

Marksman Mastery: You Only Get One Shot

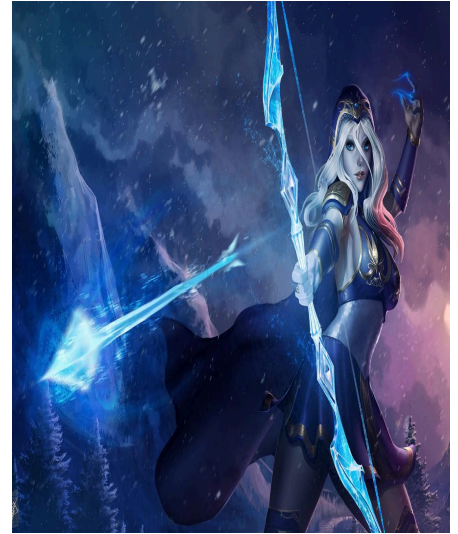
The Pathfinder Marksman ([SRD](#))

By Nova Wurmson and Lucy Fur

“Bolt actions speak louder than words.” – Craig Roberts, *Crosshairs on the Kill Zone*

The Marksman was a psionic class introduced in the Pathfinder *Psionics Unleashed Handbook*, and updated for Pathfinder by Dreamscarred Press. Throughout this guide, we'll be using the following rating system:

- **Amazing:** Highly optimized option. It's also used to denote strengths.
- **Good:** Should be heavily considered for those who can use it.
- **Average:** Not bad or good, but there may be better things (generally option works only for certain builds or there is an opportunity cost).
- **Bad:** This is inferior. It's also used to denote vulnerabilities.
- **GM Notes:** Article notes and GM tricks, shows ways to counter marksmen, and what to forbid.



The Marksman is a good ranged class. You will hit often and accurately, and be able to add riders to attacks. It acts like a specialized Psychic Warrior, which focuses on ranged, but with better hit dice, BAB (meaning you get bonus attacks sooner, and higher hit chance), saves, and automatic ranged bonuses. However, a Marksman has fewer powers known and even lower maximum level than a Psychic Warrior. If you want to hit things from far away, the Marksman class is great, just do not use it in roles it is not designed for.

Unlike 3.5, you don't need to bend over backwards to be a good ranged attacker in Pathfinder – you can be a great archer with nothing but CRB feats. Everything the Marksman gives you on top of that is great. The marksman should be able to contribute to every party. It is a [tier 3 class](#)

The marksman is a great assassin, spy, soldier, mercenary or like. Especially the Shroud archetype, which gives short-term invisibility that has no save to resist -- something very rare in psionics.

If you are new to playing a Marksman, suggest the MARK the MARKSMAN with MOXIE (page 9) to give you versatility. If you are a GM, and want some tips to fighting marksmen, read the [cyan-colored](#) text near powers and [COUNTERS](#) at the bottom of page 19. Same section also shows how players can best fend off Marksmen.

Laconic Condensing: Effort was put into having the most material in the least amount of pages. Thus, in parts, shorthand was used (esp. in the powers, build and NPC sections), which follows: w/=with, w/o=without, w/n=within, &=and, b/n=between, rnd=round, foe=target or subject, dmg=damage, Str/Dex/Con/Int/Wis/Cha=ability scores, and contractions saved space.

What a Marksman Does

The Marksman is a specialist, with a few different things it can focus on.

Things a Marksman can do Easily:

- **Sniping**: Marksmen are very good at hitting things from far away.
- **Area Damage**: The Volley style or Barrage power allows you to hit many creatures in a round. Unleashing a ranged whirlwind of projectiles. Also, three grenades inside a focusing flask thrown by someone with the grenade expert feat is similar to a fireball.
- **Zone Control**: Cover Fire, and the powers that modify it, and Wind Stike, can give Marksman the ability to pepper an area; keeping the enemy down so that allies can re-manuever.
- **Ranged Defence**: A Marksman has many ways to defend against enemy ranged attacks, with things like the deflect, disengage and defensive shot features; or many of his powers.
- **Firearms**: With many bonus feats and plenty of ways to boost attack rolls, a firearm with deadly aim feat is the best way to make this class do damage.



Things a Marksman can do, with Difficulty:

- **Scout**: The generic Marksman has some good class skills. But is still lacking bluff, disable device, most knowledge, and does not have the best skill rank modifier (only Int+4). Thus they are not the skill monkey that being a scout normally requires. Dipping in Rogue, Slayer or like will give them better skills -- but still requires a dip. They are also lacking in powers known, which may have compensated for the low skill ranks. **However, a Rogue dip (for one level), then the Shroud archetype** makes them closer to blue in scouting ability, as being invisible is a massive boon.
- **Melee**: If you want to be good at this, you are in the wrong class. The spearman archetype is a little better (making this average), but still suggest being a Soulknife, Psychic Warrior or Aegis if you want to do melee well.

