# Warrior Prestige Archetype Swordlord



# Carl Cramér





# Prestige Archetype The Swordlord

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# Introduction

A prestige archetype is a prestige class turned into a normal 20-level class, similar to an archetype or alternate class.

The goal when making these prestige archetypes has been to capture the flavor of the prestige class rather than to make an exact copy of how it would normally be. Attack bonuses, hit dice, class skills, spells, and class features have been unified and spread evenly over levels. This means that most prestige archetypes have their prestige abilities spread over the entire 20 level spread. Unlike how prestige classes normally work, these archetypes have a few complete class abilities rather than many abilities limited to a low level. In some cases, you get the choice of one of several class abilities rather than stymied versions of all the abilities.

A prestige archetype generally has elements of one or more regular character classes, to represent how prestige prerequisites were met and character development after the prestige class has ended. Sometimes there is more than one class that naturally leads itself to a particular prestige class, which can lead to several different prestige archetypes for different combinations. A few are not built on a regular class, instead expanding the idea behind the prestige class to a full 20 levels.

## Prestige vs. Archetype

One thing about prestige classes is that you grow into them - they can represent special training opportunities that the character did not know existed. Prestige archetypes don't do this; you play a prestige archetype from level one. In this case I'd suggest using the retraining rules - the character retrains those abilities that differ between his old class and the new prestige archetype. Or, if this feels cumbersome, simply change the class abilities and say the sudden change is a result of special training. This should generally work fine at lower levels, the more experienced the character is and the more abilities it has, the greater the disconnect when those abilities change. GMs wanting this kind of plot are advised to present such options early on in a campaign.

# Swordlord

The swordlords are among the deadliest and most feared fighters of the world. They have spent long years mastering the dueling sword, against both other dueling swords and all manner of other weaponry. Their speed and reflexes weave a net of impenetrable steel around them, from which they strike and harry their unfortunate opponents. They focus on avoiding damage and disarming foes; swordlords prefer wearing light or no armor, trusting their skill with their blades for protection.

**Role:** Swordlords are highly talented melee combatants, and while their true mastery shows itself in dueling situations or whenever flashy combat is called for, they can still carry their weight in more conventional battles.

#### Alignment: Any.

Hit Die: d10. Starting Gold: 5d6 x 10 gp (175 gp average).

### Table 17.1 - Swordlord

# **Class Skills**

The swordlord's class skills (and the key ability for each) are Acrobatics (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (nobility) (Int), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis) Swim (Str). **Skill Ranks Per Level:** 2 + Int modifier.

## **Class Features**

The following are class features of the swordlord.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: A swordlord is proficient with all simple weapons, with martial melee weapons, and with light armor, but not with any kind of shield.

**Dueling Mastery:** A swordlord gains the following feats at the indicated levels, ignoring the prerequisites. If the swordlord already has one of the indicated feats, he can select a combat feat he fulfills the prerequisites for instead.

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dueling sword), deft strike, Weapon
					Finesse
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Bonus feat, bravery +1, Dazzling Display
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Dueling Mastery, steel net
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Display weapon prowess
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Duel training
6th	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	Disarming strike
7th	+7/+2	+5	+2	+2	Bravery +2, aggressive defense
8th	+8/+3	+6	+2	+2	Bonus feat
9th	+9/+4	+6	+3	+3	Shatter confidence
10th	+10/+5	+7	+3	+3	Bravery +3, saving slash
11th	+11/+6/+1	+7	+3	+3	Dexterous duelist
12th	+12/+7/+2	+8	+4	+4	Adaptive tactics (swift)
13th	+13/+8/+3	+8	+4	+4	Duel training (proficiency)
14th	+14/+9/+4	+9	+4	+4	Bonus feat, bravery +4
15th	+15/+10/+5	+9	+5	+5	Counterattack
16th	+16/+11/+6/+1	+10	+5	+5	Greater saving slash
17th	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+5	+5	Adaptive tactics (free)
18th	+18/+13/+8/+3	+11	+6	+6	Bravery +5, confounding duelist
19th	+19/+14/+9/+4	+11	+6	+6	Duel mastery
20th	+20/+15/+10/+5	+12	+6	+6	Bonus feat, dueling sword mastery

- Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dueling sword), Weapon Finesse
- 2. Dazzling Display
- 3. Dueling Mastery

**Deft Strike (Ex):** A swordlord can add his Dexterity bonus (if any) on damage rolls made with a dueling sword instead of his Strength bonus. This bonus on damage rolls applies whether the swordlord is wielding a dueling sword one-handed or two-handed, though the swordlord does not apply 1-1/2 times his Dexterity bonus on damage rolls while fighting two-handed. A swordlord cannot use this ability if he is wielding a shield or an off-hand weapon, including armor spikes, unarmed strikes, or natural weapons.

**Bonus Feats:** The swordlord can take fighter-only feats, counting swordlord levels as fighter levels for feat pre-requisites. At level 2, and every 6 levels thereafter (level 8, 14, 20), the swordlord gains a combat feat as a bonus feat. The swordlord needs to fulfill all prerequisites for these feats.

**Bravery (Ex):** Starting at 2nd level, a swordlord gains a +1 bonus on Will saves against fear. This bonus increases by +1 for every four levels beyond 2nd.

**Steel Net (Ex):** At 3rd level, when a swordlord makes a full attack with a dueling sword, he gains a +1 bonus to AC against melee attacks until the beginning of his next turn. This bonus increases by +1 every four levels after 3rd.

**Display Weapon Prowess (Ex):** At 4th level, a swordlord adds a bonus equal to <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> his class level on Intimidate checks made while using Dazzling Display with a dueling sword. He also gains a +1 competence bonus on these Intimidate checks for each of the following feats he possesses with the dueling sword: Greater Weapon Specialization, Improved Critical, Weapon Specialization.

When involved in a duel, a swordlord's mastery of elaborate strokes and stances grants a bonus equal to 1/2 his class level on performance combat checks. These tricks are not merely for show, however, and are of great help in countering an enemy during a duel, granting a bonus equal to 1/2 his class level on rolls to make a dueling parry or use dueling resolve. For rules on duels and performance combat, see *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Combat*. **Duel Training (Ex):** Starting at 5th level, a swordlord gains additional benefits when fighting with a dueling sword. Whenever he attacks with such a dueling sword, he gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls.

Every four levels thereafter (9th, 13th, and 17th), the bonus increases by +1. A swordlord also adds this bonus to any combat maneuver checks made with a dueling sword. This bonus also applies to the swordlord 's Combat Maneuver Defense when defending against disarm and sunder attempts when he wields a dueling sword. While a swordlord focuses on the dueling sword, there are also other dueling weapons to consider. The swordlord also learns to apply his training to other weapons required by a formal challenge or duel. Whenever he is wielding a weapon required by the rules or customs of the circumstance, he can use all his class abilities with that weapon as if it was a dueling sword. He cannot use feats this way, nor can he ignore non-proficiency penalties. At 9th level, the non-proficiency penalty penalty is reduced by 2 in this situation. At 13th level the swordlord is considered proficient with whatever weapon a situation demands.

**Disarming Strike (Ex):** At 6th level, when a swordlord successfully disarms an opponent using a dueling sword, the swordlord also deals normal damage to the target, but without the normal Strength (or Dexterity) bonus to damage.

**Aggressive Defense (Ex):** A swordlord reduces the attack roll penalty for fighting defensively and/or using Combat Expertise by 2 at 7th level.

Shatter Confidence (Ex): At 9th level, a swordlord can make an Intimidate check to demoralize his target as a swift action after he confirms a critical hit or succeeds at a disarm, reposition, or sunder combat maneuver with a dueling sword. If his target is already shaken, he can attempt an Intimidate check to demoralize as a swift action after any successful melee attack or combat maneuver. If this check is successful, any morale bonuses the target possesses are suppressed for a number of rounds equal to the swordlord's class level. Suppressed effects are not dispelled, and resume after this time elapses if their duration has not expired. Suppressed morale bonuses include those gained from a barbarian's rage ability; however, this ability does not actually end rage or suppress any other effects of rage or rage powers that do not provide morale bonuses.

