

# The Wildside Gaming System

Fantasy Role-Playing Edition





# Skills

Your character's abilities depend on his or her brains. After you write down any bonus skills you get from the background table, your character starts with a number of skill points equal to his or her intelligence. Use these points to pick out starting skills (point costs for which are listed on pp. 17–28). Using up skill points *does not* affect your character's intelligence; intelligence only determines the initial number of points your character has.

There are two kinds of skills: abilities in which your character can improve over the course of a game—such as using weapons, magic, and thievery—and static skills in which your character's abilities usually don't change much, such as riding and reading. It is possible to advance in these static skills, but generally your character's abilities with them are dependent upon his or her innate talents.

Weapons and musical instruments are grouped in families of similar skills, with two costs given for each. The higher cost applies to the first member of a family taken. Any further skills taken from that family are at the lower cost, since your character is already familiar with a similar skill. For instance, your character would have to use 3 skill points to learn to fight with a longsword, but only 1 more point to subsequently learn to use a shortsword. You don't have to use up all of your character's skill points when you create him or her; skill points can be saved up, and your character will gain (very slowly) more of them with experience. (It's also possible to gain skills magically, with emotion magic, which is described on pp. 113–125.)

Thieving and static skills also have variable costs. The lower cost goes into effect if your character meets certain statistical standards. For instance, if your character has exceptional reflexes—a speed of 20 or better—he or she will have an easier time learning to use a shield. The cost for magical abilities (the most expensive skills) can be modified by your character's background or by taking variations such as witchcraft or minstrel magic.

Note that if your character's intelligence ever goes up for any reason, he or she gets 1 more skill point for each new

point of INT. Characters do not lose skills if their intelligence is somehow lowered, but they may get worse at those skills; magic and many static skills depend heavily on your character's intelligence.

The GM can veto the skills you choose for your character. Skills must be appropriate for the background and locality of a new character. Chances are that Abdul, the son of a desert prince, is not going to start the game with skill in sailing or blowgun. Sven the fishmonger likely won't know much about siege engineering, and if he does, there ought to be a plausible explanation.

*Example*—Sarena Serester is the daughter of Teal Serester, a soldier and longtime diplomat in the service of the God Emperor of Rohn. Sarena's mother is an illusionist her father met and married at his last diplomatic post before his retirement to a small country castle. Sarena has exceptional coordination (20), speed (20) and intelligence (23!), as well as very high fortitude (19). Weak areas are strength (8), sense (12) and leadership (10), so she's obviously not cut out to follow her father's diplomatic ways. Instead she takes magic—which includes scribe skill—at the reduced cost (for her wizard background) of 11 skill points. Riding costs another 3 points. From her father and his men at arms she learns to use a saber (3 points), hanger (2 points), and light crossbow (1 point). Although her parents aren't aware of it, she also learns pickpocketing (fingersmith) from the castle steward (only 3 points because of her high speed). That uses up all 23 skill points., and leaves her with a well-balanced set of skills.

*Example*—Tyllys Trundlsea comes from a seafaring family. He is an apprentice harpooner on his uncle's whaling ship, learning from his father, the master harpooner. He has excellent speed (20) and good strength (18), but most of his other statistics are just average. His intelligence is just adequate (15), and with a below-average fortitude (13), he tends to sicken on long sea voyages. After being hit in the head by a boom during a storm, he is now deaf in one ear (hearing 8). Tyllys gets harpoon skill free from his harpooner background. He takes the mariner package of skills (9 points), which gives him climbing, small boat, knife, cutlass, small club, and sailor. He also learns fingersmith (3 points, because of his speed) and he learns to throw a knife (2 points). That leaves 1 of his 15 skill points for later use.

Usually, a balance of skills is a good idea, so your character is never left entirely helpless. A primary weapon for most fights, a short weapon (such as a knife) for close or confined combat, and some sort of missile weapon are all helpful. Riding is a vital skill, to avoid being left behind when the rest of the group rides off into the sunset. Some skills may sound interesting but aren't of much practical use to a character—wine-making and brewing, for example. The most common skills are in boldface.

