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I Know Kung Fu:

A Guide to Pathfinder's Style Feats



“[Guide Title].”

—Neo, *The Matrix*

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Introductions

Ho, Pathfinders! Our topic of discussion today is style feats, a subcategory of combat feats that were introduced in *Ultimate Combat* and have since expanded to become one of the more interesting features of tactical combat in Pathfinder 1e. Style feats always consist of a few elements:

- Three feats, consistently introduced with a feat entitled “_____ Style,”
- Typically organized in a chain (1 → 2 → 3), but sometimes organized as a V (1 → 2 / 3),
- Which grant thematically and often mechanically unique abilities,
- Can be activated at any point during a combat encounter as a swift action,
- And are mutually exclusive with one another—only one style can be active at a given time, barring certain class features or feats.

Style feats are fun because they can often singlehandedly carve out entirely new build spaces that didn’t exist previously in Pathfinder. Does anyone remember trying to build an improvised weapon specialist prior to Shikigami Style? It wasn’t fun, was it? What if you wanted to build a grappling specialist like a tetori monk, but you wanted to be able to grapple more than one target at a time? You were up a creek without a paddle until Grabbing Style came along. Tower shield builds? Good luck getting one of those off the ground without Mobile Bulwark Style. The list goes on and on—if there’s a build concept you have that you just can’t seem to make work, chances are good that a style feat line was created at some point that makes that build concept more feasible. Whether it makes it *good* is a different question, but *viable* is certainly well within the purview of this subsystem.

If you’re curious about what’s coming next in the pipeline for me and for All Souls Gaming, I’ve got a cleric guide, a vigilante guide, and a top-to-bottom refurb of my original inquisitor guide, *The Inquisitor’s Symposium*, in varying states of readiness. I’ve been eyeing a guide to *summon monster* for some time, as well, and at some point Drop Dead Studios’ *Spheres of Guile* system will finally be released—I’ll absolutely be writing a guide for that. If you’d like to help those guides get released a little faster, you’re always welcome to provide monetary support at either [Patreon](#) or [Ko-Fi](#), but if you’re cash-poor like me and just want to drop me a line, you’re welcome to do that, too! Although I technically have a Twitter handle, I’m on there so seldom that it’s scarcely worth mentioning; sending a message to me on [Reddit](#) is a much easier way to get my attention. Alright, enjoy, and until I see you next, may all your swords be sharp, your GMs lenient, and your rolls natural 20s!

With best regards for a good game,

Chris (/u/Allerseelen)

What This Guide Is (And Isn't)

- **This guide is** a review of every one of the 91 style feat lines. Are they strong? Are they weak? Which classes or builds does the feat chain seem tailored for? Are there any combos I can think of that would work particularly well for them?
- **This guide is** rated as though you're building for the thing that the style feat line specializes in. If I think feinting is a suboptimal playstyle (and I do, for the most part) I'm not going to rate styles that specialize in feinting poorly just because they involve feinting; I'll instead evaluate how effective the styles are at improving a feinting build.
- **This guide is** unavoidably my opinion. I'm experienced at reviewing Pathfinder 1e content, but I can't be everywhere at once, having every experience with this system at once. If you disagree with some of my ratings or see combos that I don't, please write to me! Every disagreement is an opportunity for me to learn more about this game and to improve this guide. (Be kind and constructive, please. If you yell at me about what an idiot I am, there's every chance that I simply won't respond to you.)
- **This guide isn't** an exhaustive review of classes or archetypes that specialize in style feats. The master of many styles monk in particular could be (and is, for some authors) an entire guide unto itself, so for the sake of brevity I exclude everything but a cursory discussion of which classes and archetypes function best in the Styleverse.
- **This guide isn't** an exhaustive review of combos that can be achieved with the MoMS' fuse styles class feature or Weapon Style Mastery. I may create a section for MoMbo combos at the end if demand is high enough.

The Rating System

Throughout this guide, you'll see feats, items, archetypes, etc. rated using a color coding system that was first introduced by Treantmonk and since copied in many other guides. Everyone tends to use their own colors, though, so here's what we'll be working with:

Purple ratings are singular, the one ability at a given level or for a given playstyle that is cream of the crop. The apex, the zenith, the pinnacle: purple options are the royalty, the nobility. You *will* pick purple abilities, and damn the torpedoes.

Blue abilities are supercharged goodness: options that define the way a class is played, or that otherwise provide some exponential leap in effectiveness. Try your utmost to pick up these options.

Green abilities are almost universally useful, a good pick for nearly any build. If they're not gamebreakingly powerful, they're definitely holding up the line at a solid B+.

Yellow abilities are our C standard, neither good nor bad. A yellow rating can also denote situational abilities that might be useful to some playstyles but not others.

Red abilities are the traps. Stay away from these.

Who's Who in the Styleverse

Paizo clearly had overarching plans to carve out a niche for two classes in the Styleverse: monks/unchained monks and brawlers. A preponderance of style feats favor classes with monk levels (monks obviously count, but brawlers do, too, thanks to their martial training class feature), classes with good unarmed strike damage (again, pretty obvious), and classes with strong combat maneuver potential (hello, maneuver training), all of which monks and brawlers provide in spades. While these two classes are generally going to be able to squeeze the most juice out of the 91 lemons reviewed below to make delicious combat lemonade, many other classes and archetypes—generally full-BAB martial classes—can also leverage style feats quite effectively. It makes sense, then, to give you a high-level flyover of the major players in the Styleverse: what they're good at, what they're bad at, and why you might consider a dip or full build in them. This is not intended to be an exhaustive discussion of which classes can use style feats (we'd be here for years!) but rather a leisurely stroll through the cream of the crop...or the bottom of the barrel.

Monk

The core monk was the OG style feat master, and to this day houses many of the best archetypes for making use of the style subsystem, including the incomparable master of many styles archetype. Sure, flurry of blows is a mess, and sure, $\frac{3}{4}$ BAB progression on a martial class really stinks, and sure, many of the class features are only dubiously useful, and sure, a 1- or 2-level dip will suffice for many builds. That doesn't change the fact that the core monk did it first...and in some cases is the only place to shop for unique bonuses. **The general meta-consensus is that unless you want a specific archetype out of the core monk, the unchained monk is a stronger class chassis. Do with this information what you will.**

Base (No Archetype)

One of the weakest options available to you, honestly: all the weaknesses of the core monk class chassis with none of the inimitable class features from archetypes. Unless you're playing at the table of some sadist GM who only allows content from the *Core Rulebook*, you should rarely look to the core monk as your vehicle for a style feat build. And anyway, style feats weren't even introduced until *Ultimate Combat*, so why would you be interested in this guide? Who let you in here? Get out. No, you can't have Pummeling Style. Go on, get.

Maneuver Master

A not-insignificant proportion of style feats involve combat maneuvers in one capacity or another, and maneuver masters get some fun toys to facilitate their use: the equivalent of full BAB for the purposes of CMB checks, bonus maneuver feats, roll-twice-take-the-better on CMB checks, adding your Wisdom bonus to CMB checks, and so on. The biggest thing the archetype surrenders (and the main reason *not* to take it) is flurry of blows—a hard loss. If you truly want a hardcore maneuver specialist, though...well, you might still be better off building a brawler. But maneuver master isn't too shoddy as a secondary option.

Master of Many Styles

Ahhhh. Now we come to it. Master of many styles (or MoMS, as it's affectionately known on the Paizo boards) is the venerable grandfather of style feat builds, but it's not without its baggage. Essentially, the first incarnation of the

archetype was too appetizing for dip-hungry martial classes, so in the subsequent *Ultimate Combat* errata Paizo made two crucial changes: **first**, they made it so that MoMS bonus feats could not grant later feats in feat chains. If you wanted to snag Snake Fang or Crane Wing with a 1- or 2-level dip, tough tootsies, buckaroo, 'cause it ain't allowed no more. You have to start with Snake Style or Crane Style *and meet all the prerequisites of later feats* for your wildcard slots. **Second**, they gave MoMS a hefty attack bonus based on the number of stances they were currently maintaining, essentially turning the monk into a full-BAB class, albeit without a fourth iterative. While these changes generally make the archetype more appealing for a 1-20 experience, they make it far less appealing for dips. Whether you play with the errata is up to your table, of course; I won't conceal that I prefer the original MoMS, but I might feel differently if I had a player at my table who was absolutely abusing style feats. At the very least, players should be communicating with their GMs and giving them a chance to veto unreasonably strong combos.

If, however, you opt to play with the original version of master of many styles, it's great for two simple reasons. **First**, MoMS has a class feature called fuse style that allows you to maintain between two and five style feats at the same time—this is a marked departure from how style feats normally work, where you can have only one style active. If you thought style feats were cool on their own, just wait until you start cooking up MoMS combos (or MoMbo combos, as I like to call 'em) with two, three, four, five styles at a time. To execute a full-blooded master of many styles effectively would require, frankly, a pretty punishing level of systems mastery, mostly in planning wildcard feat slots and plotting the actions and interactions between your various styles in obsessive detail. **Second**, MoMS grants bonus style feats *that ignore prerequisites*. This is fabulous news for dippers! If the final feat in a given chain is obviously the strongest but you don't have the build space to satisfy all the prerequisites in the normal fashion, **a 1- or 2-level dip into MoMS** will grant you one or two bonus feats to snag those. Whether you go on to backfill the rest of the feats in the two styles you can maintain with fuse style is your business; for such a simple dip, though, MoMS is incredible at facilitating a wide variety of style builds while also granting you all the normal goodies that monk dips tend to grant—Wisdom to AC, evasion, great saves, Improved Unarmed Strike, etc.

If you were thinking of playing a single-class, pre-errata master of many styles, you should prepare for a bit of a slog. As I mentioned above, no one should underestimate the staggering complexity of trying to mash five style feat lines together, and with a limited number of actions in a given round, I earnestly doubt that you'll be able to make full use of your abilities on a regular basis. Moreover, MoMS gives up flurry of blows, which—for all its faults—the core monk definitely needs in order to keep its damage relevant unless you're building something like a Panther or Tiger Style build where the point of the build is to assiduously avoid full-attack actions. Post-errata MoMS is easier to deal with, but still might need quite a bit of help to deal damage effectively.

Monk of the Empty Hand

Monks of the empty hand specialize in improvised weaponry, and while I haven't gone over the archetype in exhaustive detail, it seems at a glance like it would synergize reasonably well with **Shikigami Style**, which is already one of the stronger style feat lines. Food for thought.

Monk of the Four Winds

Monks of the four winds have a very strong elemental theme; the main pickup is the scaling damage bonus on Elemental Fist. Style feat lines like **Electric Eel, Marid, Shaitan, Djinni, and Efreeti Style** deal with Elemental Fist, so you'll want to seriously consider this archetype if you're intending to build down those tracks.

Tetori

Tetori monks are perhaps rightly known as **the premiere grapplers in all of Pathfinder 1e**. While the dizzying array of bonus feats and various grapple bonuses in the graceful grappler class feature certainly start the archetype off with a bang, the zenith of its power is 9th level's inescapable grasp class feature, which allows tetori to beat *freedom of movement*, suppress teleportation magic, and even wrestle ghosts. Since *freedom of movement* and teleportation are two common ploys that spellcasters use to nope out of grapples, the fact that tetori get hard counters to those tactics automatically vaults them into the upper echelons of style feat archetypes. It's not worth a thin penny if you don't intend to focus all your resources on grappling, however.

Unchained Monk

The general consensus among Pathfinder players is that unchained monk is a superior class to core monk, unless you need something specifically from a core monk archetype (tetori, MoMS, etc.) that you can't get elsewhere. Ki powers are great fun, style strikes freakin' slap (literally, in some cases), flurry of blows is greatly streamlined, and no one's denying that the monk chassis really needed full BAB all along.

Base (No Archetype)

As above. Unchained monk is a fair bit more powerful than core monk, in my opinion, so this isn't a bad place to be if you want to use no archetypes.

Elemental Monk

Elemental monk is technically available as a core monk archetype, as well, but unchained monk does things better, on balance. It's got some fun tricks for shifting fluidly between the various elementally aligned style feats (Djinni, Marid, Shaitan, Efreeti, and Janni) and will generally excel **in games that feature heavy energy damage typing** (*Reign of Winter*, *Legacy of Fire*, etc.).

Monk of the Mantis

Monk of the mantis has some fun tricks for **Stunning Fist builds**. Not saying those are the strongest builds in the book, but Stunning Fist does crop up often amid styles like Dragon, Kyton, and Mantis, so it's useful to know this archetype is here.

Scaled Fist

Scaled fists use Charisma instead of Wisdom for all of their monk abilities; the archetype can therefore be a good choice if you're using some of the style feat lines that use Charisma to determine saving throw DCs (Diabolic, Beastmaster, Linnorm Hunter, etc.).

Brawler

Base (No Archetype)

For my money, at least, brawlers are slightly superior to unchained monks in the style feat meta. Although unchained monks are more mobile (fast movement) and better on defense (Wisdom to AC, evasion, still mind, purity of body) the two are otherwise fairly comparable in their BAB, save bonuses, unarmed strike damage die progression, etc. And the brawler has a few huge advantages when it comes to using style feats: **first**, there's maneuver training. Many style feat lines rely on combat maneuvers to a certain extent, and with CMD scores as high as they are, you need every bonus you can possibly get in order to make them work. **Second**, there's brawler's cunning and martial training. Brawler's cunning helps streamline your point buy, and martial training is absolutely peerless when it comes to qualifying for both monk- *and* fighter-exclusive feats. **Third**, don't sleep on close weapon mastery! Brawlers can flurry and make unarmed strikes even when they're holding close weapons, and certain weapons like the [tri-bladed katar](#) or the [waveblade](#) have much better critical modifiers or threat ranges than traditional unarmed strikes. You don't even need Ascetic Style to get the most out of close weapons! **Fourth**, there is simply no way to value martial flexibility highly enough. Many style feat lines spring from common prerequisites (Dodge, Mobility, Combat Reflexes, Combat Expertise, Improved Unarmed Strike, Weapon Focus, etc.), and once you have those prerequisites locked down, martial flexibility lets you jump into vastly different feat lines with every use of the class feature. Doing so would take a high degree of systems mastery, of course, but newcomers to Pathfinder 1e should absolutely not be playing brawlers anyway. Brawlers can even multiclass with monk or fighter, including archetypes like MoMS, if they want to squeeze more bonus feats or class features out of their parent classes.

Snakebite Striker

Snakebite striker gets some cool feint-based abilities, not to mention a source of sneak attack dice. The primary issue with the archetype is that it gives up martial flexibility, which surgically excises a huge portion of the brawler's versatility and power when it comes to leveraging style feats effectively. You're welcome to try one out, though.

Steel-Breaker

Steel-breaker is a lovely archetype to play in [construct-heavy campaigns like *Iron Gods*](#), and focuses on the sunder maneuver, the disarm maneuver, and ignoring DR/hardness. Sunder and disarm are a little underdeveloped among the style feats, but Untwisting Iron Style at the very least would be a fabulous complement.

Strangler

Strangler is a fun archetype for dedicated [grappling builds](#). It gives up brawler's flurry and unarmed strike, which together dramatically reduce the archetype's damage potential, but the sneak attack damage that stranglers deal during grapples would stack very nicely with Kraken Style, Electric Eel Style, or other styles that apply bonus damage to grabbed foes. RAW, Accomplished Sneak Attacker will not apply to the strangle class feature, as it does not specify that you gain sneak attack as a rogue or slayer; your GM may grant you some leniency on this point if you ask really nicely or offer them a bribe, though.

Bloodrager

Bloody-Knuckled Rowdy

I've never been an *enormous* fan of bloody-knuckled rowdy. While it does make for an effective unarmed strike bloodrager, you lose your DR, some part of your spellcasting, fast movement, uncanny dodge, and improved uncanny dodge—a significant defensive hit. Free Combat Style Master is fun, though.

Fighter

Brawler

Not only are brawlers fantastic at the bull rush, reposition, and drag combat maneuvers due to their close control class feature, they're also pretty jam-packed with anticaster abilities. Menacing stance in particular is absolutely hell on defensive casting, and when combined with the Disruptive feat all but guarantees that spellcasting in your presence will fail. Enemies who end up adjacent to brawlers would also have an extremely difficult time getting away—between the no escape class feature and the Stand Still feat, enemies who attempt to flee from you will incur an attack of opportunity that you can use to trip, reposition, or grapple with extreme CMB bonuses. The biggest opportunity cost of the archetype is that you can't select advanced weapon training options; otherwise, however, the close combatant class feature more than compensates you for the loss of weapon training, and armor training is easily surrendered.

Free Hand Fighter

Free hand fighters feel a bit like swashbucklers, complete with all kinds of disarm and feint bonuses. It's not a bad archetype, per se, but it does lock you out of advanced weapon training options while giving you relatively little in return.

Lore Warden

If at all possible, players interested in the lore warden archetype should opt for the version released in the *PFS Field Guide*, not the version from the *Adventurer's Guide*. In exchange for the loss of armor training and your proficiency with medium and heavy armor, lore wardens get monstrous bonuses to CMB and CMD (+8 at 15th level!) plus free Combat Expertise. If you want to build a maneuver-heavy style feat specialist on a fighter chassis, this is almost certainly the way to do it. Watch out for your defenses, though, because lore wardens can be pretty flimsy under sustained fire.

Martial Master

It's a fighter...with martial flexibility! Losing advanced weapon training is becoming a bit of a trope by this point, but if you ever wanted to build a quasi-brawler with all of the fighter's bonus feats, armor training, heavy armor proficiency, etc., martial master would be a great way to do it. It's a pity that this version of martial flexibility scales more slowly than the brawler's, but what can you do?

Varisian Free-Style Fighter

Varisian free-style fighter is one of my favorite archetypes, because it seamlessly blends the brawler class (martial flexibility), the master of many styles monk (fuse styles/free fighting style), and the fighter (everything else, barring weapon

and armor training). With martial flexibility, free fighting style, and most of the fighter's bonus feats intact, this archetype is ideally situated to take advantage of all that the style feats have to offer—except, perhaps, styles that focus heavily on flurry of blows (Pummeling, e.g.) or large unarmed strike damage dice.

Shifter

Style Shifter

Shifters are not a class that I'm at all familiar with, which is why I totally neglected to include this archetype at first. But it's actually pretty nice! You get to apply feats that require Improved Unarmed Strike to your natural attacks, not to mention free style feats in the same vein as pre-errata MoMS. Perhaps most interesting, however, are the style aspects, which grant additional upgrades to animal-themed styles (Tiger, Monkey, Crane, etc.). Some of these are quite powerful, and well worth investing. A 1- or 2-level dip in MoMS, combined with the style shifter's frontloaded bonus style feats, could let you cobble together a fully functional style feat build *very* quickly.

Slayer

Spawn Slayer

I'd love to pretend that the base slayer chassis makes for a good style feat master—because it's an awesome class—but the truth is that the spawn slayer archetype does everything the base slayer can and more when it comes to style feats. Where does the advantage lie? Well, first of all, spawn slayers get mongo bonuses to attack Large-sized (or larger) targets through their studied spawn class feature. More importantly, however, the spawn slayer becomes one of the apex predators of the combat maneuver world through two features: first, studied spawn permits the archetype to ignore size restrictions when attempting combat maneuvers—bull rush, drag, overrun, reposition, and trip all stipulate that enemies can be no more than one size category larger than the PC attempting the maneuver, so that's a pretty big deal on its own, and easily worth considering a 1-level dip in spawn slayer. Second, 7th-level spawn slayers gain anywhere from a +1 to a +8 bonus to CMB against Large to Colossal enemies. While you still won't be able to slap enemies like the [empyrean angel](#) around (it has the highest CMD of any creature in the game, barring enemies with CRs greater than 20, at a 75) it does go a long way toward making combat maneuver builds more viable. Add in the usual bonuses from Improved [Maneuver], Greater [Maneuver], *gauntlets of the skilled maneuver*, etc., and you should be...well, if not golden, at least silver or bronze.

Style Specializations

Full BAB or Monk Levels Preferred?	Styles
Yes	<p> Ascetic Brute Cerberus Cloak and Dagger Diabolic Dwarven Hatred Jabbing Pummeling </p> <p> Archon Asura Crane Cudgeler Demonic Electric Eel Grabbing Kitsune Kraken Kyton Linnorm Hunter Marid Mobile Bulwark Outslug Overwatch Shaitan Unfolding Wind (Perfect) Untwisting Iron (Perfect) Vanguard Wyvern Fury </p> <p> Azata Blood Frenzy Bull-Catcher Crashing Wave Diva Djinni Dolphin Efreeti Lantern Shark Sisterhood Skyseeker Smashing Snapping Turtle Spring-Heeled </p>

	<p>Street Swordplay Tiger Unblinking Flame (Perfect)</p> <p>Indomitable Mountain Linnorm Shapeshifter Shielded Staff Signature Strike Stock-Striker Twin Fang</p>
<p>No</p>	<p>Dragon Kirin Panther Shikigami Snake Startoss</p> <p>Barracuda Beastmaster Boar Bulette Charge Charging Stag Dragonfly Fox Spear Dancing Tatzlwurm Claw Upsetting Shield</p> <p>Blinded Blade Earth Child Empty Quiver Janni Kobold Maddening Mantis Octopus Psychovore Shielded Gauntlet Slipslinger Swift Iron Wolf</p> <p>Aldori Deadhand Illusive Gnome Orc Fury Owl</p>
<p>Primary Attribute</p>	<p>Styles</p>

Strength	<p>Brute Dragon</p> <p>Barracuda Bulette Charge Cudgeler Demonic Mobile Bulwark Untwisting Iron (Perfect)</p> <p>Blood Frenzy Smashing Street Swift Iron Tiger</p>
Dexterity	<p>Startoss</p> <p>Dragonfly Spear Dancing Unfolding Wind (Perfect) Upsetting Shield Vanguard</p> <p>Octopus Spring-Heeled Swift Iron</p> <p>Owl Shielded Staff Twin Fang</p>
Constitution	Skyseeker
Intelligence	<p>Kirin</p> <p>Fox</p> <p>Unblinking Flame (Perfect)</p>
Wisdom	<p>Dragon Panther Snake</p> <p>Asura Barracuda Dragonfly Electric Eel Kraken Kyton Marid Shaitan Unfolding Wind (Perfect)</p>

	<p>Untwisting Iron (Perfect)</p> <p>Crashing Wave Djinni Earth Child Efreeti Maddening Mantis Monkey Psychovore Unblinking Flame (Perfect) Wolf</p> <p>Deadhand Indomitable Mountain Linnorm</p>
<p>Charisma</p>	<p>Diabolic</p> <p>Beastmaster Linnorm Hunter</p> <p>Diva Lantern Maddening</p> <p>Illusive Gnome Signature Strike</p>
<p>No Primary Attribute</p>	<p>Ascetic Cerberus Dwarven Hatred Jabbing Pummeling Shikigami</p> <p>Archon Boar Charging Stag Crane Grabbing Kitsune Outslug Overwatch Tatzlwurm Claw Wyvern Fury</p> <p>Azata Blinded Blade Bull-Catcher Dolphin Empty Quiver Janni</p>

	<p>Kobold Shark Shielded Gauntlet Sisterhood Slipslinger Snapping Turtle Swordplay</p> <p>Aldori Orc Fury Shapeshifter Stock-Striker</p>
Eligible for Weapon Style Mastery?	Styles
Yes	<p>Ascetic Cloak and Dagger Diabolic Startoss</p> <p>Outslug Overwatch Spear Dancing</p> <p>Empty Quiver Shielded Gauntlet Sisterhood Slipslinger Smashing Swordplay</p> <p>Aldori Illusive Gnome Shielded Staff Signature Strike</p>
No	All others
Benefits from Combat Stamina?	Styles
Yes	<p>Dragon Jabbing Kirin Panther Pummeling Snake</p> <p>Boar Crane Grabbing</p>

	<p>Marid Shaitan</p> <p>Djinni Earth Child Efreeti Janni Mantis Monkey Snapping Turtle Tiger</p>
No	All others
Weapons Required	Styles
Unarmed Strike	<p>Brute Cerberus Diabolic Dragon Jabbing Panther Pummeling Snake</p> <p>Barracuda Boar Electric Eel Kraken Tatzlwyrms Claw</p> <p>Blood Frenzy Bull-Catcher Earth Child Janni Mantis Monkey Psychovore Shark Snapping Turtle Street Tiger Wolf</p> <p>Indomitable Mountain Linnorm Shapeshifter</p>
Weapons	<p>Ascetic (weapons in monk weapon fighter group, or in other weapon groups, with the versatile design weapon modification)</p> <p>Cloak and Dagger (light melee weapons)</p> <p>Shikigami (improvised weapons)</p> <p>Startoss (thrown weapons)</p>

	<p> Kyton (spiked chain) Outslug (weapons in close weapon fighter group) Overwatch (ranged weapons) Spear Dancing (spears and polearms) Unfolding Wind (Perfect) (thrown weapons) Upsetting Shield (bucklers) Wyvern Fury (whips and scorpion whips) </p> <p> Empty Quiver (ranged weapons) Lantern (thrown weapons) Shielded Gauntlet (gauntlets, spiked gauntlets, and shields) Sisterhood (one-handed melee weapon and shield) Slipslinger (halfling sling weapons) Smashing (weapons in axe, hammer, or flail fighter groups) Swordplay (heavy or light bladed melee weapons) </p> <p> Aldori (Aldori dueling sword) Illusive Gnome (gnome weapons) Orc Fury (quarterstaves, weapons in spear or polearm fighter groups) Shielded Staff (halfling sling weapons) Signature Strike (swashbuckler or gunslinger weapons) Stock-Striker (firearms) Twin Fang (daggers or kama) </p>
<p>Unarmed Strike and Weapons</p>	<p> Dwarven Hatred Kirin </p> <p> Archon Asura Beastmaster Bulette Charge Charging Stag Crane Cudgeler Demonic Dragonfly Fox Grabbing Kitsune Linnorm Hunter Mobile Bulwark Untwisting Iron (Perfect) Vanguard </p> <p> Azata Blinded Blade Diva Dolphin Kobold Maddening Octopus Skyseeker </p>

	<p>Spring-Heeled Swift Iron Unblinking Flame (Perfect)</p> <p>Owl</p>
Combat Role	Styles
Defense - Self	<p>Dragon (save bonuses vs. status conditions) Dwarven Hatred (AC) Kirin (save bonuses and AC vs. AoOs) Snake (Sense Motive in place of AC)</p> <p>Asura (uncanny dodge) Crane (AC) Fox (resist feints and demoralize attempts) Kyton (AC) Marid (cold resistance) Mobile Bulwark (AC, CMD, Reflex saves, total cover) Outslug (AC) Shaitan (acid resistance) Tatzlwyrms Claw (anti-grapple) Unfolding Wind (Perfect) (electricity resistance) Untwisting Iron (Perfect) (acid resistance, DR/adamantine)</p> <p>Djinni (AC and electricity resistance) Efreeti (fire resistance) Earth Child (AC vs. giants) Empty Quiver (don't provoke with ranged weapons) Janni (AC) Monkey (AC) Octopus (immune to flanking) Psychovore (AC and temporary HP) Shielded Gauntlet (shield bonuses to AC) Sisterhood (shield bonuses to AC, Reflex and Will save bonuses) Snapping Turtle (shield bonuses to AC, crit confirmation penalties) Swift Iron (ACP, maximum Dexterity bonus, minimize damage) Swordplay (shield bonuses to AC) Unblinking Flame (Perfect) (fire resistance)</p> <p>Deadhand (saves vs. fear effects) Indomitable Mountain (CMD) Orc Fury (save bonuses) Shapeshifter (CMD) Shielded Staff (shield bonuses to AC)</p>
Defense - Team	<p>Archon (AC) Beastmaster (AC, saves) Mobile Bulwark (partial and total cover) Tatzlwyrms Claw (freeing allies from grapples) Unfolding Wind (Perfect) (<i>wind wall</i>) Vanguard (AC, Reflex saves, Bodyguard builds) Wyvern Fury (no team attacks of opportunity for movement)</p>

	<p>Bull-Catcher (intercepting charges) Sisterhood (teamwork feats, Reflex and Will save bonuses)</p> <p>Signature Strike (rerolls against fear, emotion, and mind-affecting effects)</p>
<p>Offense - Self</p>	<p>Brute (extra attacks, Vicious Stomp synergy) Cerberus (extra attacks with Vital Strike) Diabolic (Vital Strike on AoOs) Dragon (damage bonuses) Dwarven Hatred (attack and damage bonuses) Jabbing (damage bonuses) Kirin (damage bonuses) Panther (retaliatory strikes) Pummeling (DR penetration, full-attacks) Shikigami (damage die size increases, weapon enhancement bonuses) Snake (Sense Motive in place of critical confirmations, attacks of opportunity) Startoss (damage bonuses, ricochet hits)</p> <p>Barracuda (full damage underwater, extra damage on charges) Beastmaster (attack and damage bonuses) Boar (damage bonuses, bleed damage) Bulette Charge (damage on successful overrun maneuvers) Cudgeler (damage die size increases) Demonic (damage bonuses) Dragonfly (attack bonuses) Electric Eel (electricity damage) Grabbing (deal damage to two grappled foes) Kraken (damage bonuses while grappling) Kyton (nonlethal damage bonuses) Marid (cold damage) Outslug (damage bonuses) Overwatch (readied ranged attacks) Shaitan (acid damage) Spear Dancing (TWF with spears and polearms) Tatzlwurm Claw (extra attacks) Untwisting Iron (Perfect) (ignore hardness) Upsetting Shield (extra AoOs)</p> <p>Blood Frenzy (damage bonuses, bleed damage, extra attacks) Crashing Wave (extra attacks) Diva (add CHA modifier as melee precision damage) Djinni (electricity damage) Dolphin (attack bonuses) Earth Child (damage and crit confirmation bonuses vs. giants) Efreeti (fire damage) Empty Quiver (take AoOs with ranged weapons) Janni (Vital Strike-esque damage on charges) Lantern (DR penetration) Monkey (attack bonuses) Octopus (attack bonuses)</p>

	<p>Shark (bleed damage, attack bonuses, damage bonuses) Skyseeker (damage bonuses vs. larger targets) Slipslinger (thrown alchemical weapons) Spring-Heeled (extra attacks during Spring Attack or Shot on the Run) Street (x3 crit modifier on unarmed strikes) Tiger (Tiger Claws, bleed damage)</p> <p>Linnorm (Wisdom to damage, retaliatory strikes) Orc Fury (attack and damage bonuses) Shapeshifter (extra attacks, damage bonuses) Twin Fang (multiple attacks with daggers or kama)</p>
Offense - Team	<p>Archon (attacks of opportunity) Linnorm Hunter (buffing animal companion)</p>
Combat Maneuvers - Bull Rush	<p>Demonic</p> <p>Janni Smashing Street Tiger</p> <p>Shielded Staff</p>
Combat Maneuvers - Dirty Trick	<p>Cloak and Dagger</p> <p>Fox Kitsune</p> <p>Illusive Gnome</p>
Combat Maneuvers - Disarm	<p>Shielded Gauntlet</p> <p>Shielded Staff</p>
Combat Maneuvers - Drag	<p>Crashing Wave</p>
Combat Maneuvers - Feint	<p>Fox</p> <p>Diva Swordplay Unblinking Flame (Perfect)</p> <p>Illusive Gnome</p>
Combat Maneuvers - Grapple	<p>Charging Stag Electric Eel Grabbing Kraken Tatzlwyrms Claw</p> <p>Bull-Catcher Kobold</p>

	<p>Octopus Snapping Turtle</p>
Combat Maneuvers - Overrun	<p>Brute Bulette Charge</p>
Combat Maneuvers - Reposition	<p>Pummeling Crashing Wave</p>
Combat Maneuvers - Steal	<p>Cloak and Dagger Shielded Gauntlet</p>
Combat Maneuvers - Sunder	<p>Kraken (kind of) Untwisting Iron (Perfect) Skyseeker (vs. larger targets) Smashing Shielded Staff</p>
Combat Maneuvers - Trip	<p>Brute Pummeling Cudgeler Azata Earth Child (giants only) Janni Kobold Octopus Smashing Wolf Shielded Staff</p>
Anticaster	<p>Brute (Strength damage) Cerberus (<i>dimensional anchor</i>, no 5-foot steps) Asura (targeted dispels) Kyton (penalties to concentration checks) Unfolding Wind (Perfect) (cut through concealment) Blinded Blade (immune to concealment) Lantern (illumination tactics)</p>
Debuffing	<p>Brute (Strength damage) Cerberus (mobility limitations) Cloak and Dagger (many conditions, depending on dirty tricks) Diabolic (staggered) Dragon (demoralization)</p>

	<p> Asura (sickened) Boar (demoralization) Charging Stag (prone) Cudgeler (stunned) Electric Eel (staggered) Kitsune (many) Kraken (suffocating) Marid (entangled) Shaitan (staggered) Upsetting Shield (attack penalties) </p> <p> Bull-Catcher (enemy positioning) Crashing Wave (disoriented) Efreeti (deafened) Lantern (dazzled, shaken) Maddening (Wisdom damage) Mantis (dazzled, staggered, fatigued) Psychovore (confused, ability damage) Smashing (AC, hardness, and armor check penalties) Street (prone, staggered) Wolf (movement speed penalties, ability damage, fatigued) </p> <p> Deadhand (demoralization, negative levels) Linnorm (stunned) Orc Fury (demoralization) Signature Strike (shaken) Stock-Striker (prone) Twin Fang (armor bonus to AC penalties) </p>
<p>Mobility</p>	<p> Dragon (charging) Jabbing (5-foot steps) Kirin (no attacks of opportunity) Panther (encourages skirmishing) Pummeling (charging) Snake (5-foot steps) </p> <p> Barracuda (aquatic terrain only) Bulette Charge (Acrobatics) Charging Stag (charging) Dragonfly (Acrobatics and gliding) Linnorm Hunter (5-foot steps) Outslug (reach, 5-foot steps) Unfolding Wind (Perfect) (full-attack with single move action) Wyvern Fury (5-foot steps) </p> <p> Azata (extra movement, ignore difficult terrain) Diva (no AoOs) Dolphin (Spring Attack-like movement) Janni (charging) Monkey (Acrobatics, Climb, crawling) Shark (swimming, charging) Skyseeker (5-foot steps vs. larger targets) </p>

	<p>Spring-Heeled (extra movement during Spring Attack or Shot on the Run)</p> <p>Swift Iron (full speed in medium armor)</p> <p>Tiger (move half speed as a swift action)</p> <p>Owl (charging)</p> <p>Shapeshifter (climb speed)</p> <p>Twin Fang (double move while using Twin Fang Strike)</p>
Elemental Fist	<p>Electric Eel</p> <p>Marid</p> <p>Shaitan</p> <p>Djinni</p> <p>Efreeti</p>
Stunning Fist	<p>Dragon</p> <p>Kyton</p> <p>Maddening</p> <p>Mantis</p> <p>Monkey</p> <p>Unblinking Flame (Perfect)</p>
Campaigns - Aquatic	<p>Barracuda</p> <p>Dolphin</p> <p>Shark</p>
Campaigns - Giants	Earth Child
Campaigns - Urban	Street

Blue (Excellent)

Ascetic

What's It Do?

