



Fortune's Die Weapons

Introduction

This is a set of rules for **D20** medieval fantasy systems. It is intended to replace both the existing charts of weapons for systems as well as the section of rules for designing new weapons. The replacement weapon charts use the design rules to give an internally balanced set of example weapons. To be clear, these are rules for players to create system-balanced weapons that would exist in the campaign world, not crafting rules for characters.

This is the annotated (A) version of the document. It contains the design notes in the text. For a shorter version which hides the design notes in tooltips, use the basic (B) version of the document. For a reference sheet, use the concise (C) version of the document.

This version of the document only includes the melee weapons. Ranged weapons may be addressed as well in a future version.

Adding These Rules To Your Campaign

A game master who wishes to use this in their campaign should choose one of the following rules and add it to their house rules list for the campaign. In any of the options, the game master may build their own custom weapons as recommended local or cultural weapons, using the formulas given. The rules options are listed from largest to smallest change from the base system; the first is recommended.

Note that if the players are allowed to use the formulas, the example weapons will also be included, since all of the weapons on the example list can be built directly from the formulas. The game master may want to rename or re flavor weapons on the chart in order to fit their setting, or provide a new chart entirely.

W1: Unrestricted Design

The players may use any weapon given on the example weapon charts, and may design any weapon that follows the formulas given. The game master might reject or adjust the flavor for a weapon that is not consistent with the campaign, but any stat set based on the formulas is acceptable.

W2: Restricted Design

The players may use any weapon given on the example weapon charts, and may design any weapon that follow the formulas given, after submitting it to the game master for their approval.

W3: Weapon Chart Replacement

The players can use any weapon on the example weapon charts, and any additional weapons given to them by the game master, but may not create new weapons.

W4: Additional Weapons List

The players must use the game's standard weapon list, but additional weapons may be provided by the game master, using the formulas below.

Advanced Worldbuilding

In a setting where large differences of metalworking technology and weapon design are present, or when building a campaign setting which will incorporate historical shifts in these fields, the game master can represent the scale from primitive to standard to advanced by giving each a different weapon design budget. For the most advanced group, use the budgets as given. These represent the pinnacle of melee weapon design and metalworking capability, advancing to counter improvements in armor and to complement new fighting styles. For less advanced cultures, build weapons with 1 fewer weapon design point. For truly primitive weapons, build weapons with 2 fewer weapon design points.

In such a setting, a different set of standard weapons should be built for each level of technology. If the more advanced groups have a shared history of warfare with the less advanced groups, you are encouraged to build earlier and later versions of the same weapon, showing the progression in their design. Some intermediate versions may have an unspent point, as there is no natural option to spend it on. In such cases, consider building a ceremonial or artistic version (with performance), or splitting the die (to represent refinement in consistency).

Designing New Weapons

Complexity

When designing a new weapon, assign it to a category (Simple, Martial, or Exotic) based on its complexity, not its commonality, and read 'exotic' as 'complicated'.

The **D20** system differentiates both commonality and complexity on the same scale. Since exotic vs. common is a flavor consideration and varies heavily on the setting, we have shifted the terms slightly so that it only reflects complexity.

Budget

A weapon's design budget is determined by its handedness and complexity. Together, these determine the budget of the weapon in design points (abbreviated β throughout). To stat out a weapon, first determine its handedness: light/double(2β), one-handed(4β), or two-handed(9β). Then determine its

1.3. DESIGNING NEW WEAPONS



complexity: simple(+0 β), martial(+2 β), or exotic(+4 β).

If you can't afford all of the features you want in a weapon, consider whether it should be in a higher complexity category. Alternatively, cull the trick list down to the essentials, then start reducing critical modifiers. If your budget has unspent points, increase the damage or critical multipliers, or split the die. It is recommended that weapons not leave points unspent, but a single unspent β will not greatly weaken a weapon.

	Design Budget (β)		
	Simple	Martial	Exotic
L/D	2	4	6
1H	4	6	8
2H	9	11	13

Double Weapons

To build a double weapon, build each head separately, with the restrictions that the simple weapons have to be the same head, martial weapons can differ only in damage type and critical range/multiplier, and exotic weapons can have entirely different heads.

Damage Type

Weapons start with one damage type: Blunt, Piercing, or Slashing. Weapons may have additional damage types added for 1β each. The designer can choose whether this addition is an 'or' (such as with polearms with multiple striking methods) or an 'and' (such as spiked maces).

In the few cases where damage type matters, there appear to be no disadvantages to having the damage types be 'or', chosen on swing, and a small handful of examples where having 'and' would be disadvantageous. This choice should be made based on the flavor of the weapon.

