



# First Edition Skills

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A Skill system designed for use with OSRIC and First Edition Fantasy Role Playing Games.

By Tori Bergquist

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## 1.0 Introduction

*First Edition Skills* provides a simple and straightforward method of handling general skills and talents in OSRIC and its relatives. This system will allow a degree of character customization while also providing mechanics consistent with OSRIC design principles. The mechanics behind this system are based on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> edition concepts previously used for skill mechanics, with some OGL modifications to tighten up the system a bit. This skill system is designed to supplement the class mechanics to allow for additional flavor to characters, but it does not replace skills which are specific to certain classes.

## 2.0 Choosing Skills

Skills use “slots” which are attained in much the same manner as weapon proficiency slots in the standard OSRIC rules. The number of slots allotted depends on the character’s class, according to the following chart. Skill slots are used to purchase skills that belong to the *class category* of the character. Each category of skills as defined by class has a corresponding number of skill slots it costs to purchase the skill for the character. In order for a character to purchase a skill that is not in his class group, he must spend one extra slot in addition to the base cost. Finally, there is a special group of *General Skills*. These can be purchased by any other character no matter what their class is, regardless of cost. Many of these general skills cost ½ a point. A character that spends a skill slot on a ½ skill may either purchase two such skills, or he receives the skill plus one bonus *improvement point* (see below).

Some of the skill options below include *weapon maneuvers*. These maneuvers allow characters to improve their opportunity to hit or add damage bonuses. Weapon maneuvers are available to any character who purchases them, but can only be used in conjunction with weapons in which the character has (or can have) proficiency. Thus, a fighter could use any of the listed maneuvers (if he learns them) with any of his weapons, while a magic-user would be limited to daggers, staves and darts.



## 2.1 Skill Slots and Level Advancement

Characters gain new skill slots as they advance in level, as shown on table 2.4 below. When the character achieves the level indicated, he gains the new slot, but he may be subject to training rules (see section 3.1). Characters also receive 1 improvement point at each level of advancement (except 1<sup>st</sup> level). See 2.3 for more on improvement points.

## 2.2 Optional Rule: Bonus Skill Slots by Intelligence

You may choose to convert your number of bonus allotted languages in to a number of bonus skill slots. Using this method, you may spend skill slots to learn languages, although you should always start with the common tongue and any racial or class languages. The *maximum number of languages* still indicates how many languages your character is capable of knowing under ordinary circumstances.

GMs may optionally declare that bonus skill slots from intelligence may only be used to purchase skills that have intelligence, wisdom or charisma as a modifier. Under this option, if the skill is physical in nature, then only standard skill points can be used to purchase it.

## 2.3 Improvement Points

At each level of advancement a character receives one bonus point *that can be added to the skill value*

of any existing skill he already knows. These improvement points reflect the experience the character gains with skills with which he is already familiar with. It is not the same as achieving a new skill slot, in that it reflects an improvement on his existing knowledge. A character can, if he chooses, switch a new skill slot out for 2 improvement points, rather than gain a new skill.

## 2.4 Skill Slot Chart

The skill slot chart include the number of skill slots each class starts with at level 1, the number per level

gained by each class, and the available skill categories. Characters that purchase skills that do not come from their available categories pay one extra slot on the cost of the “off category” skill.

### 2.4.1 Multiclass Advancement

Multiclass characters get access to both class categories and receive the largest number of starting slots at the fastest advancement of slots per level. A thief/magic-user, for example, would get 4 slots at first level, advance at a rate of 1 per 3 levels, and have access to the general, rogue and arcane groups.

**Table 2.4.1 Skill Slot Chart**

Class	Number of Starting Slots	New Slots Per Level	Available Skill Categories
Assassin	3	1 per 4 levels	rogue, general
Cleric	4	1 per 3 levels	religious, general
Druid	4	1 per 3 levels	religious, general
Fighter	4	1 per 3 levels	warrior, general
Illusionist	4	1 per 3 levels	arcane, general
Magic-User	4	1 per 3 levels	arcane, general
Paladin	4	1 per 3 levels	religious, warrior, general
Ranger	4	1 per 3 levels	warrior, general
Thief	3	1 per 4 levels	rogue, general

*Each Class Receives 1 Improvement Point from level 2 onward*

## 3.0 Training Skills

Characters begin already trained in the skills they purchase at 1<sup>st</sup> level. Thereafter, any new skills must be trained, unless it is agreed upon due to in-game circumstances by both GM and player that sufficient in-game activity was performed to justify the acquisition of a new skill without proper training.

Each skill includes a *basic training cost* and *training time* (see chart 3.0.1) determined by the category of skill in question. This cost indicates the suggested gold piece value of training as well as a randomized allotment of time which must be passed before the skill is achieved. This time could be passed during the course of an adventure in the campaign if the character has purchased the services of a tutor, or a fellow player character has the skill, and there is a period of time sufficient to allow for training. Typically a character is assumed to have spent 4-6

hours a day practicing the skill and that training beyond that point can be fatiguing and counter-productive Likewise, less effort than required is wasted effort.

**Table 3.0.1 Skill Training Cost and Time**

Category	Cost	Time
General	10 GP/week	1D6 weeks
Rogue	50 GP/week	1D10 weeks
Warrior	50 GP/week	2D4 weeks
Religious	100 GP/week	1D6 months
Arcane	100 GP/week	1D6 months

### 3.1 Who Can Train

Any character with training in a skill can train another character in that skill. Hirelings who have the skill in question can also teach the skill, although accommodations must be made to insure that the

player character and hiring a tutor are in the same place for the necessary period of time.

### 3.2 Abstract Training Option

GMs and players who wish to hand-wave training may assume that it is going on between game sessions, during long voyages, or pretty much whenever the characters are “off stage.” In such cases the GM can simply require that the gold piece cost of training be paid and the skill is automatically granted, or he can just declare that the skill has been achieved and disregard the cost.



### 4.0 Calculating Skill Values

Each skill has a value that is determined by a relevant characteristic (strength, dexterity, constitution, intelligence, wisdom or charisma) plus a listed modifier. To determine the skill value, you take the relevant stat and add the skill modifier listed. For example, horsemanship is a dexterity based skill with a +3 modifier.

*Example:* Khorsus the fighter is dexterity 15. The skill provides a +3 modifier. Thus, his horsemanship would be a base of 18.

At each level you gain one improvement point that can be used to enhance any one skill you already have.

*Example:* At level 2 Khorsus decided he wants to be even better at horsemanship than he already is, so he may add his improvement point and he will now be a master horse warrior with horsemanship 19.



### 4.1 Making a Skill Check

Characters can perform a number of stunts and attempt a variety of tasks with their skills. As a rule, it is the job of the GM to arbitrate difficult tasks with the skills in question (see chart 4.2.1 below).

