



# The Art of Bloodshed

**ANY BRUTE CAN** simply pick up an axe and sink it organ-deep into an enemy, but a true warrior knows a dozen different ways to kill his target. They know the best and finest methods to get into and out of dangerous situations, hopefully bringing ruin to their foes and fortune to their allies in the same stroke of a sword. A true warrior does not treat combat like an obstacle to be leapt over or smashed through; it is a dance. It is an *art form* that must be honed like any other. To do this, a warrior needs technique, skill and the determination to learn.

This chapter is devoted to a large collection of combat-based feats, optional rules, special attacks and manoeuvres that all add something interesting and new to *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. Although they are designed more for the 'warrior' stereotype, any character that meets the proper prerequisites can choose to utilise them.

## OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL RULES FOR CONAN COMBAT

*Conan the Roleplaying Game* is a fantastic game setting for players to build personalities and character roles that can evolve and change, to become an interesting facet of the overall gaming experience. It also lends itself by nature of the original material to being a violent game that will put these developing characters in potentially dangerous and life-threatening situations.

Combat in roleplaying games is always a big part of the action and excitement of the overall gaming experience, and we have done a great deal to make the second edition of *Conan* more action-packed and exciting than its predecessor. There is always room for improvement however, and we hope to offer some of those options here with the *Warrior's Companion*.

The following entries are a handful of optional adjustments or new rules Games Masters can choose to use in combat in an effort to add some additional grit, realism and danger.

## PERMANENT DAMAGE - THE SCARS OF PAST BATTLES

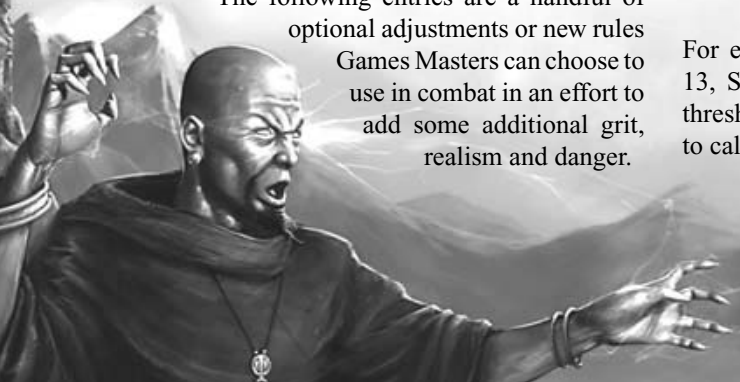
In any roleplaying game where combat is likely to occur, characters are going to get injured – especially limb carving, head chopping, body hacking combat like that found in the many tales of Conan. *Conan the Roleplaying Game* uses a relatively standard 'hit point' system to reflect a character's damage and overall health, with characters suffering damage when they are in some way harmed.

It is a simple system to grasp. When a character endures enough damage to bring his hit point total to -10, he dies. Characters can even be killed outright if they suffer a single terrible blow that causes a great amount of damage, no matter their maximum hit point totals. As characters get more powerful and experienced however, gaining levels and hit points, it can sometimes seem a little less dramatic.

This optional rule, called 'Permanent Damage', is a way to put some of R.E. Howard's grit and realism back into the *Conan* game system. It represents the fact that many non-mortal wounds still leave a memorable mark upon a character. Broken or maimed limbs, jagged scars and slowly healing wounds are all possible. That Pict hand axe that is lodged in a thigh or a Stygian arrow plunged through a hand suddenly means a lot more than just the loss of hit points.

To utilise this optional rule in combat, the Games Master must make note of every character's Constitution ability score, plus or minus the character's Strength and Dexterity modifiers. The final score is an important part of the Permanent Damage system, and is called the character's *threshold*. Threshold is a vague sub-statistic used to signify the general physical health and fitness of the character in question.

For example, a character with a Constitution score of 13, Strength 16 (+3) and Dexterity 9 (-1) has a final threshold of 15 (13 + 3 - 1); a very simple sub-statistic to calculate.



Anytime a living (non-undead, non-demon, etc.) target is attacked by a physical implement of some kind (claws, sword, falling boulder, etc.) that successfully inflicts its maximum lethal weapon damage (the dice from the weapon itself, not additional dice from abilities or critical hits) *or* inflicts enough damage to surpass the target's threshold number, there is a chance for Permanent Damage.

