

# Mastery at Arms

**Master at Arms** is a **Pathway** representing an area of specialised training in fighting and combat. Characters who learn Master at Arms get access to **Talents**. A Talent is an action that can be used to achieve a special outcome. For Master-at-Arms, the Talents are intended to be used during **Prolonged Conflicts** (typically, **Combat**), and there are only four governing rules. **1) Passive Talents** are always active, **2) You can only invoke one Action Talent** per standard action, **3) Interrupt Talents** can be used at any time (even outside your turn), **but can't be used simultaneously** to 'stack' or 'multiply' effects, and **4) you cannot use the same Talents twice in the same Prolonged Conflict**, unless otherwise stated in the description. The gameplay reason for this last rule is that Players have to think carefully about when is the best time to play a Talent. In terms of an in-world rationale, most of the Talents are based on some sort of unexpected trick, or an action that would open you to an attack if your opponent sees it coming. In effect, you can't use the same trick twice against the same opponents and get the same outcome.

**Ranks:** Characters start out at **Rank One** in **Mastery-at-Arms**. At Rank One you get to pick two First Circle Talents. Increasing your Mastery-at-Arms ranking over time allows you to access more Talents. When you advance to Rank 2, you choose an additional First Circle Talent. When you advance to Rank 3, you gain one Second Circle Talent, and so on. See **Character Advancement** for rules on how to advance Ranks in Pathways.

Rank	First Circle	Second Circle	Third Circle	Fourth Circle	Fifth Circle
1	2	-	-	-	-
2	3	-	-	-	-
3	3	1	-	-	-
4	4	1	-	-	-
5	4	2	-	-	-
6	4	2	1	-	-
7	5	2	1	-	-
8	5	3	1	-	-
9	5	3	2	-	-
10	5	3	2	1	-
11	6	3	2	1	-
12	6	4	2	1	-
13	6	4	3	1	-
14	6	4	3	2	-
15	6	4	3	2	1
16	7	4	3	2	1
17	7	5	3	2	1
18	7	5	4	2	1
19	7	5	4	3	1
20	7	5	4	3	2

## First Circle

**Battlecry (interrupt):** Restore 1 Effort to your Effort Pool.

**Bullseye (action):** Bullseye is only used for ranged attacks (archery, thrown weapons) You need to declare this action before Initiative. You automatically act first this round. You do not need to roll an Attack Roll. You automatically hit. Roll Menace and ignore armour.

**Careful Flanking (action):** Instead of attacking, you can move into a better position. On your next attack roll 4d10 instead of 3d10 and take the three rolls you want (i.e. roll at Advantage for your Skill Test).

**Catch Upon Shield (interrupt)** This move requires you to be holding a shield. You can choose to block or deflect any one ordinary physical attack (i.e. not magic, or supernatural attacks) on your shield. This 'catch' does not mark off a slot on the shield's 'soak'.

**Clever knack (interrupt)** Change the result of one die you rolled to a 1 for any Fighting Skill roll.

**Concuss (interrupt)** If you wound an opponent, you can opt to have their Skill successes penalised by 1 for the next three rounds (i.e. if they score two success, this is reduced to 1). Successes cannot drop below zero. The opponent has to be alive and physiologically capable of being dazed by a blow (i.e. does not affect undead, spirits, demons, constructs etc).

**Confuse (interrupt)** On the next Initiative phase, you can force any one opponent to act last if they fail a Normal **Test of Manoeuvre** (Diff 1). If they succeed, then they act first instead.

**Cut and Thrust (interrupt)** This move can only be used when attacking with a sword, knife or dagger. After successfully inflicting a wound, roll a d10. If you roll 1-3 you inflict an additional Shallow Wound. If you roll a 10, your opponent deals an opportunistic Shallow Wound against you instead.

**Deflect (interrupt)** Automatically block any one normal non-magical ranged missile directed at you (e.g. arrow, knife, dart, spear, axe etc). You must be armed or carrying a

shield (or at least some sort of large object) to use this Talent.

