How to Buff Martials

This document explains how to increase the power of fully martial characters, like Barbarian, Fighter, Monk, and Rogue. Generally, martials in Dungeons and Dragons 5th editions are less versatile, deal less damage, can not tank as well, and have less out of combat ability. This document provides tools for ways to alleviate those shortcomings. **This is not a complete fix.** This is what I believe is a step in the right direction, but more change needs to happen with buffs to these classes and their subclasses. Without further ado, here we go.

1. Weapon Techniques

While the idea for weapons put forth in 2024 dnd is interesting, I think it can go farther. A special weapon ability on weapon is cool, but it may get stale quickly. So what if we give at least two techniques that can be used on all weapons. The lower the weapon's damage die, the better the technique might get. And this incentivises you to use different weapons. Pick the right tool for the job.

Any creature with at least 10 strength can use these abilities. The strength stat, unfittingly, is pretty weak. It does not give many benefits. So I propose we give more reasons to be a strength based character.

Each melee weapon has a set of unique techniques a creature can use to gain an edge in battle. You can use these techniques a number of times equal to 1+ your strength modifier. You regain one expended use when you finish a Short Rest, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a Long Rest. If a technique requires a saving throw, The DC for these moves is equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength modifier. Passive techniques can be used as long as you are wielding the weapon, and do not expend all of your Weapon Technique uses. Creatures must have at least 10 strength to use any of these abilities, including passive ones.

<u>Techniques</u>:

Batter Up: On a hit, you may choose to expend one use of your weapon technique to deal an extra weapon damage die in damage. The creature makes a strength saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the creature is knocked back 15 ft and is knocked prone. On a success, the creature is unaffected.

Bleed: Your weapon cuts deep into the enemy and their life starts to leak out of them. Before you make an attack roll, you may choose to expend one use of your weapon technique to perform this technique. If you hit a creature, deal normal damage and apply 1 stack of bleeding to the creature. 1 stack of bleeding causes a creature to take 1d6 damage and the end of each of your turns for 1 minute. A creature can have multiple stacks of bleeding applied to them. The bleeding can be stopped with any magical healing, or as an action they can attempt to staunch

the bleeding with a medicine check. The DC of the medicine check is equal to your weapon technique DC. Bleeding can not be applied to undead, constructs, or elementals.

Can Opener: (Passive): *Heavily armored? That's cute.* You gain +2 to attack rolls to strike any creature wearing metal armor.

Charge: If you are at least 15 feet away from where you started your turn, before you make an attack roll, you may choose to expend one use of your weapon technique. The target takes an extra damage die of damage and must make a Strength saving throw. On a failure, the target is skewered by your weapon, pushing them forward. For the rest of your turn the creature moves along with you. This forced movement does not work on creatures three or more sizes larger than you.

Clobber: *You bash your opponent with enough force to leave them dazed.* Before you make an attack roll, you may choose to expend one use of your weapon technique to perform this technique. Make an attack roll against a creature. If the attack hits, the creature takes the normal amount of damage and must make a constitution saving throw. On a failure the creature is stunned until the end of their next turn. On a success, the target is not stunned.
You can use this techniques once per turn

Cruel (passive): Whenever you roll maximum damage on this weapon, roll again and add the total. Repeat until you roll lower than the maximum number on the die.

Deflect: *You use your weapon to deflect blows to your body.* As a reaction, when a creature hits you with a melee attack roll against you, you may choose to expend one use of your weapon technique. You can force that creature to make a dexterity saving throw. On a failure, the attack misses you. On a success the creature hits you.

Dig in (Passive): *When something pushes you back, you dig your sword into the ground to halt your movement.* When you fail a saving throw to be moved against your will by a pushing or pulling effect (like Thunderwave), you can use your reaction to reroll the saving throw.