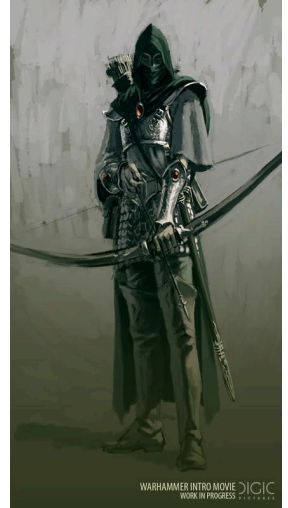
Vital Statistics

- **d10/Full BAB**: As a fighter. This makes it an excellent martial character.
- **4+Intelligence skills per level**: Not bad, and not great. You get some great class skills, but are missing a few you would expect to have. Thus it is average. Make sure to have Acrobatics, Perception and Stealth high.
- **Bad Fort**: You are vulnerable to poison, and physically affecting powers.
- **Good Reflex and Will**: Two good saves to have bonuses in, especially in a psionic game where Will saves are common.
- **Half the PP of a Psychic Warrior**: And Psychic Warriors do not get a lot. You will only be able to use powers rarely. Manifesting on the level of the spellcasting Paladin or Ranger, except you'll get a power known at level 2. You'll have 70 base PP at 20 (as the Aegis), but you have 12 powers known at level 19/20. The marksman power list is perfectly suited for a ranged attacker.

- **One of the worst Powers Known progression in the game:** You get about the same as a wilder (a class known for having very few powers known). And you have to wait until 13th level to get 4th level powers, which is your maximum level! Even expanded knowledge can't really help you with anything more than low level powers. Further, with your low power points per day, even outside powers known will only be used very rarely.

Class Features

- **Simple weapons; all light, projectile, and thrown martial weapons proficiency:** Makes you proficient with most weapons you want.
- **Light armor and bucklers:** You should not be in the front (use powers and stay behind cover).
- **Combat Style** (Technique/Mantra/Skill/Ability): This choice will probably be the biggest decider of how you build your marksman and how you play it round to round. It has its own section below.
 - Finesse: Crowd control. Don't take it if you just want to deal damage.
 - Sniper Style: Vital Strike.
 - Volley: Full attacks. Highest potential DPR.
- **Point Blank Shot:** It's a prerequisite for most ranged feats. Just take it and say "Thank you."
- **Wind Reader:** Add Wis to all ranged attacks for 1 round. The catch? It's a competence bonus, so it doesn't stack with your Favored Weapon ability. If you really crank up your Wisdom, it's better. There is one highly important power to resolve with your GM: **Wind Strike**. We'll talk about it in more detail later, but suffice to say if it's in as written, Wind Reader gets upgrade to **blue**.
- **Favored Weapon:** Bonus to attack rolls with ranged weapons.
- **Evade Arrows:** Bonus to AC against ranged attacks (but not ranged touch attacks).
- **Cover Fire:** Force an opponent to make a Reflex save or be staggered for 1 round as an *attack* action (same wording as Vital Strike - it's a standard action; thanks to Extra Achovies). If you can pin down a melee opponent or prevent a ranged attacker from full attacking your party, you're doing pretty good. Careful use of this ability can make or break a combat.
- **Bonus Feat:** Get a bonus feat from a list of great feats.
- **Disengage:** Expend focus to add Wis mod to AC and Acrobatics checks when leaving a threatened square, and move at full speed without increasing Acrobatics DC.
- **Defensive Shot:** You don't provoke attacks of opportunity for making ranged attacks.
- **Ranged Specialist:** Crit multiplier increased for ranged attacks, plus essentially free Far Shot, but better. It comes at 19, so you won't have it for long, but it's great.



COMBAT STYLES	Finesse	Sniper	Volley
Skill +1 per 3 levels	Intimidate	Stealth	Perception
Technique (Expend focus)	Ranged CMB checks	Add Wis to damage of one attack	Bonus attack

Mantra (Maintain Focus)	Bonus to Attack rolls	Bonus to damage	Initiative and Reflex saves
Ability (Level 4)	Dazzle on hit	Reroll ranged missed ranged attacks	Split damage between two targets.
Ability (Level 8)	Standard action attack + Will save vs. shaken	Increase your base weapon damage for single attacks	Move while full attacking while taking penalties (Just take <i>hustle</i>)
Ability (Level 12)	Expend focus to make target flat-footed	When you kill or knock an opponent unconscious, your shot keeps going.	Throw down caltrops
Ability (Level 16)	Fascinate/Stun creatures within 30ft.	Increased crit range and bonus on crit confirmations; sort-of stacks with Improved Crit	Bonus attacks
Ability (Level 20)	Bounce attacks back and forth, potentially hitting every creature Wis mod times/round	Standard action save-or-suck ability.	Blanket an area in attacks
Bonus Feat Choices	Disrupting Shot*, Shot on the Run, Throw Anything	Greater Vital Strike, Improved Precise Shot, Improved Vital Strike, Pinpoint Targeting, Vital Strike	Crossbow Mastery, Manyshot, Rapid Reload, Rapid Shot

Ability Scores and Races

Most Markman just need high Dexterity and Wisdom, plus good Intelligence for skill ranks. However, some builds could benefit from lowering Dexterity a little, and raising Strength and Constitution. For most Marksmen, your stat weights will probably look something like **Dex>Wis>Int>Con>Str>Cha**. If you are using composite bows, Strength should be higher.

