

Improved Barbarian, by Sky Knight

You can call this Barbarian or Fighter or whatever you want. It's a STR-based melee class. Instead of a Rage mechanic, there are the Focused Attack and Brutal Strike features, which improve the accuracy and damage of attacks. There really don't need to be two classes for this—just one good one.

This class is for physically powerful warriors. It has features from Barbarian and Fighter, and it's strong at all levels. It works with all Fighter subclasses except Arcane Archer, and Barbarian subclasses have been modified to work as well. Also, some subclasses have been buffed, such as Battlerager, Storm Herald, Champion, and Banneret.

Note: This design was released before the 2024 rules, despite some surprising similarities.

Class Features

As a Barbarian, you gain the following class features:

Hit Points

Hit Dice: 1d12 per Barbarian level

Hit Points at 1st Level: 12 + your Constitution modifier

Hit Points at Higher Levels: 1d12 (or 7) + your Constitution modifier per Barbarian level after 1st

Proficiencies

Armor: Light Armor, Medium Armor, Shields

Weapons: Simple Weapons, Martial Weapons

Tools: None

Saving Throws: Strength, Constitution

Skills: Choose two from Animal Handling, Athletics, History, Insight, Intimidation, Nature, Perception, Stealth, and Survival

Equipment

You start with the following equipment, in addition to the equipment granted by your background:

- (a) a greataxe or (b) any martial melee weapon
- (a) two handaxes or (b) any simple weapon
- An explorer's pack and four javelins

The Barbarian

Lvl	PB	Movement	Features
1st	+2	—	Focused Attack, Unarmored Defense
2nd	+2	—	Action Surge (1 use)
3rd	+2	+5 ft	Martial Archetype, Dynamic Athlete
4th	+2	+5 ft	Ability Score Improvement
5th	+3	+5 ft	Extra Attack
6th	+3	+10 ft	Danger Sense, Indomitable (1 use)
7th	+3	+10 ft	Martial Archetype Feature, Heroic Recovery
8th	+3	+10 ft	Ability Score Improvement, Feral Intuition
9th	+4	+10 ft	Brutal Strike (1 die)
10th	+4	+15 ft	Martial Archetype Feature, Indomitable (2 uses)
11th	+4	+15 ft	Improved Focus
12th	+4	+15 ft	Ability Score Improvement
13th	+5	+15 ft	Brutal Strike (2 dice)
14th	+5	+15 ft	Heroic Resilience, Indomitable (3 uses)
15th	+5	+20 ft	Martial Archetype Feature, Accuracy Techniques
16th	+5	+20 ft	Ability Score Improvement
17th	+6	+20 ft	Brutal Strike (3 dice), Action Surge (2 uses)
18th	+6	+20 ft	Martial Archetype Feature, Indomitable Might
19th	+6	+20 ft	Ability Score Improvement
20th	+6	+20 ft	Indomitable Champion

Class Abilities

Note: A Barbarian who wears heavy armor loses all class abilities.

Focused Attack

When you make an attack or ability check using Strength, you can apply extraordinary focus, gaining advantage on the roll. Once you use this feature, you must finish a short or long rest before you can use it again.

Further, your unarmed strike uses a d4 for damage. This counts as a weapon damage die.

Unarmored Defense

While you are wearing no armor, your AC equals 10 + your Strength modifier + your Dexterity modifier. You can use a shield and still gain this benefit.

Action Surge

Starting at Barbarian 2, you can push yourself beyond your normal limits for a moment. On your turn, you can take one additional action on top of your regular action and a possible bonus action.

Once you use this feature, you must finish a short or long rest before you can use it again. Starting at Barbarian 17, you can use it twice before a rest, but only once on the same turn.

Martial Archetype

When you reach Barbarian 3, you choose an archetype that you strive to emulate in your combat styles and techniques, such as Champion. The archetype you choose grants you features at Barbarian 3 and again at Barbarian 7, 10, 15, and 18.

Dynamic Athlete

At Barbarian 3, you gain an increase in movement speed, shown on the Barbarian table. Your jump distance is also increased by that amount, horizontally, and your vertical jump distance is increased by half that, rounded down. Additionally, you get advantage on Strength saves.

Ability Score Improvement

When you reach Barbarian 4, and again at Barbarian 8, 12, 16, and 19, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. As normal, you can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

Extra Attack

Beginning at Barbarian 5, you can attack twice, instead of once, whenever you take the Attack action on your turn.