Disarm: Before you make an attack roll, you may choose to expend one use of your weapon technique to perform this technique. Make a weapon attack, you attempt to disarm the target, forcing it to drop one item of your choice that it's holding. You add an extra weapon damage die to the attack's damage roll, and the target must make a Strength saving throw. On a failed save, it drops the object you choose. The object lands in the square or squares the creature stands in, or within five feet of the creature.

Discombobulate: If you hit a creature, you may choose to expend one use of your weapon technique to deal an extra weapon damage die in damage to the creature and the creature's next attack roll is made with disadvantage.

Extended Crit Range (Passive): This weapon always crits on a 19 or a 20. If you have an ability, like improved critical, extend the range 1 further. For example if you are a level 3 champion fighter, your crit range while using this weapon is 18 to 20.

Juke: *The enemy believes you missed your attack, but it's all part of your ruse.* If you miss with an attack you may choose to expend one use of your weapon technique to reroll the attack.

Harvest (Passive): This weapon deals double damage to plants.

Lunge: *You lunge out at your target, extending your body to increase your weapons reach.* Before you make an attack roll, you may choose to expend one use of your weapon technique to perform this technique. Make an attack roll, you can extend your weapon's reach by an extra 5 ft. If the attack hits, the target takes an extra weapon damage die of damage.

Savagery (Passive):
Once per turn, when you hit a creature with an attack, you can re-roll one of the attack's damage dice, and you must use the new roll.

Sucker punch: *You disorient your attacker to make a quick escape.* When you hit a creature, you may choose to expend one use of your weapon technique to force the creature to make a constitution saving throw. When a creature fails this constitution saving throw, they can't make an opportunity attack until the end of your turn.

Sweeping strike: Before you make an attack roll, you may choose to expend one use of your weapon technique to perform this technique. Make one attack roll to try and strike 2 creatures at the same time. Choose two targets within your reach, and make a single attack roll to hit once. Any of those target creatures whose AC is equal to or less than the attack roll is hit with the attack, taking normal weapon damage.

Trip up: If you hit a creature with an attack roll you may choose to expend one use of your weapon technique to deal the normal amount of damage and force the creature to make a strength saving throw. On a failure, the creature is knocked prone. On a success, the creature is not knocked prone.

Brandish: When you make an intimidation skill check, you can choose to expend one use of your weapon technique to roll the weapon die of the weapon you are holding and add the number rolled onto the intimidation check. You make this choice after you see the roll, but before the DM says whether you fail or succeed.

<u>Simple weapons</u>

Club:
Clobber
Sucker Punch

Dagger:
Extended Crit Range
Cruel (Passive)
Bleed

Greatclub:
Batter Up
Extended Crit Range (Passive)
Clobber

Handaxe:
Sweeping strike
Savagery (Passive)

Javelin/ spear:
Lunge
Juke

Light hammer:
Sucker Punch
Can Opener (Passive)

Mace:
Discombobulate
Can Opener (Passive)

Quarterstaff:
Trip up
Sucker punch

Sickle:
Harvest (Passive)
Bleed

<u>Martial Weapons</u>

Battle axe:
Sweeping Strike
Disarm

Flail:
Clobber
Disarm

Glaive:
Sweeping Strike
Trip Up

Greatsword:
Dig in (Passive)
Lunge

Greataxe:
Sweeping Strike
Juke

Halberd:
Charge
Lunge

Lance:
Charge
Trip Up

LongSword:
Deflect
Trip Up

Maul:
Discombobulate
Trip up

Morningstar:
Bleed
Savagery (Passive)

Pike:
Lunge
Bleed

Rapier:
Lunge
Disarm

Scimitar:
Extended Crit Range (Passive)
Bleed

Shortsword:
Deflect
Juke

Trident:
Charge
Bleed

War Pick:
Bleed
Can Opener
Dig In (Passive)

Warhammer:
Batter Up
Trip Up

Whip:
Disarm
Trip Up
Bleed
Extended Crit range (Passive)

Unarmed:
Sucker Punch
Juke

2. Retribution

So It is sort of hard to tank in 5e. The guy with all the AC has a tough time keeping the big monsters away from the squisher characters. But how do we resolve this? Saving throw? Some arbitrary status? Giving every character the sentinel feat?! No. We give that big monster the stick. And we make that big dummy regret attacking our friends. You can give this to Barbarian, Fighter, Monk, and Rogue at level 5.

