

Attack Variant

Attacks without ability scores

Background

The purpose of this house rule is to improve the freedom of the character creation process by basing attack rolls on level rather than ability scores. This gives a 2nd edition feel in which ability scores were basically chosen to describe your character and determine which skills you were good at. Ability skills still affect combat (defences, damage, secondary effects), but the degree is reduced so that a lower primary ability score is not debilitating.

The benefits of such a change are many. Players can design their characters to fit a flavour without needing an 18 in their primary ability score. They can choose races that do not benefit their primary ability score. This also creates more options when multiclassing. Additionally, players can use multiple attack types without having to be built for it (a wizard can carry around an axe for melee, a fighter can use a bow without suffering -4 to hit relative to her sword). Finally the expertise math issue can be worked into the rules.

Imagine a musketeer style fighter with only 14 Str and higher Dex, a charming rogue with more less Dex and more Cha. These builds would be difficult or impossible under the standard rules, but are believable and fun.

I implemented this rule for my own reasons. First, I had introduced firearms to the campaign, and no one was using them. I shouldn't have been surprised, since only players with a Dex build can even use ranged weapons. Second, some of my players are rather new to the game and keep trying to pick suboptimal race/class combos. I don't like discouraging them from picking a cool combo because the ruled didn't like it.

House Rules

Apply the following two simple changes to the standard D&D 4e rules.

1:

When players make an attack they do not add their ability score bonus to hit. For example, a Dex vs. AC attack no longer adds a Dex bonus to the attack roll. Situational modifiers involving ability scores, such as that granted by a warlord's *tactical presence*, still apply.

2:

At any given level, apply a bonus to attack rolls from the following chart instead of the normal $+\frac{1}{2}$ level bonus. This bonus is called a **level bonus**. Expertise feats cannot be taken.

Level	Attack Bonus	Level	Attack Bonus
1	4	16	16
2	5	17	16
3	5	18	17
4	6	19	17
5	7	20	18
6	8	21	19
7	8	22	20
8	10	23	20
9	10	24	21
10	11	25	22
11	11	26	23
12	12	27	23
13	12	28	25
14	14	29	25
15	15	30	26

Implementation

This rule can seem difficult to apply using the DDI character builder. Using this house rule is actually fairly easy. Consider the following tips.

Continue to build characters in DDI:

Although the attack values on power cards cannot be used, all other elements of the character builder will still be accurate.

Track your attack bonus for each weapon/implement:

Your attack bonus with each weapon comes from your level bonus, proficiency bonus, enhancement bonus, class bonus, and any situational bonuses. Record your attack bonus with each weapon. When you use an attack power, choose a weapon to use it with and use the appropriate attack bonus.

Behind the scenes (where the numbers come from)

I apply +1 every even level (normal level bonus)

I apply +4 to attacks initially (as though players had 18 to a main stat)

I apply +1 to attacks at levels 8/14/21/28 to scale with ability score increases

I apply +1 to attacks at levels 5/15/25 to make up for the expertise feat tax

Results:

Over 30 levels attacks scale by 22. With enhancement bonuses, attacks scale by 28 from 4 to 32.