When a chance of Permanent Damage has been determined (verified by the Games Master), the actual damage total is calculated and compared to the threshold of the target. The difference, either positive or negative, is then used as a dice roll modifier on the following Permanent Damage Table. The table determines whether or not the target will suffer any lasting effects from the attack. What those lasting effects do in game terms can be found in individual entries after.

### Permanent Damage

2d6 (+/- modifier) Result	Permanent Damage
Less than 0	No Effect
0	Minor Scar
1-3	Impressive Scar
4-7	Painful Wound
8-10	Slowly Healing Wound
11	Hideous Scar
12	Limb Damaged
13	Agonising Wound
14	Sensory Organ Damaged
15	Organ Damage
16	Excessive Blood Loss
17	Limb Maimed
18	Sensory Organ Maimed
19	Organ Rupture
20+	Head Trauma

**No Effect** – The wound was bad, but only superficial and has no lasting effects upon the character.

**Minor Scar** – The character's wound will heal in a small and easily overlooked scar that will forever remind him of what happened.

**Impressive Scar** – The wounding hit ripped or sliced the exposed flesh of the character, leaving behind an area that will heal into something that people will talk about for

some time to come. While the scar is visible (Games Master should decide where the attack hit), the character gains a +1 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy. Gather Information and Intimidate skill checks made against characters accustomed to combat (soldiers, gladiators, etc.).

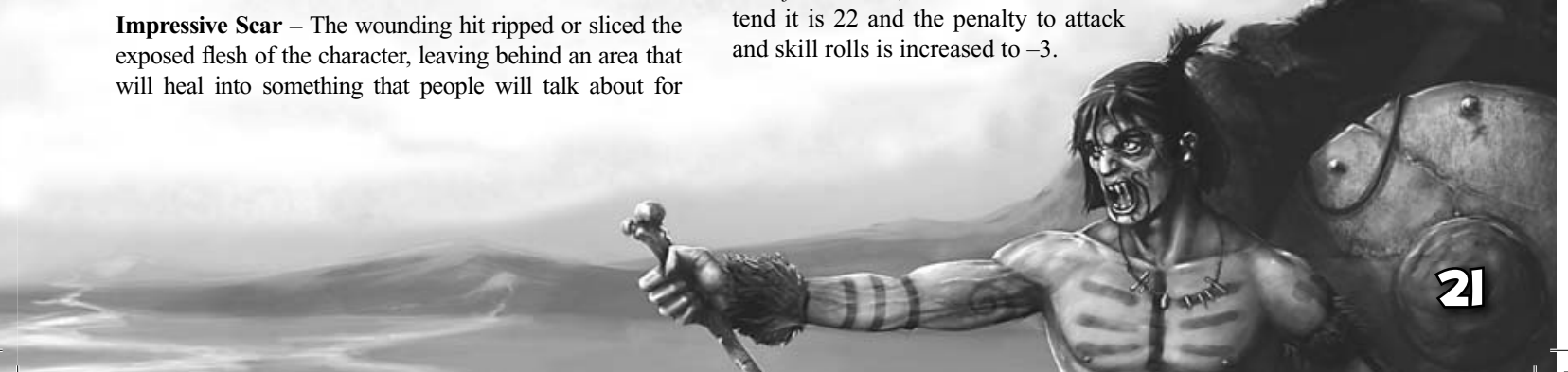
**Painful Wound** – The attack struck home in a particularly painful place (shin, kidney, groin, etc.) and will be distracting until it is properly dressed and tended to. Until the character receives a successful Heal skill check DC 18, he will suffer –1 to all attack and skill rolls. This effect *is* cumulative with other penalties.

**Slowly Healing Wound** – Something about how the damage inflicted will make the wound lightly infected and difficult to heal through natural means. This attack's damage should be recorded separately, as it will only heal at a rate of 1 hit point every full night of rest.

**Hideous Scar** – The wound dragged roughly across the character's neck, face or scalp, leaving an area that will heal as a puckered, ragged scar that is distracting to say the least to look upon. If the character does not have the scarred area covered (Games Master should decide where the attack hit), the character suffers from a –1 penalty to Diplomacy, Disguise, Gather Information and Perform skill checks.