- Retribution:

At 5th level, at the end of your turn, as a free action, you choose a creature within 10 ft of you that you attacked on this turn. If that creature damages a creature other than you or forces a creature other than you to make a saving throw, the next melee weapon attack or melee unarmed attack you land against the chosen creature is automatically a critical hit. This effect lasts for 1 minute or until you use this ability on

another creature. A creature can only be affected by one instance of retribution at a time.

At 10th level, you can close the distance between opponents faster. At the start of your turn, you gain extra movement equal to half your walking speed. You can only use this extra movement to move toward the creature who was targeted by your retribution feature. At level 15, the extra movement speed you get increases to equal your full walking speed.

You can use this ability twice. You recovered uses of retribution after finishing a short or long rest.

3. Out of Combat Abilities

Social abilities are a bit tough. How do you give an out of combat ability to the people whose whole this is combat? Well we can just make the strong guys stronger!

You can give these features to Barbarian, Fighter, Monk, and Rogue. Remarkable Talent at level 2, and Mighty Leap at level 5.

Remarkable Talent:
At 2nd level, choose between either Chucker, or Midnight Monkey.

- *Chucker:*

Prerequisite:Strength 13 or higher
As an action you can toss an object or willing creature, within your reach and equal to your size or smaller, a number of feet equal to 5 times your martial level.

You can also attempt to throw an unwilling target as well. They must make a strength saving throw. The DC is equal to 8 + proficiency bonus + your strength modifier. If they succeed nothing happens. If they fail, they are thrown.

At 10th level you can throw creatures and objects one size larger than you. At level 15 you can throw creatures and objects 2 sizes larger than you, but only half of your throwing distance.

At level 5, you double the amount of weight you can push, drag, or lift. At 10th level you triple the amount, quadruple at level 15, and quintuple at level 20.

- Midnight Monkey

Prerequisite: Dexterity 13 or higher
Sleight of Hand: Whenever you pickpocket something of value from a creature, you also get extra gold. Roll 1d4 to determine the amount of gold it is. The die you roll increases as you level up. It becomes a d6 at level 4, a d8 at level 6, a d10 at level 8, and a d12 at level 10.
The DM may choose at any point when you can and can not use this ability.
Stealth: You can move your full speed while in stealth, and you can attempt to hide even when you are only obscured by a creature that is at least one size larger than you.

Mighty Leap

At level 5, your jumping distance is increased. Your long jump increases by 10 feet, and your high jump by 5 feet. At 10th level your long jump distance increases by another 10 feet and your high jump increases by another 5ft. This happens again at 15th level and again at 20 level.

4. Magic Weapons

*The damage gap between martials and caster's is pretty wide. Scary wide. But how can I give a sweeping buff that helps classes as different as fighter and rogue? Easy. Magic weapons. It is WILD to me that there are not more magic weapons that give extra damage dice. So I made a **soft** guideline to help juice their damage numbers. I say **soft** because this guideline can not account for every single build. I highly recommend tailoring the amount of damage your magic weapons deal specifically for your player. Not one size is going to fit all. But if you want close the damage gap between casters in your game, just throw dice at the problem until the gap is closed.*

I focus on melee weapons here because they need the help more than the ranged characters. (That's how most of this document has gone). If you are risking getting hit by the big tall monster, you should get rewarded for it.

