

# GRAPPLER'S HANDBOOK

## EXPANDED

By JOSHUA & JADEN VARGO

GRAPPLING TECHNIQUES FOR  
COMBAT ENCOUNTERS WITHIN  
FIFTH EDITION  
DUNGEONS & DRAGONS



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## EXPANDED



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During my travels throughout Faerûn I have trained under a number of Martial Arts masters and combat veterans. I have also fought in many encounters using the skills that I have acquired to great success. The first veteran that trained me was Taldak Kragenart. Taldak inspired me to seek out new adventures and to never stop learning new ways to effectively defeat my enemies. After spending years mastering new methods of controlling my opponents in hand-to-hand combat, I also learned that these techniques allowed me to subdue many challengers with relatively little violence. I have found that pride and a moment of foolish action by another doesn't always warrant taking their life. One master that I studied under helped me learn to value the lives of others and that through meditation I can calm and focus my mind and body to be one. I returned to Taldak and joined his new Order of the Silent Dragon hoping to pass on my knowledge. I am writing this manual with the intention of helping new members of the Order learn not only the many techniques but the ideals that our Order holds in high regard as they were passed to us by the Unseen Protector that the Order was named to honor. Don't expect to learn all of the moves in this book in a short amount of time; it took me nearly the lifetime of a Human to master what is contained herein and I am continuing to learn and create new techniques that may be added to this at some time in the future.

*-Arnalor the Swift*



# INTRODUCTION



## WHAT IS THE GRAPPLER'S HANDBOOK

**G**RAPPLER'S HANDBOOK IS A SUPPLEMENT written by Martial Arts practitioners that also love playing DUNGEONS & DRAGONS. Many of these moves are directly inspired by different martial arts such as BJJ, Judo, Karate, and even Wrestling.

In this manual you will find expanded grappling mechanics that you can use in the world's greatest roleplaying game. The sections listed below will give your PCs, NPCs and creatures the options in combat to perform different takedowns, leg sweeps, and grappling techniques to make your encounters much more interesting and even useful in scenarios where deadly violence may not be the best option. The technique descriptions are a baseline for how the mechanics work so feel free to use your imagination or technical knowledge (depending on your own background) to describe the actions that your characters perform.

Grappling is an action that can be used in combat and is a direct competition between the attacker and the target in either Strength or Dexterity. This guide gives you the tools you need to describe different types of grappling moves that can be taken as an action from a standing position or from various prone positions on the ground. Depending on the outcome of the grappling move performed there are follow up techniques that can be used to get a desired outcome, such as restraining an opponent, breaking an opponent's limb, or even choking out an opponent.





## GRAPPLING IN YOUR GAMES


Currently in fifth edition *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*, grappling seems to be a bit limited to a few simple mechanics that allow a character to attempt to impose a condition or an effect on a target. This simple mechanic actually allows for a great number of things to happen while playing, with a little imagination though. Being creative with your game play is something that most players truly enjoy, and everyone has their own style or flavor that they use when describing how “it” goes down.

What we’re essentially doing with the Grappler’s Handbook is using the existing mechanics for grappling in fifth edition *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*, and we’re adding some realistic flavor to the grappling aspect of the game. Everyone knows that you can grab your target to restrain them just as they know you can stab or swing a weapon to inflict damage, and with some added creativity you can feel more immersed while engaging in combat.

For instance, let’s look at the Battle Master subclass for Fighters - you can now use the technically correct term and function for moves such as “Parry” or “Riposte” without having to learn the real life sequences and details that would just bog down the game. Not everyone likes to play this way but honestly, think about why video game developers moved past the text based computer games where the combat simulators would simply print the math results on screen. When used properly, the moves in this guide can be as fun as many of the class features or even spells that we all enjoy.

The intention of this guide is not to give you a complex set of moves that bring real life grappling into the game, where it’ll take many rounds of back and forth to figure out which character finally gets the upper hand. It is instead meant to give you options that you can pick and choose from that will hopefully become staples of your character’s fighting tactics or style. If you plan on using grappling often with your character, we suggest picking out a few moves that you think are cool and try those out in combat and if you think you want to use different ones or add more to your repertoire then come back to this book and have at it.

In real life martial arts, it takes many years to learn how to implement a great number of



techniques effectively, and so you can also take this approach with adding the moves available to your character by taking only a set number of moves at specific character levels much like the Fighter archetype of Battle Master. Talk with your DM and use your creativity to come up with a system that works best at your table, and most importantly of all have fun!

### **Implements:**

Using implements as part of your grappling is a way to increase its usability during combat situations where you need to keep hold of your weapons while imposing the effects and conditions from grappling. Just as weapon experts in real life can use weapons and other objects to add more leverage to make the techniques more effective, you can add bonuses for certain techniques.

### **Using the Injuries and Lingering effects:**

Using these mechanics to “break” a target’s limb or to “choke” them unconscious can be an exciting way to spice up your combat. However, you need to be aware of how much is too much with your group. Talk with your DM, or your players about how you want to implement the suggested thresholds for these effects. Just like how you can use the lingering effects from the fifth edition *Dungeon Master’s Guide* at times that are decided by the DM, you can use the DM’s discretion to impose an injury or you can use the suggested thresholds as a constant standard.

Be aware that the more consistent access the players have to inflict major damage to a target, the more they will use it. I’m sure that as a DM or player, you wouldn’t want one PC going around and snapping the arms of everyone they can in each combat scenario; that would just get old really fast and make them a bit overpowered. Use these rules and mechanics as you see fit and of course, make it fun!

*“I’ve seen people describe a variety of ways to do a grapple...”*

*I have let many players who give me good descriptions do it (grapple) with different parts of their body...*

*...As DM I’ll definitely allow that”*

*-Jeremy Crawford*

Dragon Talk: Sage Advice - Grappling



## HOW TO USE THE GRAPPLER'S HANDBOOK

Making a grappling move will follow the same contest rules from the fifth edition *Player's Handbook* Chapter 9.

The Grappling skill will use Dexterity as the base ability, but using the variant rule from the fifth edition *Player's Handbook* Chapter 7), the attempted technique may have Strength as the primary ability. In this case you will use your Strength modifier instead of your Dexterity modifier for the grapple check.

Once the attacker declares that they are taking the grapple action, they can use one of the grappling moves listed in the following pages. The outcome of the grapple check will be determined by the die rolls; whichever combatant rolls the highest will win the contest. If the grapple is successful then the attacker can declare a follow up bonus action, if there is one associated with the technique. If the grappling technique doesn't have a bonus action, then follow the description for which techniques can be used and when.

Each technique will list in its description what effects apply and if there is a condition that applies. If the attacker's roll is lower than the target's, then the grapple attempt is unsuccessful. In the rare event that the grapple check results in a tie, then both combatants are considered locked in-contest and have the "grappled" condition until one of them makes a successful move on their next turn.