- Strength: If you're using a composite bow (or are a Cannoneer) this should be two over the bow you are using (in case you get Strength damage). But if not using a composite bows, **dump it**.
- Dexterity: Essential for any Marksman, **maximize** it. Even Strength builds need at least 13 for feat requirements.
- Constitution: Hit points and Fortitude saves. Even with a decent hit die, **more hit points is always**

better than less and you have poor Fortitude saves to begin with.

- Intelligence: Increases skill ranks, which is vital if you want to be a scout or skill monkey.
- Wisdom: Your powers, power points per day and class features are modified by this. With how few base power points you have, **get Wisdom as high as you can**. You will be expending focus a lot with style abilities and feats, thus Psionic Meditation becomes more vital (and Psionic Meditation requires a Wisdom of 13).
- Charisma: This affects no class feature – **dump it**.

Small races are generally best, as they generally give size and Dexterity bonuses to attack rolls. Anything which gives a Wisdom bonus is at least **good**. And anything that gives a penalty to Dexterity or Wisdom is **bad**. Psionic races generally get bumped up a notch because they can get PP as their favored class bonus – something you need desperately.

- **Blue**: -2 Str, +2 Dex, +2 Int and small-sized. The Intelligence bonus means more skill ranks.
- **Dromite**: -2 Str, +2 Dex and small-sized. Plus they get natural armor.
- **Duergar**: +2 Con, +2 Wis and -2 Cha. Not bad, but not great.
- **Elan**: +2 to one ability. Plus some good defensive racial features.
- **Elf**: +2 Dex, -2 Con, +2 Int.
- **Forgeborn**: +2 Str, +2 Int and -4 Cha. It has nothing to offer a Marksman.
- **Half-Elf**: +2 to one ability. You can take Ancestral Arms for easy access to a repeating crossbow.
- **Half-Giant**: +2 Str, -2 Dex and +2 Wis. **An AMAZING marksman**, especially for a composite longbow or firearm build. The strength and wisdom bonuses, plus powerful build are great. Its penalty to Dexterity is less an issue because Marksmen get many attack roll bonuses.
- **Half-Orc**: +2 to one ability. The Sacred Tattoo alternate racial trait is very good. Proficiency with hornbows, which are one of the best ranged weapons available.
- **Halflings**: -2 Str, +2 Dex, +2 Cha and small-sized. A psionic race is generally better.
- **Human**: +2 to one ability and bonus feat. This allows Point-Blank Shot and any two of Precise Shot, Deadly Aim or Rapid Shot at 1st level.
- **Maenad**: +2 to one ability. Elan is much better.
- **Noral**: -2 Dex, +2 Con and +2 Wis. There are better races out there.
- **Ophidian**: +2 Dex AND +2 Wis. YES! The best two Stats for you. They get natural armor, and a bonus against poison. Plus, one of the alternate racial traits gives you a once per day poison.
- **Xeph**: -2 Str, +2 Dex and +2 Cha. Good for throwing marksman (especially with some of the alternate racial traits), but the Strength penalty will always hurt.

Other Races: Paizo prints +2 Dex races like they've got a crippling addiction, this is not an exhaustive list – only a taste.

- **Goblin**: +4 to Dex, racial +4 to Stealth, Small size for a +4 to stealth (thanks to CGNefarious)
- **Oread**: +2 Str, +2 Wis
- **Tengu**: +2 Dex, +2 Wis
- **Tiefling (Asura-Spawn)**: +2 Dex, +2 Wis
- **Vanara**: +2 Dex, +2 Wis
- **Grippli**: +2 Dex, +2 Wis, but -2 Str and painfully mediocre racial features
- **Tiefling (Standard)**: +2 Dex

Favored Class Bonuses

Always put it into more power points per day. Markmen have so few, that every point extra helps. None of the below are better than more power points.

- **Blue**: +1 use of Wind Reader per day.
- **Elf**: 1 psionic talent (level 0 power).
- **Human**: +1/3 damage when expending focus on Psionic Shot. If you were already planning on taking Psionic Shot and using it frequently, it's decent.

Archetypes

ULTIMATE PSIONICS: Unless you want to be locked into a gun, spear, or knife, your main choice is to Shroud or not to Shroud.