+1 melee weapons add 2d12 extra damage

+2 melee weapons add 4d12 extra damage

+3 melee weapons add 6d12 extra damage

One stipulation worth mentioning. I probably need to change buffed monk's improved dedicated weapon SLIGHTLY. You still can apply all the special effects from the magic weapon, but you just limit the damage your unarmed strikes get to one of the magic weapon's extra damage die. So in this case the limit would be 1d12.

5. Inventory slots and Carry Weight

I know, I know. Carrying weight is boooorrring! It bogs down the game with uninteresting nonsense. Well what if i told you we could streamline this. To be quick and easy. But what makes carrying weight such a problem?

Quick! Tell me how much 5 cockatrice livers in a burlap sack weigh! If you couldn't think of an answer in 2 seconds you took too long. In the time that you were typing up some insane google search and scouring the internet for the on statistics for ostrich organs, your players could have been punching a dragon. Which would you prefer? So I streamlined your backpack

to a binary system. It's interesting enough to allow meaningful choices, but doesn't bog you down with math using made up numbers. AND this will help the strength based character! The will be able to hold more stuff.

- DETERMINING YOUR EQUIPMENT LOAD

The number of items you carry is determined by how many equipment slots you have. The amount of equipment slots you have is determined by your strength score. For example if you have a strength score of 11, you have 11 equipment slots.

If you are a small creature, you lose 1 equipment slots.

If you have proficiency in athletics, You gain 1 additional equipment slot.

If you have expertise in athletics, you gain 3 additional equipment slots.

If you have the squat nimbleness trait, you gain 3 equipment slots.

If you have the powerful build trait, double your equipment slots.

- ITEMS

Items that DO take up equipment slots are heavier than 2 pounds or are very fragile and must be handled with care. Such items include but are not limited too...

Potions, Weapons, Shields, The armor you wear, Staffs

- WEIGHTLESS ITEMS

Any item that weighs less than 2 pounds does not take up an equipment slot, unless it is fragile or requires extra care as described above Other items that do not take up equipment slots are...

Gold Coins, Scrolls, Jewelry, Wands

- RATIONS

Any amount of rations takes up 1 equipment slot up to 10 rations. Any that go over will count as an additional equipment slot. For example, if you have 21 rations, that would take up 3 equipment slots

- BAGS OF HOLDING

While a bag of holding takes up 2 equipment slots, the bag itself can hold 34 equipment slots.

- DM DISCRETION

If the DM says it's too big to fit in your bag, or too big to fit an item slot, then that means it will not fit.

6. New Spells

“Spells? Spells?! Bone Wizard I thought you said this was how to buff martials! Why are you giving the casters more spells?” Oh the caster’s can take the spells if they wish. But the spells were not made for the casters… they were made for the DM to use AGAINST the casters!

As you may know, there are not many saving throw spells that require strength saving throws. And the ones that do usually just knock someone prone, or push them a bit. Well why can’t a strength saving throw be impactful outside a push? Why can’t a strength save spell deal a bunch of damage? Why can’t a strength save spell give a big debuff? Why can't a strength save spell tap into dark forces to appease the wicked being of the underworld? If we want to make the martials feel strong and powerful, then that means giving them saves they can beat! And if it also means the wizards fail a few more saving throws with dire results, even better!

- Rock Throw

1st level transmutation
Casting Time: 1 Action
Range: 120 ft
Components: S, M (rock)
Duration: Instantaneous
Classes: Druid, Sorcerer

A stone tears itself free from the nearby soil and hurls toward a creature of your choice within range. Make a ranged spell attack against the target. On a hit, the target takes 3d6 bludgeoning damage and must succeed on a strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, for every spell slot level above 1st you may target one additional creature with this spell.

- Grasping Wind

2nd level Evocation
Casting Time: 1 Action
Range: 30ft
Components: V, S, M (a free hand)

Duration: Instantaneous
Classes: Artificer, Druid, Ranger, Sorcerer, Warlock, Wizard

You create powerful winds, targeting a creature or object and bringing it toward you. The target must make a strength saving throw. On a success, nothing happens. On a failure the target is pushed by winds towards you in a straight line, lands within 5ft of you, and takes 2d6 bludgeoning damage. You choose which square within 5 ft of you the target lands in, and the target is grappled by you.