Ascetic Style and its various upgrades were originally intended to allow monks (who typically specialize in unarmed strikes) to use manufactured weapons more comfortably, or to allow non-monks to acquire some monk-like abilities. While this was the *original* intent, Paizo introduced some content over the years that makes Ascetic Style considerably stronger. We'll get into that below the fold. Suffice it for now to say that Ascetic Style kind of works as WD40 for weapons-based style feat builds: whatever you'd normally want to do with unarmed strikes, Ascetic Style will grease the wheels for you to do with weapons.

Who's It Good For?

As I said, predominantly monks, unchained monks, and brawlers. No other class has such a preponderance of unarmed strike feats and class features, so it makes sense that the monastic types are interested in porting over those abilities to mainstream weapons. If you were playing a typical full-BAB martial class and wanted to use feats like Perfect Strike, Stunning Fist, and Monastic Legacy, however, Ascetic Style would also be the place to come.

When Can You Get It?

As early as 1st level for all full-BAB martials, plus 1st level for core monks (even though their BAB is still a +0 at 1st level). Weapon Focus alone isn't a bad feat prerequisite, and certainly makes for more streamlined entry than many style feats in this guide.

The Feats

1. **Ascetic Style:** In its original incarnation, Ascetic Style wasn't too unbalanced: monk weapons are a limited subset of equipment, after all. With the advent of *Adventurer's Armory 2*, however, Paizo introduced a weapon modification called [versatile design](#) that, for the price of 500 smackaroos, permits you to treat *any weapon* as being part of any other fighter weapon group, so long as they're in the same basic attack class (i.e., melee vs. ranged). With that one modification, Ascetic Style suddenly becomes insane. Want to use Snake Fang or Panther Claw with a butchering axe? Yup, that's legal now. Jabbing Style with a greatsword to keep racking up d6s? Perfectly fine. Cerberus Style with a long spear to dole out Vital Strikes and *dimensional anchor* from a distance? I'm not calling the cops on you, because that's a-okay. Where things get *even more unbinged* is that Ascetic Style clears "effects that augment an unarmed strike," which is a ridiculously broad mandate. [Brawling](#) armor exists, for a permanent +2 untyped bonus to attack and damage rolls with unarmed strikes; [greater magic fang](#) applies to unarmed strikes, for an hours/level enhancement bonus to your weapon. I...I think I'm going to be sick.

2. **Ascetic Form:** Ah, now, see, that's interesting. Ascetic Form lets monks, unchained monks, and brawlers use all of their unarmed strike class features with weapons, which finally opens up broader build vistas. They could already flurry with monk weapons (and close weapons, in the case of brawlers), of course, but now style strikes, ki powers, etc. all apply to weapons.
3. **Ascetic Strike:** Ascetic Strike is a bit of an odd bird. Ascetic Style and the versatile design modification have already paved the way for monks, unchained monks, and brawlers to use any type of weapon in their attacks, so your damage dice (in theory) should be as large as you want them to be. On the other hand, not everyone wants to build a greatsword-wielding monk, and there's no denying that scaling damage dice are tasty for smaller, lighter weapons. In any case, Ascetic Strike is the least critical of all three feats in this chain unless you want your damage dice to scale up to 2d8 by 20th level.

Brute

What's It Do?

It's possible that Brute Style was created with monsters in mind. Let's put that up front. The base style feat has five feat prerequisites and requires a minimum of Intelligence 13; later feats require Strength scores as high as 23, which PCs aren't going to trip and stumble into. It's also from *Horror Adventures*, a book predominantly featuring monster options. If, however, a PC wanted to use it, Brute Style is excellent for unarmed characters with easy access to size increases who are looking to trip and overrun foes regularly. Built well, it's capable of a lot of extra damage, but the barriers to entry are steep.

Who's It Good For?

Full-BAB, Strength-based unarmed strike builds, first and foremost—you can't hit the BAB +10 and Strength 23 requirements of Brute Assault with anything but maximal investment into that playstyle. Unchained monks can get some of the feats they need from their bonus combat feats, as can brawlers; fighter would also be a strong option. In order to take full advantage of the Vicious Stomp synergy, you'd probably want a Dexterity score of at least 12, 14 if you could swing it, and access to some effect that allowed you to increase your size; natural reach doesn't increase to 10 feet until you're at least Large-sized.

When Can You Get It?

Oof. Difficult to say. An unchained monk could take Combat Reflexes and Improved Trip as their 2nd- and 6th-level bonus feats, gaining Improved Unarmed Strike for free. Adding [Dirty Fighting](#) at 1st level would satisfy the Intelligence 13 prerequisite and Combat Expertise prerequisites for Vicious Stomp at 3rd level and Improved Overrun at 5th. A fighter could accomplish something similar by investing six out of their seven 1st- through 6th-level feats. With all that said, it is possible to enter Brute Style by 6th level, but only for full-BAB classes that focus on Brute Style to the exclusion of all else.

The Feats

- Brute Style:** Improved Overrun and Improved Trip both cause enemies to fall prone, but if you're Large-sized, using a potion of *longarm*, or another similar effect, you can't use Vicious Stomp on enemies 10 feet away. No more! Brute Style makes it an increasingly viable strategy to hang back from enemies, tripping and then pummeling them while they're down.
- Brute Stomp:** Ooh, that's cruel. Brute Style gave you the ability to take attacks of opportunity within your natural reach, but if you *do* choose to get up close and personal (adjacent, i.e.) then you can make an additional attack at full BAB whenever you perform a full-attack action on a prone target. I shouldn't need to explain why extra attacks are fantastic.
- Brute Assault:** Anytime you succeed at a trip or overrun maneuver, the enemy must save or take 1d6 points of Strength damage and have their speed halved. Brute Style earns its brutal crown, at last. The Fortitude save DC is actually reasonably competitive, too—the median CR 10 Fortitude save is +11, which lets you succeed around 40% of the time.



“Wing chun. Ip Man.”
—Donnie Yen, *Ip Man*

Cerberus

What's It Do?

Cerberus Style allows unarmed combatants to take up to three attacks—all at full BAB—against three enemies who are within reach as a standard action. Later feats add the Vital Strike feats to these attacks and give you the ability to prevent enemies from taking five-foot steps or teleporting away. It's a very strong style, on the whole.

Who's It Good For?

Any Strength-based, full-BAB martial class that plans to use unarmed strikes exclusively, and preferably those that get scaling unarmed strike damage dice. Brawlers and unchained monks are therefore the primary audience for the full feat line, but fighters, slayers, etc. can all benefit.

When Can You Get It?

The BAB requirements don't allow any leeway, so you're looking at 6th, 9th, and 13th levels at the earliest. Cleave, Power Attack, Vital Strike, and Improved Unarmed Strike should all be easy pickups for Strength-based martial builds, so the feat requirements aren't too onerous.

The Feats

- Cerberus Style:** Oooh, Cerberus Style starts out *hot!* Cerberus Style is most similar to Cleave, but improves on Cleave in two very important ways. First, Cerberus Style grants you two extra attacks as part of your standard action, rather than the one extra attack that Cleave grants; granted, you take a -4 penalty to AC instead of Cleave's -2 in order to do so, but players can compensate for that weakness through other defensive layers—*mirror image*, *displacement*, *clay skin*, etc. Second, enemies do not need to be adjacent to the initial enemy in order to receive follow-up attacks. This is a bigger deal than it may appear on the surface: as size increases become more prevalent, you'll be able to beat on enemies that are spaced pretty far apart, unlike with Cleave.
- Cerberus Snare:** Ha! With Cerberus Snare, this style feat line single-handedly becomes one of the greatest anticaster tools on the market. *With no save*, you prevent any enemies damaged by Cerberus Style from taking five-foot steps (ranged attackers and spellcasters just started sweating) and from using *dimension door*, *ethereal jaunt*, *plane shift*, *shadow walk*, and other forms of teleportation or interplanar travel, as [dimensional anchor](#). In addition to shutting down spellcasters and ranged attackers, Snare is hilariously powerful against outsiders, who are fond of disappearing whenever fights start turning against them. Enemies can still take move or withdraw actions, but they'll likely provoke attacks of opportunity from you, further increasing your damage output.
- Cerberus Crush:** And now every attack with Cerberus Style can get Vital Strike added to it. Assuming you're a 13th-level unchained monk or brawler with Vital Strike and Improved Vital Strike when you finally get Cerberus Crush, each attack will deal 6d6 base weapon damage, plus any other static modifiers, and not accounting for size changes like *enlarge person* or *righteous might*. A Large-sized unchained monk or brawler at 20th level will deal 4d8 base unarmed strike damage, which pairs with Greater Vital Strike for a total of 16d8 damage, average 72. Absolutely nuts.

Cloak and Dagger

What's It Do?

Cloak and Dagger Style is all about turning tricks...dirty, dirty tricks. Taken to the end of the feat line, Cloak and Dagger increases the range of situations in which you can make dirty tricks, tags on steal maneuvers to your dirty tricks, and adds some very nasty conditions to your list of status conditions available when performing a dirty trick. The only real weakness of the feat line is how long it takes to fully grow into—you won't get Cloak and Dagger Tactics, the final feat, until at least 16th level.

Who's It Good For?

In spite of the very rogue-like name, Cloak and Dagger Style is a poor fit for rogues, thanks to high BAB and feat requirements, as well as a reliance on combat maneuvers that are poorly suited to $\frac{3}{4}$ -BAB classes with high Dexterity and low Strength. Fighters and swashbucklers get special treatment in this style feat line, but the ideal classes mechanically will have (1) high CMB scores, (2) high Intelligence modifiers, and (3) high BAB. Slayers, lore warden fighters, brawlers, and potentially trappings of the warrior occultists will excel here.

When Can You Get It?

Not until 7th level at least, thanks to a BAB +6 and Vital Strike requirement. As I said, rogues are a really poor choice here, but full-BAB classes with good Intelligence modifiers will always find a home. [Dirty Fighting](#) is a must to clear away the Combat Expertise and Intelligence 13 requirements.

The Feats

- Cloak and Dagger Style:** Each feat in Cloak and Dagger Style does multiple things at the same time, so get used breaking this down.
 - The first benefit of the feat is that you can **use dirty trick as a free action whenever you use the attack action in a surprise round**. Surprise rounds are limited to a standard or move action in most cases, so the wording about using an *attack action* (a very specific kind of standard action) isn't difficult to satisfy in this case. It does, however, require an enemy to be right next to you when it becomes your turn in initiative during the surprise round, and by definition only functions once per combat. That's not too great.
 - The second benefit, **taking an attack of opportunity whenever an enemy attempts to remove one of your dirty trick conditions**, is far, far better. A key weakness of the dirty trick maneuver is that the action cost for enemies to remove their status conditions is not large; the worse the condition, the greater the incentive to pay the action to remove it. If they *can't* remove it without provoking an attack of opportunity, however, that makes it much more likely that they'll soldier through, regardless of how much the status condition hinders them. Taking Step Up would be well-advised so that you can follow enemies as they try to step away and remove their conditions.
- Cloak and Dagger Subterfuge:** Subterfuge again does double duty.

- a. First, **you get a free-action dirty trick whenever you take an attack of opportunity.** Awesome. Under normal circumstances, you can't replace attacks with dirty trick maneuvers (as you can with trip maneuvers, sunder maneuvers, etc.), but you can now *add* a dirty trick to attacks of opportunity in addition to your damage. Obviously synergizes quite well with Cloak and Dagger Style, since you can tag dirty tricks onto the attacks of opportunity you take whenever an enemy attempts to remove their status conditions.
 - b. As for **using the steal maneuver whenever you successfully dirty trick**, that's a little more complicated. Several problems: first, unless you've invested in Improved Steal or are currently flanking with Dirty Fighting, you'll provoke an attack of opportunity yourself for stealing. Second, steal requires a totally free hand: no second light weapon for TWF, no buckler, no nothing. Third, only enemies who are reliant on worn equipment will even be susceptible to the steal maneuver, and even then, only necklaces/brooches or cloaks/sheathed weapons/pouches (with a +5 bonus to their CMD) are viable targets.
3. **Cloak and Dagger Tactics:** Dirty tricks are available to everyone as a standard action, and Cloak and Dagger Style adds dirty tricks to attacks of opportunity. With Cloak and Dagger Tactics, you can now *also* dirty trick as a free action after hitting an enemy denied their Dexterity bonus to AC (Shatter Defenses, blinded, invisible, etc.), when flanking (easily done, especially given how much Dirty Fighting incentivizes it), and when using Vital Strike or any of its older cousins. There should now be basically no action in which you cannot dirty trick! The new conditions you can add on are nasty without exception, but as you can see from the Fortitude save DC calculation, you'll need both full BAB and a good Intelligence modifier in order to take full advantage. Lore warden fighter best Cloak and Dagger user, confirmed?

Diabolic

What's It Do?

Diabolic Style is a debuff-heavy style that suppresses enemies' morale bonuses and gives you the option to stagger opponents when you hit with an attack of opportunity. Because the staggered condition is equally lethal to both martial and spellcasting enemies, you'd be well-advised to take this option! Of note, Diabolic Style relies intensively on attacks of opportunity; consider Step Up and Strike, Spellbreaker, *longarm*, or other methods of taking attacks of opportunity more consistently if you want to pursue the feat line.

Who's It Good For?

High-Charisma, full-BAB classes who have built for unarmed strikes. Avenger vigilantes with the fist of the avenger vigilante talent come to mind immediately, but Order of the Hammer cavaliers, iron paladins, scaled fist unchained monks, and brawling bladestrike samurai are also viable candidates.

When Can You Get It?

For most classes, 2nd level; monks can get it at 1st, although Wisdom-based monks aren't a great fit for the feat line. Pursuing the full three feats will carry you into your double-digit levels easily, so there's no rush to get in right away—for me, the latter two feats really pay off the promise of the base style, so you might choose to consolidate your purchases later in your career instead of going for it early.

The Feats

- Diabolic Style:** Diabolic Style represents a basic damage-for-debuffing tradeoff. Instead of dealing full damage on your attack of opportunity, you'll instead get the chance to stagger an enemy for 1 round, pending a failed Will save. The save DC is Charisma-based (that is to say, not optimal on monks or brawlers), so swashbucklers, avenger vigilantes, bloodragers, cavaliers, and other high-Charisma martial classes will work best, although they're not the classes you automatically think of for an unarmed strike build.
- Diabolic Humiliation:** Bards, skalds, bloodragers, and barbarians will all be susceptible to Diabolic Humiliation, thanks to their reliance on morale bonuses, as will spells like *bleed*, *death ward*, *dance of a hundred/thousand cuts*, *fiendish wrath*, *good hope*, *heroism*, *rage*, *righteous vigor*, and *wrath*. That's all well and good, but the real money here is doubling the duration of the staggered condition and allowing it to stack. Take enough attacks of opportunity, and you could permanently stagger enemies with weak Will saves. Deadly against ranged attackers and spellcasters in conjunction with Step Up and Step Up and Strike.
- Diabolic Judgment:** Diabolic Judgment makes one attack of opportunity per round hit like an absolute *truck*. The only other methods I know of for applying Vital Strike to attacks of opportunity are with Torag's Divine Fighting Technique (exclusive to warhammers) and the vital punishment vigilante talent (limited to 1/round). This feat smashes but good.

Dragon

What's It Do?

Dragon Style is one of the strongest and most consistently picked style feat lines, largely because Dragon Style + Dragon Ferocity provide a huge boost to unarmed strike damage, save bonuses against awful status conditions, better mobility when charging, and even some debuffing through the shaken condition. If you're interested in style feats simply as a means of becoming a better combatant without specific combat maneuver or debuffing needs, it's very difficult to beat the first two feats in this style feat line; it should almost always be included as part of a master of many styles monk's feat complement.

Who's It Good For?

Strength-based unarmed strike builds of practically any variety. That could be monks, unchained monks, brawlers, warpriests, avenger vigilantes, you name it—if you're Strength-based, you're going to have a good time here.

When Can You Get It?

Dragon Style's feat prerequisites are mercifully light, and are automatically satisfied by monks and unchained monks. Without BAB requirements (only skill ranks in Acrobatics) practically everyone should be able to enter Dragon Style at 3rd level and Dragon Ferocity at 5th level, with Dragon Roar coming in at 8th level if you're interested.

The Feats

- Dragon Style:** Dragon Style packs a lot of benefits into a small space: we've got **bonuses to saves against a variety of crippling status conditions, multiple charging benefits,** and **bonuses to static unarmed strike damage.** It's rare to find a style feat that makes you faster, tougher, and stronger all at the same time, but Dragon Style is that rare triple threat that can do all of 'em, and it's the reason why Dragon Style is one of the most-used style feat lines for both master of many styles monks and other unarmed strike builds.
 - Combat Stamina:** You could spend 3 stamina points on every unarmed strike...or you could just get Dragon Ferocity. Seems like an easy choice to me.
- Dragon Ferocity:** Dragon Ferocity provides a huge bonus to static damage on unarmed strikes. Even assuming a relatively modest Strength score of 26 by the late game, Dragon Style + Dragon Ferocity will provide a +8 damage bonus on your first attack and a +4 damage bonus on all other attacks. Add some free debuffing on a successful Stunning Fist attempt or confirmed critical threat, and you've got a really, *really* strong package.
 - Combat Stamina:** Shaken + sickened obviously works better as a debuffing package than shaken alone, but in my opinion the value add of sickened isn't worth 5 stamina points.
- Dragon Roar:** To be honest, you don't need to progress to Dragon Roar if you don't want to. It deals your unarmed strike damage in a 15-foot cone, but provides a Will save for half. You can pick it up if you anticipate facing a lot of tightly packed trash mobs, or skip it otherwise.
 - Combat Stamina:** While it's nice to have some leeway in which resources you spend on Dragon Roar, it's already the weakest of the Dragon Style feats by far. I'd say you could skip it.

Dwarven Hatred

What's It Do?

As the name implies, Dwarven Hatred Style leverages dwarves' ancestral enmity with orcs, goblins, and giants. Although you *start* with that narrow subset of humanoids, however, later feats allow you to apply your defensive training and hatred bonuses to *any* enemy for the cost of an immediate action, which is what makes this style so powerful.

Who's It Good For?

Dwarves, obviously, since they're the only race that gets hatred, defensive training, and Medium size. (Gnomes get the first two, but not the third.) There are no attribute, weapon, or skill rank requirements, and with the overall strength of the feat line, Dwarven Hatred Style should be a strong consideration for any full-BAB dwarf build. Comboing Dwarven Hatred Style with Earth Child Style and the Twin Thunder feat line on a master of many styles monk in a *Giantslayer* campaign would be *lethal*.

When Can You Get It?

Right away at 1st level, if you're playing a full-BAB class. Since orcs and goblins tend to be pretty common low-level enemies, some campaigns (*Rise of the Runelords*, anyone?) really incentivize training it right away. The later feats can and should be taken as early as possible, since they're what really brings the mechanical oomph to this feat line.

The Feats

1. **Dwarven Hatred Style:** Dwarven Hatred Style makes dwarves *really* good at taking down orcs and goblins—it's essentially a +2 favored enemy bonus against those foes. Orcs and goblins tend not to remain enemies for huge stretches of time in Paizo APs, as relatively low-CR enemies, but this feat could do great things in a campaign like *Giantslayer*.
2. **Dwarven Seething:** Dwarven Seething blows the lid off of the style feat line, enabling you to adjust your +2 attack/damage bonuses and +4 dodge bonus to AC to fit *any creature type or subtype* as an immediate action. You have to actually get hit before you can shift, but that's about the only limitation—if you want to suddenly bulk your AC up by +4 after the first attack in a full-attack, but before the other iterative attacks land, that's entirely legal. For now, you can maintain these bonuses against only one enemy at a time, but that changes with...
3. **Dwarven Fury:** And now *any* enemy can be your most hated foe! Practically speaking, the rate-limiting factor on Dwarven Fury will be your immediate/swift action economy, not your target cap, so it'll still be easy for you to get overwhelmed in fights where you're getting mobbed by enemies. Against two or three enemies, however, Dwarven Fury all but guarantees +2 attack/damage and +4 AC against absolutely everything, which should be more than enough to get anyone interested.

Jabbing

What's It Do?

Jabbing Style is the classic “float like a butterfly, sting like a bee” style feat line that allows monks, unchained monks, and brawlers to deal more and more damage as they rain down unarmed strikes with flurry of blows. The style also has some nice mobility packaged in with Jabbing Dancer, which helps practitioners skirt around larger enemies to get into flanking or other tactically advantageous positions. Of note, Jabbing Style has incredible synergy with **Pummeling Style**, and collectively allow unarmed builds that dipped into master of many styles monk for fuse styles to deal incredible amounts of damage while full-attacking basically all the time. Highly recommended.

Who's It Good For?

Jabbing Style is the rare style feat line that's designed explicitly for monks and brawlers who retained flurry of blows or brawler's flurry (although you can pick up those class features through monk/brawler dips, if you wish); jstkan artificer magi, elemental ascetic kineticists, ward spiritualists, and sacred fist warpriests can also use flurry of blows. If you want to segue into Jabbing Style from a non-flurrying full-BAB class, you can, but it's going to take a lot longer, and you'll probably be less effective at triggering your bonus damage.

When Can You Get It?

Monks and brawlers can get the style feats at 1st, 5th, and 8th levels, but other full-BAB classes have to wait until they reach 6th, 9th, and 12th levels.

The Feats

- Jabbing Style:** Right off the bat, Jabbing Style adds 1d6 damage to every unarmed strike you hit with after the first. That's not bad! A 6th-level unchained monk or brawler could easily have 4 attacks: +6/+1, with an additional +6 from their flurry and yet another +6 from *haste*; even if not all of those land, you're still dealing 2d6 or 3d6 extra damage every round. This is really only a setup, though, so let's proceed.
 - Combat Stamina:** A straightforward stamina-for-damage swap. Crucially, it seems that you don't need to spend 2 stamina points per unarmed strike, but rather spend it once and then reap the benefits on every subsequent strike. If you're running Medusa's Wrath and flurrying, this could be the best 2 stamina points you ever spent!
- Jabbing Dancer:** You can think of Jabbing Dancer like Step Up on steroids: every time you hit an opponent with an attack in your flurry, you get to move 5 feet without provoking attacks of opportunity, so long as you remain adjacent to your target. This is a fantastic tool for slowly skirting around larger enemies whose reach might otherwise preclude flanking. It can also be used to maneuver yourself into an adjacent position with an ally for teamwork feats or a touch-range buff spell, to cut off an escape route an enemy is eyeing, etc.
 - Combat Stamina:** More combat mobility is never a bad thing, ya know? Between Step Up, Following Step, Jabbing Dancer, and this combat stamina upgrade, practically no enemy in the game should ever be able to outmaneuver you.

3. **Jabbing Master:** What surprise, Paizo wrote a feat that's ambiguously worded and that was never clarified! I think I might die of a heart attack from that surprise. Anyway, the consensus among Pathfinder players and GMs seems to be that Jabbing Master adds 2d6 damage to your second hit in a flurry and 4d6 damage to your third hit and every hit thereafter. This makes it exceptionally powerful, especially against enemies with lower AC who you can count on hitting with your iterative attacks more consistently. An 11th-level unchained monk is going to have a minimum of six attacks (+11/+6/+1 from base progression, +11/+11 from flurry of blows, and +11 from *haste*) which will likely add up to at least 10d6 extra damage, with 18d6 being possible, if unlikely. If you're abusing Medusa's Wrath, Jabbing Master gets even more heinous. You Want This.TM
 - a. **Combat Stamina:** When you compare the damage-per-stamina-point value of Jabbing Master and Jabbing Style, it's easy to see that Jabbing Style is by far the better option. Moreover, Jabbing Master requires you to threaten and then confirm a critical hit with an unarmed strike—no easy feat unless you're using Ascetic Style to use an 18-20/x2 weapon with Improved Critical during a flurry of blows.

Kirin

What's It Do?

Kirin Style is all about identifying enemies with Knowledge checks and then using that knowledge to cripple them. Overall, it's a very effective combat style, granting you bonuses to defense (Kirin Style), offense (Kirin Strike), skills (Kirin Strike + Kirin Path), and mobility (Kirin Path) all wrapped up in one. Highly recommended.

Who's It Good For?

Dexterity- and Intelligence-based classes with large threatened areas and awesome Knowledge scores. Occultists, alchemists, investigators, lore warden fighters, kensai magi, Intelligence-based unchained rogues, and even some slayers can all do well here. The feat path (especially Kirin Strike) is *greatly* enhanced by having access to Combat Stamina, so talk with your GM about what their thoughts on the combat stamina system are.

When Can You Get It?

At 6th, 9th, and 12th levels. The prerequisites are quite easy to satisfy, and you'd be investing ranks in the listed skills in a Kirin Style build anyway.

The Feats

- Kirin Style:** Since Kirin Style is all about Knowledge checks, I'm going to base my ratings on the assumption that you're playing an investigator, alchemist, occultist, lore warden fighter, Intelligence-based rogue, etc. that can crush these checks with ease. And man, what a payoff! A free +2 untyped bonus to all your saves against a creature's attacks, and a free +2 to AC vs. attacks of opportunity. Great, great, great.
 - Combat Stamina:** Classes that have truly specialized in Knowledge checks likely won't need any help beating a DC of 15 + CR, so the only place that the Combat Stamina upgrade for Kirin Style is likely to find a home is on lore warden fighters.
- Kirin Strike:** A +2 insight bonus to all Knowledge checks isn't anything to sneer at, especially when all of your powers in this feat line are keyed off of successful checks, and adding twice your Intelligence modifier in damage to one attack per round can greatly enhance your DPR. It's not even precision damage! (But it probably won't multiply on a crit, since the text makes it sound as though the damage ticks after you resolve the attack.) The only thing bringing Kirin Strike down is that your swift action economy is getting extraordinarily tight—a swift action to enter the style, a swift action to identify the creature, and a swift action to enact Kirin Strike. The Combat Style Master feat can allow you to start a combat already in Kirin Style, which might slim down the action cost somewhat.
 - Combat Stamina:** The Combat Stamina upgrade for Kirin Strike slaps, and it slaps *hard*. Anytime you have 1 stamina point in your pool, you now add your Intelligence modifier to all melee and ranged damage rolls against any creature you've identified with Kirin Style. This is *by far* preferable, actionwise, to spending a swift action every round on Kirin Strike, and depending on the number of iterative attacks

you have, using no swift action might actually outdamage using a swift action! You can still replace one attack per round with the double damage option, if you still have enough actions.

3. **Kirin Path:** Identifying creatures and their weaknesses is one of the more important uses of Knowledge skills (some would say *the* most important use), so gaining the ability to take 10 on those checks even in the middle of combat works a lot like the bard's lore master class feature. It's fantastic. The movement associated with Kirin Path is equally important, however, as it allows you to skirt around foes with giant reach without having to worry about attacks of opportunity not only from your target, but from *any* monster (read the rules text carefully, and you'll see it). Since you can only trigger Kirin Path if an enemy ends their move in your threatened area, it behooves you to think about ways to increase that area: Improved Snap Shot, whip or reach weapon builds, *longarm* or *enlarge person*, etc. Combat Reflexes is obviously also a must so that you can spend multiple attacks of opportunity to move as you please. Since Kirin Style tends to cater to Dexterity- and Intelligence-based classes with large threatened areas, Combat Reflexes was going to be a good purchase anyway.
 - a. **Combat Stamina:** Frankly, the Combat Stamina bonus on Kirin Path isn't worth it. It's nice to have the option to spend stamina on your movement, of course—more options never hurt—but you'll find yourself using an attack of opportunity in 98% of cases.



“We need emotional content. Not anger! Emotional content.”

—Bruce Li, *Enter the Dragon*

Panther

What's It Do?

“I’m going to be honest with you, Brian, that smells like pure gasoline.” Yes, it’s Sex Panther Style! I mean, Panther Style. It’s just called Panther Style. Panther Style is an offensive style, but a *wacky* offensive style: it encourages you to voluntarily provoke attacks of opportunity by running around the battlefield, but then gives you options to make “retaliatory attacks” against any enemy who chooses to take an attack of opportunity. As a whole, the style feat line gives an enthusiastic thumbs-up to players who focus on highly mobile skirmishing tactics and defenses against attacks of opportunity. Note that, while you must choose to provoke in order for Panther Style to work, you don’t have to make it easy for enemies to *hit* you, and in fact you shouldn’t! Dodge, Mobility, Lightning Stance, *blur*, *displacement*, *shield of darkness*, *mirror image*, *mage armor*, etc. are absolutely worth pursuing if you intend to use this style to its utmost. **Important note:** talk with your GM about how they plan to play against a Panther Style character, because there should definitely be some kind of agreement set in place beforehand. If your GM stalwartly refuses ever to take an attack of opportunity against you, you’ve just wasted three feats. My suggestion would be that mindless creatures or creatures of animal intelligence always attempt to attack, while creatures with Intelligence scores of 3 or more should perhaps be given some type of Sense Motive or Perception check to notice that you’re luring foes into a trap when you run past them.

Who's It Good For?

Unarmed strike builds with good Wisdom scores, obviously, since the whole shebang is built around them. The usual monks, unchained monks, and brawlers get the nod, as do sacred fist warpriests and other archetypes. Since the number of retaliatory attacks you can make is limited by your Wisdom modifier via Panther Claw and *not* by BAB or full-attack prowess, Panther Style actually does really good work for $\frac{3}{4}$ -BAB classes and masters of many styles who traded away flurry of blows.

When Can You Get It?

Monks can get it right at 1st level, and other classes aren’t far behind. With the exception of having good Wisdom scores, Panther Style feats are generally very light on prereqs, which I appreciate.

The Feats

- Panther Style:** Panther Style starts out simple: whenever you provoke an attack of opportunity for moving through a threatened square, you can make a retaliatory attack against that enemy as a swift action after they’ve resolved their attack. While it’s not quite a rocketized animal yet, Panther Style can still be used once in almost every round—just move past one enemy on your way to another, and you’ll get your retaliatory strike.
 - Combat Stamina:** Panther Style’s combat stamina upgrade allows you to spend stamina to make a retaliatory strike *anytime* you provoke an attack of opportunity—not just for moving through a threatened square. I’m not saying this never happens (ranged attacks, non-defensive spellcasting, combat maneuvers without the Improved Maneuver feat, standing from prone, etc.) but the circumstances

under which a monk or other unarmed class would find themselves needing the ability are vanishingly rare.

