

The Martial Artist (Modular Version)

This advanced class is intended to replace the advanced class of the same name in the *d20 Modern* role-playing game. It is a modular class comparable to the *d20 Modern* basic classes in that it offers a very large range of abilities that can be selected by players.

The goal of this version of the class is to simulate the range of approaches to unarmed and melee combat depicted by popular culture in action, spy, or martial arts genres. It simulates various forms of martial arts with a much greater level of detail than the standard version.

In fact, this class provides what is probably more detail than most campaigns need. The standard version provides a perfectly adequate picture of a fast and powerful unarmed fighter: if you just want a basic, classic martial artist, the standard version is just fine.

However, this version should be quite welcome in some campaigns: sometimes, the added depth and variation of this version can be very helpful. For example, a player may want to play a practitioner of a specific martial art that the existing version doesn't model well, or the setting might be one in which the characters are likely to encounter lots of NPCs with martial arts training, and it would help to distinguish between their styles (a campaign set in the Orient, say, or one involving international superspies who tend to have martial arts training).

The first version of this class appeared on the message boards at the gaming site EN World (<http://enworld.cyberstreet.com>). Any and all feedback should be directed there, in the form of message board posts (I post there under the handle "comrade raoul").

Hit Die: d8

Action Points: 6 + one-half character level, rounded down, every time the martial artist attains a new level in this class.

Requirements

To qualify to become a martial artist, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

Base Attack Bonus: +3

Skills: Jump 3 ranks

Feats: Combat Martial Arts, Defensive Martial Arts

Class Skills

The martial artist's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Escape Artist (Dex), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (current events, popular culture, theology and philosophy) (Int), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (dance) (Cha), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis), Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 3 + Int modifier.

Class Features

The following features pertain to the martial artist advanced class.

Martial Arts: At 1st, 2nd, 4th, 7th, and 8th levels, a martial artist chooses one of twenty-three martial arts abilities. Martial arts abilities are like feats, but they are generally more specialized and are only available to students of various martial arts. Some martial arts abilities have prerequisites (typically, other martial arts abilities or martial artist class levels).

The martial artist selects her abilities from the following list (ability descriptions are available in the next section): Body Hardening, Circle Kick, Defensive Catch, Deflect Arrows, Eagle Claw, Flurry of Blows, Flying Kick, Iron Skin, Joint Lock, Ki Master, Leap of the Clouds, Living Weapon, Martial Arts Weapon Expert, Martial Arts Weapon Master, Peaceful Stance, Power Punch, Quivering Palm, Sixth Sense, Slow Fall, Still Mind, Strike Without Thought, Stunning Fist, Third Eye.

Exotic Weapons: A martial artist receives the Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency feats with the kama, shuriken, and nunchaku for free.

Bonus Feats: At 3rd, 6th, and 9th level, the martial artist gets a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the martial artist must meet all the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Acrobatic, Brawl, Advanced Combat Martial Arts, Agile Riposte, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Cleave, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Combat Throw, Dodge, Elusive Target, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency, Great Cleave, Improved Brawl, Improved Combat Throw, Mobility, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Spring Attack, Unbalance Opponent.

Ki Ability: At 5th level, the martial artist can choose one of five special abilities that allow her to draw upon the power of her ki, or inner vital energy. This ability improves at 10th level.

Deflect Bullets: The martial artist may spend 1 action point in order to use the Deflect Arrows ability to deflect one attack made from a firearm or other exceptional ranged weapon. At 10th level, she may also attempt to deflect all subsequent ranged attacks (including bullets) for the remainder of the round (this overrides the normal limit of one use of Deflect Arrows per round). *Prerequisite:* Third Eye, Deflect Arrows.

Iron Fist: The martial artist may spend 1 action point to increase the damage she deals to a single opponent with a single unarmed strike. The martial artist declares the use of the action point after making a successful unarmed strike. The result of the action point roll is added to the damage roll for that attack. At 10th level, the martial artist adds the result of the action point roll to all successful attacks she makes in a round.