The basic level of difficulty (easy) requires one roll on a D20, which is compared to the skill level in question. *If the roll is equal to or under*, then the character succeeds at the intended task with the skill. If the roll is over, then he fails. The length of time that it takes to succeed at a task depends upon the nature of the skill being used. As a rule of thumb, most skills require a turn, or approximately 1 minute to complete. Some skills are persistent (such as riding a horse) and the skill check may not be necessary until a specific event calls for one (such as the horse slipping on a narrow mountain path). Finally, skills involving extensive research (such as using history to read through an ancient tome and determine if it is a correct rendering of events) could take hours or even days. GMs should keep an eye on making sure skill lengths are accurately represented.

## 4.2 Difficulty Class

GMs should consider the difficulty of any skill task before the player makes a skill check. There are two methods to handling skill modifiers. The first is to provide a bonus or penalty to the skill and the second is to provide a bonus or penalty to the die roll. The difficulty chart assumes you are penalizing the skill (by adding bonuses and subtracting penalties from the skill value) so if you apply the difficulty to the die roll then you would add negatives and subtract positives. You might want to try either method and see which suits you better.

*Example:* Khorsus has stumbled across a mysterious animal carcass he wants to identify. He has Animal Lore at 10, and makes a D20 roll. The GM has ruled the skill has a difficulty -2 (difficult). Khorsus can either modify the skill (-2 being a bad number, he subtracts it for a modified skill of 8) or he can modify his die roll, which would mean he reverses the number, so a -2 actually adds 2 to the die roll.

## 4.3 Skill Difficulty Modifier Option

Under this method, the GM tells the player if he adds or subtracts a certain number by difficulty from the skill. The player then rolls the dice to see if he succeeds. GMs who want to determine success or failure in secret (such as when the player might not be aware he is being tasked for some reason) can opt to let the player roll and apply penalties in secret, asking for the degree of success by which the player made his roll.

*Example:* Khorsus is attempting a riding maneuver. Khorsus rolled a 13 on a D20 against his horsemanship, and the GM knew the difficulty was a -5 penalty, and then Khorsus's skill level of 19 was actually reduced to 14. So he would have succeeded on a 13, which was 6 points better than he needed (and therefore 1 more than the -5 penalty).

Suggested modifiers by difficulty are provided on the following chart:

**Table 4.2.1 Difficulty Levels**

Difficulty Modifier	Ease of Task
-10	impossible
-8	crazy
-5	extremely hard
-4	hard
-3	very difficult
-2	difficult
-1	mildly difficult
0	average
+1	easy
+2	very easy
+3	simple
+4	trivial
+5	usually automatic

## 4.4 Automatic Success

If a skill level after modifiers is over 20, the GM should usually rule that the success is automatic (although he may want a roll to determine degree of success; see 4.5).

### 4.4.1 Optional: Critical Success and Failure

As an optional rule, any roll of a natural 20 on the die is an automatic failure, and leads to potentially disastrous consequences at the GM's discretion. Any roll of a natural 1 on the die roll indicates a critical success, and a special additional event that benefits the character as a result of his skill check should happen.



#### 4.5 Degree of Success

Sometimes it can be important to determine just how well a character succeeded at a given task. This can affect contested skills (see below in 4.7) and it can also reflect degrees of success for tasks in which it is not as simple as success or failure.

To determine degree of success or failure, subtract the skill value (after any modifiers) from the die roll result. The net difference is the degree of success. Suggested ranges are as follows:

Difference Of Roll from Skill	Suggested Degree of Success
-11 or greater	you've made a huge mistake...
-10 to -8	that probably hurt
-7 to -5	catastrophic failure
-4 to -3	total failure
-2 to -1	close call failure
0	barely succeeded
+1 to +2	moderate success
+3 to +4	decent
+5 to +7	impressive
+8 to +10	brilliant!
+11 or greater	GM should check your dice for odd weights

*Example:* Khorsus is engaged in a series of contests involving feats of strength. The GM rules he needs to make an Endurance test to see how well he fares in the contests over the course of an hour. His Endurance skill is 12, and he rolls a 7 on a D20. 12 minus 7 is 5 under (+5 on the chart) so he has an impressive success...the GM rules that he won the contests. Had he rolled an 18 instead, then it would have been very bad; 12 minus 18 is -6, a catastrophic failure! The GM could have ruled he fell on his face in the log running contest and was knocked out cold...

#### 4.6 Cooperative Skills

Sometimes characters may wish to assist one another at a task with which they are both proficient. Each character may attempt a skill roll, and the character providing assistance will add a +2 bonus to success to the lead character's skill value as long as he makes an average success on his own skill.

#### 4.7 Contested Skills

Sometimes characters might find themselves in opposition to one another. When this happens, each character may attempt a skill check. The degree of success becomes important here: the character who succeeds by a greater margin wins the contest of skills.

*Example:* Durgin the dwarf is going to drink Khorsus under the table, so they each make a skill check against their Endurance skill. Khorsus has a 12, but the dwarf has an Endurance skill of 18 (being a dwarf and all). Khorsus rolls a 3 (a 9 point margin of success), and Durgin rolls a 7 (an 11 point margin of success). After a short while, Khorsus is slumped on the ground, incoherent and drunk, while Durgin is ready for a fifth round of dwarven whiskey.

#### 4.8 Ad Hoc Skills and Monsters

Oftentimes PCs might find themselves trying to interact with a monstrous opponent. When the opponent does not have a standard ability or skill set, the GM can either assign an appropriate score on the spot, or use the following formula:

*Physical Skills:* Assume 8+Hit Dice for the score. Reduce by ½ if the skill is Dexterity-based and the creature has no fine manipulation ability and likewise for Strength-based skills if the creature has high hit dice but is described as otherwise weak, physically.

*Intelligence/Mental Skills:* for monsters of average or lower intelligence, use a base score of 8+1/2 hit dice for the contested skill. For monsters of “very or high” intelligence, use 10+1/2 level. For monsters of “exceptional or genius” intelligence use 12+1/2 level for the score.

*Default:* Unless otherwise noted, or unless there is a reason to think otherwise, the GM can always default to a base score of 10 for any contested skill check with monsters.

#### **4.8.1 Optional: Monsters with Skills by Role**

A GM who needs a set of skills for monsters can use the above guidelines as needed, but if you would like a more definitive methodology, the following is suggested: skill sets are provided for monsters by role, including the clever monster, the smart monster, the fast monster and the brutish monster. Clever and smart monsters advance in skills at the same rate as magic-users for purposes of this system, while fast monsters advance like thieves and brutish monsters advance like fighters. It is left to the discretion of the GM to assign such roles to the monsters of OSRIC as needed.

#### **4.9 Untrained Skills**

Most skills can be performed untrained if pressed. To determine an untrained skill value, take the base trained value of the skill (see table 5.2) and subtract 10. This is the untrained value for that character. If the value is 0, then that character cannot attempt the skill untrained. *Characters can only attempt untrained skills that belong to their available skill categories (table 2.4.1).*

##### **4.9.1 Untrained Observational Skills**

Optionally, GMs could allow all characters to have untrained observational skills (alertness, listening, and search) at base values equal to the trained value

minus 5. These are adventurers, after all, and they should have some reasonable chance of noticing unusual and dangerous events...