## HAND TO HAND WEAPONS

The 13 families of weapons on pp. 17–21 are all used in face-to-face combat with other people or creatures. How to use these weapons in hand to hand combat is described on pp. 40–51. The first weapon taken in a particular family is at the first point costs, while all subsequent weapons are at the second (lower) point cost. Characters who take the *warrior* package of skills (p. 25) can take any weapon at the lower point cost.

Listed on the table are the cost of the skill (first skill in family/additional skills in family), weight factor (see section on fatigue, p. 51), average price of a so-so quality weapon (in ounces of silver), weapon length factor (see combat, p. 41), any pluses and minuses the weapon gets in combat against other specific weapons, and a description of what it looks like and how it is used.

Weapons with 2 length classes listed function with no plus or minus in either of the listed classes.

The second number listed under *cost* is the cost for the second member of a family taken or any others taken thereafter.

Some skills are generally unavailable—such as atlatl or garrotte—but will be available somewhere. . . . Sometimes variant or similar weapons are listed with many of the weapons. A character with skill in one of these weapons will be able to use another with practice, but will not be immediately proficient with one just because he or she knows another. For instance, the badelaire and the back sword are both types of saber, and both require *saber* skill to use them, but if your character is used to using a back sword and picks up a badelaire, it's going to take him or her some time to get used to the differences in the weapon (or any other weapon whose weight, heft, and other characteristics are unfamiliar).

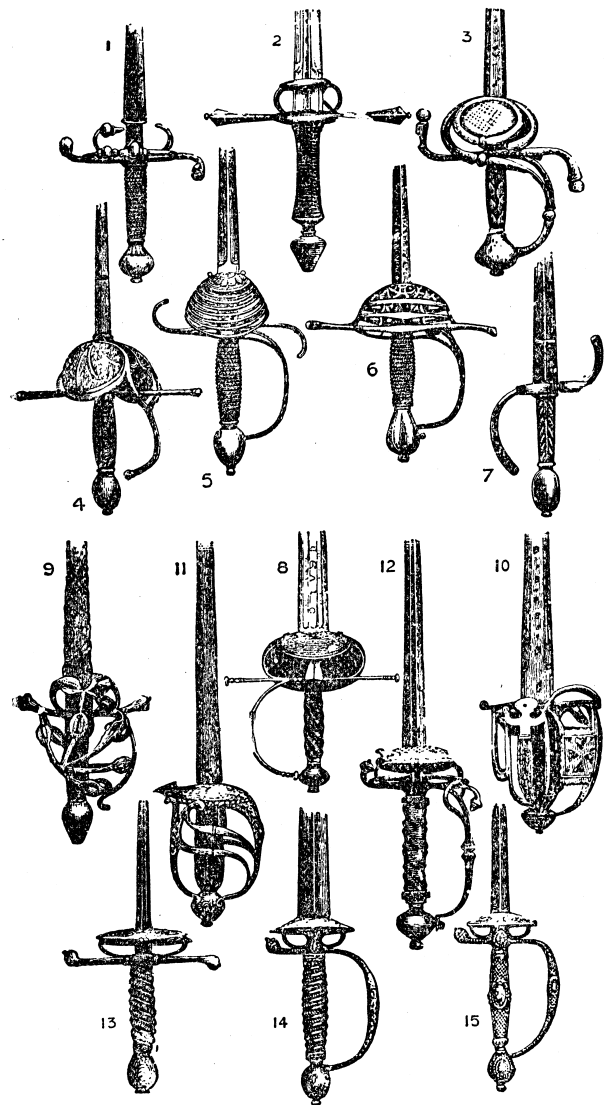


FIG. 3.—Typical European swords, 16th–18th centuries. Reproduced by permission from Mr Egerton Castle's *Schools and Masters of Fence*. 1, Earl, 16th cent.; 2, German, c. 1550; 3, Italian rapier, third quarter 16th cent.; 4, Spanish rapier, late 16th cent.; 5, Italian, same period; 6, English, same period; 7, English musketeer's sword, early 17th cent.; 8, Spanish broadsword, early 17th cent.; 9, Venetian, c. 1550; 10, Italian, late 16th cent.; 11, English, time of Commonwealth; 12, French rapier, c. 1650; 13, German flamberge, early 17th cent.; 14, 15, small-swords, 1700–1750.

