger must choose whether to forge on ahead alone or wait for the group ... potentially losing the quarry as they move farther and farther along.

If light is good (sunlight outdoors, or continual light spells underground), the full movement rates above can apply. However if light is poor (moonlight or heavy cloud cover outdoors, or torches and lanterns underground) all speeds listed above must be halved for the ranger to keep on the trail.

If light sources are not present, tracking cannot be conducted.

# **Gaining Information About the Quarry**

If the ranger is uncertain of the quarry's species, type, or other valuable clues, some of this information might well become evident during a succeeding (but not failing) tracking attempt. The chance of learning additional details is equal to the ranger's modified tracking skill chance. Therefore, if a ranger has a 40% chance of tracking successfully, and the GM rolls a 32, the tracking attempt will then be successful and then a second roll (for additional information) is rolled. If the second roll is between 01 and 40, the ranger will also learn more about the quarry. If the second roll is between 41 and 00, no further information will be learned, but the tracking attempt will nevertheless be successful.

The precise type of information that can be learned during tracking is dependent upon the ranger's experience level.





TABLE 46:

Additional Ranger Tracking Abilities

Ranger's Experience Level	Additional Learnable Information
1	If the creature type is common and it dwells in a forest habitat, the ranger will be able to identify the creatures' tracks by species (deer, wolf, etc.).
	Note that this means that the creature has forest as one of its habitat types, but the tracking attempt can be taking place anywhere. In other words, the ranger would be able to identify deer or wolf tracks even if he was tracking the animals in mountains terrain, or even if the path led into a cave or ruin.
2	As above, also:
	If the creature type is common and it dwells in a forest habitat, the ranger will be able to identify the number of creatures in the quarry group, and will know their rate of travel (full, three-quarters, half, etc.).
3	As above, also:
	If the tracking is taking place outdoors, and the creature type is common, and it dwells in a forest habitat, the ranger will be able to estimate the time that has elapsed since the creature was present, down to the nearest hour.
4	As above, also:
	The level 1, 2, and 3 aspects listed above can also be learned for uncommon creatures that dwell in a forest habitat (gnolls, hobgoblins, satyrs, etc.)
5	As above, also:
	The level 1, 2, and 3 aspects listed above can also be learned for rare creatures that dwell in a forest habitat (for example, a green dragon, provided the dragon was walking and not flying).
6	As above, also:
	The level 1, 2, and 3 aspects listed above can also be learned for very rare creatures that dwell in a forest habitat (dryads, spotted lions, etc.)
7	As above, also:
	The level 1, 2, and 3 aspects listed above can also be learned for other creatures that dwell in other types of terrain within a 100-mile radius.
	For example, if a range of hills was nearby and nagas and ogre magi dwelled there, the ranger would be able to identify their tracks in the current environs regardless of terrain.
8	As above, also:



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	If any of the quarry are humans, the ranger will know their general height (tall, average, short) and weight (above average, average, below average) based on the details of their stride.
9	As above, also: If any of the quarry are mounts, the ranger will know their general size (above- average hit points, average hit points, below-average hit points) and perhaps an unusual circumstance (such as a horse carrying two riders, or a dire wolf mount being wounded and limping).
10 or higher	As above, also: All of these details can be known for any creature type that the ranger has ever encountered in the past. However, this knowledge still does not allow for the tracking of creatures that are impossible to track (ghosts, for example).





Limitations and Disadvantages for the Ranger Class

Rangers in the World of Oldskull are limited in some ways by their haunted past, fallen legacy, and oaths made to the order of the ranger knights.

**Fall from Grace:** If the ranger ever willingly turns away from good alignment, then all ranger-specific advantages are immediately lost. The ranger then becomes a fighter of the same experience level, with D8 hit dice, and will never regain ranger status.

If the change is unwilling – for example, the ranger falls prey to a helm of opposite alignment or a curse – the ranger will lose status as above. Sacred atonement will be required for the ranger to regain ranger status and to reinstate class advantages. Atonement must be assisted by a high-level cleric of good alignment, or a druid above experience level 13. The GM decides on what type of atonement is required, depending on the severity of the transgression. Escalating examples of atonement might include swearing to adhere to the faith, making burnt offerings (sacrificing gold or valuables to be consumed in sacred fire), or fulfilling a quest to prove one's worth.