#### **5.0 The Skill List**

The following skill chart provides a summary of skills available in the game. This skill chart attempts to find a balanced medium between a good diversity of skills and skills which seem all-encompassing. For example, the ability to survive in the wilds should reasonably include the ability to start a fire with a couple sticks and some spare time, but not necessarily the ability to hunt big game or identify wild animals.

You can add new skills to the list. Simply determine the key properties of the skill in question (what it lets the character do), its cost in slots, its base characteristic, any base modifiers, untrained value, training cost and time to learn.

##### **5.1 Skill Build Example:**

Khorsus is a fighter, and at level one he takes his weapon proficiency slots and applies them to his preferred weapon skills (as a fighter he gets 4 slots at first level, so he chooses scimitar, long bow, and dagger, then scimitar for his fighter specialty.)

Next, Khorsus receives four starting skill slots at first level. He has an intelligence of 10, so he is eligible for two bonus skill slots (the GM has ruled that bonus skill slots are allowed, but languages must now be purchased with skill slots).

Khorsus is human so gets the common tongue for free. He picks orcish as a second language, using up one slot. He then looks at the fighter skill selection and chooses the following: endurance and bowyer/Fletcher. Khorsus has two remaining slots left, and decides to pick the general skills horsemanship and animal lore. He then grabs wilderness lore to fill out his roster. He calculates his skill values as follows:

*Endurance 12 (equal to Con)*

*Horsemanship 18 (equal to Dex plus 3)*

*Bowyer/Fletcher 13 (equal to Dex minus 2)*

*Animal Lore 10 (equal to Int)*

*Wilderness Lore 11 (based on Wis)*

**Khorsus the horse nomad is now ready to go!**

## Khorsus, Horse Warrior

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Human male, age 18

Fighter level 1

Neutral good

**ST** 16 (+1 to damage)(exp bonus)

**DX** 15 (-1 to AC)

**CN** 12

**IN** 10 (2 bonus slots)

**WS** 11

**CH** 8 (-5 loyalty modifier)

**Weapon Proficiencies:** scimitar, long bow, dagger

**Specialization:** scimitar

**Hit Points:** 7

**AC:** 6 (leather, small shield)

**THACO:** 20 (19 w/scimitar)

**Attack:** scimitar (1D8+2 damage, 3/2 att/rnd)

**Languages:** common, orcish

**Trained Skills:** Endurance 12  
Horsemanship 18  
Bowyer/fletcher 13  
Animal lore 10  
Wilderness lore 11

**Untrained Observational Skills:**

Alertness 5  
Listening 6  
Search 5



**Table 5.2 Skill Chart**

<b>General Skills</b>		
<b>Professional Skills:</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Value</b>
Agriculture	½	Wis+2
Animal Husbandry/Handling	½	Wis
Blacksmithing*	1	Str
Brewing	½	Int-2
Carpentry	½	Str
Cobbling	½	Dex
Cooking	½	Int
Horsemanship	1	Dex+3
Jeweler	1	(Dex+Int/2)-1
Mining	½	Wis+Str/2
Pottery	½	Dex
Riding, Unusual	1	Dex
Seamanship	1	Dex+1
Seamstress/Tailor	½	Dex-1
Stonemasonry	½	Str-2
Weaving	½	(Int+Dex/2)-1
<b>Arts/Performance Skills:</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Value</b>
Calligraphy/Scribner	½	Dex-3
Dancing	½	Dex
Musical Instrument *	½	Dex-1
Painting	½	Dex-2
Sculpting	½	Dex-2
Singing	1	Cha
<b>Social Skills:</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Value</b>
Etiquette	½	Cha
Heraldic Lore	1	Int
Languages*	1	Int
<b>Athletic Skills:</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Value</b>
Juggling	1	Dex-2
Jumping	1	Str
Mountaineering	1	Str+Dex/2
Running	½	Con
Swimming	1	Con+Str/2
<b>Observational Skills:</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Value</b>
Alertness	1	Int+Wis/2
Listening	1	Wis (special)
Search	1	Int
<b>Religious Skills</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Value</b>
Ancient History	1	Int-1
Ancient Languages *	2	Int-1
Astronomy/Astrology	1	Int
Healing	1	Wis-2
Herbalism	1	Int-2
History	1	Int
Navigation	1	Int-2
Theology	1	Wis
Spell Lore	2	Int-2

<b>Rogue Skills</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Value</b>
Appraisal	1	Int
Blind-Fighting	2	CM
Disguise	1	Cha-2
Fast Talk	1	Cha
Forgery	2	Dex-2
Gambling	1	Cha
Read Lips	1	Int-2
Set Traps	1	Dex-2
Streetwise	1	Cha
Tightrope Walking	1	Dex-2
Tumbling	1	Dex
Ventriloquism	2	Int-2

<b>Warrior Skills</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Value</b>
Animal Lore	1	Int
Blind-Fighting*	2	CM
Bowyer/Fletcher	1	Dex-1
Charioteering	1	Dex+2
Dual Weapon Fighting*	2	CM
Endurance	1	Con
Hunting	1	Wis-1
Navigation	1	Int-2
Shield & Sword*	2	CM
Trick Shot*	2	CM
Two-Handed Combat*	2	CM
Unarmed Combat*	2	CM
Wilderness Lore*	1	Wis

<b>Arcane Skills</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Value</b>
Ancient History	1	Int-1
Ancient Languages	2	Int-1
Arcana*	1	Int
Astronomy/Astrology	1	Int-1
Engineering	2	Int-3
Herbalism	1	Int-2
History	1	Int
Navigation	1	Int-2
Occult	1	Int
Philosophy	1	Int
Theology	1	Wis
Spell Lore	1	Int-2

**CM** = combat maneuvers; these do not have skill values, providing modifiers to combat rolls instead.

\* = These skills grant more benefits when additional skill slots or improvement points are allotted to them

½ = these skills cost half a skill slot; if you have half a point left over and nothing to spend it on, then you may convert ½ of a skill slot in to 1 improvement point.

### 5.3 Enhancing Skills

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Some skills grant additional benefits when more than one skill slot (not improvement points) is applied to them. For example, the languages skill grants one language per slot spent on the skill. The blacksmithing skill grants a general familiarity with smithing, but a second skill slot adds weapon smithing, and a third slot adds armor smithing. Arcana grants basic knowledge or arcane lore for one skill slot, but additional skill slots allow the character to gain specific information not normally available.

### 6.0 Skill Descriptions

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The following skill descriptions provide a brief summary of the use and purpose of each skill:

#### Agriculture

Agriculture reflects knowledge of horticulture, farming, and seasonal effects on crops, planting, harvesting and other chores normal to farm work.