**Determination (interrupt)** You can re-roll any one Initiative roll, but you must take the second outcome.

**Feint (interrupt)** You can re-roll any one attack roll. You must accept the second roll.

**Furious Blow (interrupt)** This move is only for hand-to-hand combat (i.e. not archery or thrown weapons). Instead of rolling for Menace, automatically deal a Shallow Wound. (ignore non-magical armour).

**Goad (interrupt)** Goad must be declared before Initiative order is resolved at the start of a round. Goad causes any one opponent to gain +1 on their Initiative, and -1 to skill successes for their next action (i.e. if they score two successes on an attack, this is reduced to one success).

**Gouge (interrupt)** Add +1 to the Menace of one hand-to-hand weapon for one Menace roll.

**Graceful dodge (interrupt):** Use this Talent to stop an opponent rolling for injury after they have successfully made an attack roll against you. You must declare the Graceful Dodge before the Menace roll is made. You skip your next action when you use this Talent.



**Hack (interrupt)** This move can only be used for hacking and bludgeoning weapons (i.e. axes, clubs, maces). Ignore non-magical armour for one Menace resolution.

**Heavy Blow (action)** If you use this attack you do not use Initiative this round. Instead you act last in the round. If this attack succeeds, instead of rolling for Menace in the usual way, roll d10s equal to your Fortitude +1 and pick the three dice you want (i.e. if you have a Fortitude of 3 you roll 4 dice (3+1) and pick the three rolls you want. Damage is still resolved by comparing the values you pick to your weapon's Menace.

**Hurry (interrupt) :** For three rounds you Initiative gains a +1 at the end of each round. This replaces any other bonuses or penalties you would otherwise acquire.

**Intimidate (interrupt)** Lower one opponent's Menace scores by 2 for one roll. Intimidate must be declared before Menace is resolved.

**Impale (interrupt)** This move only works for close-combat weapons that have a point (spear, sword etc), and can only be used against an opponent who has no armour or shield. Increase the severity of a Wound you have inflicted by one level.

**Lunge (interrupt):** Increase your Initiative value by +3.

**Mighty Blow (interrupt)** Increase one wound by one level. i.e. this will increase a Glancing Wound to Shallow, or a Shallow Wound to Deep, or a Deep Wound to Grievous. However, this Talent cannot be used to increase the severity of Grievous or Felling wounds.

**Momentum (interrupt)** Instead of rolling for attack this round, you can choose to keep the same attack value that you rolled last round (i.e. if you rolled 3 successes last turn, you can opt to take a 3 this round too). Momentum must be declared before you roll for an attack.

**Parry (interrupt)** When you are attacked you can try to block a blow. Roll 1d10. If you roll equal to or under your **Manoeuvre** the blow is deflected. Parry needs to be declared before Menace is resolved. You can use Parry more than once in a combat, but any use after the first costs one point of Effort.

**Reckless Assault (action):** Instead of rolling Menace Dice for damage you can automatically inflict a Grievous Wound on your opponent, however, the opponent automatically inflicts a Deep Wound on you.

**Slip past shield (action)** This attack ignores an opponent's shield. May be declared *after* an opponent declares blocking with a shield.

**Sudden Strike (action)** You can use this action only if you are acting before the opponent during the combat round (i.e. if you have a higher Initiative score this round). Increase your attack skill by +1 Rank for this attack.

**Surprise Kick (interrupt)** Roll a d10. If you roll equal to or under your **Might**, a target opponent (who must be within range of a kick from you) misses their next action. Only works on opponents who can be reasonably expected to be either distracted or knocked over by an unexpected kick.

**Teach a Lesson (passive)** You can pull your blows to teach someone a lesson (figuratively or literally). Instead of dealing wounds you will deal only bruises and minor cuts. You can opt to do this at any point during a fight, so that, in effect, you can fight as normal but declare that any given attack inflicted nothing more than an embarrassing bruise.

**Wary Steps (interrupt)** Change an opponent's roll of a single dice to a 10.

## Second Circle

**Alacrity (interrupt)** You can re-roll any one Initiative roll. You can pick whether you want to keep the first roll or the re-roll.

**Barrage (interrupt):** Only for use with a ranged weapon that can fire multiple shots (e.g. bow, sling). On a successful attack, instead of rolling for Menace, roll 5d10. Any die that rolls equal to or lower than your **Quickness** inflicts one Shallow Wound, ignoring armour.