If the target hits a creature along its path while being pushed by the winds, both the target and the creature take 1d6 bludgeoning damage. A creature that is struck by the flying target can not stop the target from coming toward you, however they can grab the target and be pulled along with it by making a strength saving throw against your spell save DC. On failure, the creature can not grab the target. On a success, the creature firmly grasps the target and is also pulled toward you. The creature chooses which square within 5 ft of the target they land in.

At Higher Levels: When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the range of this spell is increased by 20 ft and creatures who fail this saving throw take an 1d6 bludgeoning damage for each spell level above 2nd level.

- Strangling Wind

3rd level Evocation
Casting Time: 1 Action
Range: 90 ft
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, 1 minute
Classes: Artificer, Druid, Sorcerer, Warlock

You call upon the winds to create a powerful hand that strangles the life from a creature. The target must make a strength saving throw. The target becomes strangled by the wind on a failed save, or is not strangled on a successful save. Strangled creatures take 4d6 bludgeoning damage at the beginning of each of their turns. Strangled creatures can not breathe, speak, drink portions, or cast spells that require verbal components. At the end of each of the creature's

turns, the target can make another strength saving throw. On a success, the spell ends on the target and they are no longer strangled. On a failure, the creature remains strangled.

At Higher Levels: When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, you may select an additional target for each spell level above 3rd level.

- Icy Embrace

4th level Evocation
Casting Time: 1 Action
Range: 60 ft
Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, 1 minute
Classes: Artificer, Druid, Sorcerer, Warlock

You summon ice to encase your foes. Each creature in a 20ft radius sphere centered on a point you choose must make a strength saving throw. On a failure, creatures take 1d6 cold damage and are stunned for the duration. On success creatures are not stunned and take half damage. At the end of each of its turns, the affected creature makes another strength saving throw. On a success, the spell ends. On a failure, the creature remains stunned and takes 1d6 cold damage.

Normally, stunned creatures automatically fail strength saving throws. However when a creature makes a strength saving throw at the end of their turn to end the effect of this spell, they do not automatically fail the save and may roll as they normally would.

The ice clings onto creatures so tightly, the ice goes beneath the skin. Teleporting does not free a creature from the ice, the ice will go with them if they teleport.

Bone Wizard, HIGHLY recommends you use his version of stun for this spell.

At Higher Levels: When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th level or higher, you deal an additional 1d6 cold damage for each spell level above 4th level.

- Bone Thrasher

5th level Necromancy
Casting Time: 1 Action
Range: 120 ft

Components: V, S
Duration: Concentration, 1 minute
Classes: Sorcerer, Warlock

You release necromantic forces at a creature which causes the creature's bones to thrash around inside their body against their will. Choose a creature within range. The creature must succeed a Strength saving throw or start convulsing. Convulsing creatures move half their speed in a random direction at the beginning of their turn, have disadvantage on attack rolls, and deal half damage from attacks.

If a convulsing creature has spell slots, their body contorts and bends in a way to use their magic incorrectly. At the start of a convulsing creature's turn they expend their highest level spell slot and take 1d6 force damage per level of spell slot expended.

At the end of a convulsing creature's turn, the creature makes another strength saving throw. On a success, the spell ends on that creature.

At Higher Levels: When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 6th level or higher, you may select an additional target for each spell level above 5th level.

- Hungry Spirits

6th level Necromancy
Casting Time: 1 Action
Range: 120 ft
Components: V, S,M (a tooth)
Duration: Instantaneous
Classes: Sorcerer, Warlock

You summon a cloud of disembodied jaws that bite onto creatures. Each creature in a 30ft radius sphere centered on a point you choose must make a Strength saving throw. A target takes 7d10 piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

The jaws spread around corners. After you cast the spell, the area is littered with jaw bones. ***At Higher Levels.*** When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 7th level or higher, the damage increases by 1d10 for each slot level above 6th.