**Cut-and-thrust swords**—these are mostly double-edged swords where both the point and the edge are used in combat. (The rapier, which is mostly a thrusting sword, is an exception.)

ITEM	COST	WEIGHT	PRICE	LENGTH	COMBAT FACTORS AND DESCRIPTION
bastard sword	3/1	2	8	B–C	18+ STR required; +15% vs. unarmored creatures; +5% vs. armored creatures ✱ a cut and thrust sword with a long blade and a two-handed grip; designed to be fought with one-handed, but so the second hand can be added to give extra power to swinging blows
estoc	2/1	½	4	D	used at –1 (not really a main fighting weapon); +2 to penetrate armor; no strength minimum; can't sweep vs. more than one opponent ✱ a thrusting sword with a narrow blade; also called a saddle sword; includes bilbo
longsword	3/1	1	5	C	13+ STR required; +10% vs. unarmored creatures ✱ a double-edged cut and thrust sword, usually with about 3 feet of blade; includes cladibas, claymore, colichegarde, dhoup, kaskara, ken
shortsword	2/1	½	4	D	no strength minimum; +10% vs. unarmored creatures ✱ a cut and thrust sword with 1½ to 2 feet of blade; includes baselard, manople (a shortsword with two short blades flanking the main blade), zafer (a shortsword with an arm support at the end of the pommel, used like the arm of a chair when sitting but quickly converted to a weapon
rapier	3/2	1	6	C	no strength minimum; can't sweep vs. more than one opponent; +1 to penetrate armor ✱ a long thrusting sword. A shorter thrusting sword is called an estoc, or saddle sword; includes flamberge, jungheerda

**Broadwords**—these are swords used primarily for cutting and chopping, rather than stabbing. Most are single-edged.

ITEM	COST	WEIGHT	PRICE	LENGTH	COMBAT FACTORS AND DESCRIPTION
abbasi	3/1	1	6	C-D	13+ STR required; +1 if used from above; +10% vs. unarmored creatures; -10% vs. metal armor  a straight-bladed sword with supports at the back of the blade
broadsword	3/1	1	6	C-D	14+ STR required; +1 if used from above; +10% vs. unarmored creatures; -5% vs. metal armor  a heavy cutting sword with 2-3 feet of blade, usually single edged; includes campilan, khanda, pattisa, quaddara
cutlass	2/1	1	4	C-D	14+ STR required; +10% vs. unarmored creatures; -10% vs. metal armor  also known as a back sword; a short, single-edged saber with a heavy cutting blade, sometimes with a straight back; includes craquemarte, dusack (cutlass with built in brass knuckles in the guard), goliah (heavy, slightly curved sword)
dalwel	2/1	1	6	C	no strength minimum; +1 if used from above; +10% vs. unarmored creatures; -10% vs. metal armor  a cutting sword with a 2-foot, very sharp blade, used 2-handed
dukhn	3/1	1	6	C	14+ STR required; +1 if used from above; +10% vs. unarmored creatures  a slightly curved, double-edged cut-and-thrust sword; also called parang pedang
dao	2/1	1	4	C	12+ STR required; +1 if used from above; +10% vs. unarmored creatures; -5% vs. metal armor  a cutting sword with a heavy chisel-shaped blade, largest near the top and squared off rather than pointed at the tip
flyssa	3/1	1	4	C	12+ STR required; +1 to penetrate armor; +10% vs. unarmored creatures; opponents get +5% damage to hand or forearm hits against the wielder unless SPE 18+  a long, single-edged sword with a straight back and a long point, and a small hilt with no guard
saber	3/1	1	5	C	14+ STR required; +1 if used from above; +10% vs. unarmored creatures  a slightly curved single-bladed cutting sword (it can be used for thrusting as well, though it's mainly a cutting sword; sabers are especially popular for horsemen; includes swords such as alamani, badelaire, beladah, chundrik, goddara, kastane, kilij, nimcha, palache, pulouar, saif, talwar
scimitar	3/2	1	6	C-D	15+ STR required; +1 if used from above; +15% vs. unarmored creatures; +5% to damage received by the wielder unless SPE 18+; -5% vs. metal armor; -1 vs. cut-and-thrust swords  a cutting sword with a wide, curved blade. They come in a variety of sizes; this includes swords such as ahir, ayda katti; falchion, kora, pira (a scimitar with a long, curving piece attached to the pommel), sapara (a sword with a scythelike forward curve in top half of the blade), shamshir (a saber with a very curved blade), shotel
seme	3/1	1	4	C	14+ STR required; +1 if used from above; +10% vs. unarmored creatures; opponents get +5% damage to hand or forearm hits against the wielder unless SPE 18+; -10% vs. metal armor  a straight-bladed, double edged sword with the blade flaring outward so it's widest near the point; usually has no guard
spadone	4/2	1	8	C	17+ STR required; +1 if used from above; -1 vs. other swords or fast creatures  a large, straight-bladed sword, halfway between a broadsword and a great sword. Also called espadon
yatagan	3/1	1	5	C	+1 if used from above; +10% to hits on hand or forearm; opponents get +5% damage to hand or forearm hits against the wielder unless SPE 18+; -10% vs. metal armor  a single-bladed cutting sword with a reverse-curved blade (i.e., the blade curves slightly inward instead of outward, so the point makes a smooth easy cut when attacking the opponent's hand or arm; often has no guard on the hilt