**Batter (passive)** If an attack you deliver would have killed an opponent, you can choose to knock them unconscious instead. There is no limit on how many times you can do this in a combat.

**Block Blow (interrupt)** When you are attacked, you can attempt to block a blow. You must be armed or carrying a shield to use this Talent. Roll 1d10. If you roll equal to or under your **Manoeuvre** the blow is deflected. Block Blow can be declared *after* the Menace roll has been resolved.

**Bypass Basic Parries (passive)** Your attacks cannot be parried by using the **Parry** interrupt (see Rank One).

**Cauterise (action):** You can immediately cease all additional injury to yourself or another Character that would be lost due to bleeding. Cauterise can be used multiple times. It requires a fire or heat source. This action cannot stop a Character dying of a Mortal Wound.

**Channel the Spirit (action):** Requires you to spend one Essence to use. This action functions as a normal attack except that you can harm a creature or character that can otherwise only be harmed using enchanted weapons or magic whilst using a non-enchanted attack. This action can be used multiple times in a combat, but always requires the spending of one Essence on each instance of use.

**Charge (action):** Add +2 to your Initiative. Also, roll for attack as usual, except you change your attack roll dice scores to all equal the lowest roll (e.g. if you roll a 4, 6 and 10, treat this as a 4, 4, and 4).

**Cleave in Twain (interrupt):** After a successful attack, do not roll Menace. Instead roll a d10. If you roll a 1 you automatically deal a Mortal Wound to the opponent. If you roll equal to or under your **Might** you inflict a Deep Wound ignoring non-magical armour. If you roll a 10, you leave yourself open and the opponent deals a Deep Wound to you.

**Courage (interrupt)** Ignore one fear effect or magical attack against the mind or perceptions (such as an enchantment or illusion). Can be used at any time, but to a limit of X times per game session, where X is your Mind value.

**Deceive (interrupt)** You can re-roll any one attack roll, and decide whether you want to keep the first roll or take the re-roll.

**Distracting Attack (action)** Make an attack as normal. If you hit (regardless of damage) the target will only be



allowed one attack on their next action. This action is useful against creatures of people with more than one attack per round.

**First Blood (passive)** Whenever you engage a new opponent, if you injure them before they injure you, then you deal an extra 1 Shallow Wound on this first successful strike.

**Hinder (interrupt)** Stop one attack from an opponent against any one of your allies. Hinder needs to be declared before Menace is rolled.

**Press (interrupt)** Press can only be used against an opponent who has a lower Fortitude than you. You must be fighting the opponent in close-range for this action to work. The opponent rolls 2 dice instead of 3 for all Skill and Menace rolls for one Action Round.

**Shriek of Rage (interrupt):** Force one opponent to act last this round.

**Slip Past Armour (action):** This attack ignores your opponent's armour (normal or otherwise). Slip Past Armour must be declared before your attack roll is resolved.

**Stun (interrupt)** If you deal Grievous wound you can choose to stun your opponent. For the next three rounds your opponent cannot attack (only defend).

**Rake (action):** You do not need to roll to attack. You automatically hit, but you do not resolve Menace either. Instead you deal a single Shallow Wound (ignoring armour).

**Riposte (interrupt):** Must be declared at the start of the round. For one Action Round: if you suffer injury from an opponent in close combat, roll a d10. If you roll equal to or under your **Manoeuvre**, you automatically deal a Shallow Wound back to the opponent. Once activated, the effect lasts until the end of the round (i.e. you will Riposte multiple wounds in a single round if attacked and wounded multiple times). Riposte does not work against ranged (i.e. archery) attacks.

**Roll with Blow (interrupt):** You can use this trait to avoid all damage from a single attack (within reason, and at Gamesmaster's discretion: probably doesn't work well against dragon fire, for example). You can declare this after damage has been rolled against you. You skip your next action if you use this move.

**Rend the chinks (interrupt):** For the remainder of this combat, each time you roll a 1 on any attack roll, you reduce one target opponent's armour by 1 slot in addition to any other injury dealt. Start with the lowest level slots and work upwards. Only works against opponent's wearing normal armour (i.e. does not work against magical armour, or against natural armour (scales, thick hide) that a creature might have).