#### Alertness

Alertness is a useful skill for adventurers. It reflects active and situational awareness. Characters with alertness may notice something unusual or odd out of the corner of their eye seconds before an ambush, or may spot the loose stone slab that triggers a trap as their ally steps on it. Alertness cannot detect a thief hidden in the shadows who has made a successful hide roll without beating an extremely hard success (-5 penalty) unless the lighting is not in the hidden thief's favor, and the alert character must actively state he is looking for the thief in question.

Using the optional rule (4.5.1) all characters have a base alertness score of  $(Int+Wis/2)-5$ ; adding a slot to the skill removes the -5 penalty.

#### Ancient History

Ancient history reflects knowledge of the distant past; exactly how ancient the lore is depends upon the GM's chosen setting; a world in which events 500 years ago seem half mythical would consider such knowledge ancient, while another realm in which the last thousand years of recorded history are common knowledge would consider ancient

history much more venerable. At the GM's option characters may have to declare a chief specialization in this skill, being a particular era or region in which the character is well versed; every additional improvement point spent adds one additional area of specialization. Attempts to learn the ancient lore of a region outside of the area of specialization are typically at -2 penalties to success or worse.

#### Ancient Languages

This skill serves two purposes. When first chosen the character gains one new ancient language, and every additional skill slot spent adds an additional ancient language. Additionally, the character is experienced in interpreting ancient script, and may attempt to do so (in a manner similar to a thief's read languages) except he is limited to actual, real languages; codes, ciphers, runes, cryptic writing or completely dead and unknown languages remain the in the domain of the thief.

#### Animal Husbandry/Handling

This skill grants a familiarity with the handling, care, training, driving and veterinary management of animals.

#### Animal Lore

This skill involves the lore and knowledge of animal habits, behavior, tracks, scat, dens, and natural habitats. This skill deals specifically with natural animals, but can help to identify when a creature is mythical or monstrous, as well. Monsters which exist as natural creatures in the local ecology can be identified and studied with this skill.

#### Appraisal

This skill allows for the analysis and evaluation of the worth of valuables, be they works of art, coin or magical items. The degree of success or failure should be used by the GM to determine how accurate the appraisal ends up being.

#### Arcana

Arcana reflects the functional occult lore of the character, his ability to identify a type of spell being cast, the actual nature of the spell, and his ability to

discern old enchantments or enchanted items and beings from mundane entities.

The effective spell level of any enchantment should serve as a penalty to chance of success when using this skill (for example, a mage trapped in hallucinatory terrain would require a -4 penalty on any arcane check to discern he was in fact trapped in some sort of illusion.)

Arcana can be used to determine if an object is magical without casting the detect magic spell at the GM's permission, although any attempt to sense a magic item's inherent enchanted nature should be at a -5 penalty to success.

Each additional slot allotted to arcana allows the character to add one specialization to his focus (illusions, summoning, necromancy, and so forth). Each specialization grants a +2 bonus when identifying arcane effects related to the indicated type of magic.

### **Astronomy/Astrology**

This skill encompasses the study of the stars and their movements, and the predictive abilities one gains from studying them for purposes of navigation and time keeping. A character with this skill can tell when the solstice or equinox occur, predict lunar stages, eclipses, and other phenomena. The astrological component allows them to make predictions or attempt to divine the fortune or astrological data on other characters, although success may depend either on chance, whim, or degree of success on the die roll at the GM's decree.

A character who is trained in navigation as well as this skill should receive a +2 synergy bonus to both skills when using them in conjunction to navigate by the stars.

### **Blacksmithing**

Blacksmithing is the working of metals into useful items. The first slot spent on this skill grants the character proficiency with basic smelting and handling techniques and an ability to forge and hammer out simple useful items such as horseshoes, hammers, nails and so forth.

Additional slots grant two specializations (each costing one slot): armor smithing and weapon

smithing. A character who gains one or both of these specializations can craft finely made steel weapons and armor.

The cost of materials is usually equal to 40+2D10% of the base purchase cost of the item to be forged. The construction of the item in question will take 4D8 hours for single-piece items, but suits of armor will take 1D4 days per point of armor class bonus granted (1D12 days per point for ring and chain mail!). These are guidelines only, and should be modified according to the circumstances of the game, number of assistants in the task, and any other circumstantial modifiers.

### **Blind-Fighting**

This combat maneuver reduces the penalty to fighting in darkness. The character has trained and practiced techniques of fighting in the dark that help his other senses to determine where his foe is to both strike and parry more effectively. As such, a character with this combat maneuver receives only a -2 penalty to hit and armor class when fighting in total darkness or blinded. For a second skill slot, the character reduces the penalties to -1.

### **Bowyer/Fletcher**

This skill allows the character to craft his own bows and arrows from raw materials gathered in the woods. This skill, coupled with blacksmithing, allows the character to also produce crossbows (both skills are required; use the better skill total for the crafting of crossbows). See the advice under the blacksmithing skill for suggestions on calculating material cost and time to produce.

### **Brewing**

This skill deals with the art of brewing alcohols of various types and kinds. A character may opt to choose a specialization when picking this skill; he gains a +2 bonus to the skill when brewing his preferred alcoholic beverage. This can be a time-consuming process, one which is best managed by starting the stills up before leaving for a dungeon delve, and checking back in when returning from a good haul...

All dwarves receive a +2 bonus to the brewing skill.

### **Calligraphy/Scribner**

Calligraphy and scribner reflect skills of transcription and penmanship. Vital to a seneschal or nobleman, these skills can dramatically improve the appearance and worth of any written words or notes, and a letter, book or code penned by a professional is both more legible and likely to be taken more seriously. A character trained as a scribner may be able to discern some hidden truths about the nature of another's handwriting or to learn something or the technique and thusly where the note originates from.

### **Carpentry**

The skill of carpentry is ages-old and a useful talent, though perhaps one adventurers will most likely call upon when barricading a door from marauding zombies or orcs. Carpenters can build buildings and other structures, as well as determine the stability or worth of existing wooden constructions. An especially cheap high level character who seeks to build a villa or other domicile on the spoils of his delves might enjoy the use of this skill to shave off some construction costs.

### **Charioteering**

Mastery of chariots is a difficult task. Not nearly as simple as simply driving a wagon on, the skill of charioteering encompasses combat maneuvers, directing the horses and other skills necessary to survive this art. It may not be a skill available in the region of the adventurer's delves, depending upon the time and place which the setting is based on.

Charioteering can be used very simply through skill contests to resolve races or other activities, but in combat it should require a skill check every round to insure that the chariot is directed in the manner desired by the driver. A catastrophic failure (rolling a 1) inevitably lead to the device flipping over, a wheel snapping, or a horse collapsing, followed by appropriate saving throws and damage rolls.

### **Cobbling**

The art of shoemaking is an oft overlooked skill for adventurers, and for good reason; it is not

something an adventurous sole is likely to take up (pun intended). That said, if you have a player who is audacious enough to choose this professional skill for his character, I suggest rewarding him by having the party's boots stolen by gremlins in the night, allowing him the opportunity to shine by concocting new shoes for everyone, just in time for the passage through the lava chambers of doom.