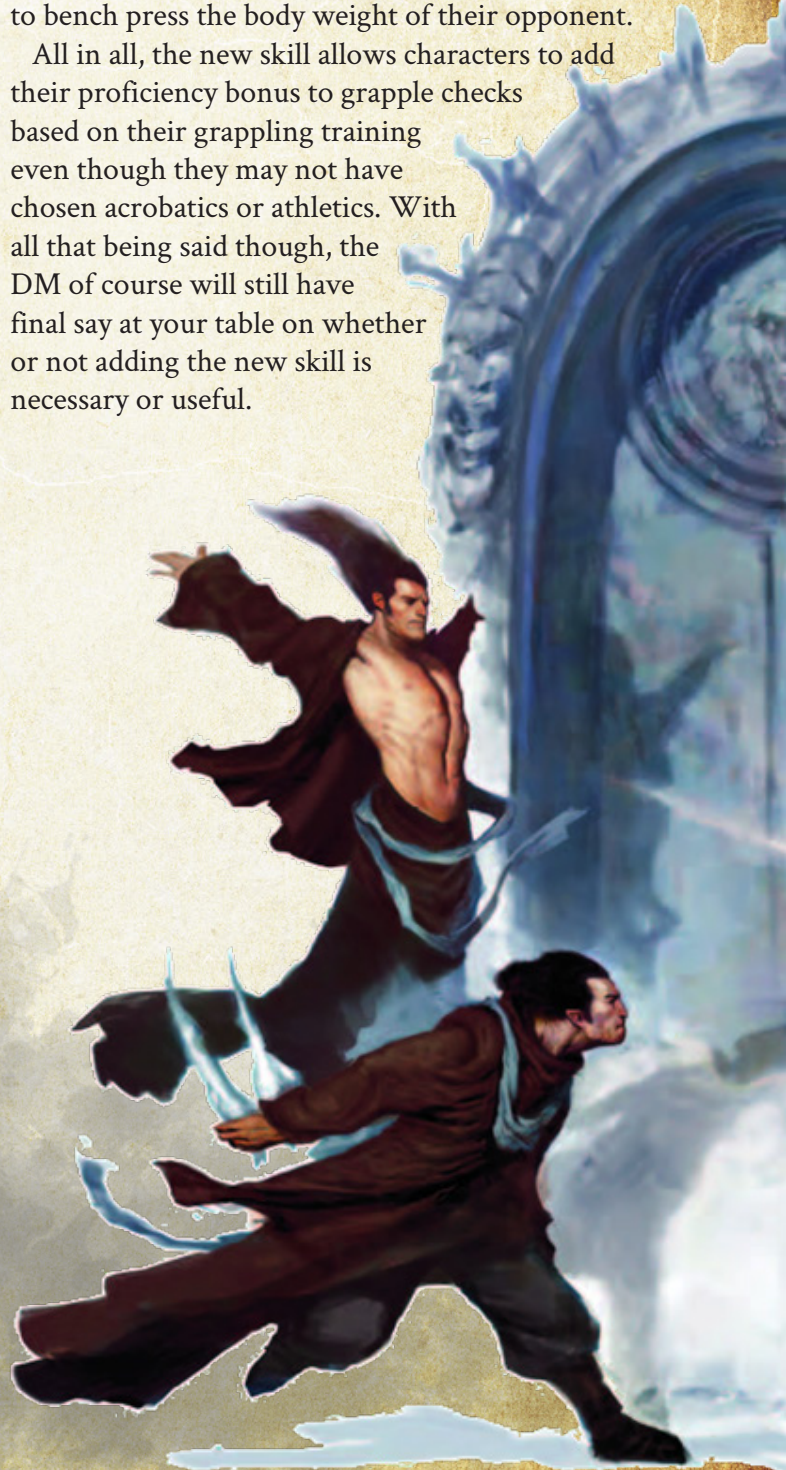
If you want to use the grappling mechanics and techniques from this book for your created NPCs and monsters, please see the section below called NPCs & Monsters for examples of how this can be done.



## GRAPPLING SKILL

We feel that grappling deserves its own skill because a character, as in real life, can be well trained and proficient in the art of grappling but not necessarily proficient with acrobatics or athletics. In martial arts there are such principles used with techniques, such as leverage, momentum, and bone alignment, that even a smaller person can still use strength as related to the technique even though they might not be able to bench press the body weight of their opponent.

All in all, the new skill allows characters to add their proficiency bonus to grapple checks based on their grappling training even though they may not have chosen acrobatics or athletics. With all that being said though, the DM of course will still have final say at your table on whether or not adding the new skill is necessary or useful.



# POSITIONS

**P**OSITIONS ARE DEFINED AS ONE OF THE following for the purpose of determining what moves can be performed. Each technique will have the position listed in its description.

## STANDING POSITIONS

### BOTH STANDING

When two creatures are within range for a grapple and both are standing.

### PRONE

When two creatures are within range for a grapple and one is standing, while one is prone. This position will be referred to in the description of a move where it will define whether the attacker will be standing or prone.

## GROUND POSITIONS

Each of the different positions below involves one creature on the bottom and one on top.

The creatures in a ground position are prone to creatures not involved in the grapple contest. Neither creature in a ground position has advantage or disadvantage against each other while grappling, unless a specific condition applies.

The ground position descriptions will state which creature is in control, being able to grapple the other creature. The creature that is not in control and is grappled will have the chance to make a Strength or Dexterity grapple check on their next turn to attempt an escape. On a successful escape a creature can use their movement to change positions if they choose, or they can attempt another technique from their current position.







## MOUNT

In the mount position, the creature on top sits on the bottom creature's torso, while the bottom creature is prone. The creature on top can take actions that are allowed while using their body weight and skill to keep the target grappled.

## GUARD

The guard position involves the bottom creature with their legs crossed around the torso under the arms of the top creature. The creature in top guard is grappled by the creature in bottom guard. Even though top guard is considered to be a non-controlling position, you have more options from this position to escape or take actions.

## SIDE CONTROL

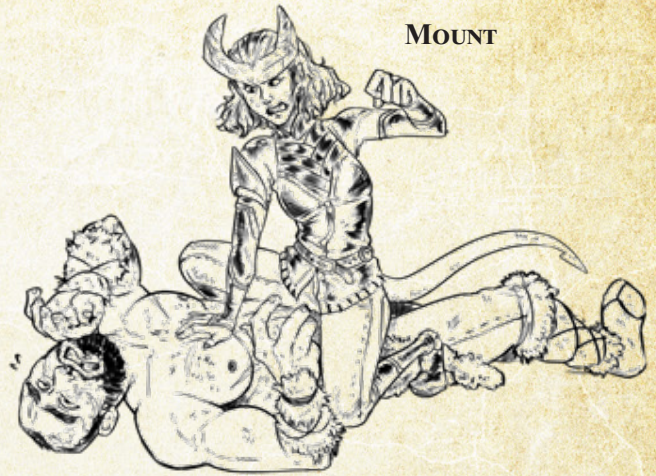
In side control, the top creature lays on top of the torso of the bottom creature at a 90-degree angle, using their body weight and positioning skill to keep the target grappled.