- **Cannoneer**: Firearms are extremely powerful, and can quickly overpower you beyond the rest of the group. Firearms require careful GM management -- but can be done in a balanced fashion. That being said, this archetype makes you a Strength-focused beast who lugs around a [culverin](#) for either shooting or bludgeoning. Later, cover fire is upgraded to permit the lock down of multiple opponents at once.
- **Kaigun**: Another firearm archetype, but a bit more "traditional" if you just want a guy with a gun. If you take this archetype, take Deadeye at level 2. Slowing Shot (the 15th level psionic deed) is basically a no-save *slow*.
- **Shroud**: *Swift action invisibility from level 1*. Best use: Sniper style, Psionic Meditation. Standard action, Vital Strike, expend focus for your level 8 ability; swift action, turn invisible; move action, regain focus. Occasionally use your move action to reposition or a swift action to *hustle* to reposition. The bonus to Stealth stacks with Sniper style's. Hide in Plain Sight is basically a straight upgrade to disengage, and essentially *greater invisibility* is generally superior to not provoking with ranged attacks.
- **Spearman**: Remember what was said about a Str-based throwing build? This is one place to start. You don't really lose too much of consequence, but you gain fun stuff like x2 Str bonus on the first thrown attack of the round after moving 10ft. You can also melee with your spear, if you're into that sort of thing.
- **Mobile Knife (Xeph)**: This hyper-mobile archetype is a fun and powerful choice. You're mostly gaining more than you lose (+1-5d6 damage when moving instead of evade arrows), but the real fun comes online when you get Fury of the Single Blade and Returning Knives, allowing you to move + quasi full attack or just throw one weapon and get all your attacks with it. You can also use all those juicy Standard action/1 attack feats like Intuitive Shot highly effectively (special thanks to thisisacat).

Powers

MARKSMAN POWERS: A separate document on marksman powers can be found [here](#).

- **Talents**: You don't get them baseline, but you can spend your powers known to get them. Don't. If

you really need them, take the Access Psionic Talent feat to get five of them in one clean sweep.

- **Conceal Thoughts**: You are not a face, do not waste a 1st-level power for this.
- **Detect Psionics**: This is a useful talent, still hard to justify losing a 1st-level power for.
- **Far Hand**: Telekinesis for focus is nice, and you only get two talents and/or 1st-level powers (total).
- **My Light**: See in the dark and illuminate for allies. Not worth a 1st-level power, but good with Access Point Talent
- **Trick Shot**: A useful talent, better than some 1st-level powers.
- **1st-Level: You only get TWO 1st-lvl powers.**
 - **Burst**: A good way to flee or charge, but situational.
 - **Catfall**: A good way to immediately save yourself from a fall, but situational.
 - **Chameleon**: A good lasting buff to your stealth. However, it may be excessive depending on build. A Shroud Sniper should skip, as they get enough inherent stealth bonuses. However, other types of Marksman may find it useful.
 - **Deaden Attack**: It is rare for you to need non-lethal damage. Unless you want all your enemies to live. Skip it.
 - **Deflect Missiles**: Damage reduction which you can augment for even more! However, this loses value at higher levels, as magical weapons will bypass it entirely.
 - **ENVIRONMENT SHIELD**: Initially like the *endure elements* spell (and weak). But at 11th level, you can use it to **become immune to cold and fire damage for 24 hours!** This can also be used to breath underwater and in airless environments.
 - **Foxhole**: This has some creative uses, plus it gives you a limited burrow speed.
 - **Inevitable Strike**: A good buff, but too costly on your power points. Offensive precognition is better, as it will last the entire battle.
 - **Metaphysical Weapon**: This power lasts a long time if you augment it. However, it won't stack with a magical weapons enhancement and you get few 1st-lvl powers. Okay early on, but replace with Environmental Shield later in your career.
 - **Precognition, Defensive**: A great defensive buff that increases AC and Saves.
 - **Precognition, Offensive**: This is a good offensive buff, against epic AC. However, your hit chance should be high enough without it. Metaphysical Weapon is better.
 - **Prescience, Offensive**: Marksmen have plenty of ways to increase attack rolls (the Shroud archetype even targets the lower flat-footed AC), but ranged builds have few ways to increase damage as significantly as this power. Mix this with the Deadly Aim feat while using a firearm for very high damage.
 - **Psychokinetic Cannon**: May be useful for a crossbow build. But otherwise skip.
 - **Sense Minds**: A very good scouting power, as it bypasses stealth.
 - **Vigor**: Not a bad power, but defensive precognition is better.
- **2nd-Level: You get up to THREE 2nd-lvl powers.**
 - **Blanketing Assault**: Good way to pin weak enemies down. But it is 3pp for a single effect.
 - **Blinding Shot**: A debuff that lasts all day, and gives you and allies sneak attack bonuses.
 - **Body Adjustment**: Okay healing, but the only good healing you have. If you want to play a lone wolf or party does not have a healer this can be life saving. If you want to heal others suggest taking the Scribe Tattoo feat, then making Crawling Body Adjustment tattoos.