**Forever a Ranger:** Regardless of ability scores or player intent, a ranger can never become a character with two classes. This is because barbarians are born and raised within the order of the ranger knights, and they will never be able to adopt a second profession while retaining their ranger status.

**Honoring the Sacred Scattering:** In youth, rangers vow never to congregate in circles greater than three. (That is, groups of adventurers should never include more than three rangers at a time, whether they be single-classed or multi-classed.) The reason for this is that the final prophecy of the Faerie Queene foretold that if the rangers ever gathered to reunite the royal house without the avatar of the god Nodens first being restored to the Obsidian Temple, the order would be forever destroyed by a dread Nyarlothian curse.

The curse has been tested by the foolish and the intrepid many times over the years, and although the order persists, those who violate the honor of the scattering fall prey to a minor aspect of the greater curse.

In game terms, this means that if the party ever contains more than three rangers, none of the PCs – the ranger, or his or her companions – will gain experience during that play session. Players are therefore free to violate this sacred tenet, but in doing so they willingly forsake the ability to progress their characters for a time.

**Oath of the Untempted Wanderer:** Since the fall of Queen's Cambria – ultimately blamed upon Nyarlathotep, yet caused by mortal failings – was truly rooted in obsession, greed, and the corruption of wealthy ranger knights of the order, all newly-initiated rangers in young adulthood swear an oath to follow the ways of the Untempted Wanderer. This oath means, simply, that the ranger will choose to only possess a portion of goods and treasure that can be carried by the ranger and one mount. All wealth beyond this proportion should be donated to a worthy temple or order, or sacrificed in a sacred burning ritual of Nodens and the ranger deities.





The ranger can use granted magic items – such as bags of holding – to stay within the oath's intent, and a "mount" might not necessarily be a horse. If the mount is slain, the ranger can retain the amount of possessions already amassed until a new mount can be attained.

Violations of the oath's intent would likely include hiding or burying treasure, storing goods in a home or stronghold, "giving gifts" to other Player Characters, giving treasure to a henchman, and so forth. The Game Master is free to distinguish what is and what is not a behavior that fairly respects the oath, and to warn the player if a "workaround" is suspicious in nature. Generally speaking, if a player is willfully seeking to subvert or game the oath for the purpose of personal empowerment, that is a violation.

If the ranger violates this oath, the ill omens that befall are ascending in nature. On a first offense, the ranger gains no experience during the current play session. On the second, the ranger loses 10% of all experience earned so far. On a third, the ranger's full experience total is halved (which will certainly result in a loss of experience levels). On a fourth, the ranger suffers a -1 permanent loss to each ability score and also temporary loss of ranger status, with atonement still being attainable. Atonement will not restore lost ability score points. On the fifth, the character's alignment is changed to chaotic neutral, ranger status is permanently lost, and the newly-fledged fighter also loses 1 further level of experience.

NPC rangers – and other NPC companions – will never again trust a ranger who falls prey to a fifth offense.

**Secrecy of the Circle:** Rangers can have companions, including Player Characters, the followers of other PCs, and animal companions. They can also let friends and allies know about their powers, origins, and beliefs at any time. However, a ranger cannot freely hire NPC followers until experience level 8, at the earliest. This includes aides, expert hirelings, henchmen, hirelings, men-at-arms, and servants of any kind. Even NPC rangers cannot be hired in this manner.

This is a traditional restriction upon the rangers which has its roots in a betrayal of the ranger order centuries ago. The tradition no longer has deadly teeth, but nevertheless violating the oath of secrecy haphazardly is considered a grim temptation of fate.

If the player insists upon violating this edict, the GM should apply a -10% loss to the ranger's experience earned to date. Therefore, a ranger with 400 XPM would be reduced to 360 XPM due to the violation of the oath of secrecy. Note that an experience level can be lost through this effect.