**Thwack the Hand (interrupt)** This move can only be used with pole-arms. If you deliver a Grievous Wound (or more severe) you can opt to completely disarm your opponent instead. Only works if the opponent has hands and is carrying a weapon.

**Trip (interrupt):** This only works on other humans (or at least roughly humanoid creatures), and requires a pole-arm. If you deal a Deep Wound or more severe you can opt to trip your opponent instead. They will not be disarmed, but cannot attack (only defend) and will be at Disadvantage until they stand up again.

**Vulnerability (action)** You can identify the Combat Skill Weakness of any one Character.

**Wild Gambit (attack):** Instead of rolling for Menace, roll Xd10 instead where X is your **Fortitude+1**. For each roll equal to or under your **Fortitude** you deal one Shallow Wound to your opponent. For each roll of 10, you suffer one Shallow Wound. This Talent must be declared before Menace is resolved.

## Third Circle

**Bleed (passive):** For the remainder of the combat, at the end of each combat round, any opponent you have injured this round also suffers an additional 1 Shallow Wound through blood loss. This loss comes at the end of the round. You still get to make a standard attack each round. The loss of blood is not cumulative and only affects a character or creature at the end of the round in which you injured them. For example, if you inflict a Deep Wound, at the end of the round the target also takes a Shallow Wound from blood loss, but the bleeding doesn't reoccur unless you injure them again.

**Behead (interrupt):** Change a Grievous Wound you inflict into a Mortal Wound instead. Ignores armour that isn't magical or natural (such as a creature's scales).

**Brutal Attack (interrupt)** For one attack, deal extra Shallow Wounds equal to your **Fortitude Attribute**.

**Charmed Fighter (passive)** For every double you roll on a Menace roll you inflict an additional 1 Shallow Wound. For every triple you roll, inflict an additional 1 Deep Wound.

**Clever Strike (passive)** Each time you roll an 1, 2 or 3 on an attack roll you lower your opponent's armour slots by 1. If you already have the Trait **Rend the Chinks**, then you lower your opponents armour if you roll a 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 on an attack roll. Remove the lowest slot first, then next highest etc. Does not work against magical armour or natural armour.

**Counteraction (interrupt)** You can cancel the effects of any one **Passive** Mastery-at-Arms Talent that an opponent has until the end of this Combat.

**Dire blow (interrupt)** You can choose to ignore armour for one attack. Dire Blow can be declared after your attack roll and Menace have already been resolved. A Dire Blow cannot be caught on a shield.

**Disarm (interrupt)** This move can only be used with a close-combat weapon (i.e. not archery or thrown weapons). If you deliver a Grievous Wound (or higher) you can opt to completely disarm your opponent instead.

**Dominate (passive)** Any enemy that you are currently engaged in hand-to-hand combat with no longer follows standard Initiative rules. Instead, they act immediately after you act each round. If you are fighting more than one opponent at once, they all act immediately after you, and the Gamesmaster determines exact order (if this is important).

**Exploit (interrupt)** If an opponent fails on their close-combat attack against you, you can decide to automatically deal one Shallow Wound in return. Does not work against ranged attacks or attacks made via magical spells.

**Finesse (interrupt)** For one attack, deal a number of Shallow Wounds equal to your **Quickness** instead of resolving Menace.

**Focus (action)** This action can only be used with ranged attacks, such as with a bow. You do not take any actions this round, and instead concentrate on your target. Next round you are allowed to make three consecutive attacks at +2 Skill and +2 Menace (all attacks trigger on your Initiative, the second attack follows immediately after the first, third after the second).

**Frenzy (interrupt)** This move can only be used for close-combat fighting (i.e. not archery or thrown weapons). Take three attacking actions this round. Your Attack Skills are at -1 and Menace is at -1 for the round (i.e. a Skill of 8 becomes 7, and a Weapon Menace of 6 becomes 5). All attacks against you bypass your armour. You cannot use a shield this round.

**Fortune Favours the Bold (interrupt):** You can decide to re-roll any one dice roll made by *any Character* (i.e. not just yourself) during the combat. You must accept the second result.