### **Cooking**

Talent in cooking is often underrated in an adventuring crew, who grow accustomed to trail rations and crude stews in backwater taverns. A Professional cook can impress and win over the hearts and minds of those around him if he is clever enough! Halflings are especially notorious for their culinary talents, and gain a +2 racial bonus to this skill.

### **Dancing**

Proficiency in dance can be useful to a courtier or other nobleman seeking to impress of woo, and adventurers can sometimes find it useful; bards are especially prone to an affinity for this skill, and if such a class is represented in your game then you might consider allowing this skill (as well as Musical Instrument) as freebies.

### **Disguise**

Disguise is a vital skill to rogues of all sorts. Thieves can use it when begging to appear more unpleasant and leprous in the hopes of gaining more coin, heroes can use it to disguise themselves convincingly as guards in the necromancer's palace, and heck one can even use it to appear to be a shambling zombie while moving through an infested graveyard of the undead without being noticed.

If a character is using a spell to change their appearance, they can also use disguise to enhance the illusion.

### **Dual Weapon Fighting**

Warriors who take on dual weapon fighting may now do so with fewer penalties. Each time a skill slot is spent on this talent, the warrior may reduce his dual-wielding penalties by 1 for each weapon; thus,

a character who normally suffers a -2/-4 penalty to strike with two weapons (the default penalty) would have -1/-3 with one skill slot, and 0/-2 with two skill slots for Dual-Weapon Specialization. A third slot could reduce the penalty to 0/-1, and a fourth and final slot would reduce it to 0/0 (remember, you cannot get a bonus with dual-wielding modifiers).

### **Endurance**

With this skill a character can struggle along for longer periods of duress, suffer through hunger or thirst, and even have better odds of surviving disease and poison. Whenever a character with this skill is subject to one of the above conditions, he may make an Endurance test to see if he fares better than others. If he succeeds at the test, then the character can gain one of the following perks:

- Divide base movement by 4 (instead of 5) for overland movement rate
- Shift your maximum movement rate by encumbrance “down” one bar on the Encumbrance chart (page 117 of OSRIC)
- Gain a +2 bonus to a saving throw vs. disease or poison

Other benefits may apply at the GM’s discretion.

### **Engineering**

Engineering is the familiarity with building, construction, and mechanical design as set by the technological level of your campaign. Engineers are good at building bridges, buildings, castles, siege equipment and dungeons as well as ascertaining when such structures are weak or dangerous.

An engineer in a dungeon can use his technique to learn much about how deep beneath the earth he is, how safe (or not) the tunnels and chambers of the dungeon are, and he can sometimes (with proper time to study) pick up oddities such as steady slopes or unusual details that might suggest traps.

GMs who prefer a more negotiable approach to such matters should allow a character with engineering the “benefit of the doubt” when manually searching architecture for unusual vagaries rather than rolling, while details that would be unfamiliar to the untrained eye would simply not be noticed by the unskilled.

### **Etiquette**

Etiquette is the skill of proper manners, and is commonly found with nobility and those who support them. Any character of noble birth should likely have this skill, and will find it useful in situations where one does not want to offend their superiors. In a dungeon delving environment it might help to determine proper manners around, say, such creatures as the goblin king or a medusa.

### **Fast Talk**

Fast talk is the art of bluffing or otherwise convincing another that you are truthful when in fact you’re blowing hot air up their chain skirt. It can be useful when convincing city guards you did not, in fact, just descend from the second story window of the mayor’s house, or when trying to convince your kobold captors that they had better let you go or you’ll incinerate them all with your magic. This is usually a contested skill against a foe’s wisdom.

### **Gambling**

Gambling is a luck-based talent with a modest amount of skill behind it, and this skill tries to capitalize on that. Gambling is most often a contested skill when dealing with card games or other venues in which the participants compete against one another, but luck is more likely to factor into games of chance (such as dice) unless the gambler has stacked the odds in his favor (such as loaded dice). In such cases the skill is relevant for casting the throw as desired while making it look innocent enough.

### **Healing**

Healing is a useful way of getting your allies up and fighting again, but it tends to involve skills such as chirurgery, bleeding, and careful study of the body’s humors. As such, healing is not always useful, and in matters of disease, sickness, and poison the GM should rule any natural failure (a 20 on the skill check) to require a second healing check; a normal failure on the second check means that the patient has been made worse (usually 1D3 hit points of

additional damage, or a progression of the disease, illness or poison by 1D6 hours).

If, however, the healer is attempting to set broken bones, sew up a wound or otherwise staunch bleeding then it can heal 1D3 hit points instead. A wounded individual who is below 0 hit points and is dying and unconscious can have his recovery time reduced by one half with a successful healing check.

At the GM's option, healing magic can automatically be maximized with a successful healing check, using the level of the spell as a penalty modifier.

### **Heraldic Lore**

In medieval times this is a valuable skill, allowing you to identify friend from foe and who you are dealing with by the imagery and symbols emblazoned on the tabards, shields and breastplates of enemies and allies. Characters should gain a +2 bonus to chances when in their homeland, and may suffer a -2 or greater penalty when they are far, far from home. They may have no hope of using the skill when in foreign kingdoms unknown to them, until they have had time to study up on the local heraldry, usually a process requiring a library, armory of the land or other location and 1D6 days of effort (or more).

### **Herbalism**

Herbalism is the art of seeking and gathering herbs and plants to grind with mortar and pestle in to salves, powders and potions. Homeopathic medicine is quite useful in a fantasy realm where such plants can have real curative qualities, and it is up to the GM as to how much liberation he wishes to allow his players with this skill. It is suggested that 1D6 hours be spend per day searching for ingredients equivalent to one use of a curative or salve, and that the chance of success at making a specific desired potion be given a penalty equal to the equivalent spell level of the desired potion.

Elves are especially in tune with their environment and receive a +2 racial bonus to herbalism.

### **History**

History is a valued subject among scholars and wizards, and often required by the nobility. Usually the historian is most familiar with his own realm, and its interpretation of history, but some scholars become very talented at distinguishing the fact from fiction in historical texts.

A character can specialize in ancient history, regional history, or modern history. If the character chooses a specialization, he will gain a +2 bonus with that specialization, but a -2 penalty to the others. Each improvement point spent on history can be used to "buy off" one of the penalties, until all three branches of history are equally familiar to the historian (though he still only gets one +2 bonus to his chief specialization). Improvement points spent this way do not add to the skill, merely eliminating one of the penalties.

*Example:* Ricardo is a historian of ancient affairs, with an Intelligence of 17. He chooses ancient history as his specialization, granting him 19 with that branch of study, but only 15 with modern and regional history. When he reaches level 2 he uses an improvement point to improve his understanding of modern history, raising it from 15 to 17.

### **Horsemanship**

Skill in riding horses is vital in an era when animals and muscle power are the main force behind locomotion. Horsemanship specifically deals with equestrian talents, and the riding, unusual skill deals with everything else.