Danger Sense

At Barbarian 6, you gain an uncanny sense of when things nearby aren't as they should be, giving you an edge when you dodge away from danger.

You have advantage on Dexterity saving throws against effects that you can see, such as traps and spells. To gain this benefit, you can't be blinded, deafened, or incapacitated.

Indomitable

Starting at Barbarian 6, you can reroll a saving throw that you fail. If you do so, you must use the new roll, and you can't use this feature again until you finish a long rest.

You can use this feature twice between long rests starting at Barbarian 10 and three times between long rests starting at Barbarian 14.

Heroic Recovery

Beginning at Barbarian 7, as an action you can recover half your missing hit points, i.e. half the difference between your maximum hit points and your current hit points. Even if you are prevented from taking actions in some way, you can still take this action. You can also take this action instead of attempting a death save. Once you use this feature, you must finish a long rest before you can use it again.

Feral Intuition

Starting at Barbarian 8, your instincts are so honed that you have advantage on initiative rolls. Additionally, you have advantage on checks to avoid surprise.

Brutal Strike

At Barbarian 9, when you use Strength to make a weapon attack, if you hit you roll 1 additional weapon damage die.

At Barbarian 13, the extra damage increases to 2 dice, and at Barbarian 17, it increases to 3 dice.

Improved Focus

Starting at Barbarian 11, when you use Focused Attack, it applies to your entire turn, instead of just 1 roll. Note that it still only works on attacks and checks that use Strength.

Further, you gain advantage on Wisdom saves, and your unarmed strikes count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage.

Heroic Resilience

At Barbarian 14, you gain advantage on both Constitution saves and death saves.

Accuracy Techniques

Starting at Barbarian 15, you can remove a Brutal Strike die to gain advantage on an attack.

Alternatively, you can attack recklessly, gaining advantage on attacks and ability checks that use Strength until the start of your next turn, while giving opponents advantage on attacks against you for that period.

Indomitable Might

Starting at Barbarian 18, if your total for a Strength check is less than your Strength score, you can use that score in place of the total.

Indomitable Champion

At Barbarian 20, your Strength and Constitution scores increase by 4. Your maximum for those scores is now 24.

Additional Note: Brutal Strike Improvement

If you use Brutal Strike with an unarmed strike, a greatclub, or a maul, and the target is large or smaller, the target is knocked back 5 feet.

At Barbarian 13, the effect works on huge creatures, and smaller creatures are moved an additional 5 feet.

At Barbarian 17, the effect works on gargantuan creatures, and smaller creatures are moved an additional 5 feet.

If the weapon is a greatsword, base damage becomes 2d8, instead of 2d6, at Barbarian 13.

Martial Archetype: Berserker

Note: These features are different from those in the 5e SRD.

Rage

Starting at Barbarian 3, when you take damage or use Focused Attack, you can choose to enter a Rage. While in Rage, you can't cast or concentrate on spells, but you have resistance to all damage, and you can use Focused Attack each turn, without resting. Further, you do not suffer the effects of exhaustion while raging (this does not reduce exhaustion levels.)

Your Rage lasts for a number of minutes equal to your Barbarian level. It ends early if you are knocked unconscious. When your Rage ends, your exhaustion increases by 1 level.

You can also enter or end a Rage as an action.

Frenzy

Starting at Barbarian 7, if you hit with 2 Strength-based weapon attacks on your turn, you can make an additional Strength-based weapon attack as a bonus action. If you are holding two one-handed weapons then this attack can be made as a reaction.

Also starting at Barbarian 7, if you are holding two one-handed weapons then you can make a Strength-based weapon attack as a bonus action, provided your turn does not contain attacks with any other weapons, and you alternate weapons on the attacks you make.

Mindless Rage

Beginning at Barbarian 10, you can't be charmed or frightened while raging. If you are charmed or frightened when you enter a Rage, the effect ends.

Mindless Fury

Beginning at Barbarian 15, your Rage becomes supernaturally fearsome. While raging, before you make any attacks on your turn, you can choose one creature that you can see within 10 feet of you. If the creature can see or hear you, it must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw (DC equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength modifier) or be frightened of you until the end of your next turn. If the creature succeeds on its saving throw, you can't attack any other creatures until that creature is unconscious, or you are unable to see it, and you can't use this feature on that creature again for 24 hours.