Damage Die

Weapons have a base damage die of 1d4 for human-sized characters (medium size in **D20**, size 0 in *Fortune's Die*). To increase the damage die type by one step costs 2β . Light and double weapons can increase the die type once, one-handed weapons twice, and two-handed weapons four times. Exotic weapons can increase the damage die for light and one-handed weapons an additional time, but may not split the die if they do.

Die Progression: 1d4→1d6→1d8→1d10→1d12. For systems that use a smaller die for smaller characters, decrease the die by one step, reducing 1d4 to 1d3.

Split Die

For 1β the damage die can be split: 1d8→2d4, 1d10→1d4+1d6, or 1d12→2d6. For players with d2's or d3's in their die bag, 1d4→2d2 or 1d6→2d3 is possible as

well. 1d3 splits to 1d2+1 and 1d2 splits to the constant '2'. If using a die program, one can split 1d10→2d5 instead. If a weapon has a split die and is built for a smaller or larger creature, shift the damage die as if it was unsplit, then split the result as appropriate.

Increasing the die type by one step improves the average damage by 1 and the maximum damage by 2, for a cost of 2β , while splitting the die improves the average damage by $\frac{1}{2}$ and the minimum damage by 1, for a cost of 1β .

Critical Modifiers

Weapons start with a critical of '20/x2'. To increase either the critical range or multiplier by one step costs 2β . Weapons cannot increase either category more than twice.

Increasing either category by one step improves a weapon's damage by at most $\frac{1}{20}$ of the total damage. The second and third improvements (if done in alternating categories), by at most $\frac{1}{10}$. While this could be better modeled by a cheaper starting cost and an increasing cost for each previous step, the formula above was chosen both for its simplicity, as well as better fitting to the existing weapon curve between the prototypical simple and martial weapons. Since the first step is the least efficient, it requires multiple steps before the efficiency is better than just purchasing a higher damage die, and the balance is close enough.

Reach

A weapon starts with a reach of

1. It threatens spaces within the wielder's reach (1 space or 5 feet for human-sized creatures). To increase a weapon's reach to 2 costs 2β , letting the wielder threaten creatures at a distance of two spaces (10 feet), but not at its normal reach.

Reach	β
1	0
2	2
3	2
1-2	4
2-3	4

For larger or smaller creatures, treat

these numbers as multipliers of its normal reach. Some weapons have a variable reach. They can threaten multiple spaces simultaneously. For each additional distance the weapon can be wielded at, increase the cost by 2β .

Range

While nearly any weapon can be improvised as a thrown object, some melee weapons are designed to be thrown and have the same characteristics when thrown as when used in melee, except that they use range instead of reach. To add the Thrown ability to a weapon costs 1β and gives the weapon a thrown range increment of 2 spaces (10 feet). Doubling the cost to 2β gives Hurling with a range increment of 4 spaces (20 feet).

This ability is for adding the thrown capability to melee weapons. Designing a thrown weapon which is not intended for melee use is covered separately.



Tricks

A weapon may have additional ‘tricks’, combat maneuvers that it is especially suited for. These use the standard rules for weapons with that trick in the **D20** system you are using. Simple weapons may have at most one trick, martial weapons at most two. Exotic weapons can have as many tricks as you can budget.

Each trick costs 1β : Adaptable, Attached, Block, Brace, Concealed, Disarm, Distracting, Grapple, Non-lethal, Performance, Sunder, Trip.

Weapons no longer have the Monk or Finesse trick. A character can use *Flurry of Blows* or *Weapon Finesse* with any light weapon they are proficient with, and only light weapons can be used with *Weapon Finesse*.

Note that several weapon special abilities, like fragile or traditional were omitted. This was intentional, as they upset the balance of player-designed weapons or they utilized rules that don’t pertain to the balance of the weapon in standard campaign combat. The comparative value of the various weapon tricks can be debated. In the interests of simplicity, and because the standard system does so, each one was given the same cost. The value relative to weapon damage or critical modifiers can also be debated, but our analysis suggests that a die bump is worth more than any one trick.

Adaptable Weapons

Adaptable weapons are those which have a two-handed fighting style and a one-handed or double weapon fighting style, such as the hand-and-a-half sword or weighted chain. To build an adaptable weapon, build a one-handed or double weapon with a full budget, spending 1β on the ‘Adaptable’ trait. Then build a separate two-handed weapon (of the same complexity) with its own budget, also spending 1β on the Adaptable trait.