- **Cloud Mind**: Selective invisibility with lots of augment options. **But if you want to be invisible often, play the Shroud archetype instead.**
- **Concealing Amorpha**: If you did not take defensive precognition, take this. Or take both if you want to be tanky.
- **Dead Hand**: **Great** if dealing with a lot of incorporeal creatures, **useless** otherwise.
- **Deflect**: Good immediate action defence. Just high cost, use Defensive Precognition or Concealing Amorphia if you think you will need to deflect more often in a fight. This should be your last defence, not your first.
- **Defy Gravity**: Levitation is situational. Some games will never need it. While others will.
- **Detect Hostile Intent**: A good social scouting power.
- **Entangling Cover**: An occasionally useful debuff. Blinding shot is better.
- **Ephemeral Bolt**: A good assassin tool. As you can hit an enemy, move out of sight, then have it deal damage. Reducing suspicion. Useless to other builds, however.
- **Gravitational Well**: Not very useful for you, as your hit chance is already high, but may be helpful for allies.
- **Kinetic Reload**: **Good for crossbow and firearm builds** (esp. repeating crossbows). **Worthless for all others.**
- **Knockdown**: 3pp for a single weak effect.
- **Localized Windstorm**: Really a bad power, only heavy augmentation makes it useful.
- **Share Pain**: Great if someone wants to share damage with you, or if you want to share it with the tank (as you will be in the rear and are unlikely to take damage otherwise. Remember, both parties must remain close.
- **Sidestep**: Better than deflect, this is your get out of jail free card for when you unluckily find yourself in melee.
- **WIND STRIKE**: If you are not a Cannoneer or Shroud, this is the best 2nd-level power -- possibly one of the best Marksman powers ever!
- **3rd-Level**: You get up to THREE 3rd-lvl powers.
 - **Concealing Amorpha, Greater**: Great power, short duration and more power points.
 - **Danger Sense**: Great scouting buff.
 - **Dimension Slide**: Good power. Costs a lot of power points, which you are low on.
 - **Ectoplasmic Grapnel**: Lots of utility out of this, you have become Spider-Man.
 - **Energy Adaptation, Specified**: This will help you against energy blasters. Take it!
 - **Escape Detection**: Nice idea, but there are better powers for you. Unless you are hunting specialized targets.
 - **Ghostslayer's Blade**: **Great** if dealing with a lot of incorporeal creatures, **useless** otherwise.
 - **Gravitational Anchor**: As Gravity Well, but actually useful.
 - **Heightened Vision**: Darkvision if you have to have it. But an **oun torch** is far better. Or pick a race with inherent darkvision.
 - **Hustle**: A Marksman has a shortage of swift actions, **skip it.**
 - **Physical Acceleration**: One of the best offensive buffs for a Marksman. GET IT!
 - **Touchsight**: Good way to spot invisible creatures. It even works on those without heartbeats and the mindless.
- **4th-Level**:

- **Barrage**: This is better than Physical Acceleration short term. As it costs power points for each use. But exponentially increases a Marksman's area damage.
- **Evade Burst**: This can be useful against blasters, but generally there are better powers.
- **Inertial Barrier**: DR which lasts a long time. Only problem is it does not augment.
- **Mirror Shot**: A good way to stack even more damage onto an attack. At this point you have more pp to spare.
- **Pierce the Veils**: True seeing is never bad. However, Steadfast Perception is generally better (lasts longer).
- **Slip the Bonds**: Essential for a Mobile Knife or Spearman. Still useful for all others.
- **Steadfast Perception**: Become immune to figments and glammers, generally better than Pierce the Veils.
- **Truevenom Weapon**: Okay poison, but you are better off buying poison.
- **Zealous Fury**: Useful in certain combos. But Physical Acceleration and Barrage are better.

BAD MARKSMAN POWERS: As a marksman you have a small number of powers known, thus each power must count for more. The below powers are either weak or super situational that you will not use them often. Use psionic tattoos or power stones to add situational powers to your character.

- **0 and 1st Level:** Distract, Float, Telekinetic Punch, Astral Traveler, Elfsight, Prevenom Weapon;
- **2nd-Level:** Body Equilibrium, Dissolving Weapon (cost too many power points for a one time use (Offensive Prescience far better), Psionic Scent, Sonic Blast (too many pp), Sustenance, Wall Walker (take Defy Gravity instead);
- **3rd-Level:** Control Air, Flexible Trajectory (not worth the pp), Ubiquitous Vision;
- **4th-Level:** Aura Sight and Sharpened Edge (not worth it).

Teach the Controversy: Wind Strike:

- **Wind Strike** is a second level power that causes all successful ranged attacks this round to daze the opponents struck for 1 round. It requires expending a daily use of your Wind Reader class feature. We're going to be considering two schools of thought on the power:
 - *Wind Strike IS Overpowered:*
 - 1) It doesn't allow a save.
 - 2) It deals damage and applies one of the most powerful statuses in the game.
 - 3) The PP expenditure is laughably small late-game, when you have 70 PP from your class (before high Wisdom, racial bonuses, etc.).
 - 4) It applies to every attack in the round, meaning if you miss a target, you can just keep on firing until you get the desired result. A player could easily keep one opponent (say, the boss of the campaign) permanently dazed until death.
 - 5) Dazing effects usually grant a Fortitude save, so creatures that should normally be technically immune to daze (constructs, undead) are vulnerable to Wind Strike.
 - 6) A GM could conceivably throw a horde of level 5 marksman at a party of any level and keep them permanently dazed until death.
 - *Wind Strike is NOT Overpowered:*
 - 1) It allows power resistance.
 - 2) It requires a swift action, and the marksman does have several swift-action

abilities.