2. **Panther Claw:** Ahhh, now that's more like it! With your retaliatory strike action economy streamlined from a swift action to a free action, you can now take (functionally) as many attacks as you want in a round, I assume always at your highest BAB. That's pretty cool. It's not uncommon to start with 16 or even 18 Wisdom on a monk or brawler, so you could instantly jump up to three or four attacks per round with Panther Claw. A Panther Style class is probably much better equipped to shrug off attacks of opportunity than other classes, too, so you can think of this feat as granting your team some *defense* as you run around draining enemies of attacks of opportunity. Truly, a lovely feat that instantly incentivizes you to provoke like there's no tomorrow.
 - a. **Combat Stamina:** I mean, sure, I won't say no to the option of adding damage on your retaliatory strikes. Doing so would tap you out pretty quickly, but there might come a time when you absolutely need to kill an enemy *now*.
3. **Panther Parry:** Panther Parry finally switches the order of AoO/retaliatory strike: where before you always went second, now you always go first. Who knows? You might even kill the enemy who was about to attack you! In any case, enemies who get hit by your preemptive strikes are less likely to be able to hit you in return, which stacks nicely with Mobility, Lightning Stance, and other layers of defenses.
 - a. **Combat Stamina:** A whopping 5 stamina points is a lot to pay in exchange for a modestly improved debuff to the enemy's attack and damage roll. I'd say you're better off not spending your stamina in this way.

Pummeling

What's It Do?

Pummeling Style is a pure offensive style based around hitting enemies as many times as possible in a flurry of blows or brawler's flurry. You get the ability to count DR only once per flurry (Pummeling Style), flurry on a charge (Pummeling Charge), and attempt free reposition or trip maneuvers on a flurry (Pummeling Bully), all of which are quite, quite powerful. The synergy here with [Jabbing Style and Medusa's Wrath](#), which reward you with more damage for each hit after the first (Jabbing Style) and two extra attacks against impaired opponents (Medusa's Wrath), is absolutely insane, so brawlers should definitely consider a 1- or 2-level dip in master of many styles monk to grab fuse styles and potentially some bonus style feats. You, uh...you wouldn't regret it.

Who's It Good For?

Monks, unchained monks, brawlers, and sacred fist warpriests, essentially, since they can enter the feat line so much sooner and use it so much more effectively than other classes. Other full-BAB classes using unarmed strikes could ostensibly use Pummeling Style, but it's sub-optimal.

When Can You Get It?

Full-BAB classes are stuck with a 6th/9th/12th progression, while classes with flurry of blows or brawler's flurry can instead do a 1st/5th/8th progression. Heck, you don't even have to wait until 8th level to grab Pummeling Charge if you want to slap a level or two in master of many styles monk.

The Feats

- Pummeling Style:** Clustered Shots almost always earns a blue rating in my guides, so Pummeling Style deserves the same; it's essentially Clustered Shots for monks, unchained monks, and brawlers. Think about it this way: if you attack an enemy with DR 10/— six times (definitely not impossible with flurries, *baste*, etc. as a mid- to high-level monk or brawler) then your damage per round drops by 60 if every attack hits. With Pummeling Style, the DR is applied only once—an effective +50 damage per round. Fortunately, not every enemy you encounter will have DR, but it's quite common in higher CR tranches, so if you're going to play in the adults' game, it's best to come correct.
 - Combat Stamina:** Flurry as a standard action, you say? How intriguing. This ability is far more valuable before you get Pummeling Charge, because the main thing you'd use it for is to move up to an enemy while still getting your flurry—something you could mostly do with a flurry tagged onto the end of a charge once you have the latter feat. Quite effective at low levels, though, even if you won't have the stamina to use it more than about once or twice per combat.
- Pummeling Bully:** In general, reposition is a lot weaker than trip, but I sure don't hate having either option available when you'd be flurrying just about every round anyway. The only time to actively avoid this tactic is when you fear you may fail your trip attempt by 10 or more, which makes *you* fall prone. Don't make me queue up the [Curb Your Enthusiasm credit music](#) for your fumbling buffoon of a monk, please.

- a. **Combat Stamina:** Eh, I really can't recommend this use of stamina. Not only are you now imposing the burden of *three* Improved [Maneuver] feats on yourself (combat stamina doesn't technically require it, but unless you want to provoke attacks of opportunity every time, you'll need Improved Bull Rush) but bull rushes don't really win you any prizes that repositions and trips wouldn't already have won.
- 3. **Pummeling Charge:** ...and now you have pounce. Sometimes you won't be able to charge an enemy (difficult terrain with no *feather step*, ally in the way with no Dragon Style, wall or pit in the way, against a flying enemy, etc.) but in the instances when you can, it's a fantastic tool for maintaining high damage per round in every round. Sure, you have to attack only one enemy, but what of it? That's usually the most effective tactic anyway. **Note:** Pummeling Charge does *not* require Pummeling Bully, so if you'd sooner skip the whole reposition/trip shebang, you can do that with no undue penalties.
 - a. **Combat Stamina:** Ah, there's the whammy. Another attack at your highest BAB is a pretty great deal for only 5 points of stamina, especially if you need to absolutely torch an enemy before they get a chance to react. Plays extraordinarily nicely with Jabbing Style, as do all of Pummeling Style's abilities.

Shikigami

What's It Do?

Shikigami Style is one of my personal favorites because it takes a fighting style that's widely agreed to be suboptimal—improvised weapon builds—and singlehandedly turns it into a totally viable option. Prepare to become BFFs with a *traveler's any-tool*.

Who's It Good For?

Improvised weapon builds, obviously. Beyond that restriction, truly anyone can benefit, even $\frac{3}{4}$ -BAB classes, so there's no need to be picky.

When Can You Get It?

As quickly as your feat progression will allow. Shikigami Manipulation is the only feat that's gated behind skill ranks, and even then it's very doable at 5 ranks in UMD. Easy-peasy.

The Feats

- Shikigami Style:** Shikigami Style kicks off what's going to be a long and torrid love affair with weapon damage die size increases, so it's worth reiterating that effective damage die size increases (e.g., from Shikigami Style or Improvised Weapon Mastery) do not stack with themselves, but *do* stack with actual damage die size increases (e.g., from *enlarge person* or *righteous might*). [The FAQ](#). In the context of improvised weapon builds, the largest number of damage die size increases you can get is four: three from the Shikigami Style feat line, and one from actually increasing your size. Paizo offers no hard-and-fast rules for [what base damage die improvised weapons should use](#) (unless you're using a piece of equipment like the [shovel](#) that tells you otherwise), but my initial thought is 1d4 for light weapons, 1d6 for one-handed weapons, and 1d8 or even 2d6 for two-handed weapons. Four size increases from 1d8 gives you 1d8 → 2d6 → 3d6 → 4d6 → 6d6, which I think everyone can agree is a very respectable damage die size. It's like an Improved Vital Strike with a greatsword on every attack! You might as well take the [Surprise Weapon](#) trait while you're here for a permanent +2 trait bonus on attack rolls with all your improvised weapons.
- Shikigami Mimicry:** Shikigami Mimicry is definitely the least valuable feat in the feat line from a mechanics perspective—I'd normally rate it yellow—but because it continues to amp up your damage, it earns its green ranking pretty easily. Assuming you know what the various weapon qualities do, it's also lovely to be able to flex into brace, nonlethal, disarm, trip, etc. at a moment's notice.
- Shikigami Manipulation:** Ah, there's the boom sauce. Shikigami Manipulation is, frankly speaking, a ridiculous feat. You can now pick up *any wondrous item in the game* and treat it as an absolutely lethal weapon, marshaling huge damage die size bonuses as well as enhancement bonuses to attack and damage just for having it in your hands. By far the wackiest and most efficient bang for your buck comes from [sovereign glue](#), a 2,400 gp item with a caster level of 20. How is a bottle of glue in your hands deadlier than that fighter's greatsword in his? Magic, man. Don't ask me. If you're looking for something that could more feasibly be used as a weapon than a bottle of

Elmer's, most *lesser metamagic rods* have a price tag of 3,000 gp, a CL of 17, and a vaguely cudgel-esque shape. Or, heck, just get a *traveler's any-tool* for 250 gp and bask in the warm glow of its +2 enhancement bonus; the *any-tool* even explicitly counts as an improvised weapon!



“Stop trying to hit me and hit me!”
—Morpheus, *The Matrix*

Snake

What's It Do?

Snake Style is one of my personal favorites. It's just such a lot of fun! In total, it allows you to use Sense Motive checks in place of your AC and critical confirmation rolls, as well as make plenty of attacks of opportunity against enemies who dare to step to you.

Who's It Good For?

Unarmed strike builds with high Wisdom scores. That, of course, should immediately lead folks to think of monks, unchained monks, brawlers, and sacred fist warpriests, but with no BAB requirements, it can also be great for squishier classes (rogues or inquisitors, e.g.) that took a 1-level monk dip and want some more defense through Snake Style alone.

When Can You Get It?

Skill ranks are the rate-limiting factor in Snake Style, so you can't progress any faster than 3/6/9 ranks in Sense Motive without levels in master of many styles.

The Feats

- Snake Style:** There's a lot of good stuff packaged into Snake Style. First, **you get a +2 bonus to Sense Motive checks.** While this bonus only applies during combats where your stance is active, it can be useful for resisting feints and essentially functions as a +2 bonus to your AC and critical confirmation rolls whenever you use Snake Style or Snake Sidewind. Second, **you can deal piercing damage with your unarmed strikes.** Having more damage types available to bypass DR/type is never a bad idea, so you won't see me kicking this bonus out of bed for eating crackers. Third, and most crucially, **you can substitute a Sense Motive check for your AC as an immediate action.** This is where Snake Style's mechanical *oomph* comes from. Although the immediate action economy can be tricky for new players, the important thing to know is that you only get one immediate action per round, and it eats up your swift action on your next turn. With that said, this bonus is incredible! Sense Motive is far, far easier to acquire bonuses for than AC, and there's nothing in the feat text that forces you to use the result of your Sense Motive check instead of your AC even if you use the immediate action—if your check falls short of your normal AC value, you're welcome to use the better value. If you can acquire a means of taking 10 on Sense Motive checks in battle (e.g., with the skill familiarity vigilante talent) Snake Style can be a hugely reliable source of AC against one attack per round. Even without a means of taking 10, however, *tears to wine*, *focused scrutiny*, Skill Focus, an *inquisitor's monocle*, etc. can all improve your Sense Motive score so dramatically that you beat your own AC even on a natural 1.
 - Combat Stamina:** The combat stamina upgrade to Snake Style is pretty good! By using an attack of opportunity instead of an immediate action, you could theoretically tank as many hits with Sense Motive as your attacks of opportunity and stamina points allow. Useful if you're up close with an enemy that's about to destroy you with a full-attack action.

2. **Snake Sidewind:** Snake Sidewind is by far the least valuable feat in the line, which is why many master of many styles builds skip over it to get Snake Fang. **Bonuses to CMD against trip maneuvers** aren't great, and **bonuses to confirm critical hits** would be excellent if unarmed strike builds had some means of threatening on more than a 19-20 with Improved Critical; it still can be excellent for certain archetypes like the hungry ghost monk that get bonuses for confirming crits. **If you're playing with *Spheres of Might* and the *Critical Genius* talent**, Snake Sidewind becomes much more useful. Finally, the 5-foot step mechanism is again constrained by how often you threaten and confirm crits, which isn't likely to be often with first-party materials.
 - a. **Combat Stamina:** If you've pumped Sense Motive as high as Snake Style wants you to, there should rarely be a need to spend stamina points to boost your confirmation roll. Save those for more important things.
3. **Snake Fang:** Oh, but I do love me some Snake Fang. Anybody who misses you, whether your AC or the result of your Sense Motive check, now provokes an attack of opportunity from you. Now, keen observers of the Pathfinder action economy will note that you cannot use more than one immediate action per round, so it's impossible to both boost your AC with Snake Style *and* take a second unarmed attack with Snake Fang. You'll therefore need to reserve Snake Fang's second attack for rounds in which you don't anticipate needing your Sense Motive-to-AC functionality from Snake Style—say, if you're getting attacked by trash mobs that have a very low chance of hitting your base AC anyway, and you simply want to burn them down. Combat Reflexes is a must here, both to satisfy the prerequisite and to ensure that you have attacks of opportunity aplenty for any and all challengers.
 - a. **Combat Stamina:** I like being able to reroll attacks of opportunity, but 5 stamina points seems like a big spend. Especially given that attacks of opportunity are made at your full BAB, I doubt you're going to miss all that often with them if you've built a solid character.

Startoss

What's It Do?

I'm going to be up-front: I have a thing for Startoss Style—a schoolboy crush, if you will. Every time Valentine's Day rolls around, I'm there, putting candy hearts in Startoss Style's desk along with a hand-drawn card. What can I say? Desna is my favorite deity in the Pathfinder pantheon, and this is (implicitly) her style. At any rate, Startoss Style is a thrown weapon style feat line: whether it's daggers, shuriken, or starknives, it's designed to make you absolutely lethal whenever you throw something.

Who's It Good For?

Full exploitation of the Startoss Style + Desna's Divine Fighting Technique build will require a full-BAB class with a high Charisma score. You *can* build for Startoss Style without Desna's DFT, but honestly, why would you? Flying blade swashbucklers or ninjas with shuriken talents are probably the #1 and #2 picks here, along with vigilantes and Charisma-inclined fighters.

When Can You Get It?

The feat and BAB requirements are pretty light, on the whole, so you should be good to jump in somewhere around 1st to 3rd level, depending on your feat situation.

The Feats

1. **Startoss Style:** Startoss Style essentially grants players a scaling Weapon Specialization on thrown weapons, all the way up to a +6. This will turn out to be important—thrown weapons often have paltry weapon damage dice, so you need some source of static damage bonuses to compete with other classes. **While I have you as a captive audience**, now might also be the time to talk about [Desna's Divine Fighting Technique](#), which amps this whole style feat line up to 11. The initial DFT benefit allows you to use your Charisma modifier (rather than Strength or Dexterity) on all attack and damage rolls made with starknives. Right off the bat, that's crazy! Charisma to attack and damage can be further complemented with the [Noble Scion of War](#) feat to use Charisma for initiative checks, as well as with a 1-level dip into oracle or ravener hunter inquisitor with the [lunar mystery](#) for its prophetic armor revelation, which grants Charisma to AC and Reflex saves. Stat your character with Charisma as their primary attribute, with some Dexterity and Constitution for feat prerequisites and survivability, and you have a potent package. Kneel before the altar of Charisma. It is the attribute of your goddess. *I said kneel.*
2. **Startoss Comet:** One standard action now nets you two thrown weapon attacks at your full BAB! If you think it's hilarious to imagine thrown weapons pinballing from one enemy to the next, wait until we reach the next feat. Anyway, at this point you're going to need some means of getting your thrown weapon to come back to you: the *returning* weapon enchantment is an obvious one, as is the *called* weapon enchantment. My preferred mode of play is usually with a *blinkback belt*, however; talk to your GM about whether they would either allow it to exist in the chest slot (instead of the belt slot) or else use the Automatic Bonus Progression rules so that you're not shooting your Dexterity score in the foot.

3. **Startoss Shower:** Finally, we've arrived. Startoss Shower makes it possible for you to hit up to 5 enemies with a single standard action, *all at your full BAB*. The catch? You can't target any individual enemy more than once, and range increments can be problematic unless you're using a *distance* weapon, have the *longshot* spell active, or have class features (as in the flying blade swashbuckler archetype, e.g.) that gradually increase your range increments with thrown weapons. One of my favorite wombo combos with Startoss Shower is the *designating* or *greater designating* enchantments. They're expensive, sure, but one good toss of a thrown weapon suddenly grants every ally huge morale bonuses to attack and damage against every creature you hit. Since Startoss Shower isn't any great shakes at taking down single targets, this is also where the advanced benefit of Desna's DFT comes into play: you throw once as a full-round action, hitting the same target one to four times on a successful attack roll and dealing your Startoss Style damage (+6) and base Desna DFT damage (+Charisma modifier) on each hit. The complete reliance on attacks made at your full BAB make Startoss Style surprisingly viable even for $\frac{3}{4}$ -BAB classes. As I said, it's one of my favorites.



“What is the name of your technique?”

“Do you want to learn? I’ll teach you.”

—Sing, *Kung Fu Hustle*

Green (Good)

Archon

What's It Do?

Archon Style is a team-oriented defensive and offensive style. You gain the ability to redirect enemies' attacks against yourself while also allowing teammates to take attacks of opportunity after the redirect. All in all, it's a good way for protecting melee allies, especially if your own defenses are rock solid, but you can unfortunately only protect against one attack per round, preventing the style from reaching the upper brackets.

Who's It Good For?

Any full-BAB class that can tank hits, honestly. Monks get early access at odd levels in order to sync up with the natural feat progression, but other classes can grab at even levels for relatively little. Archon Style and Diversion are decent for any melee tank, but Archon Justice works best when you've got multiple melee allies that can take the attacks of opportunity you'll be triggering with this style.

When Can You Get It?

The most onerous feat tax is Combat Expertise, of course, and I don't fully understand the Combat Reflexes prerequisite—it's not you making the attacks of opportunity, after all. Human monks could conceivably enter at 1st level, but all other classes are gated behind BAB and will have to wait until 3rd level at least.

The Feats

1. **Archon Style:** Archon Style grants adjacent allies a decent little bonus to AC against an enemy that you currently threaten, but only one enemy, and only for that enemy's next attack. As full-attack actions with massive numbers of natural weapons or iteratives become prevalent, both the static AC bonus and the static number of attacks Archon Style guards against will eventually fall behind the power curve.
2. **Archon Diversion:** Archon Diversion begins to funnel an enemy's melee attacks away from allies and towards *you*, which is both an interesting tanking tool and an extremely efficient way to get pounded into a paste if you're not prepared. Layered defenses, including high AC, DR, concealment, *mirror image*, etc. should all be on your mind. Allies can start to take attacks of opportunity for attacks that you redirected, highlighting the fact that Archon Style is both a defensive and an offensive style.
3. **Archon Justice:** Archon Justice finally eliminates the move action you previously needed to activate Archon Style, greatly streamlining your action economy and enabling full-attack actions. About time. Because enemies will now take attacks of opportunity from *every one of your allies who threatens them* when you redirect attacks, they'll have to think long and hard about who they want to try to hit—or whether they want to try to hit at all.

Asura

What's It Do?

Asura Style is an anticaster style feat line primarily aimed at debuffing and then dismantling divine casters. It won't do anything against other types of casters, though, so it's not necessarily the strongest primary style feat line—a bit too niche for that.

Who's It Good For?

Anybody who wants to hunt down and kill clerics, inquisitors, paladins, warpriests, etc., really. Asura Style specifies Improved Unarmed Strike and Wisdom 13 prerequisites, and since you can only sicken divine casters if you hit them with an unarmed strike or monk weapon, chances are good that brawlers and monks will be the primary classes that go for Asura Style.

When Can You Get It?

As early as 5th level for monks or full-BAB classes, if you want it. Unlike many other styles, Asura Style comes online pretty late, with Asura Spellrend (the final style feat in the feat line) becoming available only at 13th level. That's fine, though, because casters are at their most dangerous in later levels.

The Feats

1. **Asura Style:** Strike a target casting a divine spell, sicken them for 1d4 rounds. Simple enough. The Fortitude save DC to negate the sickened condition is keyed off of Wisdom, making monk or brawler the strongest choices out there. You do have to hit the creature *while it's casting a spell*, though, so get used to either readying actions or (if you're a fighter) using the Disruptive + Spellbreaker combo to take attacks of opportunity against casters who fail their concentration checks to cast defensively.
2. **Asura Sight:** I've always thought that "improved" uncanny dodge was a bit of a misnomer, since by all accounts it's more dangerous to be caught flat-footed at the start of combat than it is to be flanked. Still, this is a minor bonus to AC that will let you ignore sneak attack damage sometimes. You could do worse.
3. **Asura Spellrend:** Ah, finally, a truly delectable ability. Asura Spellrend actively strips divine buffing spells off of enemies, and between the constant erosion of their bonuses from the targeted dispels and the sickened condition piling up, this feat will make divine casters (or anyone who has had a divine spell cast on them) far less threatening than they would have been otherwise. Good stuff.

Barracuda

What's It Do?

Barracuda Style was released with the *Ruins of Azlant* adventure path, and it's clear that it was designed to be used in aquatic adventures where unarmed strike builds would suffer greatly during [underwater combat](#). The base style feat eliminates your attack and damage penalties for unarmed strikes made in the water, and the subsequent feats layer on more mobility and charging prowess. It's actually quite a strong style, but assumes that you're playing in a campaign where you're underwater nearly 100% of the time.

Who's It Good For?

Barracuda Style is written pretty explicitly for unarmed strike builds with a decent Wisdom score, so that should automatically make you think brawler or monk. The entry requirements are keyed off of skill ranks rather than BAB, however, so even $\frac{3}{4}$ -BAB, Wisdom-based classes such as warpriests, inquisitors, hunters, etc. might be able to benefit, provided that they're willing to funnel resources into unarmed strikes.

When Can You Get It?

At 3rd level, easily. With only one feat prerequisite and only a few required skill ranks that you likely would have taken anyway in an aquatic campaign, Barracuda Style is quite simple to get into.

The Feats

1. **Barracuda Style:** This feels like a feat tax to me, but there's nothing more depressing than underwater penalties to bludgeoning weapons, so you'll dang well take Barracuda Style if you're intending to play an aquatic unarmed strike build. Thankfully, the rest of the style feat line is quite strong in aquatic campaigns, so you don't have to feel bad investing in this feat, even if it is a tax.
2. **Barracuda Slam:** More mobility while underwater is never a bad thing, although you need to remember that the ability to move at an accelerated rate (or with a Swim speed, in the case of Barracuda Dash) is only active during combat while you have Barracuda Style active—once you drop out of initiative order, you no longer benefit, since style feats can't be maintained outside of combat. Anyway, damage + mobility = a win.
3. **Barracuda Dash:** A fun ability that lets you zip between two opponents in two different charge lanes, Barracuda Dash is a great way to deal damage *and* get yourself cut to ribbons by attacks of opportunity at the same time. I'd highly recommend Dodge + Mobility if you're going all-in on Barracuda Style, because you'll need the extra help avoiding attacks of opportunity.

Beastmaster

What's It Do?

Beastmaster Style is, as the name implies, for classes that have non-mount animal companions that they'd like to protect. The style feat line is focused almost entirely on negating attacks or saving throws for your animal companion, or on allowing you to retaliate with extreme prejudice if you fail to negate such assaults.

Who's It Good For?

Druids, rangers, and hunters are the obvious choices here, but sacred huntsmaster inquisitors, mad dog barbarians, wild child brawlers, huntmaster cavaliers, etc. might also benefit. So long as you've got an animal companion that you're not riding, you should be in good stead.

When Can You Get It?

As early as 1st level. There are no BAB requirements and relatively few feat requirements (Alertness is a bit of a stinker, but as skill feats from the *Core Rulebook* go, it's definitely the best of the bunch) so entry is wide open.

The Feats

- Beastmaster Style:** The positioning requirements are a bit unfortunate, since you need to be adjacent both to your animal companion *and* to the creature attacking your animal companion in order to benefit. This will mostly rule out flanking tactics, including hunter classics like Outflank, but something like Gang Up would still work. Focus on adjacent teamwork feats instead of flanking teamwork feats if you intend to take this on a hunter or sacred huntsmaster inquisitor: Shake It Off, Duck and Cover, Lastwall Phalanx, etc. Also watch out for the immediate action cost—you'll only ever be able to use this ability once per round, and it will prevent you from using swift actions on your next turn.
- Beastmaster Salvation:** Even though animal companions receive evasion and improved evasion throughout the course of their development, they are still susceptible to Will and Fortitude saves. Your Handle Animal bonus is likely to be much higher than their save bonuses, so use Beastmaster Salvation freely when you think you need to. This is another immediate action ability, so Beastmaster Style and Beastmaster Salvation will conflict in any given round.
- Beastmaster Ire:** Mechanically speaking, there are two ways to play Beastmaster Ire: the first is the normal way, in which you pump your Handle Animal score, negate attacks on your companion, and take the +2/+4 bonuses using Beastmaster Ire. The second way is a little riskier, but more powerful: you leave your Handle Animal score fairly low (skill ranks and nothing else, that is) and *rely on* the fact that you won't always beat your opponent's attack roll in order to get the +4/+8 bonuses. A +4/+8 to attack and damage is truly enormous, so you have to at least consider it if you want to be able to burn your enemy down to the waterline. I'd feel a little bad using my companion as a portable rage battery, but when needs must, I guess I would. Note also that you can't trigger Beastmaster Ire from Beastmaster Salvation, only from Beastmaster Style—attacks, no saves.

Boar

What's It Do?

An unarmed strike style that specializes in bypassing DR/damage type, facilitating Intimidate checks made to demoralize foes, and dealing extra damage or bleed damage with rending strikes. The prerequisites are eminently doable for just about any unarmed build, and because it's so good, there's no reason not to consider it.

Who's It Good For?

Any unarmed strike build can benefit from the base style feat, but unarmed demoralize builds will want to investigate at least Boar Ferocity, and possible Boar Shred, as well.

When Can You Get It?

Without monk level or BAB requirements, everyone can enter the Boar Style feats at 3rd, 6th, and 9th levels, with the only prerequisites being some ranks in Intimidate. Given how strongly focused on the Intimidate skill Boar Ferocity and Boar Shred are, this should come as a surprise to no one.

The Feats

- Boar Style:** Boar Style grants you the ability to bypass DR/slashing or DR/bludgeoning as a free action in addition to, on average, +7 damage per round whenever you hit with two unarmed strikes. This one's a no-brainer, kids.
 - Combat Stamina:** If your enemy is heavily buffed or you're heavily debuffed, you might opt to sacrifice 3 stamina points for 2d6 damage, but the cost is relatively high for what you get. Besides *hasted* monks and brawlers shouldn't have any difficulty hitting at least twice on a flurry.
- Boar Ferocity:** With the addition of Boar Ferocity, practitioners can now bypass all three DR/damage type configurations—a real boon for unarmed strike builds, which are usually locked into bludgeoning damage. The bonus to Intimidate checks is perhaps a bit more niche, but for inquisitors, vigilantes, and other classes who would rather not use Cornugon Smash or Enforcer to demoralize foes, this feat is the one-stop shop. Free action economy continues to be great for this feat line.
 - Combat Stamina:** 5 stamina points for 1 round of the sickened condition is the pinnacle of a bad trade. Nah, bro.
- Boar Shred:** Probably the most skippable of the Boar Style feats, but still solidly good for the 1d6 bleed damage that you now deal whenever you tear flesh with the base style feat.
 - Combat Stamina:** Why spend stamina to demoralize an opponent as a swift action when you could simply tear flesh and demoralize them as a free action?

Bulette Charge

What's It Do?

Overrun, overrun, and more overrun. Bulette Charge Style assumes that you'll be wearing heavy armor (preferably as a fighter or another archetype with the fighter's armor training class feature, e.g., the masked maiden vigilante archetype) and either leaping over foes or plowing right through them, knocking them to the ground and dealing a good chunk of damage in the process. You know, like real bulettes. Overrun is not the easiest combat maneuver to pull off, but if you anticipate fighting enemies with reasonable CMD scores, the style is actually fairly strong.

Who's It Good For?

Wearers of heavy armor, especially fighters, who don't mind investing in Armored Athlete (Acrobatics) and Improved Overrun. Asking the question "who's it good *against*?" is perhaps more appropriate here, however, and the answer to that question is "the squishiest target you can find."

When Can You Get It?

Assuming you're taking the recommended path and entering from the fighter class, probably around 3rd level. You'd want Power Attack and Dirty Fighting at 1st, Improved Overrun at 2nd, and Bulette Charge Style at 3rd. Easy peasy.

The Feats

1. **Bulette Charge Style:** A simple +4 untyped bonus to CMD checks made to overrun opponents. If this is your only goal—to overrun without any extra effects—then you'd be hard-pressed to do better than that kind of numerical advantage. Note that the feat says "any **magic ability or material** that reduces your armor check penalty also reduces the bonus you gain for this style." Class features like the fighter's armor training or the [Improved Armor Focus](#) feat allow you to receive this bonus as normal.
2. **Bulette Leap:** Unless you've taken the [Armored Athlete](#) feat as a fighter, chances are very good that your Acrobatics score is *not* going to be high enough to jump very far—never mind what kinds of bonuses you're adding to the check. The multiple overrun mechanic is interesting, but unlikely to succeed very often unless you're facing a lot of soft targets; at later levels, Large- and Huge-sized creatures simply have the upper hand when it comes to CMD scores, and you can't afford any penalties.
3. **Bulette Rampage:** The damage on Bulette Rampage is actually not terrible, since a lot of it comes from static Strength and AC bonuses that are likely to be quite high. If **you often face enemies of a similar size**, the multiple attacks granted by Bulette Leap plus the damage from Bulette Rampage could grow to be sizeable. Perhaps something to consider in humanoid-centric campaigns.

Charging Stag

What's It Do?

Charging Stag Style is a combination mobility/grappling style that lets you blow past traditional obstacles to charging and wrap enemies up in a grapple as part of the same charge action. It's fairly strong, on the whole, although PCs who aren't interested in grappling can stop pursuing the style feat line after Charging Stag Style.

Who's It Good For?

The base style feat can make a good purchase for any melee-based martial character who wants to be able to close the distance with enemies quickly; after Charging Stag Style, however, the utility of the rest of the feat line depends entirely on whether or not you're dedicated to grappling. If so, Stag Horns is a worthy purchase, and possibly Stag Submission, as well. Non-grapplers can exit after the base style feat.

When Can You Get It?

Monks, unchained monks, and brawlers get enough bonus combat feats to pick up Charging Stag Style by about 3rd level, and since the later feats have no added BAB, level, or feat requirements, you can easily progress through the entire feat tree by 7th level if you're invested. Fighters are likely in the same boat, thanks to their many bonus combat feats.

The Feats

- Charging Stag Style:** Charging Stag Style is actually quite nice. For melee PCs, getting up in enemies' faces before they have time to buff, throw down battlefield control, etc. is a prime directive, and the base style feat lets you charge more fluidly, weaving around obstacles, through allies, and over difficult terrain in order to get there. There's likely some synergy with [Rhino Charge](#) here, since nothing in this style specifies that you must charge as a full-round action in order to gain its benefits.
- Stag Horns:** It's unusual to see grappling abilities (Stag Horns, Stag Submission) to mobility abilities (Charging Stag Style), since grapplers tend not to move much. Stag Horns is lovely for grapplers, though, because you can charge an enemy, strike with a bonus, and then immediately lock them up in a grapple, all as part of the same action. A clutch anticaster move.
- Stag Submission:** Another relatively strong feat in Charging Stag Style. Again, Stag Submission is meant for grapplers, but it further streamlines your action economy as you close with a foe, grapple them, pin them, and then do whatever you're going to do (tie them up, coup de grace with [Throat Slicer](#), etc.). The basic action flow would be to charge and strike an enemy (Charging Stag Style), then initiate a grapple (Stag Horns) on Turn 1, and then maintain the grapple to pin and knock down as a move action (Greater Grapple, Stag Submission), then do whatever you want as a standard. If you're intending to grab Throat Slicer, you don't really benefit from an enemy being prone, so you might skip Stag Submission in that case.

Crane

What's It Do?

Crane Style is a mostly defensive style that gives you bonuses (and reduces the attack penalties) whenever you fight defensively. The final feat in the feat line, Crane Riposte, will give you a few more attacks of opportunity, but overall the style should be thought of as defensive.

Who's It Good For?

Anyone who wants to fight defensively. And before you brush that playstyle off, consider that a halfling with all three Crane Style feats, Cautious Fighter, Blundering Defense, Uncanny Defense, and 3 ranks in Acrobatics can get something like a +10 bonus to AC (2 base + 1 Acrobatics + 1 Crane Style + 4 Crane Wing + 2 Cautious Fighter), a +5 bonus to Reflex saves and CMD (Uncanny Defense), and a +5 bonus to AC for adjacent allies (Blundering Defense), all for a measly -1 penalty to attack rolls (-4 base + 2 Crane Style + 1 Crane Riposte). And that's *before* Osyluth Guile adds your Charisma modifier to AC. Anyway, monks, unchained monks, and brawlers are obviously good candidates, as are any other full-BAB classes that can commit to fighting defensively with one hand free (swashbucklers, some fighters or slayers, etc.). Because of the amazing slew of racial feats listed above, halflings also make the best Crane Style users.

When Can You Get It?

Right away at 1st level for monks and unchained monks, or by 2nd/3rd level for other full-BAB classes. Defensive fighting is really painful without Crane Style, so you'd likely want to segue into these feats as early as possible. Crane Style + 3 ranks in Acrobatics can get you a -2/+4 attack/AC setup by 3rd level, which is quite favorable.