Astonishing Ferocity

Starting at Barbarian 18, the effect of your Rage becomes stronger. When you hit on an attack while raging, all creatures of your choice within 30 feet who can see you must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw (DC equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength modifier) or be frightened of you for 1 minute. At the end of each of their turns, they can make a Wisdom check against the same DC to end the effect.

A creature can only face this effect once in 24 hours, and a creature who has succeeded on a saving throw against Mindless Fury is immune to this effect for 24 hours. Further, a creature who has succeeded on a saving throw against this effect is immune to Mindless Fury for 24 hours.

Additional 5e Barbarian Archetypes

Further 5e Barbarian archetypes can be modified to work here as well. In general, the level 6 feature can be moved to 7, and the level 14 feature can be moved to 15 or 18. In most cases, a new feature will be added, since there will be 5 feature levels instead of 4. The level 15 feature can be a ribbon, because the main-class feature is strong at that level. Here are examples:

Ancestral Guardian

Ancestral Protectors is as in the book, except there are no rage requirements. The spectral warriors appear when you use Focused Attack, and last for 1 minute.

Spirit Shield is moved to Barbarian 7, and is as in the book, except instead of rage it requires the presence of your spectral warriors, and the reduction bonuses happen at Barbarian 10 and 15.

Consult the Spirits is as in the book, except that it only comes back after a long rest.

Ancestors' Vigil Starting at Barbarian 15, you add *speak with dead* to Consult the Spirits. Further, you can cast *alarm* as a ritual.

Vengeful Ancestors is moved to Barbarian 18, and is otherwise as in the book.

Battlerager

Battlerager Armor is as in the book, except spikes can be added to any armor, and the bonus action attack no longer requires Rage. The damage die is the Spike Die, which starts at d4. Grapple damage is the Spike Die, as well, with no modifier.

Battlerager's Frenzy Starting at Barbarian 7, your spikes (i.e. any uses of the Spike Die) count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage. Further, when you take the Attack action, you gain temporary hit points equal to your Strength modifier. The Spike Die is now d6.

Battlerager's Leap Starting at Barbarian 10, if you hit a creature with a spike attack immediately after a horizontal jump of at least 10 feet, the hit is critical. The Spike Die is now d8.

Spiked Disruption Beginning at Barbarian 15, when you hit an enemy with a spike attack, while you remain adjacent to that enemy your allies have advantage on attacks against them, until the beginning of your next turn. The Spike Die is now d10.

Spiked Retribution is moved to Barbarian 18 and is as in the book, except that it uses a reaction, no longer requires Rage, and deals damage equal to the Spike Die, with no modifier. The Spike Die is now d12.

Storm Herald

Storm Aura is as in the book, except the aura emanates when you use Focused Attack, and lasts for 1 minute. During that time, you can activate the effect as a bonus action. There are also some effect changes:

- **Desert** Each creature takes 1d4 damage, rolled individually. Damage increases to 1d6 at Barbarian 7, 2d4 at Barbarian 10, 2d6 at Barbarian 15, and 3d6 at Barbarian 18.
- **Sea** Damage = 1d10, with one additional die at each of Barbarian 7, 10, 15, and 18. The saving throw DC is based on Strength instead of Constitution.
- **Tundra** Temporary hit points = 1d6, with additional dice as above.

Note that the Tundra aura can benefit you, as well as your allies.

Storm Soul is moved to Barbarian 7, and is as in the book.

Shielding Storm is as in the book.

Raging Storm is moved to Barbarian 15, and is as in the book.

Storm Surge Starting at Barbarian 18, during your turn when you hit an enemy with a Strength-based melee attack, your storm aura increases its range by 10 feet. If you hit with 2 such attacks, you gain the following, according to your environment type:

- **Desert** Creatures of your choice are unaffected by the aura
- **Sea** You can choose an additional target for the lightning effect
- **Tundra** When you activate your aura effect, creatures of your choice in the area get their speed halved, until the start of your next turn

The range of your storm aura returns to 10 feet at the end of your turn.

Zealot

Divine Fury is as in the book, except instead of activating on rage it activates when you use your Focused Attack feature, and it lasts for 1 minute.

Warrior of the Gods is as in the book.

Fanatical Focus Starting at Barbarian 7, you recover your uses of Indomitable on short rest, as well as long rest

Zealous Presence is as in the book.

Rage Beyond Death is moved to Barbarian 15, and is as in the book, except that it applies while Divine Fury is active, instead of during rage.

Strength of Conviction Starting at Barbarian 18, when you make an attack or ability check using Strength, you can activate Divine Fury by spending a hit die. You still have the ability to activate it with Focused Attack, as before.