- 3) It requires a daily use of the Wind Reader *and* power points. At the level the marksman can first select it, they only have 7 PP from their class.
- 4) A player trying to use it optimally for crowd control will split their attacks, which is non-optimal for damage. Also, when a single ranged attack is sent at someone, there are multiple ways to auto-negate it (Deflect Arrows, [deflect](#)).
- 5) You do actually have to hit the target, which can be negated by breaking line of sight, hampered by high AC and concealment/total concealment, etc.
- **If you find Wind Strike to be overpowered:** I suggest implementing one or a mixture of the following homebrew fixes:
 - A) It grants a Fortitude save, but has an augment to increase the DC.
 - B) It only affects one attack; if it misses, the power fails (akin to Stunning Fist).
 - C) It does not deal the damage of the attack; it only applies the dazed condition.

Feats

Check out the massive feat guide called [The Big Fat Feat Compendium](#) (WIP).

GENERAL/COMBAT FEATS: The elemental four are: Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot and Deadly Aim. These will almost always be your first four feats in every ranged build. **However, if wanting a firearm, see that section of feats below.**

- **Assassin's Shot:** Activate a style ability without expending psionic focus when you deal sneak attack damage with a ranged attack. Augmented Shot (8th level Sniper style) is the big one you'd want - possibly worth a level of rogue or similar.
- **Clustered Shots:** Only apply DR once to a full attack. *Incredibly* useful when you're full attacking. Obviously **nearly worthless** to Sniper style marksmen.
- **DEADLY AIM:** Deadly Aim is Power Attack for ranged attacks. With the marksman's good accuracy, you should be able to use it most of the time.
- **Far Shot:** Half range increment penalties. Only worth thinking about for thrown weapons, and I'd prefer Empowered Shot for that purpose.
- **Focused Precision:** Add your Dexterity modifier to damage rolls with crossbows and firearms when focused. Sadly not bows.
- **Expanded Favored Weapon:** Apply your favored weapon benefits to another weapon group. There's almost never a reason to use another weapon.
- **Hawkeye:** Increases the range of precision damage like sneak attack (and Deadly Throw), but also Point Blank Shot. Not worth it for just PBS, of course, but if you have precision damage, it's worth considering.
- **Improved Critical:** Only really useful if you're going for a weapon with a larger critical chance
- **Improved Initiative:** +4 to initiative. Going first wins battles.
- **Improved Precise Shot:** Ignore anything less than total cover or total concealment.
- **Improved Disengage:** Gain a bonus 5ft. step when you disengage.
- **Improved Cover Fire:** Increase the DC for cover fire, and you can expend focus to stun instead of stagger on a crit.

- **Manyshot:** More attacks if you're using a bow (with some restrictions). Damage is damage.
- **POINT BLANK SHOT:** This is a prerequisite for just about every other ranged feat. The marksman gets it for free, but some archetypes don't get it automatically.
- **PRECISE SHOT:** This lets you ignore penalties for firing into melee. You might be able to get away without it if no one in your party is melee (such as if you're a GM building a squad of archers).
- **Open Minded:** +1 skill per level. Okay if you want to make a heavily skill-focused marksman.
- **Rapid Reload/Crossbow Mastery:** Because if you're going crossbow (or firearms for Rapid Reload), you basically have to take these, and if you're not going crossbow, there's no reason to.
- **RAPID SHOT:** This lets you make an additional attack on a full attack by accepting a -2 penalty. So before BAB +6, that's a real potential to double your damage per round.
- **Relentless Shot:** If you make a ranged attack against a foe within 30ft., you can make attacks of opportunity against them with ranged weapons. It's free attacks if you're a Finesse marksman.
- **Shot on the Run/Parting Shot:** The prerequisites are so high they're hardly even worth considering. If you really want Shot on the Run, go Xeph Mobile Knife.
- **Snap Shot/Improved/Greater:** Threaten 5/10ft. with ranged weapons. You can have some fun with it by doing things like manifesting *fold space* to get next to an enemy ranged opponent.
- **Stabbing Shot:** Elf/Half-Elf only. Shove enemies away from you to avoid attacks of opportunity. You get Defensive Shot eventually (unless you traded it away with an archetype), but this can come online at very low levels and doesn't require a CMB check, save, or similar.
- **Toughness:** More HP means you survive a little longer. Because most marksmen don't take many psionic feats, the normal psionic body feat rarely helps much. Thus toughness is far better at giving extra HP.
- **Twin Throw:** Manyslot for TWF thrown. This is how you get tons of attacks on a thrower.
- **Vital Strike/Improved/Greater:** A great way to improve damage and bypass damage reduction.
- **Weapon Focus:** Hey, its accuracy. But you should be accurate enough. Only take this for the prerequisite purposes.

FIREARM FEATS

In suggested order of acquisition.