The Feats

- Crane Style:** Defensive fighting starts out with -4 attack/+2 AC, which is not at all in PCs' favor—you're far better off using Combat Expertise than fighting defensively. With 3 ranks in Acrobatics, your bonuses when fighting defensively go up by 1 (or by 2 when taking the total defense action), and Crane Style further reduces your penalties by 2 and improves your bonuses by 1. At 3rd level, this leaves you with -2 attack/+4 AC, which is far more manageable than what you started with. You're still not as bulky as you could be, but that's what later feats in the feat line and halfling racial feats are for.
 - Combat Stamina:** Crane Style is all about AC, AC, and more AC, so the fact that combat stamina offers *still more AC* will surprise no one. It's a useful tool to have, even if you don't use it all the time.
- Crane Wing:** Crane Wing grants an enormous dodge bonus to AC when you're fighting defensively, but it applies (1) only to melee attacks, (2) only when you have one or both hands free, and (3) only when opponents are consistently missing your AC by 4 or more. One persistent goal of the Crane Style life is to get your AC as high as possible so that your +4 dodge bonus remains intact as much of the time as possible. Investing in Perception and initiative so that you can both participate in surprise rounds and avoid acting last will help Crane Wing's bonuses protect you more evenly.

- a. **Combat Stamina:** Crane Wing's combat stamina upgrade is going to be prohibitively expensive in all but the most dire circumstances. 5 stamina points for a +2 dodge bonus to AC is a poor trade, even if the bonus does apply to all of the enemy's attacks.
- 3. **Crane Riposte:** In addition to reducing the penalty for defensive fighting to -1 (finally!) you now get a consolation prize if an enemy ever takes away Crane Wing's dodge bonus to AC: an attack of opportunity. While that's not fabulous, it's a solidly good ability.
 - a. **Combat Stamina:** Awww, these abilities just kept getting worse. By the time you have Crane Style and Crane Riposte, your total penalty for fighting defensively will be a measly -1, which isn't worth spending precious stamina points on.



Cudgeler

What's It Do?

Cudgeler Style is built around dealing nonlethal damage with the Bludgeoner feat, and comes complete with damage bonuses (via increased weapon damage die size), free trip maneuvers, and even the chance to stun your opponents. As with any nonlethal damage build, I'd highly encourage you to investigate the [Enforcer](#) feat, as this will add one more element of debuffing to your melee routine.

Who's It Good For?

Any full-BAB class wielding a bludgeoning weapon, including unarmed strike builds like monks, unchained monks, and brawlers. Damage die size increases work better the larger your damage dice already are, which makes the unarmed builds great choices—the scaling 2d10 damage they end up with at 20th level increases to 4d8 damage, per [this Paizo FAQ](#), and that's tasty indeed. You can use any bludgeoning weapon, though, so dwarven greathammers and the like are also legal. Heck, you don't even *technically* need to use a bludgeoning weapon, as long as you get the Bludgeoner feat and have some means of dealing nonlethal damage, but I'm assuming you won't want to take a dead feat just to get into this style.

When Can You Get It?

Right away at 1st level, easily. Cudgeler Style is very light on requirements (a real boon!) which makes it easy to fit in among other priorities.

The Feats

- Cudgeler Style:** Cudgeler Style is a simple, no-frills kind of feat: you charge someone and deal nonlethal damage, you get a bit extra on the top. As I mentioned above, damage die size increases benefit those who already have large damage dice; a 1d4 → 1d8 size increase nets you only 2 more damage, on average, whereas a 2d6 → 3d6 or 2d8 → 3d8 size increase will yield 3-5 more damage. Small, but noticeable—that's why brawlers and monks do so well here, at least at high levels. Two-handed weapon builds will excel in the early levels.
- Cudgeler Sweep:** And now you get a free trip attempt at the end of your charge. It only works if your attack lands, and because it provokes attacks of opportunity as normal, you'd be crazy not to pick up Improved Trip somewhere along the way unless you're using a reach weapon. As you'll see from Cudgeler Takedown, there's a benefit to having Improved Trip and Greater Trip in a Cudgeler Style build anyway, so get cracking.
- Cudgeler Takedown:** The final feat in the line does several things at once. First, it extends the duration of your damage die size increase to one round, instead of one attack. When is this likely to matter? Well, it matters for those using pounce or similar abilities (the avenger vigilante's mad rush vigilante talent, the barbarian's greater beast totem rage power, etc.) and for builds who intend to take attacks of opportunity as enemies fall (Vicious Stomp, Greater Trip, etc.). Second, it stuns enemies who fall prone from Cudgeler Sweep. The scaling on the Fortitude save DC is *brutal*—you get to add your full character level, instead of half, to the DC, which will leave you with something like DC 40 at 20th level, against a median Fortitude save of +23 for CR 20 creatures. Now,

whether you can actually trip the Gargantuan- and Colossal-sized creatures you fight at CR 20 is a different matter, but either way this feat is likely to be lethal against squishy casters.

Demonic

What's It Do?

Demonic Style is a heavily offensive style that combines charging, bull rushing, and cleaving with impressive damage bonuses. Because the style requires sky-high bull rush CMB scores to be utilized for maximal effect, it will find a home more often on monster builds than it will on PC builds.

Who's It Good For?

Any full-BAB, Strength-based melee combatant, really. Barbarians and bloodragers get the special perk of being able to activate Demonic Style as a free action when they enter a rage or bloodrage, but other Strength-based martial classes can also get in on the fun.

When Can You Get It?

Right away at 1st level, easily. Getting the later feats demands that you progress into Improved Bull Rush and Cleave/Great Cleave, but the base style feat is solid on its own if you're simply looking for bonuses when charging.

The Feats

1. **Demonic Style:** A nice boost to damage and attack rolls when charging. If you've got a pounce build on your hands (e.g., via the mad rush avenger vigilante talent, the greater beast totem barbarian rage power, etc.) or another class feature that incentivizes charging (e.g., the rogue's scout archetype) then this could easily rise to a blue rating.
2. **Demonic Momentum:** Much like Crashing Wave Fist, Demonic Momentum encourages you to pump your CMB score as high as you possibly can, because each increment of 5 by which you beat an opponent's CMD equates to a +2 damage bonus on all of your attacks next round. While this might work against spellcasters and other squishy targets quite well, it's very difficult to even *hit* monster CMD scores in the late game, much less beat them by 5, 10, or 15 points. **For monsters attacking PCs**, that's a different matter entirely—large enemies that are heavily invested in Strength may regularly beat PC CMD scores by huge margins, leading to consistent damage bonuses when charging. Not to mention that pounce is more often a monster ability, rather than a PC ability.
3. **Demonic Slaughter:** Demonic Slaughter brings the whole style feat line together by letting you charge, perform a bull rush to knock an enemy back into its allies, and then using Great Cleave to hit the whole lot of them with stacked damage bonuses from Demonic Style and Demonic Momentum. Although it's a cool image, this tactic depends on tightly clustered enemies, successful bull rush attempts, and circumstances that allow you to charge more than once per combat. Again, probably more effective **for monsters attacking PCs**, as PC groups tend to start encounters packed in like sardines.

Dragonfly

What's It Do?

Dragonfly is a hybrid mobility/offensive style that grants you bonuses when you attack from higher ground, a playstyle that the feat line encourages by allowing you to leap off of walls, trees, allies, and even enemies before you attack. By the time you obtain Dragonfly Wings, you'd have to actively work *not* to gain a +2 bonus to all your melee attacks, so that's tasty indeed. The many Acrobatics bonuses are also excellent for maneuvering around enemies.

Who's It Good For?

Any Dexterity- and Wisdom-based melee fighter. The Improved Unarmed Strike requirement naturally nods toward monk, unchained monk, and brawler, but hunters, inquisitors, rogues, and rangers can all find a lot to like here. In most cases, a 1-level dip into monk or unchained monk will set those classes up nicely for Dragonfly Style.

When Can You Get It?

The only rate-limiting factor in Dragonfly Style is skill ranks in Climb and Acrobatics, which should be easily managed if you have at least 4 skill ranks per level. Entering at 2nd, 5th, and 10th level is eminently possible.

The Feats

- Dragonfly Style:** A very solid opening from Dragonfly Style. Adding your Wisdom modifier to Acrobatics checks really boosts your ability to avoid movement-based attacks of opportunity, and synergizes nicely with all the high jumps you'll be performing later in the feat line. The bonuses to melee attacks are a little small and circumstantial for now, but Dragonfly Wings will help extend what you're capable of.
- Dragonfly Wings:** Dragonfly Wings is a necessary upgrade to Dragonfly Style, since you'll eventually be dealing almost exclusively with enemies that are much larger than you are. Even with Dexterity and Wisdom, you're going to need other bonuses to Acrobatics if you want to succeed at checks against creatures' CMD, so consider *boots of elvenkind*, Skill Focus (Acrobatics), and whatever other bonuses you can scrounge up. Being able to grab these bonuses while adjacent to any willing ally is key; you should now almost never fail to trigger Dragonfly Style during your turn.
- Dragonfly Flight:** Less flying than falling with style, Paizo, but I'll grant you that it's a cool image. Dragonfly Flight can be useful for clearing terrain obstacles, but it has a relatively short range and will be difficult to clear wall spells, pits, etc. without using something like the ninja's acrobatic master trick. If your GM rules that you can use Dragonfly Flight to pass over an enemy without triggering an attack of opportunity, this probably leaps up to green.

Electric Eel

What's It Do?

Electric Eel Style is an Elemental Fist-based grappling style that mixes in bonus electricity damage and debuffing through the staggered condition. Basically, you grab an opponent, set up an electric current between you, and keep shocking your foe until one of you drops.

Who's It Good For?

Thanks to the monk level shortcuts, Elemental Fist requirements, and high requisite Wisdom scores, the core monk is actually the dominant player in Electric Eel Style. Monks of the four winds deal a lot of damage with Elemental Fist and Electric Eel Conduit; master of many style monks can blend Electric Eel with Kraken, Grabbing, and other grappling styles; and tetori monks are the least escapable grapplers in the game. They're all pretty well-suited to the style, although of course other classes and archetypes will work just fine, so long as they're dedicated to grappling.

When Can You Get It?

Monks can get the style feats at 5th, 7th, and 9th levels, but other full-BAB classes get pushed back 4 levels to 9th, 11th, and 13th. Yet another reason why core monks tend to work best here.

The Feats

- Electric Eel Style:** A +4 bonus to CMB checks to grapple is really nothing to sneer at, especially when the rest of the style feat line is quite good for dealing continuous damage and status conditions to creatures you're grappling. Highly recommended for tetori monks, monks of the four winds, and master of many styles monks who are looking to jump into grappling.
- Electric Eel Shock:** Enemies now have a chance to become staggered when you hit them with Elemental Fist. While that's good in and of itself, the real money lies in the fact that Electric Eel Conduit, your next feat in this style feat line, allows you to *keep* shocking someone you have grappled, triggering a Fortitude save every round. Staggered is a strong status condition, so Shock can't go too far off base.
- Electric Eel Conduit:** At last, you've arrived! Electric Eel Conduit does two very important things for a grappling build: first, it continues to trigger Electric Eel Shock. When you're grappling a creature with a poor Fortitude save, this is more than likely to result in the enemy becoming more or less permanently staggered, and while that won't prevent CMB or Escape Artist checks made as standard actions, it *will* prevent full-attacks, which can be very nasty indeed. Second, Electric Eel Conduit deals a good amount of damage every round—1d6 plus your Wisdom modifier. Tetori monks will be more than pleased with this outcome, and masters of many styles (or those with the Combat Style Master feat) can combo it with Kraken Style to deal even more damage. A fitting capstone.

Fox

What's It Do?

Fox Style caters to full-BAB martial classes with high Intelligence scores, letting them use their BAB in place of skill ranks for various purposes (Bluff to feint, Sense Motive to resist feints) and giving them big bonuses to some combat maneuvers (feints and dirty tricks) if they can boost their Intelligence score to 19 or higher.

Who's It Good For?

Full-BAB martial classes built around Intelligence are somewhat rare, but at the very least, trappings of the warrior occultists and lore warden fighters can get in on the ground floor here. Slayer is at least nominally built for Intelligence, and brawler doesn't have a terrible time with that attribute, either. Unless I'm missing anything major, those are probably the only four routes I would recommend through Fox Style.

When Can You Get It?

Right away at 1st level, easily, and as soon as you can pick up the requisite feats for all subsequent feats in the style line. **Important Note:** because Fox Style and Fox Insight don't list an Improved [Maneuver] feat as a prerequisite, they're actually *not* eligible for the Dirty Fighting workaround I talk so much about. Fox Trickery is, however, so there's no need to pick up Combat Expertise if you'd rather have Dirty Fighting. On balance, though, this is one style feat line that you really shouldn't mind having high Intelligence for, because all of the best bonuses unlock at Intelligence 19.

The Feats

1. **Fox Style:** Fox Style essentially grants 20 free ranks in Bluff for classes who are uninterested in lying outside of combat, plus an additional bonus of +4 if you can wrangle your Intelligence up to 19. More skill ranks never hurt, of course, and you can pair Fox Style with the Student of Philosophy trait to switch your non-combat Bluff and Diplomacy modifiers over to Intelligence—an excellent option for an Intelligence-based party face.
2. **Fox Insight:** In my experience, enemies attempting to feint or demoralize PCs is pretty rare, but assuming that you face that at some point, Fox Insight will prepare you well.
3. **Fox Trickery:** Ahhh, there's the money. Performing dirty trick maneuvers as attacks of opportunity and getting a +4 bonus to do so is of real interest to many of the classes listed above, especially lore warden fighter whip builds or anyone else using a reach weapon. If you're not building a dirty trickster, you can easily stop at Fox Style, but why would you when the best feat of them all is waiting for you here?

Grabbing

What's It Do?

Grabbing Style is a grappling-focused style feat line that allows you to effectively grapple more than one target at a time, and to move those targets more swiftly across the battlefield. It can't compete with styles like Electric Eel or Kraken as far as damage output on a single target goes, but it's the only style that can increase the *number* of target grappled, and that's an effective niche to carve for itself.

Who's It Good For?

Brawlers and monks/unchained monks get access much, *much* faster than any other class, but all that's required is a dedication to grappling for Grabbing Style to be good. Full BAB is a must, obviously, for the CMB bonuses.

When Can You Get It?

At 1st or 2nd level, for brawlers and monks/unchained monks, or 6th level for other full-BAB classes. Non-monk and non-brawler classes continue to progress about 4 levels behind monks and brawlers for the remainder of the feat chain.

The Feats

- Grabbing Style:** A very solid opening from Grabbing Style, perfect for grappling builds that want to maintain a weapon in one hand, grapple two enemies at once, drink a potion while grappling, etc.
 - Combat Stamina:** Grabbing Style is all about grappling, and 1 stamina point for an untyped +2 on a CMB check to grapple is the epitome of value. You'll need all the help you can get to reliably grapple two foes at a time.
- Grabbing Drag:** Where before you could move an enemy only half your base speed while grappling them, Grabbing Drag now allows you to do it at full speed. Funnily enough, with Greater Grapple and Rapid Grappler, you can grapple someone as a standard action (normal), move action (Greater Grapple), *and* swift action (Rapid Grappler), moving someone up to your full speed each time, which actually allows you to move *farther while grappling someone than you could if you weren't grappling*. Dontcha love Pathfinder?
 - Combat Stamina:** Man, these feats are just a lot of fun. In theory, you could spend 5 stamina points after each of the three actions detailed above to move six times your speed in a single round while maintaining a grapple on someone. For perspective, you'd be moving approximately 30 feet per second, or 20ish miles per hour. So...think of Andre the Giant hauling ass as fast as a Tour de France rider while headlocking someone. The mental image is amusing, to say the least.
- Grabbing Master:** The ultimate in grappling technology, you can now grapple two opponents, damaging or moving each as part of the same action. (To be clear, you *could* grapple two opponents with Grabbing Style, but it's difficult to keep up the pain when your action economy is split between two foes. Grabbing Master fixes that.) A great feat for grapplers looking to branch out into crowd control.
 - Combat Stamina:** 5 stamina points seems like an awfully high price to pay for some extra attacks of opportunity. Maybe worth it sometimes, but not all the time.

Kitsune

What's It Do?

Kitsune Style is all about making you better at performing dirty tricks, giving you options to perform dirty trick maneuvers in place of attacks of opportunity or the attack at the end of a charge, as well as the ability to inflict *two* status conditions instead of one on enemies. Although Cloak and Dagger Style can be more powerful for builds using one specific light melee weapon, Kitsune Style comes online much sooner and caters to a wider variety of builds.

Who's It Good For?

Full-BAB classes or monks performing dirty tricks. With Dirty Fighting to smooth away the Combat Expertise and Intelligence 13 requirements, pretty much any class can get into this style feat line without a fuss.

When Can You Get It?

A human fighter could conceivably get Kitsune Style at 1st level (Dirty Fighting, Improved Dirty Trick, Kitsune Style) but there's no need to rush quite that quickly. The main benchmark you're trying to hit is to get Greater Dirty Trick, Kitsune Vengeance, and Superior Dirty Trick in the 6th-8th level range.

The Feats

1. **Kitsune Style:** It's nice to be able to start an enemy off on the wrong foot by flinging sand in their eyes, but charging is a bit of a niche application for dirty tricks. Kitsune Vengeance is where we'll really start to get going.
2. **Kitsune Tricks:** Two conditions for the price of one! Blinded + sickened or entangled is almost always going to be the mechanically optimal choice, especially once you grab Dirty Trick Master and Superior Dirty Trick to start turning entangled into pinned and sickened into nauseated. Cloak and Dagger Tactics is a very late addition that would require a dip in master of many styles monk, but if you did manage to pick it up eventually, you could add a *third* status condition—exhausted, confused, staggered, or anchored in place—to the mix.
3. **Kitsune Vengeance:** Ahhh, that's much better. Taking dirty tricks as attacks of opportunity is phenomenal, especially if you have a reach weapon build, Step Up and Strike, Spellbreaker, or other effects that allow you to take attacks of opportunity more frequently. Combat Reflexes is obviously a must-buy at this point so that you can dole out your vulpine trickery as often as possible.

Kraken

What's It Do?

Kraken Style is entirely focused on **grappling**, offering some great damage boosts that compare favorably with Electric Eel Style. Masters of many styles can pick up the base style feat if they want to deal more damage when grappling, but the latter two feats are a little weaker—if you're thinking of skipping anything, it should be those.

Who's It Good For?

Grapplers, of course, especially those with high Wisdom scores. You're here primarily for the passive increases to damage when grappling.

When Can You Get It?

As early as 3rd level, if you wanted it, and again at 5th and 7th. Once your grappling damage has been buffed to the moon and back, you can start choking fools out like a real kraken would. That is how krakens do.

The Feats

1. **Kraken Style:** Kraken Style is excellent for grappling builds, giving you both a neat bonus to CMB to maintain grapples as well as free damage equal to your Wisdom modifier every time you succeed at a grapple check. Because this includes actions that wouldn't normally deal damage (e.g., moving your opponent to a different square, pinning, etc.) Kraken Style is great for boosting your damage output even as you adapt to changing combat conditions.
2. **Kraken Throttle:** The bump to grappling damage may seem miniscule, but with the potential to succeed at three grapple checks per round as a standard action (normal grappling) + move action (Greater Grapple) + swift action (Rapid Grapple), you're bound to see some pretty big damage numbers pouring out of those chokeholds. [Suffocation](#) is, unfortunately, too slow to accomplish anything in the grand scheme of things. Even the weakest arcane caster will probably have a Constitution score of at least 8, which means they can hold their breath for 16 rounds before suffocation starts. And don't holler at me with any nonsense about Kraken Throttle skipping the breath-holding phase and moving straight to suffocation—Owen K. Stephens clarifies in [this post](#) (about halfway down) that opponents getting choked with Kraken Throttle still get to hold their breath, which makes the feat worth little outside of the damage bonuses.
3. **Kraken Wrack:** Kraken Wrack kind of gives you a janky sunder option to use when you're grappling; the issue, however, is that those two combat maneuvers don't work particularly well together. If you have someone wrapped up in a grapple, chances are good that they're already going to die, whether through direct damage, getting mobbed while pinned, etc. Do you really need to *also* destroy their equipment while you're at it? At the very least, you're getting *yet more damage* while grappling, and we like that here.

Kyton

What's It Do?

Kyton Style is a hybrid defensive/anticaster style that focuses on using spiked chains—some very heavy Zon-Kuthon flavor. The main benefits are to grant large-ish shield bonuses to AC while wielding spiked chains (Kyton Shield) and imposing penalties to spellcasters' concentration checks (Kyton Cut); classes that receive flurry of blows and Stunning Fist also get some minor goodies.

Who's It Good For?

The ki pool is the hardest requirement to attain, but monks, unchained monks, ninja, psammokineticists, esoteric magi, mediums of the master, shigenjo oracles, iron paladins, okayo corsair swashbucklers, teisatsu vigilantes, sacred fist warpriests, and rogues with the ki pool rogue talent can all enter, along with anyone dipping those classes up to the requisite level. The style chain was clearly designed for monks, unchained monks, and archetypes that pick up flurry of blows (sacred fist warpriest, notably) so take the other archetype recommendations with a grain of salt.

When Can You Get It?

Any class can grab Kyton Style at 3rd level, but the actual goodness doesn't start until BAB +5, when Kyton Shield enters. Oddly enough, monks don't get any level shortcuts for Kyton Style or Kyton Shield, only Kyton Cut. Ah, well.

The Feats

- Kyton Style:** The base style feat in this chain is essentially a feat tax for monks to be able to use spiked chains with their class features: the monk special weapon quality allows monks to perform flurries of blows with spiked chains (although it doesn't automatically make them proficient!), and the latter half of the feat text allows you to use Stunning Fist with a spiked chain, albeit by spending ki. This feat is pretty bad, if I'm honest—feat taxes almost always are—but if you want a monk to wield a spiked chain effectively, there's no recourse.
- Kyton Shield:** Ah, now *that's* more like it! Although it would take quite a bit of cash to eventually end up with a +5 *vicious spiked chain*, monks don't typically have to purchase armor, which makes the goal more reasonable. Assuming you can acquire that weapon, Kyton Shield will give you a +6 shield bonus to AC, which is quite large.
- Kyton Cut:** I debated rating Kyton Cut yellow, but I think ultimately it earns its green rating. Don't worry too much about the nonlethal damage—it's negligible, both to you and to your target. The real meat of this feat (the real feat-meat, if you will) is the penalty to concentration checks that Kyton Cuts impose. Saunter up to a caster, especially with Disruptive, Disruptive Companion, or other feats, hit them with a Kyton Cut, and all of a sudden that caster is going to be having a much worse day. You'll likely need Step Up and Following Step to ensure that you can continue to keep the caster in your threatened area.

Linnorm Hunter

What's It Do?

Linnorm Hunter Style gives you plenty of tasty bonuses for employing pack tactics to take down enemies with an animal companion.

Who's It Good For?

Because Linnorm Hunter Style relies on teamwork feats, the obvious synergies are with the hunter class and the sacred huntsmaster inquisitor. In particular, Combat Reflexes + Broken Wing Gambit + Linnorm Hunter Style + the snake animal focus is a lethal combo for burning enemies down to the waterline. Although Paired Opportunists + Broken Wing Gambit is also a classic, I tend to favor Linnorm Hunter Style because it doesn't require you to be adjacent to your animal companion. Anyway, there's considerable overlap between all three teamwork feats, so just pick a combo you like and stick with it (or experiment—remember that both inquisitors and hunters can swap out their most recent teamwork feat on the fly).

When Can You Get It?

Assuming you're playing a hunter or sacred huntsmaster inquisitor, 1st, 6th, and 8th levels will be the earliest you can satisfy the BAB requirements. The Dexterity and Charisma requirements are onerous for both classes, but there's no getting around them. The base style feat is the most crucial to animal companion-based classes, though, so you could potentially just skip the later feats if you needed to.

The Feats

- Linnorm Hunter Style:** Linnorm Hunter Style is a fantastic one-feat wonder for sacred huntsmaster inquisitors and hunters, but where it really comes into its own is when it's paired with **Broken Wing Gambit**. Let's break down how the combo works.
 - You attack.** As a free action, you grant your enemy a +2 untyped bonus to attack and damage rolls against you (Broken Wing Gambit). Your animal companion also gains a +2 untyped bonus to hit with attacks of opportunity (Linnorm Hunter Style).
 - Your enemy attacks you.** If an enemy takes the bait and attacks you, this triggers an attack of opportunity from your animal companion (Broken Wing Gambit). With the addition of Linnorm Hunter Style, however, anything that provokes from your animal companion *also provokes from you*.
 - Your enemy regrets their life choices.** Essentially, in exchange for granting your enemy a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls against you, both you (Linnorm Hunter Style) and your animal companion (Broken Wing Gambit) get to take one free attack of opportunity per round against them at a +2 bonus. If you add in the snake animal focus, you can collectively receive a +8 bonus on attacks of opportunity by 15th level. If you dip one level of master of many styles monk, you can add other styles like Diabolic Style (apply Vital Strike to those attacks of opportunity) or Snake Style (Snake Fang = all the attacks of opportunity).

2. **Linnorm Hunter Retreat:** Although I'm not overly fond of the immediate action cost, Linnorm Hunter Retreat is another great feat for hunters and sacred huntsmaster inquisitors. Remember, with the Broken Wing Gambit combo, you're both going to be making attacks of opportunity every round, and given that many hunters rely on feats like Outflank to hit reliably, massaging a little extra movement out of your attacks can help you more easily stay in flanking position.
3. **Linnorm Hunter Coordination:** Hmm. My gut instinct is that Linnorm Hunter Coordination isn't going to be too useful to most hunter/animal companion pairings. A full-attack action is usually worth a lot, and assuming most parties will have *haste* running, you'd be trading the chance to hit with anywhere between two and four iterative attacks (+15/+15/+10/+5, at 20th level) for the chance to hit with one attack that gets some bonus damage (+15). Since the attack is still made as a full-round action, this isn't a Vital Strike scenario where Linnorm Hunter Coordination compensates you for the lost full-attack damage if you need to move; unless your animal companion has some *crazy* damage on one of its natural attacks (I'm thinking companions like tyrannosauruses, who just get one enormous bite attack) you're probably going to wind up in the red more than you will in the black.



“I once saw him kill three men in a bar...with a pencil. *With a f***ing pencil.*”

—Viggo Tarasov, *John Wick*

Marid

What's It Do?

All of the elemental style feats (Djinni, Efreeti, Marid, and Shaitan) rely on the Elemental Strike and Elemental Fist feats, the former of which is available only to oreads, ifrits, sylphs, and undines. These feats deal some minor amount of energy damage, with the option to “upgrade” to bigger damage using a pool of daily Elemental Fist uses. Unfortunately for all of these style feats, Elemental Strike and Elemental Fist start out very weak and never really scale except for monks of the four winds, dragging the whole playstyle down.

Who's It Good For?

Given the heavy reliance on both a high Wisdom score and unarmed strikes, we need to think either monk, unchained monk, or brawler; practically, however, you want as many uses of Elemental Fist as possible, and monks or unchained monks get four times as many daily uses as the brawler or other classes. Makes it kind of a no-brainer, huh?

When Can You Get It?

At 9th level for full-BAB classes, or 5th level for monks.

The Feats

- Marid Style:** All of the elemental style feats (Djinni, Efreeti, Marid, and Shaitan) let you add your Wisdom modifier to the damage dealt by Elemental Strike + Elemental Fist, and one other style-exclusive effect. Marid Style's bonus effect is to increase the reach of your unarmed strike by 5 feet, which is enough to elevate the base style to at least green. You'll never regret having a longer reach.
 - Combat Stamina:** The stamina-to-damage exchange rate here isn't particularly in your favor. I'd suggest you save your stamina for something else.
- Marid Spirit:** Marid Spirit neatly upgrades both Efreeti Stance and Djinni Spirit: cold damage is relatively common, so resistance to it is nice, and the entangled condition is superior to either the deafened and burning conditions.
 - Combat Stamina:** Boosts this large to save DCs are difficult to find, and you can tailor the level of stamina expenditure to whatever level of hurt you feel you need to put on an enemy. Decent.
- Marid Goldsnap:** I'd prefer a 15-foot cone to a 30-foot line any day of the week, but the entangled condition is still good enough that you could potentially lock up a bunch of enemies if they're densely packed.
 - Combat Stamina:** A bit more flexibility in which resources you're spending never hurt anyone; assuming that you have time to take it easy in between encounters, using stamina (which is a renewable resource) is preferable to using Elemental Fist attempts (which are not).

Mobile Bulwark

What's It Do?

Mobile Bulwark Style is one of the only tools in the game that substantially improves tower shield builds. Kind of a niche market, of course, but there's really no substitute for it if that's what you're building.

Who's It Good For?

Just based on which classes use tower shields most often, fighters probably get the biggest nod for Mobile Bulwark. Phalanx soldier, tower shield specialist, or shielded fighter are all viable options, although it's been pointed out to me that tower shield specialist gets a lot of class features that are redundant with Mobile Bulwark Style. Shout-out to sixth wing bulwark warpriests, who also do tower shield combat pretty well.

When Can You Get It?

At BAB +1, +4, and +7, which will obviously be at 1st, 4th, and 7th levels for full-BAB classes. The requirements are pretty light overall, although you do need a good Strength score to continue progressing through the feat line.

The Feats

- Mobile Bulwark Style:** Mobile Bulwark Style does two things.
 - First, and most importantly, **you can now set up total cover along one edge of your square as a move action**, rather than a standard action. Don't underestimate how important this is! You can now five-foot step, Vital Strike, and plant your tower shield all in the same round, whereas before you would have had no chance of taking any offensive actions on turns that you used your tower shield. Especially with the upgrades you'll receive later in this feat chain for planting your shield, taking a move action to do so can be very powerful.
 - Second, **you gain CMD bonuses vs. bull rush and overrun maneuvers**. These are exceedingly uncommon, although with such strong bonuses you're likely to succeed whenever you *do* get targeted.
- Mobile Fortress:** Mobile Fortress does quite a bit to alleviate the pain of tower shield builds, and again has multiple layers.
 - First, **you now grant total cover to adjacent allies whenever you plant your shield**. Brilliant! A reminder on how cover works: if a line drawn from *any corner of your enemy's square* to *any corner of your ally's square* passes through the edge you've guarded with your tower shield, that counts as total cover. No attacks, no attacks of opportunity, no area spells due to lack of line of effect, usable as concealment for the purposes of Stealth checks, and on and on. If you have reliable access to size increases, this gets even better, since your tower shield will grow with you and guard a 10-foot line, instead of a 5-foot line. Using a mount solves both the size problem (you're considered to share your mount's entire square when you're riding) and the mobility problem, as well.
 - Second, **you gain some strong bonuses to your touch AC**. Although touch AC isn't *super* common for PCs to face, a variety of nasty spells require melee or ranged touch attacks to deliver. A *+4 tower*

shield will grant you +4 to your touch AC—quite tasty since you’re almost certainly playing a low-Dexterity character if you’re using tower shields.

- c. Finally, **you reduce the -2 attack roll penalty while using tower shields to -1**. Nice, but not game-changing.
3. **Mobile Stronghold:** Another three-parter! Why do you do this to me, Mobile Bulwark?
- a. First, **you can start your total cover as an immediate action in response to one attack**. Again, I’ll say: brilliant! If you have no use for swift actions in the round that follows, this aspect of Mobile Stronghold means that you get to straight-up say “Nope!” to one attack per round. Has the tarrasque moved up to hit you with Awesome Blow? Doesn’t matter whether it would hit for 400 damage—you’ve got total cover and it can’t do anything.
 - b. Second, **you grant yourself and adjacent allies partial cover against spells while planting your tower shield**. Partial cover grants +2 AC and +1 to Reflex saves, so not every spell will be affected, but some will. It’s a solid bonus, if not particularly inspiring.
 - c. Third, **you reduce the -2 attack roll penalty (now -1 from Mobile Fortress) to -0**. It took a while, but you can now attack just as freely as someone with no tower shield. You’ve arrived. Welcome...to ZomboCom.

Outslug

What's It Do?

Outslug Style is one of my favorite styles in Pathfinder. It's not necessarily the *most* powerful, but it adds a ton of mobility and options to martial characters by allowing them to use Lunge permanently at no cost and improving the quality of their 5-foot steps. Especially in conjunction with the Step Up feat line, Outslug Style can do incredible things.

Who's It Good For?

Brawlers, obviously, since they get to ignore both the Intelligence 13 and Combat Expertise prereqs. Honestly, if you want to go with Outslug Style, a one-level brawler dip is the right move. You'll get some free feats, martial flexibility, BAB and saves, plus the ability to hop into Outslug Style with a minimum of fuss.

When Can You Get It?

Theoretically, right at 1st level. Outslug Weave and Sprint are locked into how quickly you can get Lunge, which won't be until BAB +6 at least, but there are otherwise no skill or BAB requirements—you can enter as fast as you choose to pick up the feat prereqs.