## BACK CONTROL

In back control, the creature in control wraps legs around the torso, hooking the feet inside the thighs of the target while wrapping their arms around the target's neck or shoulders. The target is grappled until they escape or are released.



MOUNT



SIDE CONTROL



GUARD



BACK CONTROL



## GRAPPLING IN

### FIFTH EDITION

**W**HEN YOU WANT TO GRAB A CREATURE OR wrestle with it, you can use the Attack action to make a special melee attack, a grapple. If you're able to make multiple attacks with the Attack action, this attack replaces one of them.

The target of your grapple must be no more than one size larger than you and must be within your reach. Using at least one free hand, you try to seize the target by making a grapple check instead of an attack roll: a Strength (Athletics) check contested by the target's Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check (the target chooses the ability to use). If you succeed, you subject the target to the grappled condition. The condition specifies the things that end it, and you can release the target whenever you like (no action required).

**Escaping a Grapple.** A grappled creature can use its action to escape. To do so, it must succeed on a Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check contested by your Strength (Athletics) check.

**Moving a Grappled Creature.** When you move, you can drag or carry the grappled creature with you, but your speed is halved, unless the creature is two or more sizes smaller than you.

**Shoving a Creature.** Using the Attack action, you can make a special melee attack to shove a creature, either to knock it prone or push it away from you. If you're able to make multiple attacks with the Attack action, this attack replaces one of them.

The target must be no more than one size larger than you and must be within your reach. Instead of making an attack roll, you make a Strength (Athletics) check contested by the target's Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check (the target chooses the ability to use). If you win the contest, you either knock the target prone or push it 5 feet away from you.

## INFLECTING INJURIES

**W**HEN USING CHOKES OR LOCKS IN grappling, you have realistic options to attempt to inflict injuries with lingering effects. Here we will provide some suggested thresholds for allowing a character to attempt techniques that could leave their target with a lingering injury. The ideas provided here have been playtested and have had various degrees of success at keeping combat balanced. It will be up to the DM to decide which conditions will fit each scenario or the overall standard that works best at your table.

### *Hit point threshold:*

When using this method, you use the target's hit point maximum to determine if they are weakened enough to be susceptible to an injury after a successful attempt.

- Creatures with less than 25 maximum HP (regardless of max HP)
- Creatures with up to 100 maximum HP that are at or below 75% of their max HP
- Creatures with over 100 maximum HP that are at or below 50% of their max HP

### *Critical success:*

When using this method, you can allow the character to inflict an injury only if they:

- Roll a "critical" success.
- Use a combination of the above HP threshold and the character rolling a "critical" success on the attempt.

### ARMBAR



## OPTIONAL MECHANICS

**H**ERE ARE SOME OPTIONAL MECHANICS THAT the DM can use to enhance the immersive feel when grappling.

### EXHAUSTION

Every grappler is keenly aware that while grappling, it is not difficult to be overcome by exhaustion without having a very high level of training. One level of exhaustion can be applied after three consecutive failed attempts at an escape or to execute a technique on a grappled creature. Creatures that are immune to exhaustion will not suffer from the effects.

### GRAPPLING LEVELS

Keeping characters within their scope of abilities can be as important to your game as many other aspects. There are good reasons why spells and other useful features in fifth edition *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* are limited to certain classes, races, or other conditions. This idea can also apply to these expanded mechanics and techniques found in this book. If you choose to utilize the grappling skill as suggested in this book, you can allow your players to only perform the majority of these techniques if they have proficiency with the Grappling skill. If you choose to limit the use of these techniques, please see the section on Basic Grappling actions for determining where to draw the line for players that are not proficient with the grappling skill.

### GRAPPLER FEAT

The Grappler feat is an available feat in the fifth edition *Player's Handbook*. We suggest adding these bonuses to the feat to make it more useful to PCs that want to make the most of grappling.

- You can use your reaction to attempt to grapple a creature that has just escaped your grasp.
- You can choose to succeed a failed grapple attempt (1/day).
- You can use the grappling action as one of your attacks

## BASIC GRAPPLING ACTIONS

**T**HE MECHANICS OUTLINED ABOVE FROM the fifth edition grappling rules allow you to perform a few basic but effective actions which will be highlighted below. These actions can be used by any character that is capable of performing such moves. This is where DMs that choose to use grappling levels separate the options of available grappling techniques between those that are proficient with grappling and those that are not.

### THE GRAPPLE

This is a basic move that takes one action to grab a target creature and subject that creature to the “grappled” condition. Once you have successfully grappled a creature you can basically control their movement by keeping them grappled while you use your next action to do one of the following:

- Keep them grappled
- Move them a distance up to half of your speed
- Use the “shove” action to push them away or prone on the ground

For more information on information on strategy with grappling see “The Art of War for D&D Players” by M.T. Black on [DMsGuild.com](http://DMsGuild.com).





# TECHNIQUES

**T**ECHNIQUES ARE LISTED AND SORTED BY position. Each technique description will include the type of action it takes, and the requirements for having one or both hands free and the abilities for the grapple contest.

**Chokes.** The primary use of a choke is to grapple a creature, but if the creature is weakened enough, the technique can be used to “choke out” the opponent, leaving them unconscious for a time. In order to choke out a creature, you must have all of the conditions met as determined by the DM. See the *Inflicting Injuries* section.

**Locks.** Locks are techniques that are meant to grapple an opponent by applying leverage and pressure to joints of an appendage of a creature. If a lock is performed successfully and you have the right conditions as determined by the DM, you may attempt a “joint break”. See the *Inflicting Injuries* section.

**Escapes.** Some of the techniques are simply an action to attempt an escape from a position that leaves the creature grappled, to get into a position of control.

**Monsters.** Most of the techniques listed here are described as though two humanoids are grappling, however these techniques can just as well be used against non-humanoid creatures, provided that they are no bigger than one size larger than the character. Talk with the DM about what will work with any particular creature.

## STANDING

### ARM LOCK

Use: Action, Reaction  
Requirements: Both hands free  
Type: Lock

Use one free hand to grab the target’s wrist while using the other hand to put pressure on another joint to create leverage, controlling to restrain or putting enough pressure to dislocate or break a joint. If you win the contest, the opponent is grappled. While grappling the opponent, you can use your bonus action to attempt to break their arm. You can also use this move as a reaction to the opponent failing an attack roll against you.

### BEAR HUG

Use: Action  
Requirements: Both hands free  
Type: Takedown  
This move is simply using both arms to wrap around the target and, by sheer strength, wrenching the target to one side, forcefully throwing them to the ground. If you win the contest, the target is thrown to the ground, takes bludgeoning damage equal to your Strength modifier. The target is disarmed and prone unless they succeed a Strength saving throw (DC 10+your Strength modifier+your proficiency bonus).