**Saving Slash (Ex):** At 10th level, when wielding a dueling sword, a swordlord can use an immediate action to try deflecting a melee critical hit targeting him, reducing its damage to that of a normal hit, with a 25% chance of success. This does not stack with the fortification special ability of magical armor or similar effects.

**Dexterous Duelist (Ex):** At 11th level, a swordlord with at least one free hand is not denied his Dexterity bonus to Armor Class when making Acrobatics or Climb checks. In addition, if he stands from prone he does not provoke attacks of opportunity from any creatures he hit while he was prone earlier on the same turn.

Adaptive Tactics (Ex): A swordlord learns to adapt his fighting style to counter his enemy's strengths. At level 12, after a swordlord declares an attack with his dueling sword against a creature he attacked during the previous round, as a swift action he can attempt a Sense Motive check (with a DC equal to 10 + the opponent's base attack bonus). If the check is successful, the swordlord can choose to gain a +2 circumstance bonus either on attack rolls or to AC against that creature until the beginning of his next turn. At level 17, this becomes a free action that can be used any number of times in a round.

**Counterattack (Ex):** At 15th level, a swordlord can make an attack as an immediate action against an opponent who hits him with a melee attack, so long as the attacking creature is within the swordlord's reach.

**Greater Saving Slash (Ex):** At 16th level, a swordlord's saving slash has a 50% chance of reducing a melee critical hit to a normal hit. In addition, he can attempt a saving slash against a ranged critical hit, including those by rays and other ranged touch effects, with a 25% chance of success.

**Confounding Duelist (Ex):** At 18th level, a swordlord who successfully uses shatter confidence also suppresses any competence or insight bonuses the target possesses.

**Duel Mastery (Ex):** At 19th level, a swordlord gains Damage Reduction 5/— whenever he is wielding a dueling sword.

**Dueling Sword Mastery (Ex):** At 20th level, a swordlord masters the dueling sword. Any attacks made with a dueling sword automatically confirm all critical threats and have their damage multiplier increased by 1 (×2 becomes ×3, for example). In addition, he cannot be disarmed while wielding a dueling sword.

## Alternate Weapon Lords

The swordlord as described favors the dueling sword, but other cultures have developed dueling traditions based on other weapons. Simply replace all references to the dueling sword with the culturally appropriate weapon, usually an exotic weapon. Here are some examples of alternate dueling weapons: bastard sword, butterfly knife, dagger, elven curve blade, falchion, flambard, great terbutje, greatsword, katana, katar, khopesh, klar, longsword, nine-ring broadsword, nodachi, pata, quadrens, rapier, scimitar, scizore, sica, starknife, sword cane, swordbreaker dagger, temple sword, terbutje, two-bladed sword, wakizashi, and war razor. Not all of these weapons should have a class devoted to them in each world-DMs are encouraged to select one or a few such weapons as appropriate to the setting, or a player character might be allowed to be a pioneer that is developing a fighting technique for a new weapon.

## **Favored Class Bonuses**

Instead of receiving an additional hit point or skill rank when gaining a sword lord level, the following races may select the following option.

**Dwarf:** Add +1/4 dodge bonus to the sword lord's Armor Class while flanked by opponents.

**Elf:** Add +1/2 bonus on Acrobatics checks to avoid provoking attacks of opportunity from movement.

**Gnome:** Treat your Dexterity score as +1/3 higher when fulfilling the prerequisites of combat feats.

**Half-Elf:** Gain 1/4 of Skill Focus with one of the following skills: Acrobatics, Bluff, Sense Motive, or Stealth. Once you have selected this benefit six times for a specific skill, you must select a new skill if you continue to gain this benefit.

**Half-Orc:** Add +1/2 bonus on Intimidate checks against an opponent when engaged in single combat.

Halfling: Add +1/2 bonus on Bluff checks against an opponent when engagd in single combat.

Human: Gain 1/4 of a fighter only combat feat.

# Sample Sword Lord Character

Below is a sample sword lord character created using these rules at levels 1, 5, 10, and 15. Favored class bonus is used to provide additional hit points.