The two-handed version of a one-handed weapon must have everything that the one-handed weapon does, or better. Thus, it must have the same or better damage die, the same or better critical range and multiplier, and all of the tricks the one-handed weapon does. You may increase the reach (but not decrease it) and add additional tricks. When wielding the adaptable weapon in one hand, use the one-handed stats, and when wielding it in two hands, use the two-handed stats.

The two-handed version of a double weapon should be based off of one end (if different), and as above, be as good or better than that head in every way.

Weapon Groups

If weapon fighter group rules are being used, each weapon can be assigned a weapon group based on its flavor. It is suggested that weapon groups be given a unifying theme, such as axes being slashing weapons with a x3 critical multiplier (or higher), while swords are slashing weapons with a 19-20 critical range (or better). Flails should all have disarm and trip,

while polearms should all have reach. These grouping requirements will vary from campaign to campaign.

Later versions of this document may expand this section to give a set of default requirements for the standard weapon groups, instead of leaving this task to individual game masters, depending on feedback and interest expressed by constituents using these rules.

Costs and Weights

Light weapons weigh 1 pound, one-handed weapons weigh 2 pounds, and double or two-handed weapons weigh 5 pounds or 10 pounds if they have reach. (If using kilograms, shift this to 0.5kg, 1kg, 2kg, and 4kg respectively.)

The weights given are not intended to be real-world values for the weights of these weapons. Rather, they are intended to be a simple rule for **D20** encumbrance systems.

In order to make costs generic, fix the cost of a light simple weapon in your setting to 1Φ , then use the chart below. For example, if a light simple weapon such as a knife were costed at the historically nonsensical price of 2gp, a two-handed martial weapon would cost 20gp.

The costs given are as multiples of the cheapest weapon, and are again, not intended to be real-world values. Although existing systems try to use cost and weight as balancing factors for weapons, or try to use them as real-world flavor, the mix of both results in an inconsistent system that doesn’t correspond to reality. Other than at character creation, the cost differential between two weapons in the same category (and eventually between categories) is largely irrelevant, so that factor is removed.

	Cost (Φ)		
	Simple	Martial	Exotic
L	1Φ	2Φ	4Φ
1H	2.5Φ	5Φ	10Φ
D/2H	5Φ	10Φ	20Φ

Example Weapons

The example weapon charts on the following pages use the rules above faithfully. As a result, any weapon on them should be internally balanced to the other weapons on them, as well as to any weapon designed using the above rules. Several prototypical **D20** weapons are included as benchmarks on the charts. Any weapon which uses the same name as one in the SRD should have exactly the same characteristics in combat (but might differ in cost and weight). Not every weapon that could be replicated was included, just several familiar anchor points for players to orient themselves. This

1.5. EXAMPLE WEAPON CHARTS



list is also not exhaustive of either all weapons found in the prototypical medieval middle European setting, or of all the weapons that the rules can emulate. It is intended as a starting point or an example of using the rules above.

Weapons marked with a † have exactly the same combat statistics as they do on the chart in the book (not necessarily including any special text in the description). Weapons which were modified to fit the new formulas were renamed.

Handedness	Type	Quick Reference		Cost (Φ)
		Budget (β)	Weight	
Light	Simple	2		1
	Martial	4	1	2
	Exotic	6		4
One-Handed	Simple	4		2.5
	Martial	6	2	5
	Exotic	8		10
Two-Handed	Simple	9		5
	Martial	11	5 (10 with reach)	10
	Exotic	13		20
Double	Simple	2		5
	Martial	4	5	10
	Exotic	6		20

Example Weapon Charts

Simple Weapons

Light Simple Weapons

Cost: 1Φ Weight 1 lb.

Name	Die	Critical	Reach	Type	Special
Dirk	1d4	20/x3		P	
Knife	1d4	19-20/x2		S	
† Mace, Light	1d6	20/x2		B	
Spike-Studded Gauntlet	1d4	20/x2		P/B	Attached

One-Handed Simple Weapons

Cost: 2.5Φ Weight 2 lb.

Name	Die	Critical	Reach	Type	Special
Brush Knife	1d6	19-20/x2		S	
Cleaver	1d8	20/x2		S	
Goad	1d6	20/x3		P	
† Mace, Heavy	1d8	20/x2		B	
Shortspear	1d6	20/x2		P	Hurled



1.5. EXAMPLE WEAPON CHARTS

Two-Handed Simple Weapons				Cost: 5Φ	Weight 10 lb. if reach, otherwise 5 lb.	
Name	Die	Critical	Reach	Type	Special	
Axe, Forester's	1d12	20/x2		S	Sunder	
Half Staff	1d8	20/x2	1-2	B	Block	
† Longspear	1d8	20/x3	2	P	Brace	
Miner's Pick	2d4	20/x4		P		
Pitchfork	1d8	20/x3	2	P	Disarm	
Sledge	2d6	20/x2		B		
† Spear	1d8	20/x3		P	Brace, Hurled	
† Quarterstaff	1d6	20/x2		B	Double	