- Power Word: Push

7th level Evocation
Casting Time: 1 Action
Range: Self (100 by 20-foot line)
Components: V
Duration: Instantaneous
Classes: Bard, Sorcerer, Warlock

You emit an invisible force forming a line 100 feet long and 20 feet wide. Each creature in the area must make a strength saving throw. On a success, nothing happens. On a failure, the creature takes 8d6 bludgeoning damage and is pushed back to, from where you are standing, the opposite end of the spell's 100 foot line. If a creature is pushed back into a sturdy object, like a boulder or a stone wall, and they have not been pushed back a total of 100 feet yet, they take an additional 1d6 bludgeoning damage for every remaining 10 feet.

If a creature is brought to 0 hp by this spell they are killed. Their body is liquified in an unrecognizable mass from the extreme and sudden pressure.

- Sacrifice

8th level Necromancy
Casting Time: 1 Action
Range: 120 ft
Components: V, S
Duration: Instantaneous
Classes: Cleric, Sorcerer, Warlock

You summon a menacing invisible presence. The presence desires bloodshed. Each creature of your choosing in a 40 ft radius sphere centered on a point you choose must make a strength saving throw. On a success, nothing happens. On a failure, the creature becomes a sacrifice. The sacrifices ominously float 1 foot into the air and take 10d10 necrotic damage as their own blood erupts from their body like a fountain.

As the sacrifice's blood floats in the air, you may, as part of your action casting this spell, choose to give a blessing to a creature you can see by dousing them in a sacrifice's blood. You

have as many blessings to give out as you have sacrifices. A creature who receives a blessing gains temporary hit points equal to half the amount of damage a sacrifice took.

Creatures that are brought to 0 hp by this spell die.

- Bands of Doom

9th level Conjuration
Casting Time: 1 Action
Range: 120 ft
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 year
Classes: Bard, Sorcerer, Warlock

You summon 10 magical talking iron bands that bring only misery and woe. Choose a creature and the bands conjure onto the creature's body. That creature must make a strength saving throw.

On a success, the creature rips the bands off of their body and the bands chastise the creature for not accepting this kind gift of jewelry making the creature take 8d6 psychic damage.

On a failed save, the bands tightly secure themselves onto the creature and are considered worn by the creature. Each of the 10 bands gives -1 to all rolls the creature makes, -10 in total. Additionally any DC the creature has is lowered by the number of bands they have on their body. A creature may use its action to make a strength saving throw to remove some of the bands. On a failure, no bands are removed. On success, 1d4 bands are removed.

Casting spells like dispel magic or ending your turn in an antimagic field does not make all the bands fall off. It does however cause 1d4 of the bands to fall off.

7. Spell Nerfs

There are alot of spells that need some nerfs. Any spell that can instantly end a boss fight for example. Like polymorph, banishment, hypnotic pattern. They are super anti-climactic. Any spell that lets you summon or conjure multiple allies is also probably not a good spell. 1 summon is fine, but 10 flying daggers is a lot. But i want to focus on 2 low level spells that kinda fly in the face of the idea of casters being low AC squishy guys. If we want the martials to be good, we need to tone down the spells that let caster perform the job of martials nearly as well.

- Shield

Suggestions for how to nerf the shield spell…

1. It only gives +2 AC
2. The spell requires concentration.
3. The spell can only block a single attack.
4. If the player uses the shield spell and ANY attack still hits, the magical shield shatters making the attack that landed into a critical hit and deals the caster's level in force damage.

My suggestion is to use 3, but do as you wish.

- Mage armor

The text is changed too…

You touch a willing creature who isn't wearing armor, and a protective magical force surrounds it until the spell ends. The target's AC increases by +1. The spell ends if the target dons armor or if you dismiss the spell as an action.