### DOUBLE LEG TAKEDOWN

Use: Action, Reaction  
Requirements: Both hands free  
Type: Takedown  
Use both hands to grab a target’s legs while using your body to force them to the ground. If you win the contest, the target is knocked into bottom mount, and you are in top mount. You can also use this technique as a reaction to the opponent failing an attack roll against you.

### FOOT SWEEP

Use: Action, Reaction  
Requirements: One hand free  
Type: Takedown  
Using one hand to grab the opponent’s arm while simultaneously using one leg to kick the opponent’s leg out from under them, forcing them to fall to the ground. If you win the contest, the opponent is disarmed and knocked prone, and you can use your bonus action to follow into a ground position or make a melee attack while restraining one arm.

### GUILLOTINE CHOKE


Use: Reaction  
Requirements: Both hands free  
Type: Choke  
When an opponent misses an attack falling forward, you take the opportunity to reach your arm under and around the front of the neck, locking your hands to choke. If you win the contest, you will have the target’s head locked in a choke under one arm. The target is grappled.

### HIP THROW

Use: Action, Reaction  
Requirements: One hand free  
Type: Takedown  
Move in close to the target and use one arm to wrap behind the torso, while turning your hips under the target’s, then lean forward to throw the opponent over your hip to the ground. If you win the contest, the opponent is thrown to the ground, disarmed and takes bludgeoning damage equal to your Strength modifier, leaving them prone.

### LAPEL DRAG

Use: Action  
Requirements: One hand free  
Type: Takedown  
By grabbing your target’s chest/shoulder area with any handhold you can find, then dropping your body weight to the ground while spinning, you can effectively throw your target to the ground while maintaining control of their upper body as you



position yourself for your next move. If you win the contest, the target is thrown to the ground 5 ft in a direction of your choice and is prone.

### REAR CHOKE

Use: Action, Reaction

Requirements: Both hands free

Type: Choke

Stepping behind the target while wrapping your arm around their neck, locking your hand to your other arm to create pressure on both sides of the neck, cutting off blood flow or using the forearm to cut off the windpipe. If you win the contest, the opponent is grappled and restrained. You can attempt this move as a reaction to the opponent failing an attack roll against you.

### SINGLE LEG TAKEDOWN

Use: Action

Requirements: One or both hands free

Type: Takedown

Use one or both hands to grab a target's leg, usually around the knee, while using your shoulder/upper body to force the target to the ground. If you win the contest, the target is knocked to the ground prone. As a bonus action, you may follow the target into a ground position of your choice or make a melee attack.

### STANDING ARM TRIANGLE CHOKE

Use: Action, Reaction

Requirements: Both hands free

Type: Choke

Stepping into a position beside the target while using your arm to wrap under the armpit of the target all the way to the other side of the neck where you lock your hand to your arm and press your head into the target's head, creating a pressure point on their neck. If you win the contest, the opponent is grappled and restrained.

You can also use this move as a reaction to the opponent failing an attack roll against you.

### SUN DRAGON SLAM

Use: Action, Reaction

Requirements: Both hands free

Type: Takedown

You position yourself to grab with one hand on the target's upper body and one hand inside the leg. You lift the target off the ground and slam them back down by squatting down under the target's body mass then lifting up to flip the target's legs over their head. If you win the contest, you slam them to the ground, disarming them and leaving them prone. The target must then succeed on a Constitution saving throw (DC 10+your Strength modifier+your proficiency bonus) or be stunned until the end of their next turn.

## PRONE

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### ANKLE SWEEP

Use: Action

Requirements: One hand free

Type: Takedown

Using one hand to grab the opponent's ankle while simultaneously using one leg to kick either the opponent's other leg or their waist area to make the opponent off balance and fall



to the ground. If you win the contest, the opponent is knocked prone, and you can use your movement to move into a ground position of your choice or to stand up.

### BELT GRAB

Use: Action

Requirements: One hand free

Type: Takedown

Using one hand to grab the opponent's belt while using your body weight to twist and throw opponent to the ground. If you win the contest, the opponent is thrown to the ground prone, and you can use your movement to climb on top of them in mount.

## TOP MOUNT

---

### ARMBAR

Use: Action

Requirements: Both hands free

Type: Lock

Grabbing the opponent's straightened arm while twisting and extending both legs across the opponent's upper torso. If you win the contest, the opponent is grappled and restrained. You can then use your bonus action to try to break the arm.

## BOTTOM MOUNT

---

### UPA ESCAPE

Use: Action

Requirements: One hand free

Type: Escape

You buck your hips and grab the opponent to force them forward, then grab one arm and one leg to roll the opponent over. If you win the contest, you can stand up or switch to a controlling ground position.

## TOP GUARD

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### GUARD PASS ESCAPE

Use: Action

Requirements: One hand free

Type: Escape

If you win the contest, you force the opponent's leg to the ground, then climb over it to a top position, either side control or mount.

### SLIDING ANKLE LOCK

Use: Action

Requirements: Both hands free

Type: Lock

If you win the contest, you lock the opponent's ankle under your arm, leaving them restrained. You can then use your bonus action to attempt an ankle break.



## BOTTOM GUARD

### ARMBAR

Use: Action

Requirements: Both hands free

Type: Lock

Grabbing the opponents straightened arm while twisting and wrapping both legs across the opponent's opposite shoulder. If you win the contest, the opponent is grappled and restrained. You can then use your bonus action to try to break the arm.

### GUILLOTINE CHOKE

Use: Action, Reaction

Requirements: Both hands free

Type: Choke

Unwrapping your legs from around the opponent, you sit up enough to reach your arm over and around the back of the neck, then locking hands and falling backwards to secure your legs around the opponent once more. If you win the contest, the opponent is grappled and restrained.

### LEG TRIANGLE CHOKE

Use: Action, Reaction

Requirements: One hand free

Type: Choke

Shifting your position to wrap both of your legs around the side of the neck and trapping one extended arm, you lock your legs together and choke the opponent. If you win the contest, the opponent is grappled and restrained.

### SCISSOR SWEEP

Use: Action

Requirements: One hand free

Type: Escape

While in bottom guard, you sweep the opponent with both legs to get into top mount. If you win the contest, the opponent is rolled to bottom mount, while you gain top mount.

## TOP SIDE CONTROL

### ARM TRIANGLE CHOKE

Use: Action, Reaction

Requirements: Both hands free

Type: Choke

Wrapping one arm behind the target's neck while using your head to apply pressure under the extended arm of the target and locking hands creating a pressure point on their neck. If you win the contest, the opponent is grappled and restrained.

### KIMURA LOCK

Use: action

Requirements: Both hands free

Type: Lock

By using the arm nearest the target's waist to grab the opponent's wrist and wrapping your other arm under the shoulder to lock hands, you put immense pressure on the target's shoulder. If you win the contest, you force the opponent's arm to the ground in a bent position allowing you to attempt a joint break as a bonus action.