**Traditional Weapons Training of the Du'un-Aidai (Limitation):** Rangers begin play with three weapon proficiencies. The first proficiency is always a bow. The player can choose for the ranger to learn one of the following ranged weapon types as their starting weapon: the short bow, composite short bow, long bow, composite long bow, or light crossbow.

If the ranger does not opt for weapon specialization, the ranger's second and third weapon proficiencies will be derived from the following list: [a] either a battle axe, hand axe, or a spear; [b] either a dagger or a knife; [c] a sword of any type. The player can choose from [a] and [b], [a] and [c], or [b] and [c]. Whatever is chosen, when the ranger another proficiency at experience level 4, the third weapon type will then be selected. For example, if a ranger is proficient in [a] and [b] at level 1, then the level 4 proficiency would come from category [c].





If the ranger opts for weapon specialization, note that this is the only weapon proficiency that the ranger will possess at experience level 1. Then the ranger will gain new proficiencies at experience levels 4, 7, and 10, from the options listed above.

Once a ranger has become proficient in a type of bow and the [a-c] selections, any remaining proficiencies can be selected by the player. This will occur at either level 7 (for a non-specialized ranger) or level 13 (for a specialized ranger).





# About the Author



Beginning play as a chaotic neutral normal human with one measly hit point to his name, KENT DAVID KELLY eventually became apprenticed to a magic-user of ill repute ... a foul man who dwelt in the steamy deeps of the Ivory Cloud Mountain. After this mentor carelessly misplaced an intelligent soul-sucking sword and then died under suspicious circumstances, his former henchman Mr. Kelly escaped to the deeper underground and there began playing Satanic role-playing games. This, the legends tell us, occurred in the year 1981.

Hoary wizard-priests who inspired Mr. Kelly in his netherworldly machinations included the peerless Mr. E. Gary Gygax, Carr, Arneson, Cook, Hammack, Jaquays, Bledsaw, Moldvay, Kuntz, Schick and Ward. Sadly, a misguided made-for-the-basements movie entitled *Mazes and Monsters* gave Mr. Kelly's parents conniptions in 1982. As a result of that blasphemous Tom Hanks debacle (and other more personal lapses in judgment), Mr. Kelly was eventually forbidden from playing his favorite game for a considerable length of time.





Nonplussed but not defeated, he used this enforced exile to escape to a friend's alehouse, and there indulged himself in now-classic computer RPGs such as Zork, Telengard, Temple of Apshai, Ultima, Tunnels of Doom, The Bard's Tale, Phantasie, Pool of Radiance, Wizard's Crown and Wasteland. He then went on to write computer versions of his own FRPGs, which led to his obsession with coupling creative design elements with random dungeons and unpredictable adventure generation.

Mr. Kelly wrote and submitted his first adventure for Dungeon Magazine #1 in 1986. Unfortunately, one Mr. Moore decided that his submission was far too "Lovecraftian, horrific and unfair" to ever serve that worthy periodical as a publishable adventure. Mr. Kelly, it must be said, took this rejection as a very good sign of things to come.

In the late 80s and 90s, Mr. Kelly wrote short stories, poems and essays ... some of which have been published under the Wonderland Imprints banner. He wrote several dark fantasy and horror novels as well. Concurrently, he ran Dark Angel Collectibles, selling classic FRPG materials as Darkseraphim, and assisted the Acaeum with the creation of the Valuation Board and other minor research projects.

At this time, Mr. Kelly and his entourage of evil gnomes are rumored to dwell in the dread and deathly under-halls of the Acaeum, Dragonsfoot, ENWorld, Grognardia, Knights & Knaves, ODD, and even more nefarious levels deep down in the mega-dungeon of the Web.

There he remains in vigil, his vampiric sword yet shivering in his hand. When not being sought outright for answers to halfling riddles or other more sundry sage advice, he is to be avoided by sane individuals *at all costs*.

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Thank you as always for helping my family with your purchases and devotion. I hope to be able to write for you in the near future once again!

~K





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Long live the indefatigable Plague Doctors and the OSR!

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