TABLE: THE MARTIAL ARTIST

| Class Level | Base Attack | Fortitude Save | Reflex Save | Will Save | Special Abilities | Defense Bonus | Reputation Bonus |
|-------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|-----------|------------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| 1 | +1 | +0 | +2 | +0 | Martial arts, exotic weapons | +1 | +0 |
| 2 | +2 | +0 | +3 | +0 | Martial arts | +2 | +0 |
| 3 | +3 | +1 | +3 | +1 | Bonus feat | +2 | +0 |
| 4 | +4 | +1 | +4 | +1 | Martial arts | +3 | +0 |
| 5 | +5 | +1 | +4 | +1 | Ki ability (basic) | +4 | +1 |
| 6 | +6 | +2 | +5 | +2 | Bonus feat | +4 | +1 |
| 7 | +7 | +2 | +5 | +2 | Martial arts | +5 | +1 |
| 8 | +8 | +2 | +6 | +2 | Martial arts | +6 | +1 |
| 9 | +9 | +3 | +6 | +3 | Bonus feat | +6 | +2 |
| 10 | +10 | +3 | +7 | +3 | Ki ability (advanced) | +7 | +2 |

Maximized Attacks: The martial artist may spend 1 action point to cause maximum possible damage when attacking with the weapon she has applied Martial Arts Weapon Specialization to. The martial artist declares the use of the action point after making a successful melee attack. Determine the highest possible damage according to the weapon's normal dice (for example, 6 points for a nunchaku), and add all normal damage bonuses. At 10th level, the martial artist deals maximum damage with all successful attacks she makes in a round. *Prerequisite:* Martial Arts Weapon Specialization.

Pressure Points: The martial artist may spend 1 action point to make his attacks against vital points (Stunning Fist or Quivering Palm) more effective. The martial artist declares the use of the action point after making a successful attack roll. The result of the action point roll is added to the DC of a Stunning Fist attack, or the DC of a Quivering Palm attack is increased by +2. At 10th level, the victim of such an attack suffers 1d2 points of Strength damage (if struck by a Stunning Fist) or 1d6 points of Constitution damage (if struck by a Quivering Palm), even if his saving throw is successful. *Prerequisite:* Stunning Fist.

Wholeness of Body: The martial artist may spend 1 action point to cure her own wounds. She rolls 2d6, adding her Wisdom modifier to each die, and heals that amount (a martial artist with a Wisdom of 14 heals 2d6+4 hit points). Using this ability is a full-round action that provokes an attack of opportunity, and can only be done once per 24 hour period. At 10th level, the martial artist can cure 3d6 points of damage (again adding her Wisdom modifier to each die), and can do so as a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. *Prerequisite:* Still Mind.

Appendix One: Martial Arts Ability Descriptions

The following are the descriptions and rules for each martial arts ability.

Body Hardening: The martial artist ignores the first 3 points of any non-lethal damage she suffers.

Circle Kick: As an attack action, the martial artist may make an unarmed attack with a -4 penalty on her attack roll. If this attack succeeds, the martial artist may immediately make a second unarmed attack against another adjacent opponent at the same attack bonus (but with the same penalty). A martial artist with both this ability and Flying Kick may use both at once. *Prerequisite:* Living Weapon, 7th level.

Defensive Catch: In melee combat, if an opponent attacks and misses the martial artist, she may immediately initiate a grapple against the opponent. This counts as an attack of opportunity. If the martial artist initiates a grapple in this way, or when making any other attack of opportunity, she does not provoke an attack of opportunity yourself when grabbing.

Deflect Arrows: Once per round, when the martial artist would normally be hit with a ranged weapon, she may make a Reflex saving throw against a DC of 20. If she succeeds, the martial artist deflects the weapon (doing so doesn't count as an action). The character must be aware of the attack and not flat-footed. Normally, bullets or other modern ranged weapons can't be deflected. The martial artist must be unarmored to use this ability. *Prerequisite:* Third Eye.

Eagle Claw: The martial artist ignores half of an object's hardness when making unarmed attacks against it. *Prerequisite:* Living Weapon.