**Limb Damaged** – One of the characters limbs has been seriously hurt by the attack, snapping tendons and fracturing bone. Roll 1d6; 1: Left Hand, 2: Right Hand, 3: Left Arm, 4: Right Arm, 5: Left Leg, 6: Right Leg. If a hand is injured, any skill or attack roll using that hand suffers a –2 penalty. If an Arm is injured, the character may not wear a shield upon it and suffers a –2 penalty to attack and damage rolls from melee weapons held by that arm. For each leg injured the character suffers a –5 ft. penalty to their Speed and –1 Dodge defence. These penalties remain until the character undergoes treatment; a successful Heal skill check DC 20 and a full eight hours of bed rest. NOTE: Two 'Limb Damaged' results upon the same limb upgrade the effects to that of 'Limb Maimed'.

**Agonising Wound** – The wound causes terrible agony upon the character. This is treated in all ways as a 'Painful Wound', but the DC of the Heal check to tend it is 22 and the penalty to attack and skill rolls is increased to –3.





the proper way to use a whetstone, he can spend hours grinding away at the metal of his weapons to give them a razor's edge. This skill represents a warrior's ability to put a fine edge on his weapons; rather than being able to forge or craft new ones.

**Class Skill:** Borderer, Nomad, Pirate, Soldier, Thief

**Check:** You are considered to know the proper ways to use a whetstone, oilcloth and a little pressure to sharpen any piercing or slashing weapon to a finer edge. This practice is not great for the weapon's longevity, but it seriously improves its ability to shear through enemy protection for the time being.

Depending on the result of the skill check, a melee weapon that inflicts piercing or slashing damage can have its Armour Piercing bonus temporarily increased at a cost of the weapon's Hardness. This signifies the slow wearing down of the weapon's material, making it thinner, sharper and more brittle. The bonus Armour Piercing lasts for the duration of a single combat encounter, after which the blade has been dulled back to normal once again. The reduction in Hardness is permanent, however.

The results of the skill check and the weapon modifiers attached to them are detailed on the table below:

Sharpen Skill Check Result	Armour Piercing Modifier	Hardness Reduction
Less than 10	N/A	-2
10-14	+1	-2
15-19	+1	-1
20+	+2	-1

This skill can also be used to make piercing ranged weapons slightly more deadly, adding +1 to their Armour Piercing value on a Sharpen skill check DC 15. Sharpened projectiles are not weighted the same any longer, meaning they also suffer a -1 to hit penalty. Failing a Sharpen skill check on a ranged projectile breaks the projectile completely.

**Action:** One full hour of skill use. This time does not need to be consecutive, but the weapon in question cannot be used in the interim or it will be considered an automatic failure of the skill

check. One melee weapon or ten ranged projectiles can be sharpened in this amount of time.

**Try Again:** This skill can be used on a melee weapon or recoverable (javelin, spear, etc) ranged projectile multiple times, but you cannot, for example, sharpen a previously sharpened sword to stack the benefits; you may only re-sharpen it after the first effects have worn off.

**Synergy:** Characters with 5 or more ranks in Craft (weaponsmith) gain a +2 synergy bonus to this skill.

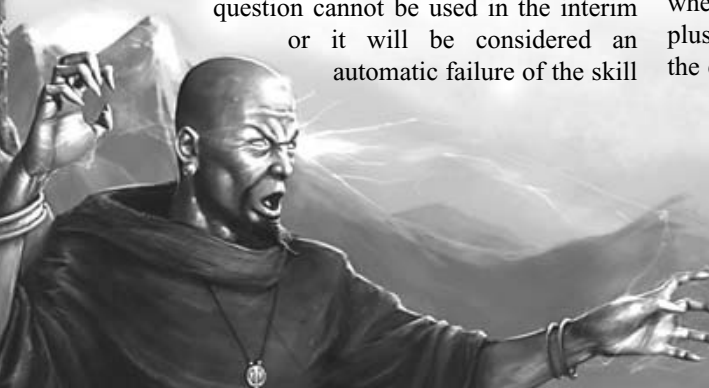


## TACTICS (INT; TRAINED ONLY)

This skill measures a character's knowledge of warcraft and battlefield strategy.