- **DEADLY AIM:** Since the first range increment is vs. touch AC, a reduction in attack does not matter as much. But because firearms are expensive, this feat has few prerequisites, and it can be used with any ranged weapon (incl. bows and crossbows), it is the best early firearm feat. The main reason firearms can outshine bows and crossbows is the higher damage when mixed with deadly aim. The downside is firearms take far longer to reload.
- **Gunsmithing:** This feat lets you craft ammo and firearms for cheaper. It also helps you repair broken firearms. While not necessary for a character with firearms, this feat is strongly encouraged as firearms break frequently (and are very expensive).
- **Exotic Weapon Proficiency (firearms):** Mandatory once you can afford a firearm. It makes you proficient with ALL firearms. Interestingly, this also makes you proficient with cannons and other black-powder based siege weapons.
- **Rapid Reload:** Reduce the reload time. Needed if you want to sustain fire.
- **Throw Anything:** If you like the Grenade Expert feat below, this is a prerequisite. Otherwise skip.
- **Grenade Expert:** You may not have a fireball spell, but you can get a similar effect with grenades.

If you like throwing grenades and have some extra gold, suggest getting a [focusing flask](#) then putting three [fuse grenades](#) inside. With some creativity you can incorporate these grenades into traps.

PSIONIC FEATS:

- **Access Psionic Talent:** Get 5 psionic talents. Potentially useful since you don't start with any of your own, but this should generally be left to the primary casters/manifesters.
- **Assassin's Venom:** You have to multiclass in Psychic Warrior, and its bonus is weak. SKIP.
- **Deadly Throw:** Dex to damage with thrown attacks (within 30ft.). If you're going to do a Dex throwing build, take it.
- **Empowered Shot:** Double range increment while maintaining focus. Could be useful for thrown builds with very low range increments, but they're pretty feat-heavy to begin with.
- **Expanded Knowledge:** Not as good for you as most psionics - the marksman power list is pretty much exactly what you need to fulfill your role. That doesn't mean that there aren't goodies to be found like *astral construct*, *inertial armor*. or an *energypower* like *energy missile* as a failsafe against foes you can't hit with a bow.
- **Intimidating Shot/Staggering Shot/Crippling Assault:** With Intimidating Shot, you make a standard action ranged attack and can Intimidate them if you hit; pretty nice, because Intimidate is more or less automatic. With Staggering Shot/Crippling Assault you make a standard action attack to potentially stagger/paralyze, but they allow saves (ugh) and they have to have lower levels of debuffs to use - if they work, they're great, if not, you're handicapping your damage.
- **Intuitive Shot/Greater Intuitive Shot:** Standard action, add Wis to damage for one attack. Greater, expend focus, Wis to damage for all attacks. With Wind Reader, you can get Dex and Wis to attack and damage, at least for a round. Kind of fun.
- **Knockdown Shot:** Expend focus, standard action, if the attack hits, your foe must save or be knocked prone. Not a priority of any kind, but you can mess with high Str/low Dex opponents.
- **Psicrystal Affinity/Psicrystal Containment:** Psicrystal Affinity Isn't half bad - you get Alertness just for having it stick around, plus you can get useful bonuses like +3 to initiative. The real draw is getting a second psionic focus - with the number of feats and class features the marksman have that require expending or maintain focus, it's a godsend.
- **Psionic Awakening:** Gain *inertial armor*, *mindlink* or *vigor* as a psi-like ability. *Inertial armor* is great.
 - **Improved Psionic Awakening:** Gain *body purification*, *minor metamorphosis* or *time hop* as a psi-like ability. Other requirements: character level 7th. Minor metamorphosis and time hop are **decent**, the other is **bad**.
 - **Greater Psionic Awakening:** Gain *fold space*, *pierce the veils* or *slip the bonds* as a psi-like ability. Other requirements: character level 13th. All three are pretty good.
- **Psionic Body/Deep Focus:** Get 2 bonus HP for each psionic feat you have. You've got tons of bonus feats, but you need to put quite a few of them into non-psionic feats. Plus, HP isn't that great for you. The only reason you should consider is as one of the two paths to a second psionic focus (Deep Focus - the other being Psicrystal Containment).
- **Psionic Meditation:** Regain focus as move action. Many feats and style abilities can be used as a standard action by expending focus. This is especially good for the Sniper style.

- **Psionic Talent:** +2 PP +1 for each time you took this feat before. You'll probably have the PP you need. Taking a psionic race for the favored class bonus is a better way to get PP if you want more.
- **Psionic Precise Shot:** It is rare to be in a situation where this is both useful and worth focus.
- **Psionic Shot/Greater Psionic Shot/Fell Shot:** Expend focus to give one attack bonus damage. Most PF archers are focused on putting out as many attacks as possible, but a sniper-style marksman can find these useful. The passive damage is mediocre. Fell Shot lets you resolve a single attack as a touch attack by expending focus, which isn't exactly a priority for the super-accurate marksman.
- **Return Shot:** It's Deflect Arrows, but you expend focus and knock the shot back at them.
- **Rebounding Throw:** Expend focus when you hit to bounce your attack to hit another target.
- **Returning Throw:** It's the *returning* special property, except if you already have *returning* or expend focus, you can use one weapon for your entire full attack routine. This feat is almost essential to an optimal throw weapon marksman build.
- **Ricochet:** Expend focus to bounce your attacks or recover from a miss. There's plenty of other feats I'd rather expend focus on for accuracy (Fell Shot or Rebounding Throw, for example).