Flurry of Blows: The martial artist gains the ability to strike with a flurry of blows at the expense of accuracy. With a flurry of blows, the martial artist may make one extra attack in a round at her highest base attack bonus. This attack and each other attack made in the round take a -2 penalty. In order to use this ability, the martial artist must be unarmored, and she must make unarmed strikes unless she has the Martial Arts Weapon Specialization ability, in which case she can attack with the weapon she applied that ability to. Using this ability is a full-round action. *Prerequisite:* 7th level.

Flying Kick: The martial artist can use a charge to deliver a devastating flying kick to an opponent. At the end of this charge, the martial artist adds her class level as a bonus to the damage she deals with an unarmed strike. The martial artist must be unarmored to use this ability. *Prerequisite:* Leap of the Clouds, Living Weapon.

Iron Skin: The martial artist gains a +1 natural armor bonus to his Defense. *Prerequisite:* Body Hardening.

Joint Lock: The martial artist may add her Intelligence modifier to all grapple checks, and may choose to establish a joint lock when grappling instead of pinning or causing damage. She makes an opposed grapple check; if she succeeds, she establishes the joint lock. Characters held in a joint lock are immobile as though they were pinned; however, if they attempt to escape from the pin, they suffer 1d10 points of lethal damage (plus any of the martial artist's usual bonuses to unarmed damage), and 1d2 points of Strength or Dexterity damage (the martial artist chooses which). Alternatively, the martial artist may choose to cause this damage as a free action, ending the joint lock but maintaining the grapple.

Ki Master: The martial artist may harness her inner vital energies by meditating for a full round and making a Concentration skill check at DC 15. If she succeeds, she gains a temporary Action Point. If she does not use that Action Point in the next minute, she loses it. Multiple uses of this ability are cumulative. The martial artist can't use this ability a number of times per day greater than her Wisdom modifier (minimum 1). *Prerequisite:* Still Mind.

Leap of the Clouds: The martial artist gains a +10 bonus on Jump checks, and doubles her height for purposes of determining her maximum jumping ability. The martial artist must be unarmored to use this ability.

Living Weapon: The martial artist attacks with either fist interchangeably, or even with elbows, knees, and feet. This means that the martial artist may even make unarmed strikes when her hands are full, and there is no such thing as an off-hand attack for a martial artist striking unarmed.

The martial artist also deals more damage with unarmed strikes: normally, she deals 1d6 points of damage with an unarmed strike (this may be lethal or non-lethal damage, at the martial artist's discretion). Martial artists who have taken the Brawl or Improved Brawl feats can hit harder and make better use of their bodies, causing greater damage (1d8 points with Brawl, or 1d10 points with Improved Brawl).

Martial Arts Weapon Expert: A martial artist picks one of the following melee weapons: chain, kama, katana, nunchaku, shuriken, tonfa, three-section staff. She gains a +2 bonus to damage rolls with that weapon. The martial artist can choose this ability more than once, choosing a different weapon each time. This does not stack with the Soldier advanced class's Weapon Specialization class feature. *Prerequisite:* Weapon Focus in the appropriate weapon.

Martial Arts Weapon Master: The critical threat range of the weapon that the martial artist has applied Martial Arts Weapon Specialization to is increased by one, and the martial artist gains the ability to automatically confirm a critical hit when attacking with that weapon, eliminating the need to roll to confirm a critical hit. This doesn't stack with the Soldier advanced class's Improved Critical class feature. *Prerequisite:* Martial Arts Weapon Specialization, Weapon Focus.

Peaceful Stance: The martial artist adds her class level to her Defense when taking the full defense action in combat. The martial artist must be unarmored to use this ability. *Prerequisite:* Third Eye.

Power Punch: The martial artist causes an additional 1d4 points of non-lethal damage when using the Brawl or Improved Brawl feats to make an unarmed attack for non-lethal damage. This can't be used at the same time as Living Weapon.