A rider with this skill can perform tricks and maneuvers in combat at a GM's discretion. Some suggestions include:

- Grant your horse a +4 bonus to AC for maneuverability
- Jump over an obstacle
- Charge a foe on horseback for a +1 to hit and +2 damage bonus
- Use your horse's hooves for a rearing, trampling or kicking attack
- Keep your horse under control when it is fearful

### **Hunting**

Hunting is a useful survival skill that applies to many environments. A hunter can make a check on this skill once per day to see if he tracks and finds game; at the GM's discretion it can be used to capture the game as well, if you do not wish to roll for the results in combat with the prey.

Hunting is not the same as foraging, which is something done with wilderness lore.

### **Jeweler**

This skill covers the art of crafting, cutting and making gems and jewelry. A character with this skill can accurately study and appraise the worth, authenticity, and perhaps even the magic to be found within found gems, jewels and jewelry.

### **Juggling**

Juggling is mostly a talent for entertainment, but a character who is also proficient with daggers and knives can gain a +1 bonus to surprise and a +2 to chances to hit should they incorporate an attack in to their act (such as for assassination!) on a successful skill check.

### **Jumping**

Getting from here to there can be tough when there's a ten foot pit in between. Jumping is the art of overcoming such obstacles.

A jumping check will determine the following: if you make a straight jump across you'll go a base of 1 foot, plus: for every point better than the skill you roll under, the character can jump 1 foot forward.

If you can make a running jump, and you succeed, you'll go 5 feet plus 1 foot for every point better than your skill value you roll under.

If you are making a standing jump up, then you jump a base distance up of 1 foot plus for every 3 points under his skill on the roll you can jump straight up one extra foot.

Thus, a character with Jumping 13 can roll and get a 7; he could do a running jump across a pit (with clearance) of up to 11 feet, or he could do a straight jump across (no running start) of 7 feet, or he could do a standing jump straight up of 3 feet.

All totals should be halved if the character is moderately encumbered, or quartered if heavily encumbered.

### **Languages**

The languages skill is a bucket; each point spent on languages grants the character proficiency in a new language. A character may learn to speak a language (but not read and write it) for a half skill point. A character can later learn to speak and read the language for another half point, but must take the time to study and receive tutoring (usually 2D6 weeks or GM's discretion).

Characters usually speak their native language and all languages they start with at first level fluently as natives. Later languages are spoken with an accent, unless the character actively tries to improve their talent in the language to native quality, which usually requires months or years of effort.

### **Listening**

Having a good ear for subtle noises is a sure way to stay alive in a dark, damp dungeon. Even if the character has poor sight, his hearing can often make up for it.

Unlike other skills, Listening is made as a percentile skill check, and works like "Hear Noise." Thieves who pick this skill gain an immediate synergy bonus with their class trait, adding their Listening skill bonus to their Hear Noise base chance of success.

GMs who don't like the idea of letting other character types buy this skill can forbid it, leaving keen hearing in the domain of thieves alone.

### **Mining**

Mining is a useful skill under the right context. It allows the GM to introduce rare and valuable metals that the characters will have to work for, and can be an incentive for them to work hard to clear out a dungeon, especially if they discover an incredibly lucrative vein of gold or a similar metal in the lower levels, unexploited by the demihumans within.

Dwarves get a +2 racial bonus with the mining skill.

### **Mountaineering**

This skill is a survival talent for getting up high cliffs, across steep mountains, and living to tell the tale. A variety of equipment is available to assist mountaineers, and use of such (from pitons and crampons to plain old rope) will grant a +2 bonus to the use of this skill.

When a skill check fails (and if will) if the character is taking precautions (tying themselves off and such) and they miss by no more than 3 of their base skill, then they may have lost their grip but managed to recover, or are hanging by a rope somewhere in need of assistance. If they fail by more than three....it is suggested that the GM then roll percentiles to see what percentage of distance up the length of the climb they made it when they lost their grip.

### **Musical Instrument**

Skill in musical instruments is a handy talent. A character can take this skill multiple times, and each time he must pick a new instrument to apply the skill to. Improvement points apply to only one specific skill at a time; a flutist could improve his flute skill, but not his drum skill, for example.

Especially moving music should allow a commensurate bonus reaction modifier; usually a 1 point bonus for every 3 points below skill level the check succeeds by.

### **Navigation**

The art of navigation, be it by land or sea, is a useful to avoid being lost. With the navigation skill a character can do, among other things, the following:

- Determine the cardinal directions correctly
- Plot an accurate course by the stars
- Recognize key landmarks in relationship to a map or memory
- Identify when those landmarks have been displaced, by sorcery or other means
- Read unusual maps

### **Occult**

The occult skill is useful for recognizing sorcerous signs, symbols and entities. When someone wishes to recognize signs of a spell, identify remnants of the material used to cast such, or correctly recognize a

tome of magical lore, this skill can be used. Occult can be used to identify the true nature of magical beings, or to sense the presence of magical beings nearby (if not specifically identify them) by noticing features in the landscape characteristic of their presence (such as suddenly curdling milk, ducks flying backwards, or the wind whispering in an ancient tongue.)

### **Painting**

The art of painting is one of producing beautiful images with paint, though the skill could also apply other mediums such as sand, stone, ink or charcoal. A character that makes a successful check by more than half his skill total can produce almost lifelike works, though the regional styles in which he or she is trained may not accommodate such realism in portraiture.

### **Philosophy**

This skill encompasses knowledge of philosophical discourse; there are plenty of orators who are sufficiently talented at debate but entirely lacking in mental prowess, and vice versa. Characters that pick this skill may use it to comprehend complex philosophical questions or riddles, and they may also engage in debates through oratory skill. A character may opt to specialize in one or the other; a character that is specialized in the Study of Philosophy gains a +2 bonus to skill checks when pondering deep questions, but suffers a -2 penalty to his oratory skills. Conversely, a character might be a great sophist, gaining a +2 bonus to his Oratory talents, but in turn suffering a -2 penalty to his Study of Philosophy focus. One improvement point can buy off the penalty, if desired.

### **Pottery**

This particular craft skill allows for the manufacture of clay fired goods, usually for fairly plebian tasks, though one could imagine an entrepreneurial adventurer manufacturing clay vessels in which to hold potions, brews, and black powder.

### Riding, Unusual

When the thing you're sitting on is alive and moving but not a horse, this is the skill you need. Unusual Riding is, in fact, a multiplicity of skills, and each skill taken should pertain to a specific beast or class of such. A few examples include:

- Giant Lizards/Dinosaurs
- Elephants
- Water Buffalo
- Griffons

### Running

The character is very, very good at running for short but determined sprints. When running, you may make a skill check to improve your distance and timing; on a success, you may triple, rather than double your running speed, but you must make a skill check each round to keep it up.