Martial Archetype: Champion

Note: These features are different from those in the 5e SRD.

Improved Critical

Beginning when you choose this archetype at Barbarian 3, your critical hit range increases by 1 on weapon attacks. I.e. if your critical hits would otherwise only be on 20, they are now on 19–20; if your critical hits would otherwise be on 19–20, they are now on 18–20; etc.

This range further increases at Barbarian 10, 15, and 18, by 1 more each time.

Physical Prowess

Starting at Barbarian 7, you can add your proficiency bonus to any Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution check you make. If you already had proficiency, this feature stacks with that, but it does not stack with Expertise.

Fighting Style

At Barbarian 10, you can choose a Fighting Style, as allowed by the 5e Fighter.

Superior Critical

Starting at Barbarian 15, when you score a critical hit on a weapon attack, you roll an additional weapon damage die.

Survivor

At Barbarian 18, you attain the pinnacle of resilience in battle. At the start of each of your turns, you regain hit points equal to 5 + your Constitution modifier if you have no more than half of your hit points left. You don't gain this benefit if you have 0 hit points.

Additional 5e Fighter Archetypes

Further 5e Fighter archetypes can work here as well. Most of them, in fact, work without changes, because they have the same feature levels, and they do not require Rage. Examples of archetypes that work include Battle Master, Cavalier, Eldritch Knight, and Samurai. Arcane Archer does not work, because it is based on Dexterity, while Barbarian is based on Strength.

You might rename Eldritch Knight to Eldritch Warrior.

Banneret

This archetype must be changed to fit the new class. The following redesign is recommended:

Commander's Presence Your confidence in battle inspires valor in your companions. Before you take any attacks on your turn, you can use a bonus action to choose an ally within 60 feet of you. That ally can use a reaction to make a weapon attack.

Royal Envoy is as in the book.

Inspiring Resolve Starting at Barbarian 7, when you use your Heroic Recovery feature, all allies within 60 feet gain the benefit as well.

Rallying Surge Starting at Barbarian 10, when you use your Action Surge feature, all allies within 60 feet of you gain advantage on their attacks, until the beginning of your next turn.

Rallying Spirit Beginning at Barbarian 15, when you attempt a saving throw in battle, all allies within 60 feet gain advantage on the same saving throw, if they attempt it. Otherwise they gain advantage on their next saving throw, provided it is in the same battle.

Further, when you use your Heroic Recovery feature, if you are in combat your melee weapon attacks allow you to heal allies, until the end of combat. The total amount of healing from each hit is equal to the hit points lost by your enemy, and you can distribute that healing as you choose among allies within 60 feet.

Rally to Victory Starting at Barbarian 18, when you use Commander's Presence, you can choose a creature. Until the end of combat, all allies' hits against that creature are critical. Once you use this feature, you cannot use it again until you finish a long rest.

You might call this subclass **Warlord**, instead of Banneret.

Martial Archetype: Knight

This is not based on any official 5e archetype. It is pure homebrew.

Elite Warrior

When you choose this archetype at Barbarian 3, You gain proficiency in heavy armor. Further, you can use your Barbarian features in heavy armor, except for Dynamic Athlete, Danger Sense, and Feral Intuition. You do get advantage on Strength saves, though.

While wearing heavy armor, you can use a bonus action to restrict movement through nearby spaces. Choose two spaces, one on each side of you, that are adjacent to you. Until the beginning of your next turn, the spaces are considered occupied by you, except to creatures that already occupy them. The effect ends early if you move from the space you actually occupy, if your speed becomes 0, if you become incapacitated, or if you are subjected to any condition that gives you disadvantage on attack rolls.

Knight's Defense

Starting at Barbarian 7, when you use your Elite Warrior feature, you gain resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage, until the beginning of your next turn.

Knight's Endurance

At Barbarian 10, you gain advantage on Constitution saves. Since Heroic Resilience gives you this advantage at Barbarian 14, at that level you gain advantage on Intelligence and Charisma saves.

Warrior of Legend

Starting at Barbarian 15, when you use your Elite Warrior feature, you gain resistance to all damage, until the beginning of your next turn.

Knight's Destiny

Beginning at Barbarian 18, when you use Heroic Recovery, your next hit with a weapon attack is critical, provided it is within 1 minute of your use of Heroic Recovery. Until the end of that minute, all further hits against the same target are critical as well.

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