The Feats

1. **Outslug Style:** Outslug Style doesn't start off super strong, but that's okay—it'll compensate for it in later levels. Minor bonuses to AC and attack rolls that incentivize you to take a 5-foot step as soon as your turn begins.
2. **Outslug Weave:** Oooh, Outslug Weave is *interesting*. Once the AC penalty from using Lunge has been eliminated, there is literally no reason not to use it in every round of combat, essentially giving you a permanent +5 feet of reach (albeit only on your turn—remember that Lunge doesn't apply to attacks of opportunity). Combined with the increased damage bonuses from Outslug Style, you've got a surprisingly strong feat.
3. **Outslug Sprint:** Aaand boom goes the dynamite. If an additional 5 feet of movement during a 5-foot step (now a 10-foot step) doesn't thrill you, you may need some enlightenment: 5-foot steps occur *all the time* in Pathfinder. You will use one in practically every round of combat you ever participate in as a martial character. If you combine Outslug Sprint with Step Up + Following Step + Step Up and Strike, you can take up to 20 feet of attack of opportunity-free movement in a round for the price of one 5-foot step, all while retaining the ability to full-attack *and* getting to take an attack of opportunity against an enemy that tried to run from you. This feat is absolutely aces at outmaneuvering enemies, whether that's to get into flanking, cut off an escape route, duck under blows to get to a fallen ally, or anything else you might require. Highly recommended.

Overwatch

What's It Do?

Overwatch Style is a ranged style that focuses on readied actions, readied actions, and—oh, look—*more* readied actions. Since readied actions always take place immediately before the action that triggered them, it's helpful to think about what Overwatch Style might want to *interrupt* when considering how to use it. Interrupting spellcasters? Destroying potions, wands, or scrolls with a single shot? Waiting for enemies to come around a corner before you blast them? Lots of things are possible with Overwatch Style.

Who's It Good For?

Any ranged character can get in on the action, whether that's a thrown weapon build, bow, crossbow (with free action reloading), or firearm (again, with free action reloading).

When Can You Get It?

Probably by about 3rd or 5th level, in most cases. All of the prerequisite feats are feats that you would have taken anyway, with the possible exception of Weapon Focus, so it doesn't force you to go out of your way.

The Feats

1. **Overwatch Style:** Overwatch Style is...tricky. In most instances, of course, ranged combatants are best off using full-attack actions to simply burn enemies down to the waterline: zen archers, slayers, rangers, fighters, etc. can all hit with four or five attacks pretty easily. When might you want to ready two actions? Maybe enemies haven't fully come into range yet, or they're positioned behind some kind of cover. Maybe you're facing off against multiple spellcasters, and you'd like to be able to interrupt multiple spells in the same round. One thing's for sure: this style will reward smart, tactical play. Perhaps best saved for Pathfinder veterans, rather than novices.
2. **Overwatch Tactician:** A straightforward upgrade to Overwatch Style's action economy. You can now move and ready two actions, draw a weapon and ready two actions, etc.
3. **Overwatch Vortex:** Four readied actions for the price of one full-round action. Will you ever need that many? Maybe! Two casters casting spells and quickened spells, perhaps?

Shaitan

What's It Do?

All of the elemental style feats (Djinni, Efreeti, Marid, and Shaitan) rely on the Elemental Strike and Elemental Fist feats, the former of which is available only to oreads, ifrits, sylphs, and undines. These feats deal some minor amount of energy damage, with the option to “upgrade” to bigger damage using a pool of daily Elemental Fist uses. Unfortunately for all of these style feats, Elemental Strike and Elemental Fist start out very weak and never really scale except for monks of the four winds, dragging the whole playstyle down.

Who's It Good For?

Given the heavy reliance on both a high Wisdom score and unarmed strikes, we need to think either monk, unchained monk, or brawler; practically, however, you want as many uses of Elemental Fist as possible, and monks or unchained monks get four times as many daily uses as the brawler or other classes. Makes it kind of a no-brainer, huh?

When Can You Get It?

At 9th level for full-BAB classes, or 5th level for monks.

The Feats

- Shaitan Style:** All of the elemental style feats (Djinni, Efreeti, Marid, and Shaitan) let you add your Wisdom modifier to the damage dealt by Elemental Strike + Elemental Fist, and one other style-exclusive effect. The bonus effect is a carbon copy of Efreeti Style, dealing 1d6 acid damage on a missed attack. Abysmal, but adding Wisdom to damage is good enough to scrape a yellow rating.
 - Combat Stamina:** The stamina-to-damage exchange rate here isn't particularly in your favor. I'd suggest you save your stamina for something else.
- Shaitan Skin:** Shaitan Style has the best rider effect of the elemental style feats: staggered. When you really need to, you can keep hitting a big, slow enemy with extra acid damage and forcing them to save against the staggered condition. If they fail, you'll remain in flurry of blows range while denying them the opportunity to full-attack. Good stuff.
 - Combat Stamina:** Boosts this large to save DCs are difficult to find, and you can tailor the level of stamina expenditure to whatever level of hurt you feel you need to put on an enemy. Decent.
- Shaitan Earthblast:** Where Efreeti Style got a cone and Marid Style got a line, Shaitan Style gets the best AoE shape: a burst centered on any point within 30 feet. It's easy to tag a few enemies with Earthblast, easy to exclude allies, and still does all of Shaitan Style's trademark staggering.
 - Combat Stamina:** A bit more flexibility in which resources you're spending never hurt anyone; assuming that you have time to take it easy in between encounters, using stamina (which is a renewable resource) is preferable to using Elemental Fist attempts (which are not).

Spear Dancing

What's It Do?

Ever wanted to cosplay as the Oberyn Martell from *Game of Thrones*? (Think back to before Season 8. There was a time when the show was good.) Spear Dancing Style is the place to go. It's built for Dexterity-heavy full-BAB fighters who want to be able to use Two-Weapon Fighting with only a single spear. Pretty cool, in all.

Who's It Good For?

Whoops, jumped the gun on that one. To quote a guide writer I know, "It's built for Dexterity-heavy full-BAB fighters who want to be able to use Two-Weapon Fighting with only a single spear."

When Can You Get It?

Neither the Dexterity nor the feat requirements are *super* difficult to fulfill for classes with a reasonable number of bonus combat feats, so theoretically anyone who's built for a Weapon Finesse build should be able to get in by about 3rd level and get out by about 7th level.

The Feats

1. **Spear Dancing Style:** Double weapons function more or less identically to a normal Two-Weapon Fighting setup, except that you're wielding two halves of one weapon instead of two wholes of two weapons. (If that makes any sense at all!) Spears don't often come with that option, so it's pretty cool to be able to TWF a long spear, ranseur, halberd, etc. with no further modifications.
2. **Spear Dancing Spiral:** Spear Dancing Style scores another solid base hit! TWF builds have notoriously high Dexterity requirements, so it does make some sense to build for Weapon Finesse if you need to prioritize one physical stat. Getting Dexterity to damage is trickier; I would think, however, that a 3-level unchained rogue dip would work as normal, since Spear Dancing Spiral explicitly qualifies spears and polearms for Weapon Finesse. If your GM had concerns that you *don't* have Weapon Finesse when you're not actively in Spear Dancing Style, a simple resolution would be to take away your Dexterity to damage anytime you're not in the stance. The second half of the feat grants the ability to use quarterstaff feats with any spear or polearm, and while I'm not as excited about this portion, Quarterstaff Master, Tripping Strike, Tripping Staff, and Tripping Twirl can all do some fun things for builds that are interested.
3. **Spear Dancing Reach:** TWF builds are almost always denied reach capabilities—but no longer! It's a heck of a lot of fun to be able to pull out 6-8 attacks on an enemy from reach. Keep an eye on that swift action cost, though, as well as the requirement that you be making a full-attack action.

Tatzlwyrms Claw

What's It Do?

Tatzlwyrms Claw Style is my dark horse favorite grappling style. Sure, it's not as out-and-out powerful as Grabbing or Electric Eel Styles, but it gives both you and your team much better defenses against having grapples turned around on you. Combined with other grappling styles and a high Escape Artist bonus, you can do quite a bit with it.

Who's It Good For?

Grapple specialists who are willing to invest in Escape Artist, which shouldn't be difficult to find, as Escape Artist is generally a more effective anti-grappling tool than straight CMB checks. Even classes that are completely disinterested in grappling can benefit from the second feat in the chain, Tatzlwyrms Grappler—rogues, ninjas, and other higher-Dexterity, lower-BAB classes will eat that feat up and ask for seconds.

When Can You Get It?

Escape Artist skill ranks limit how quickly you can progress through the feat chain, so 1st, 3rd, and 8th levels are the minimum level requirements with full investment.

The Feats

- Tatzlwyrms Style:** Tatzlwyrms Style is a fun little feat. The ability to switch to different damage types with unarmed strikes is, of course, always welcome, and mimics other feats such as Boar Style. What intrigues me most, however, is the second part of the feat, which allows you to use your grapple CMB to *save allies from grapples*. The only other ability that I know of that does something similar is the heritor knight prestige class' savior of the swallowed class feature; both are excellent for scooting allies out of harm's way. Grapples can be just the warm-up act for much more serious beat-downs (e.g., the pinned condition, a Throat Slicer coup de grace, the swallow whole, rake, or constrict universal monster abilities, etc.) so you want to end 'em as soon as they're in play. *Freedom of movement* should protect more and more allies as time goes on, but not everyone can have it running all the time.
- Tatzlwyrms Grappler:** A pervasive problem in trying to defend against enemy grapplers is that escaping from a grapple is *reactive*, rather than *proactive*: you must get grappled before you can attempt a CMB or Escape Artist check to break the grapple. This is part of the reason why *freedom of movement* is such a popular spell for casters: in addition to functioning 100% of the time with no check required, *freedom of movement* requires no action input—if the enemy tries to grapple you, the grapple simply fails with no one the wiser. Tatzlwyrms Grappler is similar to *freedom of movement* in this respect. Granted, you must still attempt an Escape Artist check, but it costs no actions to do so, and if you beat an opponent's CMD (not all that difficult to do with a good Dexterity score, skill rank investment, and *greater slick* armor) the grapple simply doesn't take effect at all. In fact, swashbucklers, rogues, and other Dexterity-heavy classes with no access to *freedom of movement* might do well to consider a master of many styles dip just to access Tatzlwyrms Grappler. It sure beats having to go through the normal grappling flowchart.

3. **Tatzlwyrms Rake:** I debated rating Tatzlwyrms Rake green, but ultimately I think it falls just short of that mark. Grappling a foe with your legs rather than your arms opens up some interesting combos, like using spell completion items or attacking another enemy while maintaining the grapple, but the rule interactions here would be complex and most likely open to all kinds of GM fiat. The bonus unarmed strike whenever you exceed a creature's CMD by 10 or more is nice (kind of like a 2e critical success!) but improbable when you're fighting enormous enemies with high CMD scores. Against puny casters? Sure, but they're likely to have *freedom of movement*. That sword definitely cuts both ways.



“Quit, don’t quit. Noodles, don’t noodles. You are too concerned with what was and what will be.

There’s a saying: Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, but today is a gift.

That is why it is called the present.”

—Master Oogway, *Kung Fu Panda*

Unfolding Wind (Perfect)

What's It Do?

Narratively speaking, Perfect Style comes from the Houses of Perfection, a trio (once a quartet) of monasteries on the island of Jalmeray that each focuses on an element. You know 'em from *Avatar: the Last Airbender*, so say 'em with me: water, earth, fire, and air. The Monastery of Unbreaking Waves was destroyed 1100 years ago and only recently reestablished within the official Golarion timeline, so only the other three monasteries have styles that go along with them. Unfolding Wind Style focuses on thrown weapons—and it's evident that monks are the intended audience.

Who's It Good For?

Thrown weapon builds, particularly those with quick move speeds, bonus attacks, and a ki pool. So...monks, unchained monks, and possibly ninja, as I describe it more.

When Can You Get It?

5th, 9th, and 13th levels are standard for the various styles of the Houses of Perfection.

The Feats

1. **Perfect Style:** Perfect Style always does the same thing, regardless of which House of Perfection your PC studied in: gives you a little bit of energy resistance that stacks with other sources (acid for Untwisting Iron, fire for Unblinking Flame, and electricity for Unfolding Wind) and—if you didn't already have a ki pool—a small ki pool for use with your Perfect Style powers. There's nothing particularly special about this feat, and I'm not very excited about it. Resistances are fine but not essential, especially when common spells like *resist energy* can so comprehensively outclass Perfect Style.
2. **Unfolding Wind Strike:** Unfolding Wind Style is explicitly for thrown weapon users, and Strike actually gives them some pretty cool tools! Doubling the range increment of thrown weapons is always helpful, especially since a flat doubling without any kind of bonus listed will multiplicatively benefit existing effects like *longshot*. It's fun to be able to snag *returning* or *seeking*, too—you'd be well-advised to get something like a *blinkback belt* to handle the *returning* weapon function, but *seeking* is always quite powerful for punching through concealment from magical darkness, blindness, *blur*, *displacement*, etc.
3. **Unfolding Wind Rush:** I've almost got to give Unfolding Wind Rush a blue rating for rule of cool alone—how awesome is it that you can create a *wind wall* just by running, especially one you can throw your weapons through at no penalty!? The better benefit, however, acts like some kind of greatly augmented Shot on the Run: you get to take a move action *and* a full-attack action every round, albeit with no full-BAB iterative attack. It's unclear to me how effects like flurry of blows and *haste* operate with Rush—it seems like you would get them at your normal, full BAB, but I'd talk it over with your GM just in case. Very powerful, especially given that you can make your attacks at any point along your move action's path.

Untwisting Iron (Perfect)

What's It Do?

Narratively speaking, Perfect Style comes from the Houses of Perfection, a trio (once a quartet) of monasteries on the island of Jalmeray that each focuses on an element. You know 'em from *Avatar: the Last Airbender*, so say 'em with me: water, earth, fire, and air. The Monastery of Unbreaking Waves was destroyed 1100 years ago and only recently reestablished within the official Golarion timeline, so only the other three monasteries have styles that go along with them. Untwisting Iron Style focuses on—no surprises—the sunder combat maneuver, plus mainlining DR/adamantine into your veins in later feats. Pretty strong, on the whole.

Who's It Good For?

Sunder specialists, obviously. The feat prereqs are pretty light, and there's technically no wording in the feats themselves that would restrict you to unarmed strikes. So...sunder specialists, period? [Anyone? Anyone? Bueller?](#)

When Can You Get It?

5th, 9th, and 13th levels are standard for the various styles of the Houses of Perfection.

The Feats

- Perfect Style:** Perfect Style always does the same thing, regardless of which House of Perfection your PC studied in: gives you a little bit of energy resistance that stacks with other sources (acid for Untwisting Iron, fire for Unblinking Flame, and electricity for Unfolding Wind) and—if you didn't already have a ki pool—a small ki pool for use with your Perfect Style powers. There's nothing particularly special about this feat, and I'm not very excited about it. Resistances are fine but not essential, especially when common spells like *resist energy* can so comprehensively outclass Perfect Style.
- Untwisting Iron Strength:** Untwisting Iron Strength would be *so much better* if you could maintain style feats outside of combat—but you can't, per the rules text. If you *could*, Untwisting Iron Strength would be great for punching your way through walls, doors, floors, ceilings, etc. Heck, iron and steel only have hardness 10, so a 10th-level monk could blow their way through a steel door quite easily in one round, if not one strike. As it is, Untwisting Iron Strength only finds its stride in sunder builds, where the ability to ignore hardness lets you bust weapons and armor with ease. The bonuses to Strength checks are probably irrelevant unless you find yourself making a lot of those in combat; Improved Sunder, as in Unblinking Flame Style with Improved Feint, is something you should purchase with your normal feats instead of wasting ki on it.
- Untwisting Iron Skin:** Hot diggity dog! DR/adamantine of any stripe is hands-down awesome, and even if you won't be *quite* as bulky as an invulnerable rager barbarian or geokineticist, DR 6/adamantine by career's end certainly isn't anything to sneer at. The DR/— will be more difficult to attain unless you're consistently sundering high-hardness items (most metal melee weapons have a hardness of 10, plus an additional 10 hardness for a +5 enhancement bonus; +5 adamantite armor would have a hardness of 30), but better than nothing when you're

facing +4 or +5 weapons. I love the ability to double your DR for a round—it's fantastic if you know you're about to get mobbed.

Upsetting Shield

What's It Do?

Upsetting Shield Style enables sword-and-board shield bash builds with *bucklers*, which is an interesting little wrinkle, as bucklers aren't typically eligible for shield bashes. There's some light debuffing tossed into the mix, as well as some extra offensive oomph from taking more attacks of opportunity.

Who's It Good For?

Any TWF sword-and-board build, really. Swashbucklers make a strange kind of sense due to their buckler proficiency, high Dexterity scores, and focus on attacks of opportunity, but more conventional classes for sword-and-board builds (fighters, cavaliers, rangers and slayers with ranger combat style bonus feats, etc.) also do very well for themselves.

When Can You Get It?

With no BAB or skill rank requirements and only minimal feat requirements, Upsetting Shield Style is one of the easiest feat lines to enter in the game.

The Feats

- Upsetting Shield Style:** On the hunt for classes that are proficient with bucklers but not shields, I was shocked (*shocked*, I say!) to discover that the only class thus restricted is the **swashbuckler**—everyone else either gets full shield proficiency or no shield proficiency at all. Although a TWF sword-and-board build would conflict with precise strike, the swashbuckler's main source of damage, you might offset that damage loss by making twice as many attacks, plus the extra attacks of opportunity you'll naturally take through this playstyle. It's interesting to consider, certainly, and the extra -2 penalty to enemies' attack rolls will help you stay alive longer.
- Upsetting Strike:** Especially as monsters gain more iterative attacks and secondary natural weapons, you can expect attack rolls against your AC to fail by 5 or more increasingly often. Upsetting Strike doesn't permit you to make attacks of opportunity multiple times against the same enemy for these misses, unfortunately, but even one extra attack of opportunity per round is great for increasing your DPR, threatening and confirming crits, replenishing panache or other on-kill/on-crit resources, etc. If you find yourself mobbed, you can even spread the shield bashes around to multiple enemies—you're limited to one attack of opportunity *per opponent* per round, not one attack of opportunity, period.
- Upsetting Vengeance:** The strategy outlined just above works even better with Upsetting Vengeance, I'm happy to report: if you hit enemies with shield bashes and then they miss *anyone*, you're taking attacks of opportunity against them. Easy-peasy, especially if they're already laden down with other status conditions (shaken, sickened) or debuffs (*ill omen*, *anticipate thoughts*, *inflict pain*, etc.) that make it even more difficult to hit you.

Vanguard

What's It Do?

Vanguard Style is all about protecting allies through the aid another action. Bodyguard, Vanguard Style, Vanguard Hustle, and careful selection of aid another abilities can make it nigh-impossible for enemies to penetrate your team's defenses, at least defenses against attack rolls and Reflex saves. Fortitude and Will saves, well, your allies are still on their own.

Who's It Good For?

Vanguard Hustle requires a bonkers number of feats, so classes like bards or succor mystery oracles that don't get any bonus combat feats should just sit on the sidelines with a standard Bodyguard build. Order of the dragon cavaliers are probably a better fit for Vanguard Style, although even they might have difficulty grabbing all the necessary feats. In any case, the feat chain demands both shield proficiency and full BAB progression to get the most juice for your squeeze, so take that into account.

When Can You Get It?

Fairly quickly, for Vanguard Style and Vanguard Ward. Vanguard Hustle requires at least BAB +5 for Combat Patrol, and you'd likely need a few more levels after that to line up all your ducks.

The Feats

- Vanguard Style:** Bodyguard builds are pretty niche, and usually leverage class features (e.g., the investigator's effortless aid talent, the succor mystery's perfect aid revelation, the order of the dragon cavalier's aid allies order ability), feats (Virtuous Creed: Protection, Swift Aid, Exceptional Aid), traits (Helpful), and items (*benevolent* weapons or armor, *gloves of arcane striking*). Halfings are traditionally the go-to base because of their vastly superior Helpful race trait; other races can get there with the Adopted trait. (See [here](#) for /u/stonehead74's fairly exhaustive treatment of Bodyguard builds—he's left out succor mystery oracles, but it's otherwise very nice.) Anyway, with all this said about Bodyguard, Vanguard Style does something else nice for you: allows you to use an attack of opportunity to bolster an ally's Reflex save. At base, it's only +2, but the Helpful trait will again take it to +4. This can be a great way to prevent slower allies from getting torched by breath weapons, conjuration effects, etc., and doesn't require much out of you that you wouldn't already have been building for.
- Vanguard Ward:** Vanguard Style and Bodyguard each work fine on their own, so combining them into one feat doesn't do anything for your efficacy or action economy unless you can envision a scenario in which someone would need both AC *and* a Reflex save to avoid an effect (those two are usually mutually exclusive). Adding your shield bonus is fun flair, but ideally shouldn't be needed if you've done your job correctly in building up a ridiculous number of aid another buffs.
- Vanguard Hustle:** Mama pajama, that's a lot of prerequisites! Combat Reflexes, Bodyguard, Dodge, Mobility, Combat Patrol, Saving Shield, Vanguard Style, and Vanguard Ward. Eight feats and...is it worth it? In my estimation, yes, absolutely. The extra AC from Saving Shield is nice, obviously; what Bodyguard builds have

always needed, however, is some means of protecting allies who aren't adjacent to them. Combat Patrol provides that! By BAB +10, a 15-foot radius burst around your PC will become fair game for all of your protective hijinks, making it stupidly easy for characters with high Dexterity scores to stand in the middle of a crowd of allies and enemies, snagging attacks and Reflex-based spells out of thin air—all without moving an inch. It's a lot of investment, I'll grant you, but the return is excellent.

Wyvern Fury

What's It Do?

Wyvern Fury Style gives whip and scorpion whip builds some fun tricks for in-combat mobility and forcing enemies not to take attacks of opportunity against fleeing teammates. Whip builds are already really crunched for feats, so you might not get into it for a while, but it's reasonably solid as a style chain.

Who's It Good For?

Brawlers and monks, obviously, since they're most associated with flurry of blows/brawler's flurry. Although these would be very niche options, jstkan artificer magi, ward spiritualists, and sacred fist warpriests also gain flurry of blows, and would thus qualify for Wyvern Fury Style.

When Can You Get It?

Acrobatics ranks are the rate-limiting factor here, so 3rd, 6th, and 10th levels are the only option.

The Feats

1. **Wyvern Fury Style: Brawlers** definitely get the short end of the stick in Wyvern Fury Style, since the spiked gauntlet and punching dagger are already part of the close weapons group; dagger, whip, and scorpion whip don't fall into either the monk or close weapon groups, however, so they're new pickups. Since you can make only one attack per flurry with a whip or scorpion whip, I suppose this feat *might* be useful if you're primarily using the whip to trip or harry one foe from 10 feet while focusing the rest of your attacks on an adjacent enemy, but is that really necessary?
2. **Wyvern Sting:** Fair is fair: Wyvern Sting is an excellent team defense feat, and only gets better as enemies become larger and natural reach increases. If an ally is pinned down and needs to escape from such an enemy, you waltz in with Wyvern Sting and rescue them—no save. A particularly beneficent move for allied spellcasters and ranged combatants.
3. **Wyvern Wing:** Wyvern Wing feels a lot like Outslug Sprint, but with the stipulation that you must make your extra 5-foot step during a flurry of blows or brawler's flurry. I'm still quite happy with it—mobility is mobility, after all—but it feels a little less universally applicable than Outslug Sprint.

Yellow (Mediocre or Niche)

Azata

What's It Do?

Azata Style is focused heavily on mobility, and even though it's not stated in any of the feat prerequisites that you need Spring Attack or Shot on the Run, this style feat line synergizes most naturally with the skirmishing playstyle that those feats encourage. If you're using Azata Style, you're almost never going to be standing still and performing full-attack actions, so prepare yourself for that reality.

Who's It Good For?

Any lightly armored, Dexterity-based class will be a good match for Azata Style, including monks, brawlers, rogues, some slayers or fighters, samurai with the warrior poet archetype, etc. As I said, Azata Style is highly mobile, and many of the feat prerequisites are Dexterity-heavy, including Wind Stance and Agile Maneuvers. This is not a style feat line for stompy-stompy-smashy-smashy types.

When Can You Get It?

Not until 2nd level for full-BAB classes, or even later for $\frac{3}{4}$ -BAB classes. There are no exceptions made for monks, as well, so Azata Style is the rare style feat line that forces unchained monks (who have full BAB) and core monks (who have $\frac{3}{4}$ BAB) to enter at different levels. More to the point, though, Azata Style requires two feats (Dodge and Mobility) that might take you until 5th level to put together. If you're playing with the *Elephant in the Room* feat tax ruleset, Dodge and Mobility get combined together into one feat, making this entry point much less onerous.

The Feats

1. **Azata Style:** Azata Style grants a +1 dodge bonus to AC in any round in which you move at least 15 feet. In addition to this being flat-out impossible sometimes (e.g., you're prone, paralyzed, entangled, grappled, on difficult terrain, etc.) a +1 bonus to AC is so paltry that it barely means anything. I have a soft spot for Azata Style, but I'll be the first to admit that it's not strong all the way through.
2. **Azata Mischief:** Azata Mischief presumes that you're going to provoke a lot of attacks of opportunity as you scramble about the battlefield, and they're probably not wrong, but even so, trip is among the weaker combat maneuvers since it fails quite easily against flying or non-bipedal opponents. It's nice that you get some bonuses to your CMB checks from Mobility, but I don't know of many other effects (traits, wondrous items, feats, etc.) that can increase your AC specifically against attacks of opportunity. The snake shifter aspect is about the only one. If you know of more, write me.
3. **Azata Sprint:** Ach. I mean, okay, an extra 10 feet of movement is nice, as is ignoring some difficult terrain. Nimble Moves and Acrobatic Steps are prerequisites for Greater Spring Attack, though, and I'll bet you anything

that you're building toward that feat if you were interested in Azata Style. Why spend seven feats (Dodge, Mobility, Wind Stance, Agile Maneuvers, and three Azata Style feats) to get this mediocre capstone when you could have simply spent those seven feats building all the way up to Greater Spring Attack?

Blinded Blade

What's It Do?

Essentially, improves your ability to attack enemies who are concealed or invisible, or to attack while you're blinded. Between the three feats in the style feat line and the three Blind-Fight feat prerequisites, it feels like you're pouring in a lot of investment just to reduce your penalties, and I'm frankly not sure it's worth it. It's fun thematically, but the juice isn't worth the squeeze.

Who's It Good For?

Anybody who's looking to cosplay Daredevil, I suppose. There are no weapon or class restrictions, just a butt-ton of feat prerequisites. Fighters, then, will have the easiest time getting in.

When Can You Get It?

As early as 5th level for the base style feat. The clauses in Blinded Blade Style and Blinded Competence then open up Improved Blind-Fight and Greater Blind-Fight, which in turn open up the next feats in the style feat line. Like I said: you need a lot of feats here.

The Feats

1. **Blinded Blade Style:** Unfortunately, nothing has come together at this point. You can *kinda* identify where enemies are with scent, but not well, and Blind-Fight only lets you reroll your miss chance on concealment—you're still going to miss about 25% of the time while blinded.
2. **Blinded Competence:** Better, better. If you can stumble into an enemy (i.e., get them within your reach) then you automatically know where they are, and they don't get any concealment against you. Seems a little foolish to be spending so many feats on ignoring or rerolling concealment checks when you're building toward blindsight, though, right?
3. **Blinded Master:** Okay, so you've *finally* got blindsight 30 ft. after investing six feats. Was this worth it? No, it was not. A potion of *see invisibility* and *remove blindness/deafness* would have worked on everything except invisible stalkers, and how often are you encountering them?

Blood Frenzy

What's It Do?

As the name implies, Blood Frenzy Style gives you lots of extra attacks with big accuracy penalties, and has various mechanisms for using bleed damage to your advantage. I don't own *Heroes from the Fringe*, so I'm not certain of the exact context, but I'd bet that this style feat line was designed with [sahuagin](#) in mind.

Who's It Good For?

Anyone with Improved Unarmed Strike and the aquatic subtype, which won't be many people. Undine, gillmen, locathah, mermen, sahuagin, and tritons are probably the only races that will consistently qualify.

When Can You Get It?

As early as 1st level, for unchained monks, or 2nd level for brawlers and core monks. Improved Unarmed Strike, Strength 13, and BAB +1 are pretty easy prereqs to satisfy.

The Feats

1. **Blood Frenzy Style:** Kind of like a weak version of the barbarian's rage class feature, except the bonuses never scale up. I wish that the other style feats in the feat line scaled the bonuses up a *little*.
2. **Blood Frenzy Strike:** Minor bleed damage that could have been superseded easily by the Belier's Bite feat. Unless your GM rules that the attack you get every 1d4 rounds can be made as an extra attack stapled to a full-attack, I wouldn't use it—a -5 penalty is no good in exchange for +2d6 damage.
3. **Blood Frenzy Assault:** Okay, that's finally a good feat. Heavy bleed damage is nothing to sneer at, and the ability to burn down bleeding enemies with extra attacks is fantastic, although you need to gauge the AC penalties or you'll find *yourself* getting burned down faster than enemies.

Bull-Catcher

What's It Do?

Bull-Catcher Style is a predominantly defensive style that lets you ready an action to grapple moving enemies, hurl them into a nearby square, and redirect the charge attack that they were about to make, possibly into one of their own allies. I wouldn't call it the strongest grapple style feat line, but it's certainly hilarious to toss one enemy into another and watch the second take the damage from its friend's charge.

Who's It Good For?

Grapple-focused unchained monks and brawlers can enter earliest, but any full-BAB class that wants to specialize in grappling is welcome to it, provided that they take a little more time entering the later feats. Since charges tend to work best in open ground, you might consider Bull-Catcher Style in campaigns where you know many fights will happen in open, unimpeded territory. You *want* enemies to charge you in this style.

When Can You Get It?

As early as 3rd level for monks, unchained monks, and brawlers. The later two feats will be gated by either monk/brawler levels (4th and 8th) or BAB (+8 or +12).

The Feats

- Bull-Catcher Style:** The base style feat is defensive in nature: in order to use it, you need to spend your standard action preparing for whatever movement might come your way in the round; rather than actively moving to an enemy, you wait for them to come to you. Note that enemies don't have to charge for you to grapple them—you just get bonuses if they do. Bull-Catcher Style isn't the strongest grappling style feat, but it's solid for planting yourself in front of squishier allies and snagging foes who try to blitz into the back lines. Bull-Catcher Style becomes solidly better if **you have some means of increasing your natural reach**, as this allows you to grab enemies from a larger area. Remember that you're limited to only one Bull-Catcher grapple per round.
- Bull-Catcher Toss:** Bull-Catcher Toss deals with enemy positioning, which in my opinion is an underrated tool in Pathfinder. Although you're forbidden from maneuvering enemies into intrinsically dangerous or unstable squares, you could toss a foe into a flank, up against a wall, into an area of *deeper darkness* or *obscuring mist*, etc. Another option is simply to throw an enemy back the way they came!
- Bull-Catcher Wrangle:** Unlike Bull-Catcher Style, which doesn't require a charge to work, Bull-Catcher Wrangle explicitly does. While it's fun to piledrive an enemy's attacks into one of his friends (or potentially an ally who's better equipped to deal with the attack than you are) charges are known for being early-combat tools that are quickly dropped once everyone's in full-attack range. I'm inclined to think it won't see a lot of use.

Crashing Wave

What's It Do?

Crashing Wave Style is primarily focused on the drag and reposition maneuvers. The base style feat gives you a little more mobility while dragging or repositioning, Buffet adds a light debuff, and Fist allows you to take unarmed attacks against enemies you're currently dragging or repositioning. Drag and reposition definitely fall into the C-tier of combat maneuvers, however, and Crashing Wave Style doesn't do nearly enough to strengthen that standing.

Who's It Good For?

The feat line benefits from a high Wisdom score and the ability to make unarmed strikes, so monk, unchained monk, and brawler should be your first considerations. Fighter, ranger, shifter, and slayer could all work with some imaginative builds, though.

When Can You Get It?

Improved Drag and Improved Reposition aren't on the monk's list of bonus feats, so it might actually take you until 5th level or so to build up to Crashing Wave Style even on a friendly class chassis. Somewhere between 5th and 7th level should be feasible for all the classes listed above.

The Feats

1. **Crashing Wave Style:** Crashing Wave Style feels like a bit of a retread of Step Up, except instead of taking your step when an opponent steps, you take your step when you successfully drag or reposition an opponent. I'm trying hard to come up with a good use for this ability, and really drawing a blank. Movement that doesn't provoke attacks of opportunity is universally good, of course, but the immediate action cost and limitation of only moving on a successful combat maneuver check? Less so.
2. **Crashing Wave Buffet:** Every time I see this feat, I think less about Jimmy Buffett and more about an all-you-can-eat buffet, which is a much funnier way of reading the feat's name. At any rate, the disorientation penalties are minor and short-lived, plus a Fortitude save negates. You can do way better.
3. **Crashing Wave Fist:** Fair is fair: if you had an enormous CMB score, Crashing Wave Fist would be quite good, essentially allowing you to take a full-attack action while simultaneously dragging or repositioning an enemy. Because enormous CMB scores aren't common among PCs, this feat actually makes much more sense as a *monster* pick: give a storm giant monk or brawler levels, then leverage that insane CMB score against the PCs, and watch the unarmed strikes fall down like rain from the heavens. For **PCs**, you're unlikely to roll high enough on your CMB checks to get more than about two strikes—not really worth the three-feat investment.