AKASHIC MYSTERIES FEATS:

- **Chakra Targeting:** Get an insight bonus on attack and damage rolls with ranged weapons. This is really good for a lot of archers, but you've got *offensive precognition/prescience* for insight bonuses, so it's not too pressing.
- **Powerful Throw:** Use Strength for attack rolls with ranged weapons and Power Attack instead of Deadly Aim for ranged weapons. Core for a Str-based thrower (i.e. Spearman) build.

Build Options

Generally it is best not to multi-class, as it reduces the Marksman's manifesting abilities. Which are already weak. However, a one to three level dip can help by filling weaknesses in the base Marksman design.

BASE CLASSES:

- **Aegis:** There's lots of useful things to find, but Powerful Build is great for non-half giant Sniper style marksmen.
- **Rogue/Ninja/Slayer:** Anything that grants a +1d6 sneak attack allows you to qualify for Assassin's Shot. Rogue and Slayer also give trapfinding which turns Marksmen into good scouts (as they now can disable magic traps and have disable device as a class skill), plus more knowledge and social class skills.

PRESTIGE CLASSES:

- **Phrenic Slayer:** One of the better prestige classes for a Marksman, it only reduces your manifester by one, and gives you a lot of defensive abilities (esp. Vs. mind control and mind effects).
- **Sighted Seeker:** You would think this would be a good idea by flavor, but the mechanics are way off. You would stop progressing in all marksmen abilities. Then would slow down in manifesting progression; or stop it altogether if you wanted sighted seeker powers.
- **War Mind:** You WILL decrease your Marksman manifester level considerably. But you do gain the

“Chain” features which stack with most Marksman features and some new Psychic Warrior powers. However, a pure Marksman is generally better.

Gear

TRADITIONAL: If firearms are forbidden (and for lower levels when firearms are not affordable).

- Magically enhanced [composite longbow](#) with arrows. Alternatively a [repeating heavy crossbow](#), but you will need a feat to use effectively (exotic weapon proficiency), will want the rapid reload feat, AND bows are still far better.
- A [spear](#) or other simple melee weapon (or light martial weapon). This is a backup if foes get close.
- +1 [lamellar leather armor](#), which is cheap good armor until you get [Psionic Awakening \(inertial armor\)](#).
- A grappling arrow or bolt and knotted silk rope (to get to hard to reach places).
- [Weapon blanch](#) for arrows. Especially ghost salt to do full damage to incorporeal.
- Wisdom Headband, then Dexterity Belt.
- If doing a Rogue or Slayer multiclass, you will want concealable thieves' tools (and any other trapping material).
- Cloak of resistance: Increases your saves so you do not fail a save or die.
- [Quiver of Recall](#) or [Efficient Quiver](#): Generally the efficient quiver is better, because you can store larger weapons in it and it is cheaper. If you like using highly expensive ammo which often misses and still have the wind reader ability, the quiver of recall is okay – but if you are using expensive ammo which misses often, you will want to redesign your character.

FIREARMS ALLOWED: As above (incl. longbow), plus the below.

- All need a Gunsmith's Kit to repair broken firearms and make more ammo.
- Bandoleers to carry ammo and small tools. You can wear two bandoleers.
- Either go the Double-Barreled pathway (two shots to same target) OR the Dragoon pathway (weapons with three rounds in magazine and lower misfire chance). Firearms should always be bought magically enhanced to remove the risk of them breaking (they instead wreck, which is a lesser condition).
 - If Double-Barreled pathway, initially get a [double-barreled musket](#) and attach a [bayonet](#) to its end (in case a foe gets close). Later get a [double-barreled pistol](#), to use as a backup if musket misfires (or you don't have time to reload).
 - Need bullets and black powder (best stored in multiple powder horns). Suggest having enough for at least 30 shots.
 - If Dragoon pathway, initially get a [dragoon musket](#) and attach a [bayonet](#) to its end (in case a foe gets close). Later get a [dragoon pistol](#), to use as a backup if musket misfires (or you don't have time to reload).
 - Need dragoon cartridges (each cartridge has three shots, best thinking of it as a magazine with only three shots). Suggest having enough for at least 30 shots.
- Handy haversack, alchemist lab, and [cauldron of brewing](#) (to make alchemy faster). This adds more utility to a marksman.
- Alchemical weapons, like [fuse grenades](#). If firearms are available, then alchemical weapons are

likely available.

MARK the MARKSMAN with MOXIE

A sneaky gunslinger with psionics and alchemy. (See link for details.)

HIGHLIGHTS: Swiftly gains greater invisibility, fires both barrels of a musket (w/ sneak attack, deadly aim and vital strike), then gets a full move action. Has to reload every other round. Can scout, disable magic traps, and track foes. Can craft alchemy, firearms, psionic tattoos (akin to potions) and traps.

- **avgDPR vs. avgCR14, if w/n 30' and sneak attack:** 84.2
 - secondary attack: 61.8
- **Utilities:** traps, greater invisibility, see invisibility, crafting (incl. alchemy and firearms)
- **Defensive:** immune to cold & fire damage, can heal self (or others with crawling tattoos)
 - HP119, AC23, Will+14 (+2 vs. mind effects)