Quivering Palm: The martial artist gains the ability to use the dreaded quivering palm attack. She can use the quivering palm attack once a week, and the martial artist must announce her intent before making her attack roll. Creatures immune to critical hits cannot be affected. The martial artist must be of higher level than the target (or have more levels than the target's number of Hit Dice). If the martial artist strikes successfully and the target takes damage from the blow, the quivering palm attack succeeds. Thereafter the martial artist can choose to try to slay the victim at any later time within a week. The martial artist merely wills the target to die (a free action), and unless the target makes a Fortitude saving throw (DC 10 + one-half the martial artist's level + Wisdom modifier), it dies. If the saving throw is successful, the target is no longer in danger from that particular quivering palm attack (but may be affected by another one at a later time). *Prerequisite:* Still Mind, Ki Master, Stunning Fist, 7th level.

Sixth Sense: The martial artist adds her Wisdom bonus to her Initiative rolls.

Slow Fall: The martial artist takes damage from a fall as if it were 20 feet shorter than it actually is. The martial artist must be unarmored to use this ability.

Still Mind: The martial artist gains a +2 bonus to Concentration checks, a +1 bonus to Will saves and an additional +2 bonus saves against harmful, mind-affecting drugs, magical spells, or psionic powers.

Strike Without Thought: If the martial artist begins her turn next to an opponent who is denied his Dexterity bonus to Defense for any reason, she receives a free attack action against him. She only receives one attack in this way, regardless of the number of opponents who are denied their Dexterity bonus. The martial artist must be unarmored to use this ability. *Prerequisite:* Sixth Sense

Stunning Fist: The martial artist can declare that she is performing a stunning attack prior making any unarmed attack (a missed attack roll ruins the attempt). A foe struck by the martial artist is forced to make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 10 + one-half the martial artist's level + Wisdom modifier). If the saving throw fails, the opponent is stunned for 1 round in addition to receiving normal damage. She can use this ability up to once per round, and no more times per 24 hour period than the martial artist's level.

Third Eye: The martial artist adds her Wisdom bonus to her Defense when unarmored. This represents a preternatural awareness of danger, and a martial artist does not lose either even in situations when she loses her Dexterity modifier due to being unprepared, ambushed, stunned, and so on. (The martial artist does lose these bonuses when immobilized.)

Appendix Two: Sample Martial Arts Styles

The following are hypothetical (and probably inaccurate) recreations of seven archetypical martial arts styles in terms of martial arts and ki abilities. Abilities are listed in the order in which a practitioner would choose them, starting at 1st level and continuing through 2nd, 4th, 7th, and 8th levels.

Aikido: A largely defensive style that aims to subdue through grappling and vital strikes.

Martial Arts Abilities: Third Eye, Stunning Fist, Peaceful Stance, Defensive Catch, Joint Lock

Ki Ability: Pressure Points

Boxing: A classic Western martial art founded on endurance training and skill at delivering non-lethal damage.

Martial Arts Abilities: Power Punch, Body Hardening, Stunning Fist, Flurry of Blows, Iron Skin

Ki Ability: Iron Fist

Karate: A fast, powerful, and acrobatic style with effective punches and kicks; closest to original *d20* Modern martial artist advanced class.

Martial Arts Abilities: Living Weapon, Leap of the Clouds, Flying Kick, Flurry of Blows, Eagle Claw

Ki Ability: Iron Fist

Kung Fu: A balanced style with strong unarmed combat supplemented by spiritual training and vital strikes.

Martial Arts Abilities: Living Weapon, Stunning Fist, Still Mind, Ki Master, Quivering Palm

Ki Ability: Iron Fist

Kenjutsu: A sword art founded on swift, powerful katana strikes, aiming to end a fight before it begins.

Martial Arts Abilities: Martial Arts Weapon Expert (katana), Sixth Sense, Strike Without Thought, Flurry of Blows, Martial Arts Weapon Master (katana)

Ki Ability: Maximized Attacks

Ninjutsu: A pragmatic and deadly style focused on quickly eliminating and incapacitating opponents.

Martial Arts Abilities: Living Weapon, Sixth Sense, Stunning Fist, Flurry of Blows, Strike Without Thought

Ki Ability: Pressure Points

Thai Kickboxing: A very powerful, direct style that blends fierce punches and kicks with grueling physical training.

Martial Arts Abilities: Living Weapon, Body Hardening, Iron Skin, Flurry of Blows, Circle Kick

Ki Ability: Iron Fist