Martial Weapons

Light Martial Weapons				Cost: 2Φ	Weight 1 lb.	
Name	Die	Critical	Reach	Type	Special	
† Handaxe	1d6	20/x3		S		
Kukri	1d4	18-20/x2		S		
† Pick, Light	1d4	20/x4		P		
Quickblade	1d4	19-20/x2		P	Thrown, Concealed	
† Short Sword	1d6	19-20/x2		P		
Tomahawk	1d4	20/x3		S	Hurled	

One-Handed Martial Weapons				Cost: 5Φ	Weight 2 lb.	
Name	Die	Critical	Reach	Type	Special	
† Battleaxe	1d8	20/x3		S		
† Cutlass	1d6	18-20/x2		S		
† Flail	1d8	20/x2		B	Disarm, Trip	
Jarid	1d8	20/x2		P	Hurled	
† Long Sword	1d8	19-20/x2		S		
Military Hammer	1d8	20/x2		P/B	Sunder	
† Pick, Heavy	1d6	20/x4		P		
Sabre	1d6	19-20/x3		S		
Truncheon	2d4	20/x2		B	Nonlethal	
† Warhammer	1d8	20/x3		B		

Two-Handed Martial Weapons				Cost: 10Φ	Weight 10 lb. if reach, otherwise 5 lb.	
Name	Die	Critical	Reach	Type	Special	
† Bardiche	1d10	19-20/x2	2	S	Brace	
† Glaive-Guisarme	1d10	20/x3	2	S	Brace	
Goedendag	1d10	19-20/x3		P/B		
† Greatsword	2d6	19-20/x2		S		
Hand-and-Half Sword	1d12	19-20/x2		S	Adaptable	
Heavy Axe	2d6	20/x3		S		
Hooked Poleaxe	1d10	20/x3	2	S	Trip	
Military Fork	1d8	20/x4	2	P	Disarm	
Pick, Military	2d4	19-20/x4		P		
Pike	1d10	20/x2	2-3	P	Brace	
Partisan	1d10	20/x2	1-2	P	Brace	
War Maul	2d6	20/x2		P/B	Sunder	
Double Spear	1d6	20/x3		P	Double	

1.5. EXAMPLE WEAPON CHARTS



Exotic Weapons

Light Exotic Weapons				Cost: 4Φ	Weight 1 lb.
Name	Die	Critical	Reach	Type	Special
† Aklys	1d6	20/x2		B	Hurled, Performance, Trip
Dragnet, Light	1d4	20/x2	2	B	Disarm, Trip, Grapple, Nonlethal
Goblin Ripper	1d6	19-20/x3		S	
Orcpiercer	1d8	20/x3		P	
Spring Blackjack	1d6	19-20/x2		B	Nonlethal, Concealed
Swordbreaker	1d6	19-20/x2		S	Disarm, Sunder
Assassin's Blade	1d4	19-20/x4		P	
Throwing Spikes	1d4	19-20/x3		P	Concealed, Thrown

One-Handed Exotic Weapons				Cost: 10Φ	Weight 2 lb.
Name	Die	Critical	Reach	Type	Special
Balanced Pigsticker	2d4	20/x3		P	Adaptable
Assassin's Sword	1d6	19-20/x4		P	
Ogrepiercer	1d10	20/x3		P	
† Falcata	1d8	20/x3		S	
Half Bladestaff	1d8	19-20/x3		S	
Hand-and-Half Sword	2d4	19-20/x2		S	Adaptable
Hooked Sword	1d8	19-20/x2		S	Disarm, Trip
† Rhoka	1d8	20/x4		S	
Weighted Whip	1d4	20/x2	2-3	B	Nonlethal, Grapple, Disarm, Trip

Two-Handed Exotic Weapons				Cost: 20Φ	Weight 10 lb. if reach, otherwise 5 lb.
Name	Die	Critical	Reach	Type	Special
Balanced Pigsticker	1d10	20/x3	1-2	P	Adaptable
Dragnet, Heavy	2d4	20/x2	2-3	B	Disarm, Trip, Grapple, Nonlethal
† Fauchard	1d10	18-20/x2	2	S	Trip
† Flying Blade	1d12	20/x3	2	S	Performance
Footman's Long Flail	2d6	20/x2	2	B	Trip, Disarm
Full Bladestaff	2d6	19-20/x3		S	
Giantpiercer	2d6	20/x4		P	
Headsmen's Axe	2d4	18-20/x4		S	
Hooked Longpike	1d10	20/x2	2-3	P	Trip, Brace, Disarm
† Longhammer, Dwarven	2d6	20/x3	2	B	
Puzzle Staff	1d10	20/x2		B/P	Nonlethal, Grapple, Disarm, Trip, Brace, Sunder
Scourge Flail	1d12	19-20/x2		B/P	Disarm, Trip
Weighted Chain	1d8	20/x2	2-3	B	Adaptable, Disarm, Distract, Grapple, Trip