**Class Skill:** Noble, Pirate, Soldier

**Check:** The primary use of the Tactics skill is to better co-ordinate allies and cohorts in a battle or combat. The character using the Tactics skill must be aware where enemies are (but need not necessarily see them) and where his allies are. Using the Tactics skill is DC 12, plus the average number of combatants on either side of the encounter. If successful, the character has a number



of tactical suggestions he can call out (or use himself) during the encounter equal to his Intelligence bonus plus half his level. Each use of a tactical suggestion allows the affected character to add +1 to hit and damage for their next attack action. These tactical suggestions can be as simple as 'aim for the weak point under the arm!' or 'go after the little guy, he's the weak link!' and they can only aid actions that take place on or after the skilled character's initiative. Failing this skill check will result in misinformation and doubt, penalising everyone on the character's side with a -1 to hit penalty for the duration of the encounter.

A battlefield commander may also better orchestrate his forces by looking over the geography of the field of engagement and estimating how best his soldiers will need to use it. The DC for this type of Tactics check is DC 20 plus 1 for every unit of ten or more soldiers (or five cavalry) that the character is trying to orchestrate. Failure means the army will be in a tactically disadvantageous position, giving the enemy a +1 bonus to all attack rolls for the first 5 rounds of combat. Success on the skill check gives the army's allied units +1 to hit on all attack rolls for the first 5 rounds of combat. It should be noted that this version of the Tactics skill can *only* be used for massive army-level engagements, not small party-based skirmishes.

**Action:** The *tactical advice* version of the skill requires one full-round action to study the conflict, during which time the character cannot suffer damage (or the check fails). Once the check has been made it is a free action to deliver a piece of advice to an ally.

*Orchestrating an army* requires 1d6 hours of battlefield assessment and unit studying, during which time the character must look over unit logs, battle drawings and similar information.

**Try Again:** No; the use of the Tactics skill can only determine the situation once per encounter, ambush or battle.

**Synergy:** A character with 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (Warfare) gains a +2 synergy bonus to Tactics.

## NEW SKILL USES

The following entries are all optional uses for the existing skills found in *Conan the Roleplaying Game*. Warriors that spread their skill points across numerous talents and skills will now find that they have several new strategic uses for their normally less-martial abilities.

Each of these alternative skill uses has a 'minimum ranks' listed in its title, located

in parentheses next to the skill it requires. This is the number of skill ranks in the listed skill(s) that a character must possess before being able to utilise the optional skill use.

### ARMAMENT JUDGEMENT (APPRAISE; 3 RANKS)

The appraise skill is generally used by characters looking to steal or purchase items in order to first know how much the items are worth, or perhaps to know how much a newly acquired gemstone or piece of jewellery will sell for. A warrior's eye however, is more attuned to the costs of his armour and weapons.

By calling upon the appraise skill in a combat situation, a character can judge the quality and potential of an enemy's armour or weapons. It is a standard action that requires a DC 12 check for armour, DC 15 for weapons. A successful check on a piece of armour will allow the character to add +1 to his effective Armour Piercing for the encounter. A successful check on a weapon will add +2 to any attempts to sunder the weapon.

### CAVALRY TEAM TRAINING (HANDLE ANIMAL; 6 RANKS)

It does not take much more than a decent equestrian knowledge base to train a single warhorse to serve as a combat steed for a cavalryman, but it does take time. Any horseman will agree that they would love to have the time to fully train every horse they ride out to battle, but sometimes there simply is not enough time or manpower to arrange for such a feat. In these cases it is acceptable for a single skilled warrior to push a group of horses through the basics – getting them ready to ride in an upcoming battle.

For a character to train a team of cavalry horses, they must have all the necessary supplies and equipment to do so. Additionally, the handle animal skill check is at a higher difficulty. The DC numbers below are for 5 horses being trained at once; the DC increases by +5 for each set of five horses beyond the first.

**Combat Riding (DC 25)**

**Fighting (DC 22)**

**Guarding (DC 22)**

**Riding (DC 18)**

No matter how many horses are being trained, the time required to train them remains the same, plus one day per horse beyond the first. So, a group of ten horses being taught *Fighting*

would be a DC 27 skill check that takes thirty days (three weeks plus nine days). If a character has enough spare time they are allowed to take longer on this training in order to Take 10 or Take 20.