## Alister

"A well-made blade is a thing of beauty. A skilled warrior is as well. As well as possessing the first, I am also the second. Surrender, run, or fall before me. Your choice."

### Alister (CR 1/2; XP 200)

Male human sword lord 1 LE Medium humanoid (human) Init +3; Senses Perception -1

#### DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge) hp 12 (1d10+2) Fort +3, Ref +3, Will -1

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

**Melee** dueling sword +4 (1d8+3/19-20) or dagger +4 (1d4+2/19-20)

**Ranged** dart +4 (1d4+2) or dagger +4(1d4+2/19-20) **Special Attacks** deft strike

STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 12
Base Atk +1; CMB +3; CMD 17
Feats Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dueling sword), Quick Draw, Weapon Finesse
Skills Acrobatics +7, Climb +6, Intimidate +5, Swim +6

Languages Common, Elven

**SQ** heart of the streets

**Combat Gear** *potion of shield of faith*; *Other Gear* leather armor, dueling sword, dagger, dart (5), bedroll, belt pouch, cards<sup>UE</sup>, dice<sup>UE</sup>, dominos<sup>UE</sup>, explorer's outfit, flint and steel, gear maintenance kit<sup>UE</sup>, grooming kit<sup>UE</sup>, masterwork backpack, sack, shaving kit<sup>UE</sup>, signet ring, torch (2), trail rations (5 days), waterskin, whetstone, wrist sheath<sup>UE</sup>, 5 gp, 6 sp, 6 cp

### Alister (CR 4; XP 1,200)

Male human sword lord 5 LE Medium humanoid (human) Init +3; Senses Perception -1

#### DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge) hp 42 (5d10+10)

### **Fort** +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +0; +1 vs. fear **Defensive Abilities** bravery +1, steel net +1

#### OFFENSE Speed 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk dueling sword +11 (1d8+4/19-20) or dagger +8 (1d4+2/19-20)

**Ranged** dart +8 (1d4+2) or dagger +8 (1d4+2/19-20) **Special Attacks** deft strike, duel training +1

### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 14, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 12 **Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 21

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Dazzling Display, Dodge, Dueling Mastery, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dueling sword), Mobility, Quick Draw, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (dueling sword)

**Skills** Acrobatics +12, Bluff +9, Climb +10, Intimidate +9, Swim +10

Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven

**SQ** display weapon prowess, heart of the streets **Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2), *potion of jump* (2), *potion of shield of faith* (2); **Other Gear** masterwork studded leather, masterwork dueling sword, dagger (2), dart (5), bandolier<sup>UE</sup>, bedroll, belt pouch, cards<sup>UE</sup>, dice<sup>UE</sup>, dominos<sup>UE</sup>, everburning torch, explorer's outfit, flint and steel, gear maintenance kit<sup>UE</sup>, grooming kit<sup>UE</sup>, *handy haversack*, shaving kit<sup>UE</sup>, signet ring, trail rations (5 days), waterskin, whetstone, wrist sheath<sup>UE</sup> (2), 2 gp, 2 sp, 8 cp

#### Alister (CR 9; XP 6,400)

Male human sword lord 10

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +4; Senses Perception -1

### DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 16, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge) hp 79 (10d10+20)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +2; +3 vs. fear

**Defensive Abilities** aggressive defense, bravery +3, sav-

### ing slash, steel net +2

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft. **Melee** +1 dueling sword +18/+13 (1d8+7/19-20) or dagger +14/+9 (1d4+2/19-20) **Ranged** dart +14/+9 (1d4+2) or dagger +14/+9 (1d4+2/19-20)

**Special Attacks** deft strike, disarming strike, duel training +2, shatter confidence

#### STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 19, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 12

**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +12 (+14 disarm); **CMD** 28 (30 vs. disarm)

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Dazzling Display, Dodge, Dueling Mastery, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dueling sword), Improved Disarm, Mobility, Quick Draw, Spring Attack, Step Up, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (dueling sword) **Skills** Acrobatics +17, Bluff +14, Climb +15, Intimidate +14, Swim +15

Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven SQ display weapon prowess, heart of the streets Combat Gear potion of cure moderate wounds (3), potion of jump (3); Other Gear +1 studded leather, +1 dueling sword, dagger (2), dart (5), bandolier<sup>UE</sup>, bedroll, belt of incredible dexterity +2, belt pouch, cards<sup>UE</sup>, dice<sup>UE</sup>, dominos<sup>UE</sup>, everburning torch, explorer's outfit, flint and steel, gear maintenance kit<sup>UE</sup>, grooming kit<sup>UE</sup>, handy haversack, ring of protection +1, shaving kit<sup>UE</sup>, signet ring, trail rations (5 days), waterskin, whetstone, wrist sheath<sup>UE</sup> (2), 3 pp, 21 gp, 12 sp, 8 cp

#### Alister (CR 14; XP 38,400)

Male human sword lord 15 LE Medium humanoid (human) Init +6; Senses Perception -1

#### DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 18, flat-footed 17 (+6 armor, +1 deflection, +6 Dex, +1 dodge) hp 117 (15d10+30) Fort +12, Ref +13, Will +6; +4 vs. fear

**Defensive Abilities** aggressive defense, bravery +4, saving slash, steel net +4

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft. **Melee** +2 *dueling sword* +27/+22/+17 (1d8+11/17-20) or mwk dagger +22/+17/+12 (1d4+2/19-20)

**Ranged** dart +21/+16/+11 (1d4+2) or mwk dagger +22/+17 (1d4+2/19-20)

**Special Attacks** adaptive tactics (swift), counterattack, deft strike, disarming strike, duel training +3, shatter confidence

#### **STATISTICS**

**Str** 14, **Dex** 22, **Con** 12, **Int** 14, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 12 **Base Atk** +15; **CMB** +17 (+19 disarm); **CMD** 35 (37 vs. disarm)

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Critical Focus, Dazzling Display, Dodge, Dueling Mastery, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dueling sword), Improved Critical (dueling sword), Improved Disarm, Mobility, Quick Draw, Spring Attack, Step Up, Tiring Critical, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (dueling sword), Whirlwind Attack

Skills Acrobatics +21, Bluff +16, Climb +17, Intimidate

+16, Sense Motive +17, Swim +17

Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven

**SQ** dextrous duelist, display weapon prowess, heart of the streets

**Combat Gear** *potion of barkskin, potion of cure serious wounds* (3), *potion of jump* (3); **Other Gear** +3 *studded leather,* +2 *dueling sword*, masterwork dagger (2), dart (5), bandolier<sup>UE</sup> (2), bedroll, *belt of incredible dexterity* +4, belt pouch, cards<sup>UE</sup>, *cloak of resistance* +2, dart, dice<sup>UE</sup>, dominos<sup>UE</sup>, everburning torch, explorer's outfit, flint and steel, gear maintenance kit<sup>UE</sup>, grooming kit<sup>UE</sup>, *handy haversack, ring of protection* +1, shaving kit<sup>UE</sup>, signet ring, trail rations (5 days), waterskin, whetstone, wrist sheath<sup>UE</sup> (2), 3 pp, 20 gp, 16, sp, 18 cp

Alister Acememnon III was the son of a minor noble in the Kingdom of Iffud. Like many in Iffud, his ancestors supported Thulian crusaders and Tulite martyrs against elementalist forces during the NewGod Wars. Dedicated to serve the community and a willingness to sacrifice oneself were lessons taught to a young Alister every day.

Now a skilled sword lord and noble in his own right he is quick to impart to his lessers how important it is for them to serve him and sacrifice their well-being for the prestige of his family line. Within the City of Conflict, he owns and operatres of a minor dueling school, the Acememnon Institute, commonly referred to as the Alticorns.

When he recruits the right students who are capable following his teachings it won't be long before his replaces the Drake's Academy and the Archon Scholarium as the preeminent dueling school in all of Iffud. From their he should be able to an easy matter for one as skilled as he to move into a high-ranking post within the military and then the government itself. It is just a matter of time.

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