Exotic Double Weapons				Cost: 20Φ	Weight 5 lb.
Name	Die	Critical	Reach	Type	Special
† Axe, Orc Double	1d8	20/x3		S	Double
Crescent Antler Sword	1d6	19-20/x2		P	Double, Block, Disarm
† Flail, Dire	1d8	20/x2		B	Double, Disarm, Trip
Kusarigama (L)	1d8	19-20/x2		S	Double
Kusarigama (R)	1d4	20/x2	1-2	B	Double, Disarm, Trip
† Sword, Two-Bladed	1d8	19-20/x2		S	Double



Robert's Ramblings

What's Broken

The **D20** weapon charts are a mess. They're not internally balanced within a given category. A full analysis of those imbalances won't be done here, but they are apparent when looking at items such as the greataxe vs. the greatsword vs. the greatclub, or the mace vs. the morning star.

Even the rules provided in the book to design your own weapons don't ameliorate the problem, as they are for game masters to insert a new weapon into their campaign, not for the players to use. To make things worse, the formulas don't match up in a sensible way to the other weapons provided, or to the relative costs of exotic vs. martial proficiency vs. being able to use simple weapons.

Additionally, the **D20** system differentiates both commonality and complexity on the same scale; some simple weapons are actually 'common' weapons, which are culturally entrenched in the setting and easy to acquire, and not necessarily very simple to use, such as the sling. Other simple weapons, such as the morningstar, are easy to use, but would not be found in the average peasant village. 'Exotic' weapons, on the other hand, covers both complex and exotic weapons. Unusual weapons like the khopesh or kama are as easy to learn as their local equivalents, the sword and the sickle, but are from a different culture than the one the setting is based on. Complex weapons, like the whip or exotic polearms, are as commonly found in the setting as many martial weapons, but are hard to learn and master. Some weapons, like the kusarigama, are both hard to use and not native to the setting.

How We Fixed It

The idea is simple: Players should be able to freely choose a weapon that fits the flavor of their character without being penalized mechanically for imbalances between the weapons on the weapon list.

The intention of this set of rules is to be a complete replacement for the weapons chart in your **D20** game. It is a GM option to include the rules, but the specific weapon construction can then be left up to the players. While charts are provided giving example weapons, players should be allowed to build whatever set of features they can afford for a given complexity and handedness

with an appropriate flavor to describe the combination.

The difference between simple, martial, and exotic is increased in effect, and they are used as synonyms for 'simple', 'easy with training', and 'hard to use well' in building the weapon flavors and mechanics.

In the real-world eras corresponding to fantasy roleplaying, every smith had their own variations on a weapon, most easily seen in the variations of design in the one-handed sword and in the huge varieties of polearms throughout the period. It makes sense that characters in such a setting would be wielding a wide variety of weapons with various quirks or characteristics.

Fortune's Die

This document is a recreation of rules I worked up for my home campaigns back in the late 90's and expanded in the early 00's, back when the current edition of **D20** was still Dungeons and Dragons 3rd Edition. I have revised it to fit within the larger framework between 3.5 and Pathfinder today.

These rules should fit neatly into any medieval fantasy **D20** campaign, and work with the existing Pathfinder and 3.5 rules. However, they are a small piece of a much larger project that we will be publishing in chunks, the *Fortune's Die* system. This system graduated from house rules to a full system in 2004 and was revised through 2008, when work stopped on it in recognition that the niche it would occupy had been already seized by the Pathfinder system. As Pathfinder has aged, the flaws it has carried with it from 3rd Edition are more evident, and we feel the time has come to address them with an updated version of *Fortune's Die*.

More Stuff!

We hope that this rules module makes your **D20** games smoother and more enjoyable. For other modules, visit us at <http://tinyurl.com/gmupenl>. To support work on future modules, choose 'Pay what you want' for this module or donate to us at <https://www.patreon.com/FortuynGames>. To try out our other stuff, check out <http://FortuynGames.com>.

Credits

Author: Robert Fortuyn

Feedback: Stuart Files, Ed Schumacher

Robert Fortuyn

