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## Kick Monster Butt

You're looking at the first strategy guide for the revised edition of the world's most popular role playing game.

Let's be real – the game's about combat, not charisma!

This strategy guide gives you the strategies and techniques you need to win. It's like a football coach's playbook, or a video game champion's cheat codes. Feat combos, sneaky skill uses, multiclassing secrets, and abusing the rules: that's what it's all about.

## Build the Perfect Warrior

Pick the wrong feats and you'll be pushing up daisies.

Pick the right ones and you'll be racking up XP! This book is all about making the right decisions to build the perfect warrior. Whether you're a fighter, ranger, paladin, monk, or barbarian, if you're interested in combat, you'll learn how to max out your abilities.

## Make the Right Decisions

Who has the better chance of hitting an AC 15 target: a 5th level fighter with a two-handed longsword, or a 5th level ranger with a longsword and shortsword?

If your BAB is +5 and you're facing an AC 15 monster,

how much of your attack bonus should you allocate to Power Attack?

Does fighting defensively really help you live longer?

When you're through with this book, you'll know the answers.

## But Don't Tell the DM

Everything in this guide comes straight from the core rulebooks.

It's 100% official material; all we do is tell you how to use it.

But you don't want your DM to read this book.

Just think, all these useful tips and suggestions in the hands of the guy who runs the monsters!

Shudder. Keep this one tucked away  
or you'll regret it.

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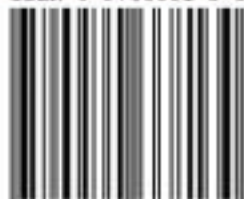
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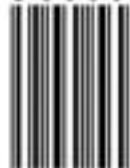


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# The Power Gamer's 3.5

# WARRIOR

## Strategy Guide

The 100% Official Guide to Kicking Monster Butt  
and Winning the Game!

Sample file

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## Introduction

# Building the Perfect Warrior

Min/maxing gets a bad rap. Sure, there's little role-playing involved in stat-monsters, and not a lot of background to create an immersive gaming experience. But in every gamer lurks the secret munchkin, wanting – even craving – a bad-ass character able to survive nearly any threat, overcome any trap, and kick the living crap out of anyone or anything getting in the way. This is where the Power Gamer's 3.5 Strategy Guides come into play.

The Warrior Strategy Guide gives you all the strategy and advice you need to play a combat character, whether you sling arrows or swing a sword. While most of this book covers fighters, barbarians, monks, rangers and paladins, there is sure to be useful information in this guide for any other character. Rogues, clerics and even druids can become combat monsters with multiclassing or the right selection of skills and feats. Likewise, war wizards can benefit from the information by studying the strengths and weaknesses of their enemy. In short, there's something for everyone.

### Where's the New Stuff?

The Power Gamer's Strategy Guide's primary purpose is to make sure you can use it. Instead of loading this book with questionable prestige classes, sketchy feats, and yet another way to use the Profession skill, we've torn apart the mechanics of the 3.5 game, looked at them, and slapped them back together. With just the 3.5 core mechanics, this book gives you everything you need to roll up the character of your dreams. Moreover, because everything is straight out of the three core books, no one can stop you from using it. Period. It's 100% official.

### How Do I Use this Book?

You use this book the same way a football coach uses a playbook, the same way a video game champion uses his cheat codes, and the same way an auto mechanic uses his repair manual. This book gives you the strategies and techniques you need for winning 3.5 combats. If you're rolling up a new character, the chapters on ability scores, races, and classes will help you get started on the right foot. If you have an existing character, the chapters on skills and feats will help you plan his progression. No

matter where you are in your campaign, the chapter on equipment will always be useful. And then there's the gold mine: Chapter 7, Combat. This chapter is all about how to kick monster ass in the most efficient manner possible. Like we said, it's a playbook, cheat code, and repair manual all wrapped into one handy guide for winning every combat you ever step into.

## Listen Up! They're Called Archetypes

Instead of spending all of our time on specific classes, we use archetypes. What's an archetype? An archetype is a prototype, a kind of model everything else is based on. In this book, an archetype represents a particular style of warrior: archer, cavalry or tank. With the right feat and class choices, you can build a warrior modeled after any one of the archetypes. On the other hand, it's not necessary to use one of these types – there's plenty of info in this book to keep it useful no matter how you handle it. Nonetheless, the archetypes are handy for organization and thematic choices, perhaps opening a door to a combo or feature you hadn't thought of before. Figure out what kind of warrior you want to play, and see if one of the archetypes matches. If so, you won't be disappointed.

### HIDE THIS BOOK!

While everything in this guide is legit – it comes straight out of the core rulebooks – you don't want your DM to read it. Just think, all these useful tips and suggestions in the hands of the guy who runs the monsters! Shudder. Keep this one tucked away or you'll regret it.

### Archer

The archer's the guy in the movies that makes the impossible shot. Specializing in ranged attacks, most archers employ some sort of bow, but this could include anyone who makes more ranged attacks than melee attacks. Archers are typically fighters or rangers.