Diva

What's It Do?

Diva Style is a feint-based style intended for melee bards. If that sounds a bit narrow in scope, it is—and that's why it's rated yellow, Mediocre or Niche (in this case, Niche). For melee bards, however, Diva Style adds a nice bit of damage, lets you port over your versatile performance skills easily, and gives you some fun movement and casting tricks at later levels.

Who's It Good For?

Melee bards, or anyone else who gets bardic performances. Unfortunately, Diva Style will be of very little use to anyone else.

When Can You Get It?

Right at 1st level for bards, although a feint-based build will probably want to take the traditional route through Dirty Fighting → Improved Feint before approaching Diva Style.

The Feats

1. **Diva Style:** Versatile performance is one of the bard's best class features, allowing them to consolidate skill ranks quite effectively, but since most bards would be putting ranks in Bluff even if they didn't have versatile performance, I'm not sure how much you're gaining here. Feinting as a move action when you begin a bardic performance is something that could have been achieved via Improved Feint, which you're likely to take if you're at all interested in the feinting playstyle. Not the best feat, on the whole.
2. **Diva Strike:** Aha, now that's more like it. Diva Strike gives feint-based bards a nice bump to damage output, although precision damage won't affect all enemies. Vital Strike wouldn't be a bad option to pursue here—if you're going to be attacking with standard actions most of the time, you may as well make them count.
3. **Diva Advance:** Diva Advance is my favorite of the Diva Style feats because it brings a surprising amount of versatility to combat. Some potential applications:
 - a. Begin bardic performance (swift at 13th) → feint enemy within 30 feet (move) → charge 30 feet to attack (standard)
 - b. Feint adjacent enemy (swift or move with Improved Feint) → cast a spell without provoking or needing to cast defensively (standard)
 - c. Feint adjacent enemy (move with Improved Feint) → maneuver around enemy into flanking position (move)

Djinni

What's It Do?

All of the elemental style feats (Djinni, Efreeti, Marid, and Shaitan) rely on the Elemental Strike and Elemental Fist feats, the former of which is available only to oreads, ifrits, sylphs, and undines. These feats deal some minor amount of energy damage, with the option to “upgrade” to bigger damage using a pool of daily Elemental Fist uses. Unfortunately for all of these style feats, Elemental Strike and Elemental Fist start out very weak and never really scale except for monks of the four winds, dragging the whole playstyle down.

Who's It Good For?

Given the heavy reliance on both a high Wisdom score and unarmed strikes, we need to think either monk, unchained monk, or brawler; practically, however, you want as many uses of Elemental Fist as possible, and monks or unchained monks get four times as many daily uses as the brawler or other classes. Makes it kind of a no-brainer, huh?

When Can You Get It?

At 9th level for full-BAB classes, or 5th level for monks.

The Feats

- Djinni Style:** All of the elemental style feats (Djinni, Efreeti, Marid, and Shaitan) let you add your Wisdom modifier to the damage dealt by Elemental Strike + Elemental Fist, and one other style-exclusive effect. Djinni Style's exclusive effect is a +2 dodge bonus to AC vs. attacks of opportunity, which ain't great at all. Half of the Mobility feat? Meh. Nice to add your Wisdom modifier to damage rolls, though; $1d6 + [\text{BAB}/4] + \text{Wisdom}$ is a lot better than $1d6 + [\text{BAB}/4]$.
 - Combat Stamina:** The stamina-to-damage exchange rate here isn't particularly in your favor. I'd suggest you save your stamina for something else.
- Djinni Spirit:** Unfortunately for Djinni Style, the electricity resistance and deafened condition associated with Djinni Spirit are weaker than the options available in other elemental style feat lines. Fewer enemies deal electricity damage, and deafened is a mild debuff that's relevant only against spellcasters.
 - Combat Stamina:** Boosts this large to save DCs are difficult to find, and you can tailor the level of stamina expenditure to whatever level of hurt you feel you need to put on an enemy. Decent.
- Djinni Spin:** Yeesh, a weak blast with a Fortitude save for half that only affects adjacent enemies. Yeah, there are much better options available for monks.
 - Combat Stamina:** A bit more flexibility in which resources you're spending never hurt anyone; assuming that you have time to take it easy in between encounters, using stamina (which is a renewable resource) is preferable to using Elemental Fist attempts (which are not).

Dolphin

What's It Do?

Dolphin Style is an aquatic-only style that gives you some truly unusual mobility options in Dolphin Dart and Dolphin Circle. Barracuda Style is probably the stronger aquatic option, but there's some stuff here to like. Interestingly, even though the style lists Improved Unarmed Strike as a prerequisite, the style does quite well with reach weapons. You could consider that path.

Who's It Good For?

Any full-BAB martial who's using unarmed strikes. As usual for many style feat lines, brawlers, unchained monks, and monks will do best here; there aren't any saving throws, so it's actually pretty easy to make the style work for any class.

When Can You Get It?

Dolphin Style doesn't have a lot of feat prerequisites, so you're really limited only by Swim ranks and BAB/monk level. It should be easy to enter all the feats at 3rd, 6th, and 10th levels, if you were so inclined.

The Feats

1. **Dolphin Style:** Oof, not starting off strong here. Your attacks get a bonus only if there are at least three enemies in a fight, all of those enemies are adjacent to each other, and you're not flanking with anyone. The ability to ignore AC provided by aid another is mostly fluff—how often do enemies boost each other's AC like that?
2. **Dolphin Dart:** Okay, fair is fair: Dolphin Dart is actually pretty good. You can think of it in a similar vein as Spring Attack, except Dolphin Dart doesn't provoke attacks of opportunity from *any* enemy (whereas Spring Attack ignores attacks of opportunity from only your target enemy) and Dolphin Dart works only underwater. Practically speaking, you'd need a swim speed of at least 30 feet for Dolphin Dart to confer any noticeable advantage, but if you can get that and you're playing in an aquatic campaign, it's a solid choice.
3. **Dolphin Circle:** Dolphin Circle is deceptively simple—there's a lot of complexity here. Let's go into some of the advantages and disadvantages:
 - a. **Advantage: flank with everyone.** Being able to flank with absolutely everyone along your path is a pretty nifty ability, especially if you have allied rogues or something.
 - b. **Advantage: threaten everything.** Dolphin Circle allows you to threaten what you would normally be able to threaten if you stood in every square along your path. This is probably Dolphin Circle's biggest advantage: although you're losing the opportunity for a full-attack action, you could reliably take attacks of opportunity against multiple enemies if you had Combat Reflexes.
 - c. **Advantage: attack of opportunity-free movement.** Dolphin Circle isn't the most direct route to getting attack of opportunity-free movement, but after one round of circling, you get to pick which square along your path you end up in. If you circled around a large enemy with reach, this might help you maneuver your way to their blind side.

- d. **Advantage: increased opportunity for touch-range buffs.** This one is a bit niche, but some classes have touch-range buffs that can be difficult to leverage in pitched combat. With Dolphin Circle, you can receive those buffs as you swim by.
- e. **Disadvantage: requires a strong swim speed.** Dolphin Circle is restricted to one move action, which frankly doesn't buy you much when you're likely working with a swim speed of 30 feet. Of course, the farther you swim, the more likely you are to get attacked or to stray into an area effect—maybe you don't *want* to swim very far.
- f. **Disadvantage: opens you up to area effects.** Some AoEs only tick when you start or end your turn in the area of effect, but others tick immediately when you pass through. Especially as auras and other enemy-centered AoEs become common in the later game, you might find this point becoming more and more salient.
- g. **Disadvantage: everything threatens you.** Just as you threaten everything along your path, Dolphin Circle unfortunately opens up all those enemies to take potshots at *you*. The more enemies you encircle, the greater the chance that you'll be attacked. Common movement defense feats (Mobility, Wind Stance, Lightning Stance) will also be ineffective here, making you less safe with this type of movement than others.

Earth Child

What's It Do?

Earth Child Style is a hybrid offensive, defensive, and combat maneuver style that is purchasable only by dwarves and gnomes. (Dwarves do much better in Wisdom-based classes than gnomes do, which is why I'll tailor this writeup toward dwarves.) The catch with Earth Child Style is that all of its many bonuses apply only to giants; practically, this means that it's never an optimal build decision except in [Paizo's *Giantslayer* AP](#) or [certain books of *Rise of the Runelords*](#).

Who's It Good For?

Dwarves and gnomes are the only ones who can even get in the door, but of the two races, dwarves do much better with the style's reliance on high Wisdom scores. Given that some key aspects of the style feat line involve combat maneuvers, unarmed strikes, and Stunning Fist, it's not too difficult to intuit that monks, unchained monks, and brawlers were intended as the primary audience, although brawlers are likely to purchase only the first two feats. I'll throw in a plug for the [dwarven master of many styles monk using Dwarven Hatred and Earth Child Style](#). That build would be incredibly powerful in a *Giantslayer* campaign.

When Can You Get It?

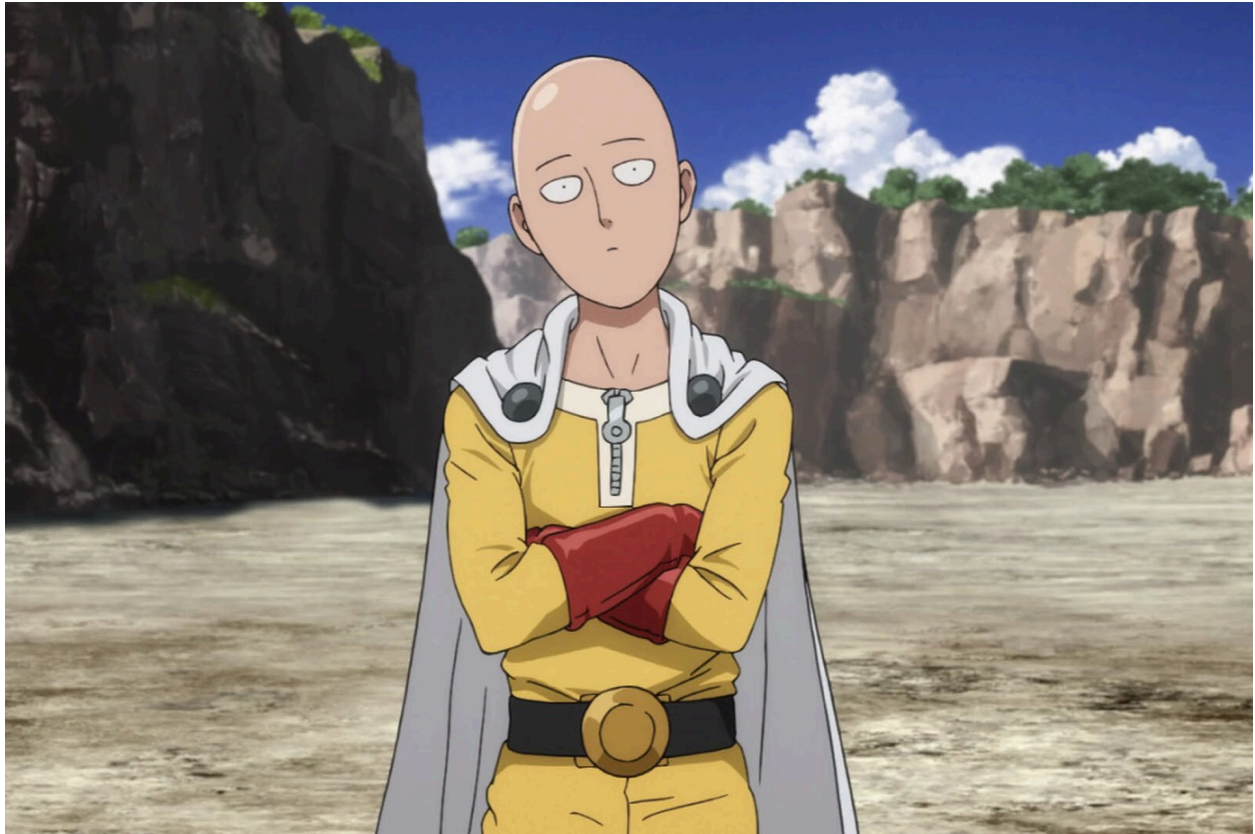
Acrobatics ranks limit the speed with which you can progress through Earth Child Style, so 3rd, 6th, and 9th levels are par for the course.

The Feats

- Earth Child Style:** Earth Child Style is only going to be useful in a campaign where giants are the most common enemies, which means that [Giantslayer](#) is your go-to AP. If you're playing *Giantslayer*, congratulations! This feat is ridiculously powerful for unarmed strike builds, granting a +2 dodge bonus to AC and the ability to add your Wisdom modifier to damage rolls against giants. Of note, Earth Child Style pairs *exceptionally* well with [Dwarven Hatred Style](#) on a master of many styles monk; since Earth Child Style simply increases your defensive training AC bonus, Dwarven Seething and Dwarven Fury can then apply that +6 AC to every creature you encounter.
 - Combat Stamina:** Probably green in [giant-heavy campaigns](#). More damage is always good, right?
- Earth Child Topple:** Another feat that's 100% made for [dwarven monks playing *Giantslayer*](#). Adding your Wisdom modifier to both your CMB score to trip and on your critical confirmation rolls is incredible, but only works against giants; in any campaign where giants aren't the main focus, you're just throwing feats in the garbage can.
 - Combat Stamina:** The stamina-to-damage exchange rate is about equal with Earth Child Style, so I think this would also get a green rating in [giant-heavy campaigns](#).
- Earth Child Binder:** Only rune giants, eclipse giants, and vault giants are larger than Huge size, so Earth Child Binder doesn't add significantly to your list of viable trip targets as a dwarven monk. The Stunning Fist bonuses are a little weak, too: taking a CR 13 storm giant as an example, the average monk is likely to have a Stunning Fist

save DC in the low 20s (10 + [½ 12th Level] + 5 Wisdom Modifier). The storm giant has a +17 Fortitude save modifier, and thus would need to roll a natural 3 or lower to fail. Is bumping that up to a natural 7 worth the extra feat? I'm inclined to think not.

- a. **Combat Stamina:** Nah. Just spend your Stunning Fist uses per day. They're less valuable than combat stamina.



“He was like...a god, in human skin.”
—About Saitama, *One-Punch Man*

Efreeti

What's It Do?

All of the elemental style feats (Djinni, Efreeti, Marid, and Shaitan) rely on the Elemental Strike and Elemental Fist feats, the former of which is available only to oreads, ifrits, sylphs, and undines. These feats deal some minor amount of energy damage, with the option to “upgrade” to bigger damage using a pool of daily Elemental Fist uses. Unfortunately for all of these style feats, Elemental Strike and Elemental Fist start out very weak and never really scale except for monks of the four winds, dragging the whole playstyle down.

Who's It Good For?

Given the heavy reliance on both a high Wisdom score and unarmed strikes, we need to think either monk, unchained monk, or brawler; practically, however, you want as many uses of Elemental Fist as possible, and monks or unchained monks get four times as many daily uses as the brawler or other classes. Makes it kind of a no-brainer, huh?

When Can You Get It?

At 9th level for full-BAB classes, or 5th level for monks.

The Feats

- Efreeti Style:** All of the elemental style feats (Djinni, Efreeti, Marid, and Shaitan) let you add your Wisdom modifier to the damage dealt by Elemental Strike + Elemental Fist, and one other style-exclusive effect. Efreeti Style's bonus effect is that you deal 1d6 fire damage even on a miss, which is somehow even worse than Djinni Style's bonus. I'll still rate this yellow because adding your Wisdom modifier to damage is good, but man, what a close call on a red rating.
 - Combat Stamina:** The stamina-to-damage exchange rate here isn't particularly in your favor. I'd suggest you save your stamina for something else.
- Efreeti Stance:** As with Djinni Spirit, Shaitan Skin, and Marid Spirit, Efreeti Stance grants some energy resistance (fire, in this case) plus a bonus rider effect on Elemental Fist. Fire resistance is good, as things go, but the rider effect is terrible—1d6 fire damage per round, with a Reflex save every round to put it out? Blech.
 - Combat Stamina:** Boosts this large to save DCs are difficult to find, and you can tailor the level of stamina expenditure to whatever level of hurt you feel you need to put on an enemy. Decent.
- Efreeti Touch:** Kind of like a weak *burning hands*, but for ifrit monks. The shaping is better than Djinni Spin, since you can angle it, but fire resistance and immunity are far more common than electricity resistance or immunity.
 - Combat Stamina:** A bit more flexibility in which resources you're spending never hurt anyone; assuming that you have time to take it easy in between encounters, using stamina (which is a renewable resource) is preferable to using Elemental Fist attempts (which are not).

Elven Battle

What's It Do?

Not much. The biggest pickup is the ability to add Intelligence to damage with elven weapons (Elven Battle Focus) but that's a three-feat investment that doesn't yield equivalent results to a Dexterity-to-damage build. It's not an abysmal style; it simply fails to hit the mark it's trying to hit in many ways.

Who's It Good For?

Well, elves and half-elves, obviously. If we're thinking single-class builds, lore warden fighters would probably do best—grab an elven branched spear and go to town—but anything with a high Intelligence modifier will work (occultists, empiricist investigators, kensai magi, some rogues or unchained rogues, etc.). Full BAB helps get you to Elven Battle Focus quicker, though. The student of war prestige class is a fun addition to grab Intelligence to AC.

When Can You Get It?

Not until 2nd level at least, and that's for a *fighter*. With two feat prerequisites (Weapon Finesse and Elven Battle Training) you'll have to school yourself in patience while you work up to it. Once you satisfy those basics, however, the rest of the feat chain opens up at 4th and 10th levels for full-BAB classes.

The Feats

- Elven Battle Style:** Well, that's legitimately disappointing. Anyone who's performing combat maneuvers regularly needs the Improved [Maneuver] feat, plain as that, and once you have that feat, Elven Battle Style becomes completely useless.
- Elven Battle Focus:** Elven Battle Focus is rated blue less because of how powerful it is (quite a bit less powerful than plain ol' Strength to damage, and slightly less powerful than Dexterity to damage) and more because of the interesting builds it opens up. Essentially, you take a Dexterity/Intelligence build and, rather than pursuing Dexterity to damage (which is only available for rapiers, of those weapons granted to elves) you pursue Intelligence to damage. Was it worth three feats? Maybe not, but it's good to know the option's here.
- Elven Battle Torrent:** One attack of opportunity per round against an enemy who attacks you while you're fighting defensively or using Combat Expertise. Hmmm. Yeah, no, that's unfortunately not great. Defensive fighting and Combat Expertise are suboptimal in many builds, and Elven Battle Torrent doesn't have any particular synergy with that playstyle.

Empty Quiver

What's It Do?

Empty Quiver Style is a ranged combat style that helps bow, crossbow, and firearm users threaten enemies in melee range with their ranged weapons, and eventually stop provoking attacks of opportunity for reloading or firing their weapons. Unfortunately, there are many better options available that accomplish this goal, which blunts Empty Quiver's overall effectiveness.

Who's It Good For?

Anyone using ranged weapons. There are no BAB or skill rank prerequisites, only feats, which makes the style very class-agnostic.

When Can You Get It?

Right at 1st level, if you're a human or a fighter. I wouldn't recommend that, though, because it's still well worth grabbing Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, and Rapid Shot as your three initial feats. No sense in building for melee combat when you haven't even built for ranged combat yet.

The Feats

1. **Empty Quiver Style:** Although it's fun to be able to choke up on your bow or rifle and smash someone's face in with it, for the moment you get no bonuses to do so, and all of your investment in Dexterity will be wasted, as melee attacks naturally default to Strength. Later feats improve this situation, but not entirely.
2. **Empty Quiver Flexibility:** This feat is a real puzzler as far as which feats and class features apply or don't apply to your rolls. At the very least, Weapon Focus and Weapon Specialization count, as does Deadly Aim; class features such as the ranger's favored weapon, the fighter's weapon training, and the gunslinger's gun training should also count. Beyond that, you also essentially get Snap Shot as a bonus feat, although the efficacy of Empty Quiver Flexibility is bound to be a little lower than Snap Shot since you're making melee attacks rather than ranged attacks in melee. I'd call it good, but not excellent.
3. **Empty Quiver Flurry:** Both Point-Blank Master (for archers) and Deft Shootist (for gunslingers) do better jobs of making you safe to attack in melee range, and allow you to keep your ranged attack bonuses as normal—Deft Shootist can be acquired through normal feat progression, and Point-Blank Master can be acquired through a 3-level zen archer monk dip if you have no other means of satisfying the Weapon Specialization prereq. Either way, Empty Quiver Flurry is an inferior replacement, since you *must* hit an enemy with at least one melee attack every round in order to maintain your attack of opportunity-free shooting, and the bonuses apply to only one enemy—not very helpful when you're being mobbed.

Janni

What's It Do?

Janni Style is a bit muddled in focus, granting bonuses to AC, trip and bull rush combat maneuvers, Acrobatics checks, and charges. The style's bonuses are a bit too diffuse to recommend strongly, but it's not a terrible feat line, either.

Who's It Good For?

Highly mobile combat maneuver builds. You need to be using unarmed strikes, which obviously nods to brawlers and monks, but otherwise Janni Style can synergize with most classes.

When Can You Get It?

At 3rd, 5th, and 8th levels. You can't cheat skill ranks, and there are no exceptions made for monks or brawlers.

The Feats

- Janni Style:** Janni Style imparts only minor AC bonuses when you're charging or flanked, none of which bring the feat up to par.
 - Combat Stamina:** I mean, meh? You were already taking only a -1 penalty to AC from charging, and with movement speed bonuses from *haste*, *expeditious retreat*, fast movement, it seems like an extra 10 feet of charge speed wouldn't break the bank.
- Janni Tempest:** A +4 bonus to trip and bull rush maneuvers will certainly help you succeed at those actions, but the catch is that you need to hit a foe with an unarmed strike first. Best used for flurrying monks or any full-BAB class that wants to replace an iterative attack with a combat maneuver using Quick Bull Rush. Also pairs well with **Street Style** to attack and then swift-action bull rush.
 - Combat Stamina:** The exchange rate of stamina-for-CMB isn't great, but I like that you get a little more flexibility on which maneuvers you use—not that you'd ever use any of them without the appropriate Improved [Maneuver] feat, right?
- Janni Rush:** Janni Rush essentially lets you tag a Vital Strike onto the end of a charge, similar to Gorum's Divine Fighting Technique, but without actually needing the Vital Strike feat. You do have to make a successful Acrobatics check to make it work; that's not a huge burden, though.
 - Combat Stamina:** Given how difficult it is to threaten a critical hit with an unarmed strike, I'm inclined to think that Janni Rush's combat stamina improvement won't do much for most players.

Kobold

What's It Do?

Kobold Style gives Small-sized adventurers some big CMB bonuses, and allows them to attack flat-footed AC if they can trip their target.

Who's It Good For?

Small-sized, full-BAB races that want to focus on combat maneuvers. My #1 pick would be for **spawn slayers**: they get to ignore size differences when attempting combat maneuvers, can trip foes as easily as other full-BAB classes, and gain demonstrable benefits from being able to attack prone enemies' flat-footed AC (i.e., sneak attack).

When Can You Get It?

Ridiculously early, actually. None of the feats in Kobold Style have skill rank, feat, BAB, or other requirements apart from Combat Expertise and any previous feats in the chain, so you're good to go almost immediately.

The Feats

1. **Kobold Style**: A +4 untyped bonus to CMB is strong for combat maneuver builds, of course, but the question is, how are you going to deny enemies their Dexterity to AC? Shatter Defenses is an option if you're running an Intimidate build; feinting is expedient; dirty tricks to blind a foe will also work. **If you're Small-sized and already building for one of the above goals**, Kobold Style can do good work for you, but I'm not certain that it's worth it on its own when there are so many style feats available.
2. **Kobold Groundling**: Kobold Groundling raises the stakes in this style feat line in an interesting way. It's typically difficult to deny enemies their Dexterity to AC—and for good reason—but now that you can target flat-footed AC when enemies are prone, you're free to hit them with as much sneak attack damage or other nasty tricks as you'd like. Lore warden fighters using whip-trip builds were the first candidates I thought of for Kobold Groundling, but **spawn slayers** are perhaps the mechanically optimal choice: once you trip an enemy, you're basically guaranteed to hit them (+4 for prone, -Dexterity to AC, and an additional +4 if you're attempting a combat maneuver), and you'll deal sneak attack damage on every hit. Spawn slayers have excellent numerical advantages when using combat maneuvers on big targets, too, which amps up the synergy.
3. **Kobold Flood**: ...I may be dumb, but I genuinely don't understand how Kobold Flood works. Once you pass the grapple check, are both of you grappled as normal? Only the creature you've mounted? What happens if the target breaks the grapple and stands up? Do you continue to remain on top of it? I just think it's a poorly worded ability. I'm inclined to think that, even if you cleared up all the inconsistencies, Kobold Flood would still not be a great feat. Grappling is one of the more niche combat maneuvers, and Kobold Style would appear to work better for trip builds than for grapple builds.

Lantern

What's It Do?

Lantern Style adds some relatively minor debuffing to thrown weapon builds, plus the ability to bypass DR when making single attacks with ranged weapons. Because you'd obviously want to leverage that latter point as much as possible, Lantern Style tends to work best for master of many styles monks (who'd use it in conjunction with Startoss Style), Vital Strike builds, builds using Desna's Divine Fighting Technique, etc.

Who's It Good For?

One unusual feature of Lantern Style is that it stipulates that you must have either monk levels or a *caster level* to select it. In general, ½-BAB full casters won't be interested in martial combat of any kind, much less thrown weapon builds, which relegates the style feat line to monks, unchained monks, and other ¾-BAB casters like clerics, oracles, inquisitors, warpriests, magi, bards, skalds, etc. The other major requirement of Lantern Style is that it's a thrown weapon style, hence no other combat style need apply.

When Can You Get It?

As early as 1st level, if you have either monk levels or a caster level that kicks in at 1st (sorry, rangers, paladins, and bloodragers). The later feats open up at 7th and 11th levels, although I don't know that I would advise progressing past Lantern Light, which is clearly the crux of the feat chain.

The Feats

1. **Lantern Style:** Lantern Style desperately needs some clarification, because we all know that Pathfinder's illumination rules are a bit of a mess regarding which darkness or light effects take precedent when they conflict. What spell level do thrown weapons count as, or is the illumination non-magical? Without knowing that, I really can't rate the (potentially) most useful part of the feat. Dazzled, meanwhile, is a garbage status condition that isn't worth the virtual ink taken to write it out. A disappointing entry to the feat chain.
2. **Lantern Light:** Lantern Light is probably the best feat of the chain, but that's unfortunately not saying much. Sure, bypassing DR of any variety is a nifty trick, but it relies on you making a single attack, and with the exception of a master of many styles Lantern/Startoss combo build, you're likely to want to make more attacks, not fewer, as you level up.
3. **Lantern Glare:** Lantern Glare emulates the archon monster family's aura of menace class feature, which causes enemies within a certain radius to become shaken as they witness your awesome (?) power. The feat also emulates aura of menace's main weakness: the shaken condition goes away if an enemy ever hits you. Additionally, the Charisma-based saving throw seems a bit bizarre when pasted onto a monk chassis; I suppose it's viable for bards, skalds, mesmerists, oracles, summoners, and some vigilante archetypes.

Maddening

What's It Do?

Maddening Style is almost completely focused on debuffing via Wisdom damage. Although I haven't perused *Horror Adventures*, I have to believe this feat chain is more useful to enemy monsters than it is to PCs, but it still does pretty well for PCs, largely thanks to the strength of Maddening Strike.

Who's It Good For?

Monks, pretty exclusively. Between the Wisdom, Improved Unarmed Strike, Stunning Fist, and ki pool requirements, most classes will be unable to compete in the space. Unfortunately, the feat chain *also* has fairly high Charisma requirements, which makes the already-MAD monk even more MAD. If there's anything that kills the feat chain for PCs, it's going to be that Charisma requirement.

When Can You Get It?

Ostensibly at 4th, 8th, and 10th levels. The only hard and fast limits on progression are the Knowledge (Arcana) ranks you're required to invest, plus the obviously problematic attribute score requirements. Assuming you can get that far, though, those are your target levels.

The Feats

- Maddening Style:** Monks and unchained monks aren't my forte, not having written a class guide on them, but in my admittedly limited understanding, neither class traffics in confusion, insanity, or madness effects. This feat is therefore likely intended for non-humanoid monsters with class levels, who can leverage racial spell-like abilities, spells, supernatural auras, etc. to inflict confusion or madness on PCs. The increase to the save DC of your Maddening Strike is of minor benefit, but the bonuses are otherwise entirely forgettable.
- Maddening Strike:** High risk, high reward is the name of Maddening Strike's game. Particularly against martial classes with already-poor Will saves, dealing 1d4+1 Wisdom damage consistently can quickly render an opponent unconscious—and the really brutal thing is that with each hit, that Will save will get harder to succeed at. This feat is good enough on its own, but in conjunction with an enchantment-based caster using *dominate person*, *murderous command*, etc., Maddening Strike can be incredibly powerful. It should go without saying that you should always use it on an attack made at your highest BAB, and never against an enemy with other defensive effects such as *displacement* or *mirror image* active. If it misses for any reason, you're taking the Wisdom damage yourself.
- Maddening Obliteration:** By far the best effect here is the -2 penalty to Will saves vs. your Maddening Strike. A classic combo is to hit someone with your highest-BAB attack (either while *hasted* or as part of a flurry of blows) to trigger the save penalty, then use your swift action and spend a ki point on your next attack at full BAB to use Maddening Strike. Enemies will take an effective -3 penalty to their saves from Maddening Style + Maddening Obliteration, plus any effects of the Wisdom damage that they may be feeling.

Mantis

What's It Do?

Mantis Style focuses almost exclusively on making the Stunning Fist feat better by increasing its save DC, granting bonuses to attack rolls to hit with Stunning Fist, and adding some flexibility regarding which status conditions you impose on an enemy. Stunning Fist builds are already somewhat niche, however, and the latter two feats don't particularly add much to the style—you're good just to take Mantis Style and stop there in most cases.

Who's It Good For?

Monks and unchained monks, primarily: they get Improved Unarmed Strike and Stunning Fist for free, and have the best scaling progression of Stunning Fist uses per day. Mantis Wisdom is a nice addition to classes other than monk or unchained monk that are trying for a Stunning Fist build, but how often do you see those?

When Can You Get It?

At 3rd, 6th, and 9th levels, irrespective of class. You can't cheat your way around skill ranks, my friends, and Heal skill ranks are required in this style feat line.

The Feats

- Mantis Style:** Stunning Fist builds aren't the most common things in the Pathfinder universe, but in keeping with this guide's goal of rating each style feat line as though you were building for the thing that the style feat line emphasizes, I have to say in all candor that Mantis Style is pretty good. Anything save-based in Pathfinder 1e has a very binary feel to it—the enemy either fails their save or not. Extra uses of Stunning Fist and a flat +2 to your save DCs are good for any monk build using Stunning Fist regularly.
 - Combat Stamina:** The combat stamina upgrade to Mantis Style is excellent for Stunning Fist builds because it essentially turns Stunning Fist into a renewable resource. Classes receive stamina points equal to their BAB + Constitution modifier, so once you hit 5, 10, 15, 20, and 25 points of stamina, you can use Stunning Fist without counting against your daily uses two, three, four, or even five times per combat—provided, of course, that you can work in a short rest afterward. Great for keeping the Stunning Fists flowing throughout the day.
- Mantis Wisdom:** Mantis Wisdom does three things, which I'll rank in descending order of power: first, it grants you a **+2 bonus on attack rolls that you make with Stunning Fist attached**. That's obviously pretty good unless you're making heavy use of Combat Stamina and spend 5 stamina points to declare a Stunning Fist attempt after you've already hit an enemy. Second, it **improves the scaling of your Stunning Fist uses per day outside of monk levels**. Slower scaling is only a problem if you're multiclassing or entering Mantis Style from a class other than monk or unchained monk, so that seems fairly niche. Third and finally, it **allows you remove Stunning Fist from a target with a melee touch attack**. When or why would you do this? You want enemies to remain disabled as long as possible, and are certainly not going to burn actions healing them.