Characters running gain penalties to their skill check for encumbrance, or being fatigued, as follows:

Condition/Encumbrance	Running Penalty
Less than 20 lbs. carried	none
20-35 lbs.	-1
36-70 lbs.	-2
71-105 lbs.	-4
106-150 lbs. or more	-6
Fatigued	-5
Lame leg	-10

### Sculpting

Another craft skill, one which synergizes with pottery to allow for complicated statues and designs, sculpting is a fine art, and can be useful in down times when the adventurer has a chance to relax and pour his soul in to depicting images in clay, stone or another medium of his latest travails and delves. This skill might come in handy in actual adventuring only rarely, though a creative adventurer might think of ways.

### Seamanship

The skill of manning a boat, be it a dingy or a galleon is surprisingly useful for adventurers, especially when they find themselves stranded at

sea after the crew mysteriously disappears on the "Cursed Maiden," or perhaps they need to purchase a vessel of their own to investigate a lost island that no sailors dare travel near, for fear that the indigenous cults of lizard men will swarm the vessel and haul everyone off to be sacrificed to their giant ape god...trust me, seamanship can be useful.

There are a bewildering number of nautical terms that one may not be familiar with in regards to this skill; if you have one or more players who are deeply affected by sailing upon the sea, then you should encourage them to be descriptive, or seek out a resource that will aid you in the same.

### Seamstress/Tailor

This useful skill can help to mend damaged garments, and to sew new ones. It can take several hours to properly mend or produce a satisfactory garb, but there are times when such a talent could be handy. A tailor can use this skill to identify magical cloth and garments made there from, though not necessarily the exact properties of such.

### Search

The search skill is not the same as alertness, which is a more primal sense of awareness. Search is what you do when you are combing a room for hidden clues, or perusing a library for a missing book. It is useful in finding obscure data or minutiae, and is also handy when you are trying to spot that one errant tile in a sea of colorful ceramic bits in a vast chamber in which a secret door might be hidden.

Elves are naturally observant about minutiae, and gain a +2 racial bonus to this skill. In addition, as an optional rule GMs may allow elves or any other race that has an innate chance of detecting secret doors to make a search role should the occasion rise in place of the usual D6 roll.

### Set Traps

This skill allows a character to discreetly place and set traps such as snares, nets, pits, claw traps and so forth. The exact nature of the trap will determine the time it takes; digging a pit will be considerably more work than placing a claw trap, for example. The degree of success by which the skill check is

made determines the difficulty penalty of the intended target's ability to spot the trap (via an alertness check).

### **Shield & Sword**

This skill encompasses the art of fighting in the traditional form, with a sword (or other weapon) in your main hand and a shield in your off-hand. The skill imparts the following benefits, depending upon how many slots you spend on it; he must choose from one of the following benefits each time he spends a slot on this skill:

*Improved Shield Use:* the warrior gains an additional +1 bonus to AC when fighting in this style; he may pick this option twice (for a total +2 bonus)

*Arrow Deflection:* the warrior gains a 15% chance of deflecting arrow attacks that he is aware of (not surprised by) with medium shields; 25% chance with large shields, and 5% chance with small shields or bucklers; he may pick this option a second time, increasing the bonuses above by 10% each.

*Shield Bash:* the warrior may shield-bash, gaining a 1D4 bashing attack with his shield as an off-weapon (normal dual-wielding penalties apply, and can be offset with that particular skill). Shields equipped with spikes will do 1D6 bashing damage. For a second slot, the warrior can attempt a shield rush maneuver, which will do the indicated damage and knock his opponent prone.

Note that all shield rules (OSRIC, page 30) still apply regarding number of opponents that a shield is effective against; likewise, shield benefits do not apply to attacks from the rear.

### **Singing**

The talent of singing is one beloved by skalds and bards, but an adventurer might need it, too under unusual circumstances (such as when captured by a lecherous hag or a lusty nymph) to try and distract or entrance others. Successful use of the singing skill should grant a bonus to reaction modifiers if the situation is appropriate. Singing can also improve morale, and the degree of success (or failure) can be applied as a modifier to morale checks for troops in battle.

### **Spell Lore**

This is the catch-all skill of arcane and divine talent. With spell lore a wizard or cleric (or other scribe) can recognize the type, strength and nature of magical spells and effects being cast in his vicinity. This skill, coupled with Occult can be very useful when identifying the origin and nature of sorcerous effects.

The penalty for identifying a spell effect is based on the effective level of the spell; thus, a 9<sup>th</sup> level spell would have a -9 penalty to success (though admittedly watching the effect in action might speak volumes on its nature).

Spell Lore can also be used to identify certain properties of magical items, such as activation phrases, number of charges remaining and possibly a key obvious effect. No magical device that has an ability which is not potentially obvious from careful study should be identified in this manner, however (such items should be left for the appropriate spell).

### **Stonemasonry**

Where the engineer plans out a structure the stonemason builds it. This is a conventional crafting skill, but could be useful for characters with an hour or three to prepare for an unexpected siege, or as a useful skill in identifying weak points in a structure under observation.

### **Streetwise**

The skill of streetwise is one of familiarity with the city at large, and how to maneuver and get along therein. A streetwise character knows the nice areas of town (or can quickly identify them) as easily as the seedy areas, and is quick to locate specific persons or information about a given region. It is a sort of local knowledge skill, but applied to the city at large. If the character has a particular home town in which he grew up then he always has a +2 bonus to this skill when visiting that locale.

### **Swimming**

Swimming is a much more useful skill than adventurers think, and can also be the death of many a hero who forgot he was wearing plat email.

When swimming characters normally move at half their base rate unencumbered (and at half their encumbered rates as well). Characters should apply a penalty to their swimming skill check equal to the “Effect on AC” modifier (OSRIC page 30) apply to magical protection such as amulets or bracers). Thus, plate mail would incur a -7 penalty to swimming checks.

Exactly how often swimming checks need to be made is dependent on the GM’s preference. You could require one for every turn/minute of passage, or you could rule that a lightly encumbered man could swim for as many minutes as his constitution score before making a new check. Penalties for choppy water or stormy effect could also be applied, ranging from -2 for rough waters to -6 or greater for hurricane weather while swimming.

### Theology

While philosophy deals with the study of many mysteries and epistemology theology deals with the metaphysics of the gods and the afterlife. Theology also deals with the specific history of those gods and the churches and cults dedicated to them.

Theology would seem to be a must for clerics, but in fact faith requires little understanding of the underpinnings of the divine. A theologian is one who seeks hidden truths within the framework of his belief system, and in turn often learns of other truths as well. Some theologians may not have any faith of their own, preferring to approach the divine in the same clinical way that the occultists parse out the secret lore and history of the arcane world.

### Tightrope Walking

This is a handy skill for thieves, acrobats and even the legendary thief-acrobats. The skill is very difficult to accomplish if the character is at all encumbered; the penalty for light encumbrance (up to 35 lbs.) is -2, and increased to -4 for medium encumbrance (up to 70 lbs.) then -8 for heavy encumbrance (up to 105 lbs.) and -16 beyond that.