## FIGHTING MEDITATION (CONCENTRATION; 3 RANKS)

A true warrior understands that even when he is not actively in combat he must keep his mind sharp. A practice that is very common in Stygia, Vendhya and Khitai, meditation and combat mantras help a warrior stay focussed on his abilities.

Meditation can be a training routine that a warrior uses to practice his individual moves; be they attacks or defences. A half-hour of fighting meditation in the hours after dawn can be exactly what a warrior needs to clear his head and prepare for the day's events. These morning exercises not only help put mind and body in tune with one another, but it help to build the muscle-memory needed to use a weapon as an extension of oneself.

Spending one half-hour in uninterrupted meditation gives the opportunity to make a Concentration skill check, DC 20 minus the character's Base Attack Bonus. Failure means the character is tired and still somewhat distracted, but otherwise has no effect. Success adds a +1 bonus to hit and parry with the weapon the character meditated with for his first encounter that day.

Additionally, if a Scholar character uses fighting meditation he regains 1d3 Power Points when successful.

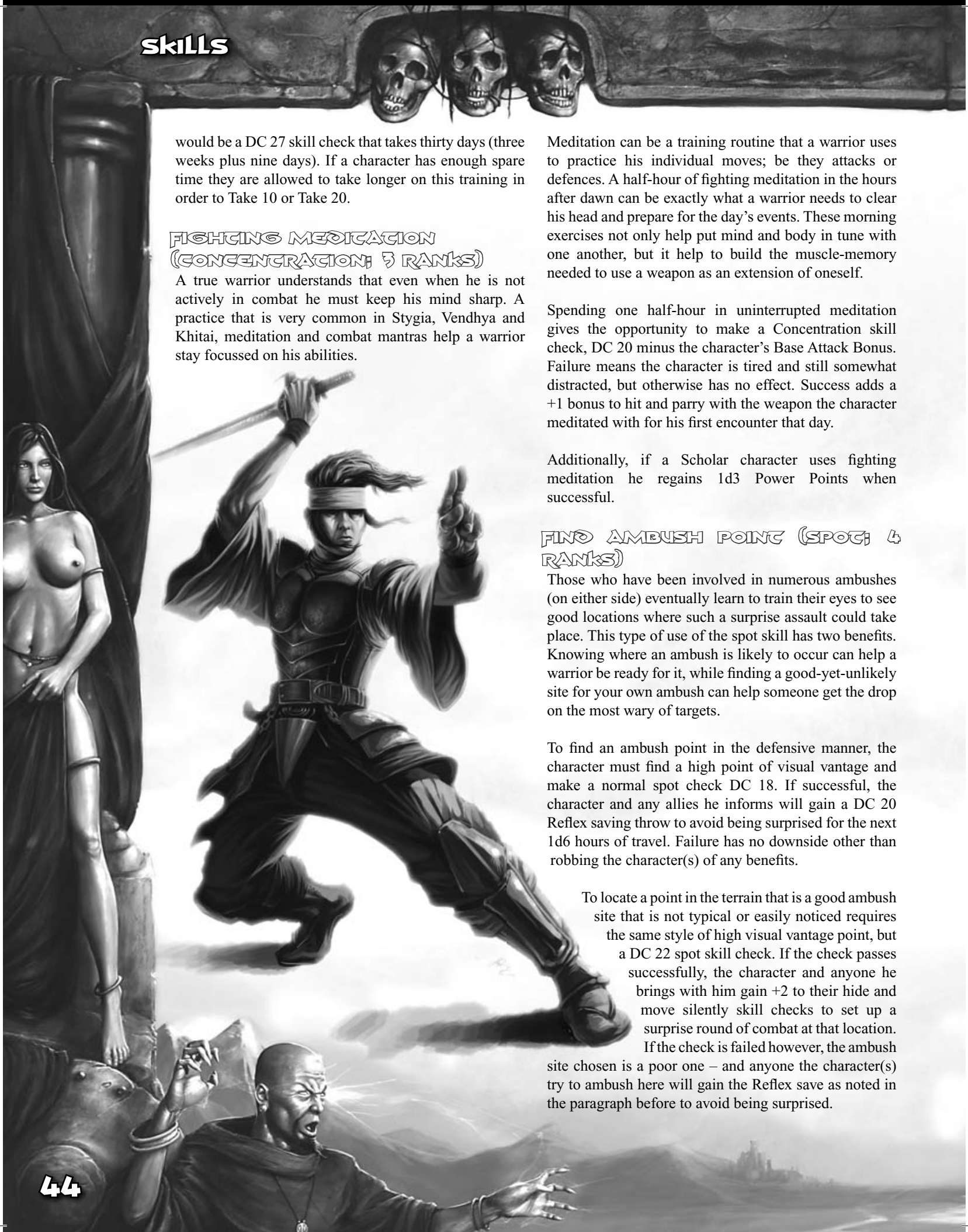
## FIND AMBUSH POINT (SPOT; 4 RANKS)