## Cavalry

From the steel-encased knight to the lightly armored horse barbarian, any character fighting from the back of a mount lumps into this category. Mounted characters don't just ride horses. Small characters can employ riding dogs, while higher-level characters can gain cohorts, like dragons, to use instead of the more common steeds. Cavalry often consists of paladins or fighters.

## Guerrilla

The guerrilla is a specialized warrior whose role is to take out a specific threat. Such opponents could include wizards, goblinoids, or even demons. These guys are super-specialized, but good enough to adapt to problems when the situation demands. Guerrillas are often rangers or monks.

## Infantry, Heavy

Heavy infantry characters excel at wading into the thick of combat. Sometimes called bricks or tanks, the heavy infantry archetype uses heavy armor and high-damage weaponry, has a low Dexterity, and lacks any semblance of grace. When you think fighter, you're probably thinking of a tank, but some paladins and clerics fall into this category as well.

## Skirmisher

Every group has to have a generalist. The skirmisher specializes in nothing, opting to fill other roles as needed. Don't let their lack of focus fool you; these guys are good in enough things to be able to do some serious damage. Moreover, they have the ability to get in where they're needed, and get out when things get too nasty. Multiclass warriors typically wind up as skirmishers.

### NO PERFECT WARRIORS

Just because an archetype defines what you're good at, it doesn't mean it's the only way you'll be fighting. Cavalry can lose their mounts, archers are in deep trouble in melee, and heavy infantry drown when submerged. Your DM will challenge you. But you know what? There is no perfect warrior. Don't think this book or the archetypes presented make invulnerable characters. That's not what this is about. It's about staying alive as long as you can and winning the game you're supposed to win.

### OK, So Where Do I Go From Here?

Now it's time to get started on the fun part: building the perfect warrior! It's helpful to have a copy of the PHB and your character sheet handy as you read through the rest of this book, since you'll be constantly thinking about how to get most juice out of both your character and your rules. Read carefully, think hard about your character, and be prepared to start winning lots of combats. And remember, there's nothing your DM can do about it. After all, every strategy we discuss comes straight from the PHB!

## Infantry, Light

Light infantry characters are warriors who don't use much armor. Preferring mobility and speed to the slow pace of the tank, these characters are fast and effective at taking out the larger opponents. Despite their lack of protection, they still fight on the front lines. Light infantry consists most commonly of barbarians or monks.

## Chapter One

# Ability Scores

For many players, ability scores are their character's most important trait. Ability scores provide the blueprint for character creation, define the character's strengths and weaknesses, establish the framework for role-playing, and set the boundaries of the character's limitations. Of course, not all ability scores carry the same weight. Most warriors never have use for Charisma or even Intelligence, while Strength and Constitution are vital to almost all martial characters. This section overviews the abilities best suited to each archetype, and addresses the occasional exception in the monk, paladin, and ranger.

## Abilities & What They Do

### Strength

Here's one you should know already: Strength is your most important stat. It's vital for melee, special attacks like sunder and grapple, and breaking down doors. It functions as the key ability for most movement-related skills like Climb, Jump, and Swim. To access the best fighting feats, you need a 13 Strength.

### Dexterity

Dexterity is nearly as good as Strength. It beefs up AC, Initiative, and Reflex saves, and for the mobile types, it serves as the key ability for Hide, Jump, Move Silently, and Tumble. Finesse characters, like the archer, light infantry, or guerrilla, need at least a 13 Dexterity.

### Constitution

A solid Constitution is the best defense a warrior can have, even more so than Dexterity, because you keep gaining the bonus to your hit points every time you advance. Bonus hit points let you take damage and keep fighting. Despite its minimal impact on skills, a high Constitution improves your Fortitude save, beefing up your chances to resist negative energy levels, poison, and disease.

### Intelligence

If there is a stat you can overlook, Intelligence should not be it. If you have two bad rolls, though, stick one of them here. Intelligence affects your skills. While important, skills don't define warriors like they do rogues. However, certain feats like Combat Expertise require a 13 or better Intelligence, so if an AC warrior is your path, you'd better suck it up and count on this attribute being among the better ones.

### Wisdom

Enchantment spells wreak havoc on a party of adventurers: *Dominat* person, *suggestion*, and *even charm person* can pit you directly against your allies, bad news indeed for them. You want to avoid letting this happen. Wisdom improves your Willpower save, helping to resist those slimy spells. Put a decent stat in your Wisdom.

### Charisma

Charisma sucks. About the only way it comes into play for warriors is for Intimidate checks and for feint maneuvers. Sure, rangers need it to cuddle with their critters, and paladins need it for smiting demons and boosting their saves, but for monks, fighters, and barbarians, there's just no reason to waste the roll. So, if you wind up with a 6, put it here.

## Abilities and Archetypes

By now, you know why certain attributes are vital to warriors and why others aren't. More importantly, you need to know where to put them for the greatest effect. Each of the following sections recommends stat placement for the appropriate archetype using the assumption that you've rolled the following scores: 15, 14, 13, 12, 10, and 8. Use the archetypes as a model for placing the results of your die rolls.