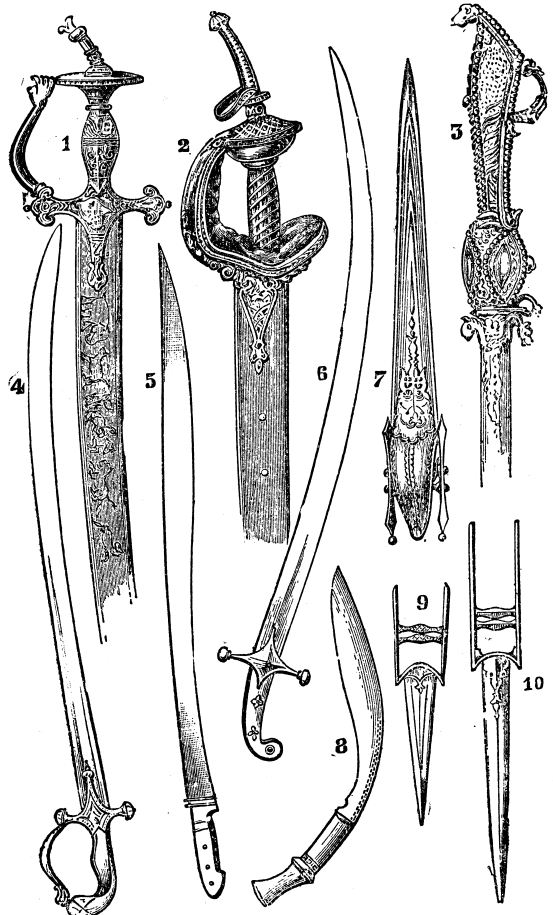


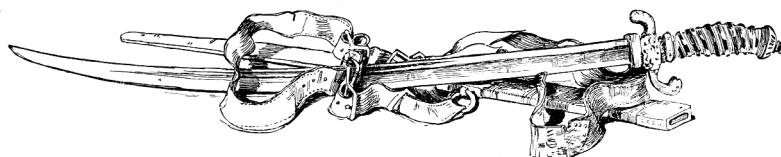
Fig. 2.—Oriental swords (reproduce<sup>d</sup> by permission from Egerton's *Illustrated Handbook of Indian Arms*, published by the War Office, 1880). 1, 2, Decorated Persian arms; 3, gauntlet sword; 4, common type of talwar (North-West Provinces); 5, yataghan type; 6, Persian talwar; 8, kukri (Nepal); 7, 9, 10, Mahratta, showing transition to gauntlet sword.

**Japanese swords**—similar to longswords, but listed separately, since Japanese swordfighting techniques are so much different from both Western and other Asian techniques; for GMS with Japanese-flavored campaigns. (Other Japanese weapons are listed in the classes where they occur.)