Those who have been involved in numerous ambushes (on either side) eventually learn to train their eyes to see good locations where such a surprise assault could take place. This type of use of the spot skill has two benefits. Knowing where an ambush is likely to occur can help a warrior be ready for it, while finding a good-yet-unlikely site for your own ambush can help someone get the drop on the most wary of targets.

To find an ambush point in the defensive manner, the character must find a high point of visual vantage and make a normal spot check DC 18. If successful, the character and any allies he informs will gain a DC 20 Reflex saving throw to avoid being surprised for the next 1d6 hours of travel. Failure has no downside other than robbing the character(s) of any benefits.

To locate a point in the terrain that is a good ambush site that is not typical or easily noticed requires the same style of high visual vantage point, but a DC 22 spot skill check. If the check passes successfully, the character and anyone he brings with him gain +2 to their hide and move silently skill checks to set up a surprise round of combat at that location.

If the check is failed however, the ambush site chosen is a poor one – and anyone the character(s) try to ambush here will gain the Reflex save as noted in the paragraph before to avoid being surprised.



its Armour Check Penalty, they increase the Damage Reduction of the armour by 2 to any ranged weapons that inflict piercing-type damage.

**Hide, Leather or Quilted Armour Only**  
**DC 20 Craft (tanner)**  
 +30 sp

#### Bladed Edge

This modification involves sharpening the metallic edge on the armour or shield, essentially adding an extra 'blade'. This blade is considered wielded even when the wearer has no other hands free, or is bound, and inflicts 1d4 damage when used. Avoiding hurting oneself on the edge requires the wearer to be additionally careful, adding an extra -1 to the Armour Check Penalty.

**Metal Shields and Plate Armour Only**  
**DC 22 Craft (weaponsmith)**  
 +20 sp

#### Chainweave

A mail shirt is good protection, but its construction leaves several holes through which a weapon could pierce. Careful winding of wicker or leather straps across these holes makes a more solid bank of protection, but causes the mail to be stiff and inflexible. This modification adds 1 to the Damage Reduction of the armour, but reduces its Maximum Dexterity Bonus by -1 and increases its Armour Check Penalty by -1.

**Mail Armour Only**  
**DC 18 Craft (weaver/tailor)**  
 +20 sp

#### Headbutting Blade

By riveting on a stout metal blade on the forehead or bridge of the nosepiece and reinforcing the area behind it, the warrior with this helm modification can deliver deadly blows in close combat. The helm imposes a -1 penalty to all Spot skill checks because of the eight-inch blade in the way, but the wearer can use the blade as part of an unarmed attack (head butt) that will inflict 1d6 lethal damage with a critical threat range of 20/x2.

This attack can even be used while the warrior is being grappled – but he cannot try to break the grapple that round if he does so.

**Helms Only**  
**DC 20 Craft (weaponsmith)**  
 +15 sp

#### Studs and Spikes

This modification will not only make the armour look savage and fearsome, but it will also inflict 1d3 points of damage each round against any target currently grappling/grappled by the wearer. This makes the armour slightly more difficult to safely move around in, adding -1 to the Armour Check Penalty and reducing the Maximum Dexterity Bonus by -1. NOTE: Pit straps modified in this fashion have their damage dice turned to 1d4s.

**All Armour, No Shields**  
**DC 20 Craft (armourer) and DC 18 Craft (weaponsmith)**  
 +35 sp