## BOTTOM SIDE CONTROL

### KNEE AND ELBOW ESCAPE

Use: Action

Requirements: Both hands free

Type: Escape

By using your knee and your elbow to push under the opponent's torso, you twist your hips out of side control and into bottom guard. If you win the contest, you shift into bottom guard. You can then use your bonus action to quickly attempt a technique in guard position.



# IMPLEMENTS

## WHAT ARE IMPLEMENTS?

**T**HINK OF YOUR FAVORITE ACTION HERO IN a fight scene where they use a small fighting stick or maybe even a knife in one hand and they end up twisting the arm of their opponent and using the weapon as leverage to lock them up in a restrained state or to add some power to their throw.

If you have Martial Arts experience or like watching fight scenes in some of the major spy or other action films then you should have an idea of what this can look like. Using an Implement in grappling can increase your chances of success with restraining an opponent or giving you an extra bonus action to hit or stab the opponent.

Weapons that have the Light property and/or the Finesse property can be used as implements. A character can only use an implement if they have proficiency with the weapon they are trying to use. Implements can grant bonuses or attacks to a character using them.

### SAI

Name	Cost	Damage	Weight	Properties
Sai	2gp	1d4 peircing	1 lb.	Light, finesse, thrown 20/60

The sai is a three-pronged metal weapon that is generally held so the length of the weapon is against the forearm, keeping it somewhat hidden from an opponent and making it harder to judge the weapon's actual reach in combat. The sai can be used for blocking while parrying attacks and easy use as an implement for grappling techniques. Sai are typically used in pairs but can be used singly or in a set of three with one carried in the belt to easily replace one that is thrown.

Sai can deal piercing or bludgeoning damage depending whether the weapon extended out is used for stabbing or swinging strikes. If the sai is used for grappling it adds +1 to all grapple checks and techniques that allow implements to be used. For example, if two sai are wielded then you gain +2 bonus to grapple checks and techniques.



### TONFA

Name	Cost	Damage	Weight	Properties
Tonfa	1gp	1d4 bludgeoning	1 lb.	Light, finesse

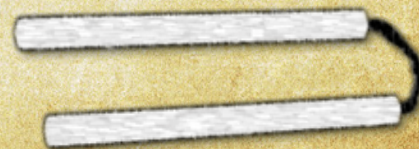
Tonfa are wooden melee weapons that are roughly the length of the user's arm from fingertip to elbow. Typically used in pairs, they have a perpendicular handle that allows the wielder to hold the weapon in a position along the forearm. The tip extends beyond the fist by several inches allowing for precise strikes. The main shaft of the tonfa can be swung out from under the forearm for quick bludgeoning attacks. When being used as a grappling implement, the tonfa can, with a quick flip across the back of the hand, be grasped by the opposite end like a club allowing the handle to be used as a hook for applying pressure with certain grappling techniques. The tonfa adds +1 per held tonfa to all grapple checks and techniques that allow implements to be used. For example, if two tonfa are wielded then you gain +2 bonus to grapple checks and techniques.



### NUNCHAKU

Name	Cost	Damage	Weight	Properties
Nunchaku	1gp	1d4 bludgeoning	1 lb.	Light, finesse

Nunchaku are pairs of sticks that are connected at one end with either a chain or a rope. The sticks are usually made of wood as it is an easy material to source but can be metal or another hard material. Nunchaku are a lightweight and fast weapon that make quick bludgeoning strikes, coming from a position close to the wielder's body, making it hard to gauge the distance and speed. Nunchaku can be used as grappling implements by using the held stick as leverage when used directly against joints, and the chain (or rope) can be used to wrap around a target small enough and both sticks can apply pressure to control. If the nunchaku are used for grappling, they add +1 to all grapple checks and techniques that allow implements to be used. For example, if two pairs of nunchaku are wielded then you gain a +2 bonus to grapple checks and techniques.



**DODGE & CHOKE**

Use: Reaction/Dodge

Requirements: Wield one or more Implements

Type: Choke

After taking the dodge action, or as a reaction when an opponent misses on a melee attack against you, as a bonus action you can quickly make one melee attack with your implement as you position yourself behind the attacker, using your weapon to perform a choke. On your next turn, you can attempt a choke out, or use another action.

**DRAGON CLAW RAKE**

Use: Action, Reaction

Requirements: Dual-wielding Sai

Type: Takedown/Attack

While dual-wielding sai, you use the pointed tips of the outer prongs to stab into the flesh of the target's arm, then rake them down to the wrist, disarming the target. You then simultaneously hook the wrist and elbow to create leverage and throw the opponent to the ground, either holding the arm extended in a joint lock or shoving the target 10 ft away leaving them prone and dealing 2d4 piercing damage from the rake.

**ELBOW FLIP**

Use: Action/Reaction

Requirements: Dual-wielding implements

Type: Takedown/Disarm

Using one implement to strike the target's wrist while using the other implement to slide under the target's elbow, creating a bend then putting pressure on the arm to create leverage, you continue the momentum to flip their body to the ground leaving them prone. If the target is flipped to the ground, they must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be disarmed.

**WINDMILL KNOCKDOWN**

Use: Action

Requirements: Dual-wielding Tonfa

Type: Attack/Shove

While in front of your opponent, you simultaneously strike both forearms of the target while spinning your arms in a circular motion until the target's arms are crossed, then you draw both arms back and strike forward with both tonfa making a powerful shove. The target takes 2d4 bludgeoning damage, is knocked prone and shoved 10 feet back.

**WRIST WRAP**

Use: Action, Reaction

Requirements: Wielding one Nunchaku

Type: Takedown/Disarm

You wrap your nunchaku around the target's wrist, attempting to disarm and grab them. If you win the contest, the target is disarmed and grappled. On a successful grapple, you can use your bonus action to drag the target or force them to the ground by twisting their arm, holding their wrist while they are prone. If the target escapes the grapple, they are unable to wield any weapon in that hand for 2 rounds.

**ROLL & SNAP**

Use: Action

Requirements: Wielding one Nunchaku

Type: Takedown/Lock

While prone, you can use your nunchaku to wrap around the target's ankle and attempt to pull their leg out from under them to make the target fall prone. As a bonus action you can move into mount position on the target's back as you control their leg, making them flip onto their stomach while you have their leg restrained. On your next turn, you can attempt to break the opponent's knee using the leverage from your nunchaku grip.

**SAI PIN**

Use: Action

Requirements: Wielding one or more Sai

Type: Grapple

Using one sai to throw at the target's limb, you can pin an appendage to the ground making their movement speed zero until they use an action on their next turn to remove the sai. As a bonus action, you can attempt a grapple into a ground position. The DC for removing the sai pin is 10 + the thrower's Strength modifier.

**TONFA DRAG**

Use: Action

Requirements: Wielding one or more Tonfa

Type: Lock

Grabbing one tonfa by the long end, you attempt to grapple your opponent by using the handle to hook around the target's arm or leg (or other appendage) at two joints. You can drag your opponent up to half of your remaining movement as you keep them grappled.