Tightrope walking can be a quick way to get out of a jam. GMs should allow for inventive players who like to fire rope-loaded arbalests across chasms across which they can walk, though commensurate

penalties should apply for loose ropes, high winds, or the distraction of angry guards shooting arrows as the escaping thief.

### Trick Shot

This particular combat skill allows for unusual skill when using missile weapons. Each slot applied to this skill grants a 1 point reduction in the penalty applied to any attempted trick shots. Trick shots are any unusual attempts by the character to hit especially small targets, perform unusual maneuvers while firing, or otherwise pull off anything an ordinary archer would be amazed by; range penalties apply, as does rate of fire effects for missile weapons.

The following list suggests some possible trick shots and their base penalties. Each penalty listed is reduced by 1 for each skill slot spent on this skill, to a maximum reduction of 0 (just like dual wielding).

Trick Shot	Base Penalty
Shooting an apple off head	-4
Hitting an eye	-8
Hitting a lever or switch	-6
Disarming a foe	-6
Shooting a running foe in the foot	-4

There are plenty of other possible variations on trick shots, though the above measurements can be used as guidelines. Remember that the above penalties assume the character is firing at a target in close range.

### Tumbling

This skill is useful for quickly darting and rolling out of the way during combat or when presented with a trap. A character who makes a successful tumbling check when faced with a saving throw in which dexterous movement might get him out of the way should receive a +2 bonus to his save. A character who tries to tumble in combat should make a skill check with a penalty of -4 to reposition him, allowing for a sudden backstab against another target perhaps, or allowing for a new opportunity of attack in battle.

OSRIC does not use opportunity attacks endemic in later games, but if a tumbling character does attempt to reposition himself by a surprise move against his foe and succeeds, the GM should grant him either a +1 to his next chance to hit or damage for having gotten the better of his foe; conversely, if he fails the check, then the foe instead has thwarted his attempts to tumble in to a better position of attack and may instead gain a bonus to attack or damage against the tumbler.

A GM could also rule that instead of a -4 penalty, that the base penalty is equal to the level or hit dice of the foe against whom the maneuver is being performed.

### **Two-Handed Combat**

This martial combat skill allows a character to become better and more effective when wielding large weapons that require two hands.

Each skill slot applied to two-handed combat grants the character one of the following benefits (choose one for each slot invested):

*Increased Damage:* You may do an additional +1 to damage rolls with two-handed weapons.

*Reach bonus:* if your foe closes on you to attack, you are not surprised, your weapon is ready and you have not made your attack this round, then you may perform your attack action before he does; this does not apply if your foe also has a two-handed weapon

*Sundering Attack:* you can try and damage your foe's armor with the force of your weapon; this targets the armor of the foe (who must be wearing armor in the first place) instead of the foe itself; the attack is at a -2 penalty to hit, but if you succeed then the foe's armor has been damaged and is reduced in effectiveness by 1D3 points (i.e. Plate hit and damaged could go from a -7 AC modifier to as little as a -4 modifier). Such damaged armor will need to be repaired as necessary (the smithing skills would be useful here).

*Stunning Blow:* you can stun an opponent by applying a -4 penalty to your chance to hit; if you succeed, you not only injure your foe but they must make a save vs. paralyzation or they are stunned for 1D3 rounds, incurring a -2 penalty to attacks and defense until they recover their wits.

If a GM does not want to allow these maneuvers in to his game without some potential penalty, then you can rule that each time the character performs one of these maneuvers he must make a constitution check (D20 equal to or lower than Con) or suffer fatigue and be unable to perform any more maneuvers until he has rested for a short period.

### **Unarmed Combat**

Unarmed combat is a useful talent. This combat skill provides different bonuses for each slot applied; pick one below for each slot invested in this skill:

*Grappling:* you can try and grapple an opponent; make your attack roll as usual; if you hit, make a contested strength check between you and your opponent. If you beat the check in the contest then you have grappled your opponent; your opponent is at a -4 penalty to his AC for the duration of the grapple; you may make one-handed or unarmed attacks against him while grappled. On his turn he may make a new strength test to break free of the grapple.

*Lethal Strikes:* normally you deal nonlethal subdual damage with an unarmed attack (this is not specifically addressed in OSRIC, but it presumed to be a default for purposes of this skill). This modifier allows you to do lethal damage with your unarmed attacks instead.

*Stronger Blows:* a normal attack is presumed to do 1D3 damage (plus strength bonuses). With this skill you can boost your unarmed blows to 1D6 damage. For a second slot you can boost it to 1D8 damage. If your character type does a larger amount of base damage for any reason, increase it by one die code instead (i.e. 1D8 base fist damage becomes 1D10).

*Stunning Blow:* this option works just like stunning blow for two-handed combat, but applies only to unarmed attacks.

### **Wilderness Lore**

A character versed in the lore of the wild is proficient at a number of useful skills, including the ability to start a fire without even flint and tinder, an innate sense of direction (not the same as what is offered by the navigation skill), the ability to forage off the land for subsistence, the ability to find shelter

from the elements or construct such, and a familiarity with basic edibles in the wild, as well as those which are poisonous.

A character can, upon spending an improvement point, instead pick a specific environment in which he is especially familiar, gaining a +2 bonus with skill checks when in that environment. Examples include the arctic, forestland, mountains, desert, jungle, and a sea. More exotic environments may also be available, depending upon the setting.

### Ventriloquism

Ventriloquism allows a character to throw his voice, essentially, and at times also to mimic another's voice in tone and aspect such that he might be mistaken for that individual. The skill is a minor one but can be crucial to a roguish sort who

needs a quick and dirty distraction. It can also be useful for entertainers who like to stick their hands up the posteriors of puppets, although such characters are unlikely to be delving in to the dark corners of the earth.

### Weaving

The skill of weaving is perhaps not one most adventurers take up, but it has its uses. Besides woven baskets and skirts one could use this skill conceivably to weave together the wicker frame of a crude sail or even the vessel itself. You might be surprised at one can come up with when this skill is available (then again you might not).

~Fin~

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Khorsus the warrior crept forward, studying the darkened halls ahead as the torch-light flickered over ancient runes etched upon the wall. "By Ares I'll be damned if I have no clue what these mean, Savor." He looked back to study the elderly wizard as he moved forward, to see what the warrior referred to.

"Ah, yes, I see..." his fingers traced the runes upon the wall. "It is good that you had an old historian along like Savor, here!" he chuckled, a mirthless noise that grated on Khorsus's nerves. "For if I am reading these runes correctly, the tomb of old Sargothan is directly ahead!"

Behind them, Piper the halfling suddenly appeared. "Well, then you boys had best let me take over here!" He pulled out a set of twine, a leveling device and a pouch full of soft powder. "The tomb's laden with traps and tricks, built by the ancient architects. Good thing you brought a professional architect with you."

Khorsus grunted. *Good thing we brought fodder, yes...*

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