ITEM	COST	WEIGHT	PRICE	LENGTH	COMBAT FACTORS AND DESCRIPTION
katana	5/2	1	12	C	13+ STR required; +10% vs. unarmored creatures ✨ a straight-bladed, single-edged cut-and-thrust longsword
wakizashi	3/1	1	8	D	no strength minimum; +10% vs. unarmored creatures ✨ a straight-bladed, single-edged cut-and-thrust shortsword

**Axes**—medium-length chopping weapons

ITEM	COST	WEIGHT	PRICE	LENGTH	COMBAT FACTORS AND DESCRIPTION
adze	2/1	1	2	C–D	12+ STR required; –1 vs. other weapon ✨ axelike carpenter's tool; may be encountered as a war-adze or as a tool put to other use
adze-axe	3/2	1	5	C–D	13+ STR required; +10% vs. unarmored creatures ✨ double bladed weapon with an axe on one side of the handle and an adze on the other
battle axe	3/2	1	5	C–D	14+ STR required; +10% vs. unarmored creatures ✨ a single-bladed axe on a two-foot shaft (see weapon add-ons for double-bladed axes); includes bullova, doloire (wagoner's axe), fuetsu, galraki
bhuj	2/1	½	2	E	12+ STR required; +10% vs. unarmored creatures ✨ a heavy chopping blade or wide knife blade on a 2-foot shaft
great axe	5/3	2	10	B	18+ STR to use; –2 vs. swords or against fast-moving creatures; +4 to penetrate armor; +10% damage ✨ an enormous single- or double-bladed axe on a 3–4 foot shaft; designed for use against slow-moving, heavily armored opponents
great sword	5/3	3	12	B	18+ STR to use; –2 vs. swords or against fast-moving creatures; +3 to penetrate armor; +15% damage ✨ an enormous cutting sword, in the area of six feet in length; includes khadja; designed for use against slow-moving, heavily armored opponents
hand axe	2/1	1	4	C–D	no strength minimum; 50% chance to be destroyed on disarm rolls vs. bladed weapons a hatchet or tomahawk
head axe	3/2	½	2	E	14+ STR required; +5% vs. unarmored creatures ✨ a 2-foot axe with a crescent shaped blade that curves inward rather than outward like a battle axe; the top of the blade is flat and has a spike protruding from the back of it (like a double-bladed axe)
poleaxe	3/2	2 ½	5 ½	B	+2 to penetrate armor; no length advantage vs. swords unless SPE 18+ ✨ a single- or double-bladed axe on a 4–6 foot shaft; includes crowbill



**Knives**—short-bladed cutting and thrusting (or both) weapons

ITEM	COST	WEIGHT	PRICE	LENGTH	COMBAT FACTORS AND DESCRIPTION
axe-knife	2/1	½	2	D	a long knife with a thick chopping blade (such as a machete); includes barong, churra, cutty, klewang, moplak, opi, pichangatti, talibon, wedong
bank	2/1	½	2	E	a knife with a curved, sickle-shaped blade; includes danisko and golo (hook-shaped knives also used for throwing)
bichwa	2/1	½	2	E	a knife with a double-curved or wavy blade; sometimes the blade is forked; includes chilanum, yaghatan, khanjar, kriss
dagger	2/1	½	2	E	+1 to penetrate armor; – vs. other bladed weapons ✨ a short-bladed thrusting weapon; includes dirk, batardeau, bodkin, cinquedeau, kard, misericorde (long narrow stabbing dagger designed to pierce the armor of a helpless opponent), pesh-kabz, stiletto (very thin-bladed dagger)
hanger	2/1	½	3	D	a very light, slightly curved sword; includes dha, kantschar
small sword	2/1	½	3	D	a very light thrusting sword; includes fleuret
knife	2/1	½	2	E	a short cut-and-thrust weapon with a straight, usually heavy blade; includes buyo, choora, golok, jamdhar katari, qama, telek
kukri	2/1	½	2	D–E	+20% vs. unarmored opponents ✨ a heavy single-edged cutting knife with a curved blade, designed to do huge amounts of damage with little physical exertion; includes panabas
jambiya	2/1	½	2	E	a knife with a double-edged, curved blade; includes karoula, khapwah, korambi
katana	2/1	½	2	C–E	a knife with 1–3 blades that stick straight forward from the user's fist (it has a grip perpendicular from the normal knife grip, more like the grip on brass knuckles or tiger claws. Sometimes there is a gauntlet or boxing glove-like attachment fastened to the blade. Most katars are short (class E), but some (known as pata or gauntlet swords) have blades as long as swords, and function as longer weapons

