**Weapon Mastery**

Weapon Mastery is a character's ability to use weapons with greater skill than the game normally allows. All characters, not just fighters, can learn to use weapon mastery.

Weapon Choices

When a new character is created, that characters receives a number of weapon proficiency slots as shown in the table below.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | Initial # | Levels | Non-proficiency Penalty |
| Warrior | 4 | 3 | -2 |
| Wizard | 1 | 6 | -5 |
| Priest | 2 | 4 | -3 |
| Rogue | 2 | 4 | -3 |

All characters must spend a slot (or more for higher levels of proficiency) for each weapon they wish to become familiar with. If that character uses a weapon that he is not proficient with, then the penalty listed above is tacked on to the attack roll. Spending the slots required on a weapon choice gives the character a basic understanding of how to use that weapon. There are six levels of mastery.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Number of Weapon Slots Spent | Level of Mastery |
| 0 | Unskilled |
| 1 | Basic |
| 2 | Skilled |
| 3 | Expert |
| 5 | Master |
| 8 | Grand Master |

At beginning levels, only warriors may choose to upgrade their level of mastery to skilled. Rogues, priests and mages must spend their weapon slots on separate weapons and must wait until gaining new weapon slots in order to become more skilled in a weapon. At first level, characters must use up all their proficiency slots. At higher levels, characters can save slots for a later use. Also, warriors may become more skilled in more than one weapon, while other character classes may gain a greater level of mastery in only one weapon. In general, the higher a character's level of mastery with a weapon, the more damage he does with the weapon and the greater number of special results he can achieve with the weapon. At higher levels, it takes an additional slot (two total) to attain Master ranking in a weapon, and two additional slots (three total) to attain the ranking of Grand Master.

Training

To gain a higher level of mastery in a weapon, not only must the character spend the required weapon slot but he must be trained by someone who has equal or greater knowledge of that specific weapon. That someone could be another PC but it is usually a NPC teacher.

After finding a trainer who will provide the necessary instruction, the student must pay all of the required costs before training can begin. The costs and time required for weapon training vary by the level of mastery sought (and by the teacher), and they are listed below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Level of Mastery Sought | Time Required | Cost Per Week |
| Basic (new weapon) | 1 week | 100 gp |
| Skilled | 2 weeks | 250 gp |
| Expert | 4 weeks | 500 gp |
| Master | 8 weeks | 750 gp |
| Grand Master | 12 weeks | 1000 gp |

A student can train only to the next rank of ability above his own. During each training period, there is a chance of failing to achieve the next rank. His chances of success and failure vary by the mastery levels of himself and his trainer, as given in the chart below. From the character's perspective, failure may occur because the trainer has insufficient knowledge or lacks the ability to train others or because the student cannot fully absorb the new information. Failure does not mean that the character has lost his weapon slot for that experience level. The slot is still there and it's still dedicated to the weapon and level of mastery he has chosen for it. The student has lost the time and money he has spent, but he may spend more time and money until he succeeds.

The chance of success is checked halfway through the training period, and the student is immediately informed of the results. (In the role-playing situation, usually this consists of the teacher taking the student aside and telling him that he is not ready yet and that it is useless to continue.) The student may then either continue his training (despite the teacher's recommendations) or stop his training. If the student continues to train, he may attempt to train with another teacher with a 10% bonus added to the success roll. If the student stops training, he will not lose the time involved and usually the teacher will refund half of the student's payment. However, the student does not receive the 10% bonus for the next time he attempts to attain the next level of mastery.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Student's Knowledge | Trainer's Knowledge |  |  |  |  |
|  | Basic | Skilled | Expert | Master | G. Master |
| None | 60% | 80% | 95% | 99% | 99% |
| Basic | 1% | 50% | 70% | 90% | 95% |
| Skilled | ------- | 1% | 40% | 60% | 80% |
| Expert | ------- | ------- | 1% | 30% | 50% |
| Master | ------- | ------- | ------- | 1% | 20% |

As noted in the table above, there is a small chance that a character may better himself by training with someone of equal ability. Grand Masters are difficult to find and very expensive to train with, so at higher levels, most characters tend to study multiple times with their peers in order to gain the 10% bonus (which is cumulative!).

Skilled Weapon Use

When using the weapon mastery rules, all weapons acquire new abilities and damage ranges. Those benefits include extra damage, attack roll bonuses (for fighters only), improved range with missiles and thrown weapons, ability to throw some hand-held weapons, bonuses to armour class and other special results (stunning, paralysis, entanglement, etc.)

Another benefit for fighters only is one of multiple attacks. During a combat round, the fighter may choose to take multiple attacks if he is eligible. See the chart below. If the character chooses to use multiple attacks during the round, the damage is equal to the next lowest level of mastery. (Expert becomes Skilled, Skilled becomes Basic).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Fighter Level | Melee Weapon | Light X-bow | Heavy X-bow | Thrown Dagger | Thrown Dart | Other\* Missiles |
| 1-6 | 3/2 | 1/1 | 1/2 | 3/1 | 4/1 | 3/2 |
| 7-12 | 2/1 | 3/2 | 1/1 | 4/1 | 5/1 | 2/1 |
| 13+ | 5/2 | 2/1 | 3/2 | 5/1 | 6/1 | 5/2 |

\*Non-bow

Fighters who specialise in bow gain an additional range category instead of extra attacks: point blank range. Point blank range for bows is from 6 to 30 feet. At point blank range, the character gains a +2 modifier on attack rolls. No additional damage is caused but Strength and magical damages apply. Furthermore, if the character has an arrow nocked and drawn, and has his target in sight, he can fire at the beginning of the round before any initiative rolls are made.

Some benefits can occur only if the player announces that his character is deliberately using them (such as deflecting, disarming, etc.) The player must mention this before he rolls to hit. It is too late to mention it after the die has been cast.

Attack and Defence Benefits

Many damage increases vary with the type of opponent. Opponents that attack with two-handed missile fire devices have similar defences to those that attack with natural body weaponry. This type of opponent is designated "M" (for Missile or Monster) on the Weapon Mastery Table.

Defence is very different for opponents using hand-held weapons that are swung (such as swords and axes) or thrown (such as daggers and bolas) and opponents using missile-fire weapons that only need one hand (slings, short blowguns, hand crossbows). On the Weapon Mastery Table, these opponents are designated "H" (for Hand-held).

If an opponent could fit into both categories (such as a wererat carrying a sword), the character attacking that opponent uses his weapon's damage results that are most favourable to the opponent, not the attacker. However, if this type of opponent drops the weapon it holds, it immediately becomes category M for all calculations.

Many weapons are better when attacking one or the other of these defence categories. On the Weapon Mastery Table, each weapon's listing shows a primary opponent (the category of defensive against which the weapon is most effective) and a secondary listing (the other category, where the weapon is less effective). A few weapons are equally good against both target types; they bear the table notation (P = A) where A stands for all.

Attack Roll Bonuses

Characters with skilled or better weapon masteries receive bonuses to attack.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Mastery | Warrior Bonus | All Others |
| Unskilled | no bonus | no bonus |
| Basic | no bonus | no bonus |
| Skilled | +1 | no bonus |
| Expert | +2 | +1 |
| Master | +3 | +2 |
| Grand Master | +4 | +3 |