**NPCs & MONSTERS**

THE PAGES BELOW CAN BE USED AS examples for implementing the grappling mechanics and techniques from this book into the stat blocks of your NPCs and monsters.

All of the material in this book provides plenty of ready-to-use techniques that can simply be inserted into the actions of a stat block or character sheet. However, don't limit your imagination to just what you see in this book. Use your creativity or personal knowledge of grappling, wrestling, or other arts to add the right touches to your creations and make your encounters as interesting as you and your players want.

Feel free to use the creations below to add to your campaigns and either terrorize your players with them or use them to drive your story along.



## ZOLA

Medium humanoid (half elf), Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 15 (leather, +1)

Hit Points 94 (10d8) +30

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	9 (-1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

**Skills** Athletics +4, Deception +2, Intimidation +4, Perception +3, Persuasion +2, Survival +3

**Saving Throws** Str +4, Con +5

**Senses** Passive Perception 15, Darkvision 60 ft.

**Languages** Common, Elvish, Infernal

**Challenge** 4 (1100 XP)

**Ruiner.** After landing two consecutive attacks against a target, she attempts to apply one of the following effects to her opponent. The target must succeed on a CON save DC 10 or suffer the effect.

- **Go for the Eyes.** The target suffers the effects of Blindness until the end of their next turn.
- **No Escape.** The target's movement is halved until the end of their next turn.
- **Numb Arms.** The target's attacks that rely on their arms are made with disadvantage until the end of their next turn.
- **Open Wounds.** Attacks on the target deal a 1d4 extra weapon damage until the start of their next turn.

**Brutalizer.** When Zelnoa reduces a target to 0 HP she can use a bonus action to brutally murder her opponent. Every enemy that can see the act within 30ft must make a WIS save DC 12. On a failed save they are frightened of her and can make another save at the end of their turn.

**Mounted attacks.** Zelnoa can grapple a target into the "mount" position to keep her opponent grappled while she delivers unarmed strikes or dagger attacks with advantage.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Zelnoa makes two attacks per turn.

**Longsword, +2.** Melee weapon attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target

**Hit:** 6 (1d8+4) slashing damage.

### BONUS ACTIONS

**Dagger, +2.** Melee weapon attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target

**Hit:** 6 (1d4+5) piercing damage.

**Unarmed Strike.** Melee attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft one target

**Hit:** 3 bludgeoning damage.

## ZOLA

Zola is specially trained to inflict the maximum amount of pain on her opponents. This is a practice that she thoroughly enjoys while punishing her foes with debilitating injuries. As an agent of the Zhentarim, Zola frequently accepts assignments that put her face to face with anyone that has earned the wrath of the Black Network. She is an expert at extracting information using various torture techniques keeping her victims barely alive as long as she can continue to inflict suffering. She even uses this tactic in combat while she toys with lesser fighters.

Zola has a callous personality; she does what she pleases and takes what she wants, and to the Abyss with anyone who gets in her way. When she is on assignment, she will easily present herself as friendly towards her mark but only as long as necessary before employing her sadistic and cruel manipulations.

Zola was inspired by the "Tormentor", from The Dark Archetypes available on [DMsGuild.com](https://www.dmsguild.com)





## TO'RUK MAK'TAU

Medium humanoid (human), Neutral Good

Armor Class 18 (shield)  
Hit Points 115 (10d12)+30  
Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)

**Skills** Animal Handling +4, Athletics +7, Intimidation +4, Survival +4  
**Saving Throws** STR +7, CON +6  
**Senses** Passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common, Dwarvish  
**Challenge** 7 (2900 XP)

**Titanic Strength.** While raging, To'Ruk's unarmed strikes count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to non-magical attacks and damage. Also, When To'Ruk moves while grappling creatures his size or smaller, he moves at normal speed.

**Inescapable Grasp.** When a creature escapes a grapple To'Ruk can attempt to grapple the creature again as a reaction.

**Rage (4/day).** To'Ruk uses a bonus action to enter rage. He gains advantage on STR checks and saving throws, +3 melee damage with STR weapons, resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, slashing damage.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** To'Ruk makes two attacks per turn.

**Battleaxe.** Melee weapon attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target

**Hit:** 8 (1d8+4) slashing damage.

**Unarmed Strike.** Melee weapon attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target

**Hit:** 7 (1d6+4) bludgeoning damage.

**Sun Dragon Slam.** To'Ruk grabs the target by the chest and leg, then lifts the target off the ground and slams them back down by squatting down under the target's body mass then lifting up to flip the target's legs over their head. The target is left prone and disarmed and must succeed on a CON saving throw (DC 14) or be stunned until the end of their next turn.

### BONUS ACTIONS

**Unarmed Strike.** (against grappled foe) Melee weapon attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target

**Hit:** 7 (1d6+4) bludgeoning damage.

## TO'RUK MAK'TAU

To'Ruk was raised in the Bone Eater peaks where he learned to keep a good attitude and have a good heart despite the inherent dangers that his tribe constantly faced. To'Ruk is strong and mighty, and he faces many foolish challengers due to his rough appearance, but he does his best to avoid confrontation before bashing their faces in. Rather than seeking vain glory from pointless fights, he instead prefers to travel and cook hearty meals for his allies.

While to many he seems slow, he is often quick with a witty comeback. When To'Ruk is faced with a challenger, he likes to stand tall and raise his chest while saying his favorite intimidation line; "You wanna wrestle, punk?".

When entering rage, To'Ruk always steps out into a wide stance, stomping one foot at a time to accentuate his strength, then leaning towards his enemies with his arms outstretched screaming "Let's get cookin'!".

To'Ruk was inspired by Crit Academy's "Path of the Brawler", available on [DMsGuild.com](https://www.dmsguild.com)



## ALARICE WINDBORN

Medium humanoid (human), Neutral Good

**Armor Class** 17 (unarmored)  
**Hit Points** 87 (12d8) +22  
**Speed** 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

**Skills** Acrobatic +7, Medicine +8, Religion +4, Stealth +7  
**Saving Throws** Str +6, Dex +7  
**Senses** Passive Perception 13  
**Languages** Common, Halfling, Goblin  
**Damage Immunities** Poison  
**Challenge** 5 (1800 XP)

**Elbow Flip.** As an action or reaction Alarice can use one handaxe to hook a target's wrist while using the handle of the other to catch inside the elbow, applying the leverage to flip the target prone on the ground, disarming them.

**Supple Palms.** When Alarice escapes a grapple, she can use her reaction to attempt to grapple the creature that held her.

**Crashing Wave.** (3/day) Alarice can choose to shove a creature 40 ft away inflicting 2d6 bludgeoning damage, the target is prone unless it avoids taking damage from the shove

**Python's Coil.** (2/day) Alarice can choose to shove a creature 40 ft away inflicting 2d6 bludgeoning damage, the target is prone unless it avoids taking damage from the shove

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Alarice makes two attacks per turn.

**Handaxe.** Melee weapon attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target, Ranged 20/60 ft

Hit: 7 (1d8+3) slashing damage.