**Grand Channelling (action):** Requires you to be on full Essence score to use. Reduce your Essence to zero. For the remainder of this combat all your physical attacks can hurt creatures or characters that otherwise can only be hurt by enchanted weapons or magic.

**Hamstring (interrupt)** This move is specific to pole-arms that have a blade (spear, halberd, glaive etc). If you inflict a Grievous wound, you can opt to hamstring an opponent instead. A hamstringed opponent makes all subsequent attacks and actions at Disadvantage (roll 4d10, take highest three rolls) and moves at half their usual speed.

**Harry (interrupt)** You can automatically stop one Mastery-at-Arms Talent (*Action* or *Interrupt*). Harry is declared immediately after the action or interruption has been declared. It then cancels the previously declared action. The cancelled action cannot be used again in this combat. However, a Harry cannot be used to cancel a Harry.

**Haste (interrupt) :** This Talent will increase the next three of your Initiative values by +3 cumulatively (i.e. +3 first round, +6 next round, +9 next round). These bonuses replace any bonuses or penalties you might otherwise have received.

**Outthink (action)** A single opponent you are directly engaged with has their Quickness Defence reduced by 1 until the end of combat, to a lower limit of zero. For example, if a Character has a Quickness Defence of 3, it is reduced to 2. Note that this will make the character or creature easier for everyone to hit, not just you. To remain actively attacking you must direct at least one attack against the target every two Action Rounds.

**Quick of Body (action):** Roll Xd10 where X is your **Quickness** instead of 3d10 for Initiative, and take the most favourable three scores. Also add +1 to your Initiative at the start of each round for three rounds. Must be declared at the start of a battle before Initiative scores are resolved.

**Shield of the Champion (interrupt)** This move requires that you have a shield in hand. You can choose to block or deflect any one attack directed at you, or at someone standing nearby, whether ordinary, magical or supernatural, even if the block is rather implausible (i.e. you could block dragon fire if you wanted to do so). A slot is lost from the shield as per normal.

**Stout Stance (interrupt)** The next three times you receive a Wound, roll a d10. If you roll equal to or under your Fortitude reduce the Wound severity by one level.

**Sweep (interrupt)** If you deal a Grievous Wound to one opponent, you can deal a Shallow Wound to up to two other nearby opponents. The opponents must be standing sufficiently close that a carry-over attack is plausible. This is at the Gamesmaster's discretion.

## Fourth Circle

**Adjusted Modus (interrupt)** You can change the Combat Skill Weakness of any one Character to any other Combat Skill of your preference. This effect lasts as long as you are actively attacking the target Character (make an attack at least once every two Action Rounds).

**Arrows Aflame (passive)** You know how to apply an oil and rag to arrows to be set on fire whilst also retaining their ability to puncture and wound. It takes a minute to apply oil to each arrow and this must be done before combat. The oil lasts for about a week before it needs to be reapplied. Note that you need a source of fire to set the arrows aflame before loosing them. Add +1 to the Menace of any arrow you set on fire in this way. Anything you hit with a flaming arrow that is flammable has a 2/10 chance of catching on fire.

**Baffle (action)** A single opponent you are directly engaged with has their Quickness Defence *reduced to 1* until the end of combat. To remain actively attacking you must direct at least one attack against the target every two Action Rounds.

**Critical Blow (interrupt)** If you roll a 1 on a Menace roll you can opt to change the resulting wound to a Grievous Wound instead.

**Eviscerate (interrupt)** Automatically deal an additional 5 Shallow Wounds against a target following a successful inflicting of a Deep or Grievous wound.

**Grande Finesse (interrupt)** For one attack, deal a number of Deep Wounds equal to your **Quickness** instead of resolving Menace. Ignore all armour, including magical armour.

**Skilful Dance (interrupt):** Increase your Fighting Skills by 3 Ranks until the end of round.

**Lingering revenge (passive):** You have learned the trick of applying slow poisons or infectious filth to your weapons. At the end of the battle, anyone you injured who survived **Tests their Endure** (Diff 1). If the test fails, they contract a lethal disease, gangrene, blood poisoning or similar. Treat this a Level 8 Threat, tested once per day with the final effect 'death' and the active effect 'bedridden'. The poisonous liquor takes one round (about 30 sec) to apply.