- a. **Combat Stamina:** Again, you would never take the option of removing Stunning Fist status conditions from an enemy, so gaining the ability to do it at range without a touch attack doesn't meaningfully improve your life.
- 3. **Mantis Torment:** The baseline stunned condition that Stunning Fist slaps on enemies is somewhat more powerful than staggered or fatigued, and many times more powerful than dazzled. Especially at higher levels, one round of overwhelming incapacitation is far better than several rounds of mild inconvenience; since monks and unchained monks naturally get to apply a variety of status conditions to their Stunning Fist attempts as they level, too, there's no particular utility to getting more from this feat. The fact that this suboptimal option also costs twice as much is onerous.
 - a. **Combat Stamina:** Doesn't fix Mantis Torment's main problems—its expensive cost and its weak effects.



“One often meets his destiny on the road he takes to avoid it.”

—Master Oogway, *Kung Fu Panda*

Monkey

What's It Do?

*Now I'm the king of the swingers, oh, the jungle VIP / I've reached the top and had to stop and that's what's bothering me...*yes, Monkey Style is designed to let you become [King Louie](#) from *The Jungle Book* (and how cool is that recorder counterpoint in the intro!?), complete with climbing, crawling, acrobatic kip-ups, sudden pratfalls, and aggressive moves into opponents' spaces. It's got style, if nothing else!

Who's It Good For?

The mobility options from Monkey Style + Monkey Moves can assist pretty much any Wisdom-based class, but Monkey Shine should be reserved for **Small-sized races dipping into mouser washbuckler and vexing dodger unchained rogue**. Niche, I know. As always, monks, unchained monks, and brawlers will do just fine here.

When Can You Get It?

At 5th, 8th, and 11th levels. Skill ranks impose hard-and-fast limits on progression, but the other prereqs are easily satisfied with a one-level monk or unchained monk *deeeee-yip*.

The Feats

- Monkey Style:** I'll give this to Monkey Style: it takes a lot of risks, designwise, and even if not all of those risks pay off, it's still a bold style feat line. Monkey Style eliminates the AC and attack roll penalties for the prone condition, making it much more viable to lie down within an enemy's threatened range, and eases the transition from prone to standing by making it (1) not subject to attacks of opportunity and (2) achievable as a swift action instead of a standard action. Because you're now adding your Wisdom modifier to Acrobatics checks in addition to your Dexterity modifier, hitting a DC 20 check to stand as a swift action should be a piece of cake (5 Acrobatics ranks + 3 class skill + 3 Dexterity + 3 Wisdom + 5 *boots of elvenkind* = +19 right off the bat at 5th level). At the very least, Monkey Style will infuriate ranged combatants, as you can close the distance to a ranged attacker and drop prone at the end of every turn, popping up again as a swift action before you next start moving for a more-or-less permanent +4 AC.
 - Combat Stamina:** The math I laid out above should show that hitting a DC 20 Acrobatics check is a piece of cake for Monkey Style. Don't waste stamina on it unless your Acrobatics bonus has been debuffed through the floor somehow.
- Monkey Moves:** Monkey Style serves up another funky feat! You don't gain a climb speed while using Monkey Moves, but you'll climb much faster and much more reliably than you could previously. What's more, you can now lie prone with almost no consequences of any kind—Monkey Style eliminated any numerical penalties, and now you can five-foot step and move at half speed while crawling. So...stay down, I guess? You'll get the AC bonuses against ranged attacks if you do, and unless you suddenly have to chase someone at full speed, the half-speed movement won't affect you much. You can also start to maneuver around enemies better once you start hitting with flurries, too, so don't sleep on that clause. A lot of bonuses packed in here.

- a. **Combat Stamina:** Hmm. Climbing at full speed without a Climb check is nice and all, but this is 8th level, and group-wide flight is definitely on its way, if it hasn't arrived already. Stamina is a precious resource, so you wouldn't often use this power unless you were at the bottom of a *hungry pit* or something.
3. **Monkey Shine:** Haaa, I see the clever little *Wortspiel* you did there, Paizo. On its own, Monkey Shine is good but not incredible: you have to succeed at a Stunning Fist attempt against an enemy to even enter their space, and once you do, they're free to move away from you, albeit provoking an attack of opportunity on the way out. Where Monkey Shine gets truly ludicrous, however is on a **Small-sized UnMonk 1 / Mouser Swashbuckler 1 / Vexing Dodger UnRogue 4** build. Don't believe me? Unchained monk nabs you most important prereqs plus a bunch of other goodies; mouser swashbuckler allows you to move into an enemy's space whenever they miss you with an attack, and once you're there, they pretty much stink at attacking everyone else and you can flank them quite easily; vexing dodger lets you skip the preamble and climb enemies directly, leveraging your amazing Climb score from Monkey Moves to do so. While you're on a creature's square, you (1) flank them if an ally is adjacent, which is crucial for triggering sneak attack damage (underfoot assault), (2) give them a -4 penalty to attack creatures other than you (underfoot assault), (3) give them a penalty to attack *you* equal to your number of sneak attack dice (limb-climber), (4) gain a +4 dodge bonus to AC against that creature (Monkey Shine), and (5) gain a +4 untyped bonus on melee attack rolls against that enemy (Monkey Shine). You won't achieve that level of shenanigans until 11th level, but if there's one thing that Monkey Style promises will be worth the wait, it's the shenanigans.
 - a. **Combat Stamina:** Eh, another uninspiring combat stamina upgrade. If you've come this far in Monkey Style, you really should just go for the build outlined above, and if you've done that, your limb-climber ability from vexing dodger will ensure that you can remain on creatures even if they try to move.

Octopus

What's It Do?

A little bit of everything. Anti-flanking defenses, some attack bonuses, grappling, tripping, you name it. I don't think Octopus Style particularly functions as a [*Gesamtkunstwerk*](#), but your opinion may be different.

Who's It Good For?

Anyone who plans to be absolutely overrun with trash mobs. If you regularly fight hordes of 8 or 9 low-power monsters, that's probably where Octopus Style does best.

When Can You Get It?

Theoretically? At 1st, 3rd, and 7th levels. Octopus Focus is the best feat in the bunch, though, so you'd be well advised to stop there.

The Feats

1. **Octopus Style:** Even at 1st level, Octopus Style essentially makes you unflankable. While that's an admirable goal for a style feat line, the action economy is not in this feat's favor: a move action is a lot to ask when the highest DPR for nearly any martial character relies on full-attacking. If it lasted longer, that'd be fine; if it cost a swift or free action, that'd be fine. As it stands, it's a hard sell, even though the benefit is good.
2. **Octopus Focus:** Octopus Focus really hits its stride when **you're absolutely swarmed with enemies**, and while your mileage may vary, my experience with Paizo APs has been that encounters tend to consist of four or fewer monsters, some of whom inevitably won't be attacking you at any given time. If your GM plays with 4e minion rules adapted for Pathfinder (not a bad idea, honestly, since minions were actually a decent 4e invention) then this ability will get much stronger. As for the grappling stuff, Grabbing Style will probably outperform Octopus Focus unless you have something very specific in mind.
3. **Octopus Thrash:** Octopus Style just kinda lacks design focus and a clear direction, you know? We've got some defensive stuff in the first feat, some offensive stuff in the second, grappling, tripping—it's all over the place. The juice simply isn't worth the squeeze here, even for dedicated trip builds.

Psychovore

What's It Do?

Psychovore Style is a combination defensive/debuffing style that lets you get inside an enemy's head, almost literally. There are some AC improvements, the confused condition, and eventually some mental ability damage and temporary HP in store for you if you can somehow build an effective unarmed strike crit-fishing build, but otherwise it's an aggressively mediocre style feat line.

Who's It Good For?

Reliance on Wisdom scores and unarmed strikes should automatically have you thinking monk, unchained monk, brawler, and sacred fist warpriest, if nothing else. Maximum investment in Sense Motive is also a must, for feat entry if nothing else.

When Can You Get It?

At 3rd, 9th, and 15th levels. Skill rank requirements are hard-and-fast limits that can't be circumvented.

The Feats

1. **Psychovore Style:** Psychovore Style definitely gets full marks for flavor—you're almost a mind-reader, anticipating your opponent's moves so well that you can avoid their attacks. Unfortunately, the dodge bonuses to AC are quite small, can only be maintained against one target at a time, require a move action to activate, and may not even function unless you've invested heavily in Sense Motive. There's some potential synergy here with **Snake Style**, but it otherwise seems like a mediocre mechanical choice.
2. **Psychovore Strike:** The confused condition is always pretty strong, and Psychovore Strike adds an interesting twist by forcing confused enemies not to attack you—this is huge, as confused enemies automatically attack the last creature to hurt them, per the condition text (“Any confused creature who is attacked automatically attacks its attackers on its next turn, as long as it is still confused when its turn comes”). Functionally, this means you can continue to wail on an enemy as they keep harming themselves, babbling incoherently, or attacking one of their allies. I wish you got more uses per day, but the scaling save DC and longish duration are nice enough touches that I'm happy to grant it at least a green.
3. **Psychovore Master:** Psychovore Master has a good heart, but I doubt that it would work out to be that mechanically strong. First, you have to be using Psychovore Strike against an enemy—and as a reminder, you only get to use that ability $1 + \text{Wisdom modifier}$ times per day. *Then*, you have to threaten a critical hit with that strike—something that only happens on a natural 20, since unarmed strikes have a x2 crit range, absent Improved Critical—and *then* you have to confirm that critical hit. All that for 1 point of Intelligence and Wisdom damage, plus a few measly temporary HP? Nah. You have much better candidates for purchase at 15th level.

Shark

What's It Do?

Shark Style offers some minor bleed damage, scent to locate bleeding foes underwater, and a highly unimpressive aquatic charge attack. Not one of the stronger style feat lines on offer, even if you were playing an aquatic campaign like *Ruins of Azlant*—Barracuda is closer to what you're looking for.

Who's It Good For?

Unarmed strike builds in aquatic campaigns. Whether full-BAB class or monk/unchained monk/brawler, it's immaterial.

When Can You Get It?

At 3rd, 6th, and 10th levels. The feats are locked behind both skill rank *and* BAB/monk level requirements, so there's no way to take shortcuts.

The Feats

1. **Shark Style:** I'll give Shark Style a cautious green rating because it's not strictly limited to aquatic adventures—if you'd like to hit enemies with piercing and bleed damage while on land, you're more than welcome to do so. It's similar in this way to Boar Style, but Boar has a better trajectory in the long run.
2. **Shark Tear:** Hmm. Because style feats aren't active outside of combat, you shouldn't count on your scent except when you're acting in initiative. The bonuses to attack and damage rolls are nice, but so minor that they likely won't make much difference in the long run.
3. **Shark Leap:** The bonuses on Shark Leap are definitely interesting, but the mandate to get beneath underwater enemies and then ambush them with a charge means that it's almost certain to be more useful for NPCs than for PCs.

Shielded Gauntlet

What's It Do?

Shielded Gauntlet Style is an odd bird, and no two ways about it. Where shield bash builds take fundamentally defensive pieces of equipment (shields) and turn them into offensive tools, Shielded Gauntlet Style builds take fundamentally offensive pieces of equipment (spiked gauntlets) and turn them into defensive tools. It can be a useful alternative to classic sword-and-board TWF builds, but is still fairly niche.

Who's It Good For?

As above, sword-and-board TWF builds are going to be right at home here. Shielded Gauntlet Master is particularly lovely for its ability to skip over a lot of prerequisite feats and get you right to Shield Master (well, the same bonuses as Shield Master, anyway) without much fuss. Full BAB is probably another requirement, since that's your best bet for good damage scaling with Shielded Gauntlet Attack.

When Can You Get It?

With no BAB or skill requirements, you're limited only by how quickly you can progress through the feat chain, which could be as soon as 3rd or 5th level for the final feat. Pretty low-maintenance.

The Feats

1. **Shield Gauntlet Style:** In our opening feat, gauntlets essentially become bucklers: they get treated in exactly the same way for feats and abilities, they provide the same AC bonus, and they still lose that AC bonus if you attack with the gauntlet. In short, Shield Gauntlet Style is a tax to even allow you to use a gauntlet as a shield, but doesn't add any additional value.
2. **Shielded Gauntlet Attack:** Fair is fair—Shielded Gauntlet Attack is actually quite good. Your gauntlet's damage now scales with your BAB, per the warpriest sacred weapon class feature, and it gets its own pool of attacks of opportunity that can be used to attack or perform disarm/steal combat maneuvers. The increased damage is the headlining item, but the attack of opportunity could prove useful from time to time if you haven't picked up Combat Reflexes. If you're in this style feat line, though, you're probably building for Two-Weapon Fighting, and those builds generally mandate high Dexterity scores.
3. **Shielded Gauntlet Master:** Shielded Gauntlet Master, practically speaking, is the Shield Master feat and the Improved Shield Bash feat crammed into one feat. This is probably the true power of Shielded Gauntlet Style: you get to jump into Shield Master without the BAB +11 requirement, letting you wield a progressively better "shield" without sacrificing any of your offensive potential.

Sisterhood

What's It Do?

Sisterhood Style rewards you for fighting like Gray Maidens: shields locked, side by side, rebuffing oncoming advances with longswords at the ready. It's a deadly style feat line in the hands of GMs, but not at all well-suited to player characters.

Who's It Good For?

NPCs, honestly—PC parties would be at a loss for what to do with this style feat line, as it relies on having as many sword-and-board martial allies around you as possible. Classic phalanx tactics, but that's not how Pathfinder PCs play the game.

When Can You Get It?

At BAB +2, +4, and +6. The feat prereqs are pretty steep, so that might be the rate-limiting factor in most cases.

The Feats

1. **Sisterhood Style:** Two essentially dead feats (Weapon Focus and Shield Focus) don't start Sisterhood Style off on the right foot, but the bonuses to Reflex and Will saves will perk up the ears of martial classes. The clause about granting teamwork feats to allies is...tricky. First of all, entering a stance is a swift action, so where does Paizo think that extra swift action is going to come from to loan out a teamwork feat? Assuming you and your GM can iron out that wrinkle, it's still pretty niche—most PC parties can't get out of their own way to use teamwork feats effectively, which is why they're typically relegated to inquisitors, hunters, cavaliers, samurai, and other classes that either get them for free or can pass them out to teammates effectively.
2. **Sisterhood Rampart:** Another feat that I have to believe is simply way more effective for NPCs than it is for PCs. If you're a GM running Gray Maidens, by all means, get a bunch of them together, park them in a line, and then have ranged attackers behind the line start plugging away at your PCs. It's a great tactic that synergizes naturally with Shield Wall. The idea of PC parties having multiple sword-and-board users coordinating their builds is laughable, though. Have you *met* Pathfinder players?
3. **Sisterhood Dedication:** The bonuses are decent, again, but based around a scenario that will simply never occur for PC parties. GMs, feel free to use Sisterhood Dedication in a *Curse of the Crimson Throne* campaign. It probably won't come up anywhere else.

Skyseeker

What's It Do?

Skyseeker Style has its roots in dwarven culture as they face off against giants and other large foes, but the style's focus on size differentials between the style user and the target doesn't do enough to compensate you for your investment. Earth Child Style or Dwarven Hatred Style would be more powerful options for smaller races fighting larger opponents.

Who's It Good For?

Small-sized, full-BAB melee martial. Ranged characters can't glean anything from Skyseeker Style, but there are otherwise no restrictions placed on monk levels, skill ranks, etc.

When Can You Get It?

Fighters can get into Skyseeker Style right at 1st level, but most other classes would need to wait a level or two for their feat capabilities to come more fully online. BAB is going to be the rate-limiting factor in later feats.

The Feats

1. **Skyseeker Style:** Skyseeker Style is a great way to move close to enemies with large threatened areas, but the fly in the ointment is that it only works against enemies with *reach weapons specifically* (which are quite uncommon) rather than enemies with large natural reach (which are quite common). I would say this would get a green in **power**, but a red in **applicability**.
2. **Skyseeker Thrash:** For Small- or Medium-sized PCs fighting Large- or Huge-sized enemies, Skyseeker Thrash is no better than Weapon Specialization, which is largely considered to be a mediocre feat. You can get larger size differentials than that, but Gargantuan- or Colossal-sized enemies are fortunately pretty rare—only 259 out of 3658 enemies in the bestiaries are that big (roughly 7%) and 75% of those 259 creatures occur at CR 15+. Skyseeker Thrash is therefore unlikely to be all that mechanically impactful.
3. **Skyseeker Impact:** Hmm. Skyseeker Thrash incentivizes you to be as small as possible relative to your enemies, but weapon damage die sizes generally mean less at small sizes than at large sizes; 1d3 → 1d4 nets you very little damage, whereas 4d6 → 6d6 nets you quite a bit of damage. Again, I'm inclined to think that Skyseeker Impact isn't going to do much for you, damagewise, and sunder is about as niche as combat maneuvers come.

Slipslinger

What's It Do?

Slipslinger Style singlehandedly makes halfling sling staff builds fun again! See below for details.

Who's It Good For?

Halflings are a must, of course, because no one else gets the warslinger racial trait. Fighters can do good things with Slipslinger Style, and alchemists are excellent at crafting the alchemical munitions that you'll use in Slipslinger Grenadier and Bombardment. A gestalt or multiclassed fighter/chemist is probably the best audience for Slipslinger Style.

When Can You Get It?

Right at 1st level for fighters, or sometime after that for other classes. Slipslinger Bombardment, the final feat in the line, should be achievable by about 5th level for most classes.

The Feats

- Slipslinger Style:** *Wow*, this feat took me down a halfling sling build rabbit hole that I was entirely unprepared for. To recap for the audience: halflings with the weapon familiarity racial trait are proficient with slings and can treat any weapon with the word “halfling” in it as a martial weapon. This opens up [halfling double slings](#) and [halfling sling staffs](#) for classes that get martial weapon proficiency. But there's a problem: double slings and sling staffs require you to reload them as a move action, which effectively precludes full-attack actions—the source of most Pathfinder PCs' damage. The halfling racial trait warslinger (which would allow you to reload your sling as a free action) explicitly doesn't work with double slings or sling staffs, per [this Paizo FAQ](#), and while [Ammo Drop](#) and [Juggle Load](#) work with double slings, there's no specific wording permitting sling staffs. Well, into this unholy Gordian knot of rules interactions steps Slipslinger Style to cut your confusion in twain! It does two *very* important things for **sling staff builds**: first, it eliminates attacks of opportunity for reloading, and second, it allows you to use warslinger with double slings and sling staffs. With one feat, you can now attack as many times in a round as you'd like without provoking attacks of opportunity for reloading. So...if you want to play a halfling slinger, you basically need Slipslinger Style, no questions asked. Weapon Focus + Slipslinger Style is a much better combo than Ammo Drop + Juggle Load.
- Slipslinger Grenadier:** Slipslinger Grenadier is a really cool feat. It gives you the ability to use a standard action to attack an enemy with a sling weapon while *also* using an [alchemical splash weapon](#). If you hit, you get both effects! You can't use it with an alchemist's bombs, and as a standard action (not an attack action, which is a specific type of standard action) it's not eligible for Vital Strike; it does, however, allow you to tag a bunch of nasty alchemical effects onto your attacks. A gestalt or multiclassed fighter/chemist would be a force to behold with Slipslinger Grenadier and its older cousin, Slipsling Bombardment.
- Slipslinger Bombardment:** At last, you can attack with as many alchemical weapons as you want to in a round! This playstyle would get ungodly expensive, so you'd basically have to have alchemist levels and craft your own ammunition. Powerful for nova strikes, though!

Smashing

What's It Do?

Smashing Style focuses almost exclusively on the sunder combat maneuver, applying some mild debuffs to hardness, AC, and armor check penalties when you successfully sunder armor or weaponry. It does too little to be effective, on the whole.

Who's It Good For?

Combat maneuver specialists. First-party Pathfinder materials don't have a particular sunder specialist, to my knowledge, but *Spheres of Might* has the blacksmith class, which would definitely find Smashing Style interesting.

When Can You Get It?

You need at least three feats to enter into Smashing Style in the first place, which makes it impractical even for fighters before about 3rd or 4th level.

The Feats

1. **Smashing Style:** Unless you're constantly sundering armor, Smashing Style isn't going to permit you to trigger your free bull rush or trip attempt often enough. Highly recommended for the 3PP [blacksmith class](#) in *Spheres of Might*, though.
2. **Smashing Crush:** [Most armor and weapons have hardness ratings of either 5 or 10](#), with bonuses applied for higher enhancement bonuses. How many sunder attempts do you think it's going to take to break or destroy an item, though? One? Maybe two or three? Decreasing hardness by 1 on each successful sunder attempt seems like it's too little, too late.
3. **Smashing Dent:** As is often the problem with sunder-related feats, Smashing Dent relies on your enemies using manufactured weapons and (in this case) armor to have any effect at all. **If you are facing enemies who consistently use manufactured armor**, it's not bad for sunder specialists, but it's once again too slow to achieve much in pitched battle.

Snapping Turtle

What's It Do?

Snapping Turtle Style is ostensibly a defensive style, although most of the benefits it provides aren't mechanically solid. It's better as a one-feat wonder for **grapplers**, who will often want Snapping Turtle Clutch to help them snag enemies who miss them in melee range.

Who's It Good For?

Anyone who wants to get good at grappling, I suppose. The BAB or monk level requirements are easily fulfilled, and the feat requirements aren't too strenuous.

When Can You Get It?

BAB should be the rate-limiting factor in this style feat line, so BAB +1, +3, and +5.

The Feats

- Snapping Turtle Style:** A feat in exchange for a +1 shield bonus to AC seems like...well, it seems like an exceptionally poor deal. I'm not saying it does nothing, just that it doesn't do nearly enough.
 - Combat Stamina:** Starting off at a +2 shield bonus to AC is, well, twice as effective as it would have been at baseline, and it's not like it's difficult to enter a combat with more than 1 point of stamina.
- Snapping Turtle Clutch:** About the only builds I would recommend Snapping Turtle Clutch for are **grappling builds**, which benefit immensely from the ability to make retaliatory grapple attempts as immediate actions. For **anyone not pursuing grappling**, the bonuses to touch AC and CMD are bottom-of-the-barrel poor.
 - Combat Stamina:** I like that grapplers are given the option to negate the -2 penalty on grapple checks made as immediate actions, and it's pretty cheap at 2 stamina points. Try to size up your enemy's CMD before making a decision about the stamina investment—if you're grappling some jamoke whose CR is 3 or 4 below your level, there's no way you should need this benefit.
- Snapping Turtle Shell:** Although I won't say no to another small AC bonus, the penalty to enemy crit confirmations is what I like most about Snapping Turtle Shell. Think of it as anti-Critical Focus.
 - Combat Stamina:** Sure, more opportunities to further penalize critical confirmation rolls. Used judiciously, you might just save your own life with this ability.

Spring-Heeled

What's It Do?

Spring-Heeled Style is tooled for skirmishing builds that use Spring Attack or Shot on the Run, but the design decisions feel...confused. Spring-Heeled Sprint and Spring-Heeled Reaping do just fine as tools in the toolbox of Spring Attack builds—assuming you didn't want Greater Spring Attack at some point—but the base style is bafflingly irrelevant to a skirmishing playstyle.

Who's It Good For?

Full-BAB skirmishers who want to be able to move like lightning through the battlefield. Think warrior poet samurai, order of the flame cavaliers, bloodragers or unchained monks with fast movement, etc.

When Can You Get It?

BAB requirements are pretty hard and fast, so you'll be limited to BAB +4, +7, and +11. A two-level dip into master of many styles might not be a terrible idea if you want to skip the base style and go right for the meat of the feat line in Sprint and Reaping.

The Feats

- Spring-Heeled Style:** Hmm. First, let me disclaim: the feat requirements for this style line are ridiculous. Shot on the Run alone requires BAB +4, Dexterity 13, Dodge, Mobility, and Point-Blank Shot, so you need at least four feats before you can even enter the style. Let's evaluate the feat on its own merits, though, shall we? **The first benefit** is that you gain a +2 bonus on weapon attack rolls whenever you use a move action to move more than 10 feet in a round. This is less applicable than it might seem at first blush. Charging? Full-round action. Shot on the Run or Spring Attack, the feats that this style line seems to have a major crush on? Full-round actions. Move + Vital Strike, move + Overwatch Tactician, or move + Panther Style are about the only applications I can see without doing some deep thinking. **The second benefit** is that the Mobility bonus to AC applies to ranged attacks and reloading ranged weapons. While that's interesting, many ranged classes have class features or feats designed to make these actions not provoke attacks of opportunity at all—and if you had to choose between not provoking or getting an AC bonus when you provoke, which would you choose? The former every time, right? Heck, the second benefit doesn't even apply to melee builds. I'm unimpressed.
- Spring-Heeled Sprint:** Spring-Heeled Sprint is the rare feat that actually becomes more powerful as you level up. If you're performing only one attack with Shot on the Run or Spring Attack, chances are good that you won't need to move that far; if you're performing two or three attacks with those feats, however, especially Spring Attack, your movement needs will likely be far greater. For this reason, Sprint probably eases up to green in **higher levels of skirmisher builds**.
- Spring-Heeled Reaping:** As best I can discern, Spring-Heeled Reaping does not stack with Improved or Greater Spring Attack, which again makes it a weird choice. Spring-Heeled Style doesn't work with Spring Attack, Spring-Heeled Reaping doesn't work with Improved Spring Attack...why try to make a skirmishing style feat line

where only feat actually works with the main method of skirmishing in Pathfinder? The advantage that Reaping has over Improved Spring Attack is that both of your attacks are made at your full BAB, which I suppose is worthy of a green rating.



“Enough. Is he toying with Jamis?”
“No. Paul has never killed a man before.”
—Stilgar to the Lady Jessica Atreides, *Dune*

Stick-Fighting

What's It Do?

Stick-Fighting Style makes you better at fighting with sticks (funny how closely the name hews to the purpose, eh?), including making extra attacks of opportunity and combat maneuvers. Not the most effective style line on the books, but also not the least effective.

Who's It Good For?

Any full-BAB class that's already using stick weapons, I suppose. Focusing on combat maneuvers would also be a plus.

When Can You Get It?

BAB is the rate-limiting factor, so whenever BAB +1, +4, and +6 comes for your particular class.

The Feats

- Stick-Fighting Style:** The masterwork bonus granted by Stick-Fighting Style won't persist beyond 3rd level, if it even persists that far, which leaves you with the weapon special qualities. I won't say that all of these are useless, especially for combat maneuver builds, but the bonuses are small enough that they're near-irrelevant. Nearrelevant.
- Stick-Fighting Counter:** Listen: I like making attacks of opportunity as much as the next Pathfinder munchkin, and it does sound like you'd get to make a fair number with Stick-Fighting Counter. Fighting defensively is typically a pretty suboptimal choice unless you've concocted a halfling Crane Style build, however, so the goodness of the feat's benefit is counterbalanced by the badness of what you have to do to *get* that benefit.
- Stick-Fighting Maneuver:** Credit where credit is due: even though I don't like this style much, Stick-Fighting Maneuver is quite good for combat maneuver builds, assuming that you're attacking with only the weapons listed. Combat maneuvers usually have a "Quick [Maneuver]" feat that lets you replace one attack in a full-attack action with a maneuver, or permit you to do that at baseline, but the disadvantage to these options is that you detract from your DPR in order to use the maneuver—not a great idea. At least this way, there's truly no opportunity cost to attempting a combat maneuver.

Street

What's It Do?

Street Style is a hybrid combat maneuvers/debuffing style that suffers from one noteworthy weakness: it can't be used anywhere other than urban terrain. **If you're playing an urban-themed campaign or one-shot**, give it the once-over, but **if you're playing a rural (or I guess suburban?) campaign**, just drop it immediately. There's nothing more to see here.

Who's It Good For?

High-Strength, full-BAB characters who attack with unarmed strikes. Awww, dang, looks like we're right back to the old unchained monk/brawler/avenger vigilante crowd. Of course, $\frac{3}{4}$ -BAB archetypes like the sacred fist warpriest are always an option, but they're going to have a hard time with CMB checks unless you

When Can You Get It?

Unchained monks and brawlers are about the only classes that would really want to get involved in both combat maneuvers and unarmed strikes, so the style feats will open up for them at 3rd, 5th, and 7th levels. Non-monk full-BAB classes will have to wait until BAB +4, +6, and +8.

The Feats

1. **Street Style:** Street Style is neither amazing nor terrible. The bonus damage you deal upon hitting a foe is ultimately negligible compared to sources like Jabbing Style, and the swift-action bull rush attempt is fine. It's the remainder of the feat line that you'll want, so pump your bull rush CMB like crazy.
2. **Street Sweep:** Ahhh, now this is more like it! Street Sweep forces any enemy that you bull rushed in the previous round to save or become staggered and prone for one round. Although I would normally ding a Fortitude save, the DC actually scales very well into the endgame, and prone plus staggered is a very strong combo when you were going to be attempting bull rushes nearly every round anyway. I'm a big fan.
3. **Street Carnage:** I mean, eh? The problem with unadjusted x2 crit modifiers is that even if you pick up Improved Critical or the *keen* weapon enchantment, you're still only going to threaten on a 19-20. A 19-20/x3 is perfectly respectable, of course, so I'd rate it green **with Improved Critical**. Otherwise, you're not going to threaten often enough to really see Street Carnage hit its stride.

Swift Iron

What's It Do?

Swift Iron Style is one in a series of armor-related style feat chains released as part of the *Armor Master's Handbook*. Bulette Charge Style focuses on heavy armor; Swift Iron Style focuses on medium armor. The style increases your speed and maximum Dexterity bonus, reduces your armor check penalty, and allows you to tank some hits while wearing medium armor, but it's flimsy, on the whole.

Who's It Good For?

Medium armor wearers of any stripe, although having full BAB is preferable for Swift Refuge.

When Can You Get It?

As soon as your feat progression allows—there are no skill rank or BAB requirements.

The Feats

1. **Swift Iron Style:** Armor check penalties and maximum Dexterity bonuses are ultimately negligible components of what makes armor good or bad—typically medium and heavy armor users won't max out their Dexterity bonuses or focus on Dexterity-based skills anyway. It's nice that Swift Iron Style stacks with armor training, but most medium armor users should be angling for *celestial plate armor* by game's end, which grants a +9 armor bonus, a maximum Dexterity modifier of +6, and a -3 armor check penalty. That's as good as you're going to get with medium armor; you don't really need Swift Iron Style to make the picture brighter.
2. **Swift Refuge:** Two flies in Swift Refuge's proverbial ointment: first, the ability is usable only a few times per day, and with its BAB requirements, $\frac{3}{4}$ -BAB characters will be shut out in the cold. Second, the ratio of damage dealt through weapon dice to damage dealt through static Strength bonuses, enhancement bonuses, class features, etc. tends to grow smaller and smaller as time goes on. A 1st-level barbarian with a greatsword might deal 2d6+6 damage, of which more than 50% (on average) is contributed by the weapon dice. A 20th-level barbarian with *enlarge person* might instead deal 3d6+30 damage; now only 25% of the damage is contributed by the weapon dice. If you get targeted with a Vital Strike or some rogue with a bunch of sneak attack dice, sure, feel free to use Swift Refuge to tank the hit, but it's not going to be very effective against the enemies that are most common at higher levels.
3. **Swift Sprint:** Armor restricting movement!? Whoever heard of such a thing? (*Laughs in dwarven racial traits*) Pathfinder combat generally involves very little movement beyond well-placed 5-foot steps. If you've built some skirmishing build, well, chances are good that you weren't wearing medium armor anyway. Not to mention that movement speed buffs (*boots of springing and striding, longstrider, expeditious retreat, haste, etc.*) easily supersede the movement penalties of armor. You're safe to let this one go.

Swordplay

What's It Do?

Swordplay Style is built predominantly for swashbucklers and fighters who want to use Combat Expertise to continually deflect enemies' blows. The bonuses granted aren't for everyone, to be sure, but for specific classes, it's actually a decent style feat line.

Who's It Good For?

Swashbucklers, primarily, with fighters coming in second place and everyone else in a very distant third. The style works best with full BAB and the opportune parry and riposte swashbuckler deed—what more can I say?

When Can You Get It?

BAB is going to be the rate-limiting factor in how quickly you progress through Swordplay Style, so +3, +5, and +7 are the targets to beat. If you were going to use a master of many styles dip to cut laterally through the prerequisites, Swordplay Deflection is definitely the best feat in the chain for swashbucklers and fighters—aim there first.