### BONUS ACTIONS

**Handaxe.** Melee weapon attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target, Ranged 20/60 ft

Hit: 4 (1d8) slashing damage.

**Unarmed Strike.** Melee attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target

Hit: 8 (1d8+4) bludgeoning damage.

## ALARICE WINDBORN

Alarice Windborn is a strong-willed young woman that gives the impression of a single minded and selfish girl to those that don't know her well. She is however, a very caring and smart woman that will step up to any challenge for the good of those she cares about.

When she was young, Alarice took to the teachings of a group of traveling monks that spent some time in her home village on the Dragon Coast. After spending several years of dedicating herself fully to studying and practicing the teachings from the ancient scrolls that the monks possessed, she had a falling out with them and left.

Alarice now travels as part of groups of performers that she can find work with as they move from town to town. As a monk that is very skilled in the martial arts, she puts on acts of great martial skill that include feats of acrobatics, strength, weapon throwing and even grappling matches to willing challengers. Even though she greatly enjoys the lifestyle she lives now, she longs to see her family that she's been away from for years now.

Alarice was inspired by M.T. Black's "Way of the Iron Embrace" available on [DMsGuild.com](http://DMsGuild.com)





## DAENALA OTHRONUS

Medium humanoid (elf), Neutral Good

**Armor Class** 14 (Unarmored)

**Hit Points** 75 (9d8) +27

**Speed** 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

**Skills** Acrobatic +4, Insight +3, Nature +4, Perception +3

**Saving Throws** Str +3, Dex +4

**Senses** Passive Perception 14, Darkvision 60 ft.

**Languages** Common, Elvish

**Damage Immunities** Poison

**Condition Immunities** Poisoned, Charmed, Frightened

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Evasion.** When Daenala is subjected to an effect that allows her to make a DEX saving throw to take only half damage, she instead takes no damage if she succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if she fails. She can't use this trait if she is incapacitated.

**Dragon Claw Rake.** Daenala use the pointed tips of the outer sai prongs to stab into the flesh of the target's arm, then rake them down to the wrist, disarming the target. She simultaneously hooks the wrist and elbow to create leverage and throw the opponent to the ground, either holding the arm extended in a joint lock or shoving the target 10 ft away leaving them prone and dealing 2d4 piercing damage from the rake.

**Spellcasting.** Daenala can cast one of the following spells as an action: (3/day) Charm Person, Calm Emotions, Suggestion, Catnap. (2/day): Mass suggestion, Cause Fear, Enthrall. (1/day): Command, Confusion.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Daenala makes two attacks per turn.

**Sai.** Melee weapon attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target

**Hit:** 5 (1d6+2) *Peircing damage.*

**Unarmed Strike.** Melee attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target

**Hit:** 5 (1d6+2) *bludgeoning damage.*

### BONUS ACTIONS

**Sai.** Melee weapon attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target

**Hit:** 5 (1d6+2) *Peircing damage.*

**Unarmed Strike.** Melee attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target

**Hit:** 5 (1d6+2) *bludgeoning damage.*

## DAENALA

Daenala is a warm hearted elf that prefers seclusion and study over seeking adventure. She delights in learning history and new ideas in philosophy but rarely debates with anyone. She is considered a young elf, but her monk training makes her a formidable opponent if one happens to face off with her.

On occasion, Daenala has been outside of her monastery to accompany fellow monks on important missions, but having been in the monastery since a young child, she has yet to see much of the dangers of the world and beyond.

Daenala is not intimidated easily and is comfortable being around just about anyone not causing trouble, but she rarely speaks unprompted. Most folk unfamiliar with Daenala find that once they actually get her talking, she has a bit of an off putting, blunt personality and her sense of humor is quite stale for their taste.

When in combat, Daenala seems to have a gift for figuring out unusual ways to defeat her foes. Using her ability to quickly assess the terrain and conditions of the battlefield, she uses every advantage available to her.

Daenala was inspired by the "Way of Mindful Fist" monk, available on [DMsGuild.com](http://DMsGuild.com)



## ABYSSAL GRAPPLER

Medium fiend (demon), Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 18 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 51 (6d8)+24

Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	25 (+7)	18 (+4)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

**Skills** Acrobatics +10, Grappling +10, Stealth +10

**Saving Throws** STR +7, DEX +10

**Damage Resistances** Cold; Bludgeoning, Piercing, and Slashing from Nonmagical Attacks

**Damage Immunities** Fire, Poison

**Condition Immunities** Poisoned

**Senses** Darkvision 120 ft., Passive Perception 13

**Languages** Abyssal

**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)

**Poison Breath (Recharge 4-5).** While grappling a creature, the abyssal grappler can use a bonus action to exhale toxic fumes at the target. The target must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or take 1d6 poison damage and is poisoned for 2 rounds.

**Spiked Flesh.** When the abyssal grappler is grappled with a creature, any time a grapple check is made, the target takes 2d6 piercing damage.

**Lapel Drag & Slam.** As an action, the abyssal grappler jumps at the target grabbing the torso and using the force from the jump to slam the target to the ground prone and. The target can attempt to avoid the slam with a grapple check. On a failed grapple check the target is grappled in the bottom mount position taking 4 bludgeoning damage.

**Inescapable Grasp.** When a creature escapes a grapple, the abyssal grappler can attempt to grapple the creature again as a reaction.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The abyssal grappler makes two attacks per turn.

**Claw.** Melee weapon attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target

**Hit:** 11 (1d8+7) slashing damage.

**Bite.** Melee weapon attack: +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target

**Hit:** 12 (1d10+7) piercing damage.

### REACTIONS

**Distraction Tail.** When a different creature makes a melee attack that would hit while the abyssal grappler is grappling, add +3 to the abyssal grappler's AC.

## ABYSSAL GRAPPLER

The abyssal grappler is a frightening prowler of dark places; with its uncanny speed, stealthy hunting, and thirst for violence, adventurers beware. Abyssal grapplers are usually found in packs hunting in the deepest, darkest places of the abyss and on the material plane. They can occasionally be found alone or in pairs as they sometimes cannot find enough carnage to satisfy an entire pack. It has been said that the first abyssal grapplers were ancient Eladrin that were captured by a Demon Lord that corrupted and bred them to become powerful fodder for their army. But when the abyssal grapplers' numbers became overwhelming, the Demon Lord could no longer control them.

### Vicious Hunters

Abyssal grapplers take time to stalk their prey, but once they attack, they will be relentless against their chosen target. They typically fixate on a single target until they kill it. Using its incredible speed to quickly jump and grapple their victims to the ground, they use their claws and teeth to relentlessly attack their target until it is clearly dead.

### Masters of Control

When grappled with another creature, the abyssal grappler uses a poison breath to subdue its next meal. It also uses its spiked tail to distract attackers by constantly whipping it around its body while it works.