**Maul (passive)** Only works for hacking or bludgeoning weapons. Whenever you deal a Grievous Wound your opponent also *permanently* loses a Wound Slot. Start with the lowest unwounded slot and work upwards.

**Minor Healing Tricks (action)** You can restore 1 lost Wound that is Shallow or Deep to yourself or another. Minor Healing Tricks is only used outside of combat and requires an hour of rest (by the injured Character) afterwards to work. This Talent can be used multiple times, but it can only be used once per day on a given character (i.e. the most you can restore to a Character using this Talent is 1 Wound every 24 hours).

**Recreant Tricks (passive):** You have learned the trick of applying caustic tar or flaming oil to your weapons. Add 1 to the score of your Menace rolls for the remainder of the combat (i.e. if you score 2 successes, increase this to 3 successes). The tar or oil takes a full round to apply (about 30 seconds). You cannot apply it before battle because it slowly eats away at the weapon. It must be thoroughly cleaned off after fighting or the weapon will corrode. Only works on close-combat weapons that are steel (i.e. you can't apply burning oil to a quarterstaff or cudgel).

**Unarm (interrupt)** If you deliver a Deep or Grievous Wound you can opt to completely disarm your opponent instead.

**Uncanny Grit (interrupt):** Costs three Effort. Remove two Wounds from your Character. Start with the lowest level wound first.

**Unpleasant Wound (action)** Make an attack as normal. If you succeed in wounding an opponent, then that opponent can only make one attack per round until the end of the

combat. This attack is useful against creatures or characters that have more than one attack per round.

**Yell of the Warrior (interrupt):** Restore your Effort to full. You still get to make a standard attack this round.

## Fifth Circle

**Dismember (interrupt):** When you deal a Deep or Grievous wound, you can choose to hack off a limb. The enemy immediately takes an extra Grievous Wound, and will lose 1 Shallow Wound at the end of the round for 10 rounds due to bleeding, or until healed or cauterised. If they continue to fight, they will do so at Disadvantage (roll 4d10 and take highest 3 rolls).

**Eerie Potency of Self (passive)** Using an ordinary weapon you can hurt creatures or entities that usually can only be harmed by enchanted weapons or magic. No Essence spend is required, but if your Essence drops to zero, the effect no longer works.

**Major Healing Tricks (action)** Reduce the severity of any one wound by one level, applied to yourself or another. Major Healing Tricks is only used outside of combat and requires an hour of rest. This Talent can be used multiple times, but it can only be used once per day on a given character (i.e. the most you can heal for a Character using this Talent is 1 Wound level every 24 hours). This Talent cannot save a Character who has received a Mortal Wound on its own, but if applied to a Character who is being kept alive (See **Stave off Death**, Rank Five) after combat has finished, it can then save their life by changing the Mortal Wound to a Felling Wound.

**Monster Hunter (passive)** If an opponent is not human and has more Fortitude than you do, add +3 Skill and +3 Menace to all attack and menace resolutions you inflict against it (i.e. if you have a Skill of 8, this is increased to 11, and a Weapon Menace of 7 would increase to 10).

**Red Fury (interrupt):** If you succeed on two attack rolls on two consecutive rounds, you can enter into a battle fury. While in this state: all wounds you inflict are increased by one level (i.e. glancing to shallow, etc), but your own armour is ignored. If you deal a Grievous or Felling Wound while in this state, you automatically kill the opponent. You cannot

die until the end of the combat. That is, even if you take Mortal Wounds, you will continue to fight, but you will die once the battle is over.

**Stave off Death (interrupt)** If you can physically reach a Character who has received a Mortal Wound before death results (i.e. as long as they are no more than 20 paces away), you can hold off death by stopping bleeding and applying first aid. However, you can take no other actions during the remainder of the fight and must stay with the Character. This action works only at the Gamesmaster's discretion. If a Character has been beheaded, staving off death is unlikely to work. This action will keep a person alive until magical or herbal healing can be brought to the character.

**Weird Speed (interrupt) :** Increase your Initiative by +20.