The Feats

- Swordplay Style:** Defensive fighting styles are typically a niche subset of Pathfinder builds, and since Crane Style and Swordplay Style don't play particularly well together, you're more or less locked out of that combo. Where Swordplay Style finds its best footing is with Combat Expertise: a +1 shield bonus to AC isn't *phenomenal*, but it's also not terrible, and the ability to ignore the attack penalty on your first attack in a round is nice. Think of it like Furious Focus, but for Combat Expertise instead of Power Attack.
- Swordplay Upset:** Swordplay Style caters to swashbucklers, who often love to feint enemies but cannot reduce the action cost below a move action (Improved Feint) without help from other sources. Swordplay Upset can be one of those other sources! An immediate action feint is infinitely better than a move action feint, although seizing the opportunity for an immediate action feint will then exclude the dodging panache deed and the riposte portion of the opportune parry and riposte deed. Still, a good option to have.
- Swordplay Deflection:** Swordplay Deflection is...complex. Typically, opportune parry and riposte costs an attack of opportunity to parry and an immediate action to riposte; here, you sacrifice one attack, most likely one of your iterative attacks in a full-attack action, then "store" that attack for later use as an opposed check against a foe's attack roll. If you don't have the opportune parry and riposte deed, the most elegant rule for when and how to use Swordplay Deflection is to store your first iterative attack (which will have the highest bonus to hit, and no attack penalty from Combat Expertise, thanks to Swordplay Style), then interrupt your opponent's first attack (which will have the highest bonus to hit, and which will also provide you the shield bonus to AC against the greatest number of attacks, should you succeed at the "parry" attempt). Swashbucklers get a huge action edge here, however, in that they don't *need* to "store" an attack at all, but can simply parry as usual and enjoy a large shield bonus to AC if they succeed at the parry attempt, in addition to negating the enemy's attack. The usual calculus

about interrupting an enemy's first attack applies here, as well, since you want to do everything you can to prolong the duration of the AC bonus.



“Manners maketh man.”

—Harry, *Kingsman*

Tiger

What's It Do?

I had heard a lot about Tiger Style but never investigated it in any depth, and I have to say, I'm a mite disappointed. Tiger Claws is the obvious pinnacle of the feat chain, but even that is good only for single-class **masters of many styles monks** who traded away flurry of blows to their archetype. The rest of the chain isn't very good, even accounting for potential upgrades from combat stamina.

Who's It Good For?

Masters of many styles monks, almost exclusively. Tiger Claws only makes sense as an offensive modality if you have fewer than two attacks that you're confident would hit an opponent, and that's not generally what happens with normal monks and brawlers.

When Can You Get It?

Monks can pick up Tiger Style at 3rd, 5th, and 8th levels; all other full-BAB classes need to wait until BAB +3, +6, and +9. Or, heck, just pick it up any time with MoMS bonus feats.

The Feats

- Tiger Style:** Different damage typing on unarmed strikes can be accomplished better by other style feats (Boar Style, e.g.), bleed damage can be accomplished better by [Belier's Bite](#), and all that's left is CMD bonuses. Those aren't good enough to bump things up above a yellow.
 - Combat Stamina:** The upgrade is *still* somehow worse than Belier's Bite. If you want to deal bleed damage, don't look here.
- Tiger Claws:** For **most monks and brawlers**, Tiger Claws is a terrible waste of a full-round action. Why would you attack once when you could use flurry of blows or brawler's flurry instead? For **masters of many styles**, who trade away flurry of blows, however, Tiger Claws is about as much damage as you can get without a Panther or Snake Style build that focuses on retributive attacks of opportunity.
 - Combat Stamina:** Yeah, my recommendation would be that you don't spend stamina on bull rush attempts. They're going to be weak no matter what.
- Tiger Pounce:** What Tiger Pounce seems to envision is a continuous cycle of bull rush → pursuit → attack, with enemies attempting to 5-foot step, Acrobatics, or withdraw away from you each round. It's not necessarily a bad vision, but if you miss with Tiger Claws in even one round, you're barred from using Tiger Pounce and will have to begin again with—most likely—a move action to pursue and a standard attack action to hit an enemy. Tiger Pounce becomes much stronger when **you have a source of movement speed buffs**, whether they come from class features like fast movement, wondrous items like *boots of springing and striding*, or spells like *baste* or *expeditious retreat*; the faster your base speed, the farther you can travel in your swift action. The elective AC penalty from Power Attack is interesting, and should be seriously considered by most monks, who will generally have more problems with their attack rolls than with their AC.

- a. **Combat Stamina:** Tiger Pounce's combat stamina upgrade is pretty good, actually. One of the weaknesses of the Tiger Claw/Pounce combo is that the cycle of pursuit → attack breaks when you fail to either hit a foe or succeed on a CMB check in a given round. This benefit simply ensures that you can simply spend a little stamina whenever you miss, move to the enemy as a swift action, and resume the cycle with a fresh Tiger Claw.

Unblinking Flame (Perfect)

What's It Do?

Narratively speaking, Perfect Style comes from the Houses of Perfection, a trio (once a quartet) of monasteries on the island of Jalmeray that each focuses on an element. You know 'em from *Avatar: the Last Airbender*, so say 'em with me: water, earth, fire, and air. The Monastery of Unbreaking Waves was destroyed 1100 years ago and only recently reestablished within the official Golarion timeline, so only the other three monasteries have styles that go along with them. Unblinking Flame Style is mostly focused on using the feint maneuver and then stunning enemies who become flat-footed as a result of your feint. Very ifrit energy.

Who's It Good For?

Wisdom-based, full-BAB classes that have focused on unarmed strikes. Monk, unchained monk, and brawler are the obvious picks, but sacred fist warpriest could also function. Maybe rangers or slayers with Irori's combat style to grab Monastic Legacy?

When Can You Get It?

Surprisingly late, given that the feasts aren't all that strong. 5th, 9th, and 13th levels are standard for the various styles of the Houses of Perfection.

The Feats

- Perfect Style:** Perfect Style always does the same thing, regardless of which House of Perfection your PC studied in: gives you a little bit of energy resistance that stacks with other sources (acid for Untwisting Iron, fire for Unblinking Flame, and electricity for Unfolding Wind) and—if you didn't already have a ki pool—a small ki pool for use with your Perfect Style powers. There's nothing particularly special about this feat, and I'm not very excited about it. Resistances are fine but not essential, especially when common spells like *resist energy* can so comprehensively outclass Perfect Style.
- Unblinking Flame Feint:** Be honest: what do you get from Unblinking Flame Feint that wasn't available elsewhere? If you want Wisdom to Bluff, a two-level inquisitor dip for the conversion or heresy inquisitions would do it *and* give you spells, *detect alignment* at-will, cunning initiative, monster lore, and a judgment 1/day. And if you're building to feint, there's no excuse for not having Improved Feint. Lucky, bad dog, no more hot dogs for you.
- Unblinking Flame Fist:** Although I'd debate whether Stunning Fist is a worthwhile playstyle in the first place, you can't say no to a +2 to the save DC if you're into that kind of thing. The ability to feint as part of a charge is undercut by the fact that you have to spend ki to get it—probably not optimal in most circumstances.

Wolf

What's It Do?

Wolf Style is concerned primarily with debuffing: you've got some movement speed penalties from the base style feat and some fatigue or ability damage from Wolf Savage, plus some tools for using the trip maneuver. I'm sorry to report, however, that all of its abilities are too narrowly applicable to make an impact.

Who's It Good For?

Even though it seems like it should be an unarmed strike build, Wolf Style and Wolf Trip have absolutely no text that specifies a weapon type. Wolf Savage is unarmed-only, though, so the usual monk, unchained monk, brawler, and sacred fist warpriest stuff applies.

When Can You Get It?

Skill rank prereqs cap progression firmly at 3rd, 6th, and 9th levels.

The Feats

- Wolf Style:** Wolf Style is unfortunately a bit limited in what it can do. You'd need to deal 60 damage in a single attack of opportunity to trigger a trip attempt against a foe with 30 feet of movement, and in practice many enemies have far more than a 30-foot base speed. There are a limited number of ways to attach Vital Strike to attacks of opportunity—Torag and Gorum's Divine Fighting Techniques will actually work here, since the feat text doesn't specify that your attack of opportunity must be taken with an unarmed strike, and I suppose Diabolic Judgment would also work if you fused two styles through a MoMS dip. Even if you're using Greater Vital Strike on an attack of opportunity, though, it's going to be hard to debuff an enemy hard enough to get the trip attempt, which leaves only a mediocre move speed debuff.
- Wolf Trip:** Why did Wolf Style and Wolf Trip have to be locked into attacks of opportunity? Why, why, why? This would be a perfectly acceptable green ability if it applied to all attacks. As it is, however, you'll only reliably trip enemies when they move or (if you have Step Up + Step Up and Strike) when they use ranged weapons, cast a spell non-defensively, or 5-foot step away from you. Even if you *can* trigger an attack of opportunity, trip does not match up favorably against most late-game enemies, who tend to have huge CMD scores, multiple legs, *no* legs, or fly speeds. ^_ (˘) _/
- Wolf Savage:** I like where Wolf Savage's head is at, but it too falls prey to the "When will this ever happen?" syndrome that afflicts Wolf Style and Wolf Trip. Let's start with the prone condition first. As we've previously established, tripping late-game enemies is really difficult to pull off, and while there are some spells that target the generally weak Reflex save and bypass CMD, those wouldn't typically be accessible to you as a monk, unchained monk, or brawler. Second, you must hit the enemy and deal at least 10 points of damage. This should be quite doable, but suffers against effects like *displacement* or *mirror image* that can cause you to miss even if your attack rolls are on point. Third, you must have a swift action to spend. Again, usually quite doable, but if you used an immediate action in your previous turn, you're out of luck; the swift action cost also means you can't savage a

creature more than once per round, barring extremely rare effects like *borrowed time*. Fourth, the enemy must fail a Fortitude save, which isn't anywhere close to a given as the strongest monster save by level. Fifth, the enemy must not be immune to ability damage or fatigue, which rules out constructs, undead, and inevitables. All this, for a measly 1d4 ability damage or a mild status condition?



Red (Poor)

Aldori

What's It Do?

A mostly defensive style that increases the effectiveness of Combat Expertise and allows you to parry one melee attack per round in the style of a swashbuckler using opportune parry and riposte. Between high feat investment and extremely low returns on that investment, however, I'd recommend the style to nearly no one.

Who's It Good For?

Given how heavy the feat prerequisites are, probably only fighters, rangers, slayers, and aldori swordlord prestige classes. You've got a lot of mediocrities required to progress through the feat line, including Alertness, Weapon Focus, and Exotic Weapon Proficiency, so access won't be easy unless your class is providing bonus feats.

When Can You Get It?

There aren't any BAB or monk level requirements, only a ton of feats. Weapon Finesse and Weapon Focus are sometimes granted as bonuses, but Alertness and Exotic Weapon Proficiency will require some investment. A human fighter could select the base style by 4th level, but you'd want to pair it with Combat Expertise soon afterward in order to take advantage of its AC scaling, which is superior to fighting defensively. For players using the *Elephant In The Room* feat tax rules, you'll get both Weapon Finesse and Combat Expertise for free, making this style line much more feasible.

The Feats

1. **Aldori Style:** The style doesn't give you much on its own, only a +2 damage bonus if you manage to hit an enemy despite your defensive fighting or Combat Expertise attack roll penalties. This is in no way worth five feats.
2. **Aldori Style Aegis:** Inferior to the swashbuckler's opportune parry and riposte deed in nearly all ways: you can only parry one enemy, you take a penalty to AC against all other creatures, you need to invest a swift action *and* an immediate action every round to maintain the benefit (meaning you'll have to do a one-round-on-one-round-off playstyle, since an immediate action taken when it's not your turn gobbles up your swift action when you next act in initiative order), you can only parry while using Combat Expertise or fighting defensively, and you can't even riposte. Swashbucklers are howling with laughter at how bad this.
3. **Aldori Style Conquest:** The attack penalties from Combat Expertise were never really the issue with Aldori Style Aegis—it was everything else. Fixing the attack penalty doesn't help the feat.

Deadhand

What's It Do?

Deadhand Style would be best classified as a defensive style, I suppose, with some debuffing tagged onto the very end. Its main function is to make you more resilient to fear effects, and to pass some of that fear and debuffing onto enemies. It's not terribly effective, though.

Who's It Good For?

The full feat line has enormous Wisdom score requirements, and that combined with the ki pool prerequisite should make you think immediately (and solely) of monk and unchained monk. The ninja class, psammokinetic kineticist, esoteric magus, medium of the master, shigenjo oracle, iron paladin, okayo corsair swashbuckler, teisatsu vigilante, and sacred fist warpriest also receive ki pools, but of these alternative options, only the warpriest is likely to have a high enough Wisdom modifier to qualify for the later feats.

When Can You Get It?

Skill ranks in Knowledge (Religion) and Wisdom score requirements are the rate-limiting factors in this style feat line, so you'll have to wait until at least 4th and 6th level to pick up the first two feats. The last, Deadhand Master, can't be purchased until at least 14th level, which is fine, because it'll take that long to achieve a Wisdom score of 23.

The Feats

1. **Deadhand Style:** Bonuses against fear effects are often pretty weak, and especially as the style is tailored toward monks and warpriests (who both have strong Will saves and a Wisdom casting stat) I'm less than impressed with Deadhand's opening salvo. As far as demoralizing enemies, you could pick up this ability in any number of ways, none of which require a failed Will save—Boar Style + Boar Ferocity could get you here, Bludgeoner + Enforcer could get you here, plain old Cornugon Smash could get you here. There's no need to bring Will saves into this.
2. **Deadhand Initiate:** More nonsense bonuses to saves against fear effects. Swallowing fear to gain temporary HP is okay, but you don't get much in return for your ki investment.
3. **Deadhand Master:** Negative levels are great debuffing tools—no one's debating that. You have to spend at least 1 point of ki per negative level, though, which will burn through your resources in a hurry. The other element to consider here is that your ki points are locked away along with those negative levels—whether the enemy lives or dies, keeps the negative levels permanently or heals them, you're all but guaranteed to lose access to those ki points for at least 24 hours.

Illusive Gnome

What's It Do?

Ostensibly? Help gnomes feint with gnome weapons. In reality, though, it doesn't do much of anything.

Who's It Good For?

Gnomes who want to feint, I suppose, although it doesn't even do that well. You're much better off with Fox Style, Diva Style, or other feint-based styles if you're looking for these kinds of abilities.

When Can You Get It?

Probably not until 3rd level or so, even for full-BAB classes. For such a poor feat line, Illusive Gnome Style is also curiously feat-intensive.

The Feats

1. **Illusive Gnome Style:** A minimum of three feats, just to gain some bonuses to feint attempts? *And* you have to sacrifice spell slots to get those bonuses? *And* you have to be using gnome weapons, which (by and large) are worse than other comparable melee weapons? No thanks.
2. **Illusive Gnome Surprise:** Bonuses to feints and dirty tricks don't make up for the fact that this feat is still abysmal. If you want weapon special features, you should just *use a weapon that has that special feature*. There's no sense in wasting a Bluff attempt just to give yourself the brace or trip quality.
3. **Illusive Gnome Bewilderment:** Alriiiiight! After five feats, we've finally arrived at this turd of a capstone: when you feint, you get to add one weapon special feature for free. Was it worth it?

Indomitable Mountain

What's It Do?

Indomitable Mountain Style gives you big bonuses to your CMD, the DC of Bluff checks to feint you, and the DC of Acrobatics checks to move past you without provoking—but only if you don't use a move action that round. Unfortunately, none of the things that the style feat line guards against are particularly life-threatening for PCs, so you run into the trouble of aggressively fixing a problem that didn't truly need to be fixed. The design feels misguided, is all.

Who's It Good For?

Full-BAB, Wisdom-based classes with Improved Unarmed Strike. Fighters, unchained monks, and brawlers are the primary audience. Whether it's truly *good* for those classes is another question entirely, because the style isn't truly good for anyone.

When Can You Get It?

Entry at 4th level is easy for the classes listed above, with progression to the later feats at 6th and 9th levels. I wouldn't recommend spending the feats on this style, though.

The Feats

1. **Indomitable Mountain Style:** Look, I'm not saying that CMD bonuses are never useful, only that if a Colossal-sized monster wants to bull rush a PC, they're going to get bull rushed—a +4 bonus isn't going to matter much. Blocking Acrobatics checks is also an extraordinarily niche effect.
2. **Indomitable Mountain Peak:** More CMD bonuses that don't do much. Pass.
3. **Indomitable Mountain Avalanche:** It's cool to rebuff enemies this forcefully, but mechanically speaking, attacks of opportunity are almost always better spent on damage instead of enemy positioning.

Linnorm

What's It Do?

Linnorm Style focuses predominantly on retaliatory unarmed strikes, but everything it does, Snake Style (Snake Fang more specifically) does better. There's simply no niche that I can imagine, even for the Wisdom-based monk builds the feat chain was clearly designed for.

Who's It Good For?

Wisdom-based unarmed strikers, which in this case will likely mean monks, unchained monks, brawlers, some fighters, sacred fist warpriests, and—hot take here—phantom blade or ward spiritualists. It's not a good style feat line, though, so I hesitate to call it “good” for anyone.

When Can You Get It?

At 3rd, 6th, and 9th levels for full-BAB classes and monks. Building a Snake Style build will yield much more fruit in the long run, however.

The Feats

- Linnorm Style:** Try as I might to twist my brain into a position where Linnorm Style is useful, I just have difficulty. The problem is this: combat builds focus on either Strength or Dexterity. Period. Because you're *substituting* Wisdom for either Strength or Dexterity, rather than *adding* Wisdom to Strength or Dexterity, you're almost always going to be trading down from your primary attribute to a secondary attribute. Even if you were a monk who wanted to use Wisdom as their attack stat, *+1 guided handwraps* will get you there without all the fuss. So...what's the point of Linnorm Style, especially when you take a permanent -2 penalty to AC to get the benefits?
- Linnorm Vengeance:** You're likely to get hit often in melee combat, so Linnorm Vengeance's bonus to attack rolls will often pop up of its own accord. With few exceptions, you should never allow an enemy to hit you, even for minimum damage: it's not the damage dice that are going to kill you, it's the static damage bonuses from 1.5x Strength, Power Attack, etc. The retaliatory strike option is also bottom-of-the-barrel. If your class feature or feat only works *in the moment before you fall unconscious or die*, you're focusing on the wrong things in your build.
- Linnorm Wrath:** Jeeez. Linnorm Style can't catch a break. It's fun to be able to retaliate against people who are attacking you, of course, but with the immediate action cost, you won't be able to do it more than once per round. Why not Snake Style instead? My comments on Linnorm Vengeance apply to the latter half of Linnorm Wrath, as well—you don't want a feat that only grants its benefit right before you *freaking die*.

Orc Fury

What's It Do?

Orc Fury Style does exactly what the name implies: makes orcs and half-orcs scarier. The style is mostly built around the Intimidate skill and the Bullying Blow feat, which doesn't exactly inspire confidence, given how bad the latter is. In general, Cornugon Smash or Enforcer are much more reliable tools for single-target demoralization; even the strength of Orc Snarl can't save this feat line from the trash bin.

Who's It Good For?

Well, orcs and half-orcs, obviously, since they're the only ones who can pick up Bullying Blow in the first place. Classes that are built to be scary already (inquisitor comes to mind) would fit in here, as would full-BAB martial classes looking to add a little debuffing and shore up their save-based defenses. There's a huge amount of investment required to achieve even modest results, however, so I'm frankly unenthused about the prospect.

When Can You Get It?

Skill ranks are again the rate-limiting factor, so 3rd, 5th, and 7th levels for any class. Again, though, I really wouldn't.

The Feats

1. **Orc Fury Style:** Right off the bat, Orc Fury Style builds on an insecure foundation: Bullying Blow, an orc-exclusive feat so inferior to Cornugon Smash and Enforcer that it's not even funny. A standard action to make one attack at a -2 penalty, followed by a free action to Intimidate? Screw that! We have much, much better options available for demoralization builds. The fact that Orc Fury Style allows you to use Bullying Blow as part of a full-attack action still doesn't permit it to rival Cornugon Smash, so the style comes off the starting block already at a huge disadvantage. Thanks, but no thanks.
2. **Orc Rampage:** Finally, three feats in, Bullying Blow loses all of its penalties. Gee, thanks. The +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls against shaken foes is minor and ultimately forgettable.
3. **Orc Snarl:** Alright, fair is fair: Orc Snarl is great. Dazzling Display is a common purchase for demoralization builds, and allows you to demoralize a whole bunch of foes at once—so what if you could get a +4 untyped bonus to all your saves against every supernatural, extraordinary, spell-like, or spell effect that they create? That would be pretty amazing, right? Unfortunately, you have to wade through four—*count 'em, four*—feats ranging from mediocre to outright bad in order to get to this point. Are you really going to make that trek?

Owl

What's It Do?

Owl Style keys three Dexterity-based skills off of BAB, rather than skill ranks: Stealth (Owl Style), Acrobatics (Owl Swoop), and Fly (Owl Dive). The design decisions feel a bit confused here. You'd want a melee-based full-BAB martial chassis that didn't have enough ranks to invest in these skills—if you did have skill ranks, they'd be superior to Owl Style almost every time—but you also couldn't reasonably use a Strength-based melee build, since the Dexterity requirements in Owl Style's later feats are so high. Owl Style itself would reward sneak attack builds making frequent ambushes, so...a full-BAB, Dexterity-based martial character with sneak attack? Slayer, maybe? Hard to imagine slayers not already being great at Stealth and Acrobatics, though.

Who's It Good For?

Like I said, perhaps slayers? It's a strange feat line that I'm frankly not convinced really adds value to any class.

When Can You Get It?

As early as 1st level, if you're playing a human or half-elf with Skill Focus (Stealth). I doubt you'd want to do that, though.

The Feats

1. **Owl Style:** Owl Style is interesting. It's clearly built for full-BAB martial classes that receive few skill ranks: fighters, barbarians, paladins, etc. Unfortunately, stances from style feats can't be maintained outside of combat, so you'd still need to invest in Stealth with skill ranks to be able to sneak around well. About the only thing that Owl Style does well is to deny an enemy their Dexterity bonus to AC for all attacks at the end of a charge, instead of only one. Most PCs won't be able to make more than one attack at the end of a charge, but barbarians with the greater beast totem rage power, avenger vigilantes with the mad rush vigilante talent, etc. might be able to make something work here.
2. **Owl Swoop:** Owl Swoop has some of the same issues as Owl Style, namely that the ability to key Acrobatics off of BAB rather than skill ranks only persists while you're in combat and in Owl Style. With its rising Dexterity requirements, Owl Swoop is starting to get out of the comfort zone for Strength-based martial.
3. **Owl Dive:** Fly is probably the least applicable of all of Owl Style's BAB-to-skill-ranks pillars, not only because not every character flies all the time but also because Fly checks are generally going to be easy for you to beat if you have Dexterity 17. I dunno. I'm unenthused.

Shapeshifter

What's It Do?

Shapeshifter Style includes some bonuses for wild shape builds, but they're all weak or highly circumstantial. I'd say no PC ever needs to seriously consider investing in these feats.

Who's It Good For?

The wild shape qualifies you for the feat line, so that means shifters and druids, plus other archetypes like feral hunter, totemic skald, serpent herald skald, feral champion warpriest, or avenging beast vigilante. I know of only one other way to get the shapeshifter subtype outside of wild shape, and that's with the malleable flesh vigilante talent; this talent doesn't grant you change shape, however, so it doesn't qualify you for these feats. It's a bad feat line anyway, so you exert yourself too hard trying to get into it.

When Can You Get It?

At BAB +3, +5, and +8, which would mean 3rd, 5th, and 8th level for shifters. Other $\frac{3}{4}$ -BAB classes would need to wait a bit longer.

The Feats

1. **Shapeshifter Style:** The bonuses are all pretty blasé—nothing that you wouldn't already be getting through cheap wondrous items or low-level spells.
2. **Shapeshifter Twist:** Bonuses to your CMD score and on checks to escape grapples seem about as niche as niche can be. Bad.
3. **Shapeshifter Savage:** Gosh, this feat line is bad. No, you don't need to make one attack when you wild shape.

Shielded Staff

What's It Do?

Shielded Staff Style lets you combine a spear/quarterstaff/longspear with a shield to create a hybrid weapon/shield. It raises questions of *why*, precisely, you would choose to do that, however: your shielded staff seems to suck up a whole bunch of Two-Weapon Fighting feats without giving notable advantages above and beyond a typical sword-and-board TWF build.

Who's It Good For?

Any full-BAB class that would have been using TWF anyway, I suppose. Rangers and slayers are obvious candidates thanks to their fighting styles, but fighters and most other full-BAB classes could enter this feat line reasonably well. I'm not saying it's *worth* your entry, only that it wouldn't be the most difficult thing in the world to effect.

When Can You Get It?

At 1st level for fighters, or shortly thereafter for everyone else. The latter two feats can be picked up at BAB +4 and +8, which will equate to 4th and 8th level for full-BAB classes. Note that Shielded Staff Master does not require Shielded Staff Ambush as a prereq, so you could skip the "middle" feat if you wanted Master without Ambush for some reason.

The Feats

1. **Shielded Staff Style:** Huh. What a funky style feat. The advantage to attaching your shield to a spear, longspear, quarterstaff, etc. is that you get to wield it in two hands (for your 1.5x Strength modifier to damage) while still gaining a shield bonus to AC, at the cost of a -1 penalty to attack rolls. Even though the style requires Two-Weapon Fighting, you can't actually TWF with it, so my instinct is to ask, "Why not just leave the two weapons separate and make two attacks at a -2, instead of one attack at a -1?"
2. **Shielded Staff Ambush:** Most combat maneuvers allow you to make CMB checks as part of a full-attack action, and there are feats to allow you to do so even if the combat maneuver doesn't permit it as a baseline feature (Quick Dirty Trick, for example). An immediate action combat maneuver therefore doesn't get you much that you couldn't already have picked up elsewhere, especially since doing so forces you to surrender your shield bonus to AC for the round.
3. **Shielded Staff Master:** *Finally*, shielded staves can be used with no penalty to attack rolls and you can enhance your shield bonus to AC normally. I'm still having a really hard time discerning how Shielded Staff Master is better than, say, Shielded Gauntlet Style or a normal sword-and-board TWF build. Why build into TWF if you don't ever intend to use your weapons separately?

Signature Strike

What's It Do?

Signature Strike Style deals with [called shots](#), an optional rules system introduced in *Ultimate Combat* that primarily affects gunslingers and swashbucklers. It's the classic *Fallout* V.A.T.S. idea. Unfortunately, called shots have huge burdens imposed on them from the get-go, taking anywhere from a -2 to a -20 attack penalty and requiring a full-round action to use. You can *kind of* solve the attack penalty and action economy problems with [Improved Called Shot](#), which non-gunslingers or non-swashbucklers are required to have for entry into this feat line, but it's still a pretty sub-optimal playstyle.

Who's It Good For?

Gunslingers and swashbucklers, almost exclusively. Swashbucklers fare slightly better because some of the feats require consistent critical hits.

When Can You Get It?

At BAB +7, +9, and +11, which seems ludicrously high when you think about how little the style feat line actually does.

The Feats

1. **Signature Strike Style:** This is, what, four feats of total investment in exchange for 1d3 rounds of the shaken condition, tops? I'm all for the *Legend of Zorro* flavor that this style imparts, but it's in no way mechanically worth it.
2. **Signature Strike Taunt:** Minor penalties to AC don't help much because the base style is so bad. Remember, enemies need to fail a Will save to even gain the shaken condition, and even then it persists for only 1d3 rounds.
3. **Signature Strike Triumph:** Eesh, another poor style feat. The extra saving throws against emotion, fear, and mind-affecting effects are interesting, but they require that you (1) hit an enemy with a called shot, (2) spend panache or grit to leave a scar, (3) hope that the enemy fails their save to gain said scar, (4) attack that same enemy *again*, (5) threaten a critical hit, and (6) confirm the critical hit...all that before anything happens. Swashbucklers can probably get all that to happen with some regularity, but even so, man, what a long road to walk to get there.

Stock-Striker

What's It Do?

Clear the chickens off the runway, it's a gunslinger-exclusive style feat line! Stock-Striker Style sets up your grimacing, Eastwood-esque Pathfinder PCs to pull some gun kata, à la Christian Bale in *Equilibrium*, on foes who get into close quarters. It's a pity the pistol-whip deed is so mechanically bad.

Who's It Good For?

Gunslingers, pretty obviously. The Amateur Gunslinger feat doesn't grant 3rd-level deeds, so that's a miss. Other firearm-focused archetypes that could theoretically use pistol-whip include spellscar drifter cavaliers, steel hound investigators, holy gun paladins, and trophy hunter rangers.

When Can You Get It?

As soon as you get the pistol-whip deed, which is to say 3rd level. The other feats in the chain can be picked up at BAB +7 and +9, although the reasons why you'd consider doing that are the real mystery.

The Feats

1. **Stock-Striker Style:** Pistol-whip is just a bad deed, plain and simple—you're better off spending feats to get Snap Shot and Improved Snap Shot, instead of using your gun as a melee weapon. Even if you were building for pistol-whip, the bonuses in the base style feat are far too weak to merit a feat.
2. **Stock-Striker Sweep:** So now you can kinda Cleave with pistol-whip? I guess? Unfortunately, Stock-Striker Sweep assumes a successful CMB check to knock an enemy prone; there are two issues with that assumption. First, gunslingers are a Dexterity-based class with absolutely no incentives to prioritize Strength, so their CMB is likely to be quite a bit lower than Strength-based martial, even though they share full BAB progression. Second, pistol-whip's combat maneuver check reads, "the gunslinger can make a combat maneuver check to knock the target prone as a free action." It is *not* a trip maneuver, hence feats like Improved Trip or Greater Trip won't improve your chances of knocking an enemy down—it's just a flat CMB check against their CMD. Very unlikely to succeed.
3. **Stock-Striker Takedown:** I'm going to give Stock-Striker Takedown a yellow rating just for rule of cool—I mean, you cold-cock someone, knock them to the ground, and then put a bullet in their chest from close range!—but it's otherwise no more effective than the other feats in this style. By this point, you've spent a full round trying to knock someone down and shoot them once when you could have shot them *at least* two times (+9/+4 with base iteratives, +7/+7/+2 with Rapid Shot, and +7/+7/+7/+2 with *haste* and Rapid Shot) with a normal full-attack action.

Twin Fang

What's It Do?

Twin Fang Style lets you carve away armor bonuses to AC and perform TWF attacks more easily with kama or daggers. It fails to beat Vital Strike in many cases, however, which makes it more or less dead weight.

Who's It Good For?

My first thought was rogues, but the BAB requirements and Quick Draw prereq make it generally unappealing for them. Slayer? Ranger? Monks and brawlers get an automatic in, of course. Anything that has full BAB progression and uses TWF extensively can at least function as the target audience.

When Can You Get It?

At 1st, 6th, and 8th levels, for full-BAB classes or monks, and at 2nd, 8th, and 11th levels for $\frac{3}{4}$ -BAB classes. Not that I'm recommending that in the slightest.

The Feats

- Twin Fang Style:** Although Twin Fang Style might seem fairly powerful to new players at first blush, it's actually not. The limited duration is a concern; the requirement of hitting with a large number of TWF attacks is a concern; the fact that many enemies will not have any armor bonuses to AC is a concern. If you're TWFing kama or daggers anyway, it'll do *something*—it just might not do as much as you'd like.
- Twin Fang Strike:** Mathematically, Twin Fang Strike is no better than Vital Strike. You have to use an attack action (just as you do with Vital Strike) and you apply precision damage and other effects that trigger on a hit only once (just as with Vital Strike). Attacking twice is good, but mathematically, the “roll two d20s, take the better” mechanic adds about 3.86 to your effective die roll. But you're making those rolls at a -4 penalty! So if you're going to make two attacks at an effective 9.86 (Twin Fang Strike) or one attack that deals double damage at an effective 10.5 (Vital Strike), why choose this feat?
- Twin Fang Lunge:** Continuing on with our “Twin Fang Strike is similar to Vital Strike” analogy, Twin Fang Lunge essentially gives you the ability to Vital Strike on a charge (i.e., Twin Fang Strike on a double move). The usual restrictions on charging don't apply to double moves, of course, but I still question the basic value of this feat line.

Other Feats

Weapon Style Mastery: All else being equal, Weapon Style Mastery is available only to fighters, or to other classes that gain weapon training (sohei monks, myrmidarch magi, molthuni arsenal chaplain warpriests, etc.). I'm still inclined to think that a MoMS dip to pick up fuse styles is a better investment than Weapon Style Mastery, but if you do want to jump into this feat, note that only one of your styles needs Weapon Focus—the other can be whatever you want it to be. Look [here](#) to determine which styles are eligible for this feat.

Combat Style Master: In general, builds that focus on more than one style feat line will have taken a MoMS dip in order to snag fuse styles, and thus will not need to switch between the two, even as a free action. The bit about beginning combat in a style is interesting, but really only bears fruit when **you have a strong defensive style** like Crane, Snake, or Untwisting Iron Style that you rely on to protect you even when you're caught unawares.

Items

Dhoti of Style Mastery (CL 3, 5400 gp): The *dhoti of style mastery* is reasonably cheap, occupies the rarely-used body slot, and grants up to $3d8+3$ temporary HP (average 16.5) 1/day as you enter a stance. That's a decent value—solid B-.

Earth Child Faceguard (CL 10, 10000 gp): Earth Child Style is useful only against giants, and while some campaigns will accommodate it more easily than others (*Giantslayer* or *Rise of the Runelords*, e.g.) the style simply won't be useful, even to dwarves.