# GRAPPLING TOURNAMENT

**L**IVING GRAPPLING IN FIFTH EDITION DUNGEONS & DRAGONS seems to rarely go beyond one or two rounds of grapple attempts or techniques being used before the situation changes or combat gets wrapped up. When a DM wants to add an encounter or scenario where the players have the chance to take on challengers in grappling, this section should give you some good ideas for handling this without it becoming a boring encounter.

In this section you will find some guidance and usable information for running a “Grappling Tournament” in one of your sessions. The keys to making this type of challenge interesting are to, first of all, have some good descriptions for what the grapplers are actually doing, and second, some type of goals that work within a structure. The techniques and positions in this book are a great start for the players and DM to familiarize themselves with so they can use the mechanics to accomplish set effects or conditions to gain points in the matches. Another great way to familiarize yourself with the terminology and get a good idea of what these techniques actually look like when used in real life is to watch some actual grappling, wrestling or mixed martial arts competitions.

In fifth edition DUNGEONS & DRAGONS we have a great combat system that allows for a lot of creativity compared to older systems where the grappling mechanics have players confused or getting bored very fast. Use these rules for running a tournament and remember to make it varied by utilizing as many of the options that a character has in combat such as Dash, Dodge, Ready, or even Hide.

Putting your players in an empty ring where the only thing that happens after initiative is rolled is to have each combatant say “I grapple you” then, “I escape and grapple the opponent back” is going to end very quickly in boredom. Instead, take your players into a place where there is terrain that is interesting and has obstacles that can be used to maximize the combat actions. Give them good descriptions of what happens with each attempted technique and let them use their creativity to score points and move the matches along. If possible, you may find it easier to run



matches simultaneously so it still feels like running combat. This will keep each player engaged while the grappling matches go on instead of focusing on one player at a time and leaving everyone else waiting.

## SETTING UP RULES FOR YOUR TOURNAMENT

Before you start the actual combat part of your tournament, you will need to establish the rules. Follow the list below to ensure you have a good structure to determine the outcome of matches.

- How many points to win a match
- How to score points
- What combat actions are allowed and what actions constitute a foul (if any)
- What would be grounds for disqualification
- How does the tournament work; bracket system or free for all?
- Any other stipulations you want to add

## RUNNING THE TOURNAMENT

Once you have the rules established and everyone is ready to go, you can decide whether or not you want to allow the combatants to use any weapons/implements, or just strictly unarmed combat. We like the format of an unarmed combat scenario for this, but doing something like a popular video game that drops random weapons in the arena can work just as well. You can decide to have the matches continue for a set number of rounds then see who has the most points, or you can set a number of points that one must get to win. If you find that the matches are too short, you can have the combatants continue with multiple matches and determine the winner by who won the most matches overall. Remember to make the action exciting, don't let the opportunities pass to spice things up. When a grapple check fails to escape a lock or choke, don't just say “it failed”, describe the attempt and use the theatre of the mind to let the players see the struggle.



## SCORING POINTS

Characters can score points for a variety of things, executing particular techniques, escaping a non-controlling ground position and switching to a controlling ground position, imposing various conditions on an opponent and even making successful unarmed strikes.

### *Suggested point awards*


- Foot sweep that leaves target prone = 1
- Takedown into a ground position = 2
- Holding an opponent in a restrained position (lock/choke) for 3 consecutive rounds = 2
- Throwing the target to the ground = 3
- For each unarmed strike combination of two or more consecutive hits = 1
- Successfully using the Dodge action twice consecutively = 1
- Escaping a lock or choke = 2
- Escaping a controlling ground position = 1
- Switching from a non-controlling to a controlling ground position = 3

## UNDERGROUND FIGHT CLUB

**W**ELCOME TO THE UNDERGROUND FIGHT club. This encounter will introduce your players to a shady character that will take them into a seedy scene where illegal fight clubs operate. The encounter is written to be located in the city of Waterdeep assuming your players have at least started the Dragon Heist adventure and are easily found in Trollskull Alley, but can easily be set in another location that fits your current campaign. You can find more rules and detailed information on running this encounter in the Grappler's Handbook Expanded edition under the "Grappling Tournament" section.

### SHADY VOSYS

While the players are walking through Trollskull Alley, they see a man walk out of The Bent Nail. The man is dressed in darker colored common clothes and he is closing a belt pouch that he's wearing right before he takes notice of the player's group as if he is sizing them up. This man is "Shady" Vosys, a coordinator for the underground fight club.



At this point you can have Vosys approach the players and introduce himself as a local entrepreneur and he bluntly states that he has noticed the players around the city, and he has an offer for them. If this direct approach doesn't seem fitting for the group, then have Vosys follow them for a time until the right opportunity presents itself, maybe after he witnesses them in action.

### THE OFFER

Vosys tells the party that he is looking for participants in a tournament and he thinks they, or at least some of them, would do great and win some gold coins for their efforts.

#### *Read the following:*

*I have some friends that uh, run a tournament, of sorts... you know, like wrestling, and that sort of thing. I think you would do great, after seeing what you've already done since you got here. There's money too! You can win lots of gold pieces if you decide to join us. It's coming up in a few days, I'll give you the location. What do you say?*

*If the characters refuse, have Vosys be more insistent and maybe offer up a small amount of gold to entice them. The location for the tournament will be in the Dock Ward two days after this encounter.*

### ENTERING THE TOURNAMENT

When the players arrive at the location given by Vosys on the appointed day and time, it's after dark and they will see various small groups of people walking to the same location to gain entrance. The location will seem much busier than before; if the players happened to check out the location in advance, they found no indication of activity.

As the players walk to the entrance of the warehouse, they see that this area has many abandoned and run down buildings that were once used for shipping storage but has long been in disuse. Now frequented by squatters and most likely the hidden activities of the criminal underground of the city.

The large man at the door of the building stands in place with his arms cross as the players approach. He grants them entrance after they



give the password given to them by Vosys at their first meeting.

As the players enter the building, they see Vosys talking to someone who looks like another combatant in the tournament. Vosys takes notice of the players and waves his hand to motion them to come toward him. After Vosys greets the players, he tells them that they are there to compete, and to follow him to get ready. The players need to either leave their weapons and armor with their companions that are not fighting, or use a storage chest to keep their items safe. After the players get ready by removing any weapons, armor, and magical items, Vosys takes them to the next area where the waiting combatants watch the fights and warm up. This is where they will be subjected to search including detection magic looking for any magical items that are not allowed.

The waiting area with the combatants is full of competitors that are doing what they can to warm up while looking tough, attempting to intimidate any potential opponents. The fighters don't know who they will be fighting until they are called to the central open area of the warehouse, where the fighting takes place in front of a crowd that surrounds the space, cheering and placing bets.

As the first match takes place, Vosys takes the time to explain the rules to the players.

- Combatants are unarmed and are not allowed to use magical items or enhancements for the fights.
- Each match is overseen by a referee and will be stopped when a clear winner is determined.
- Scoring for the particular techniques listed in the Grappling Tournament section will be added up at the end of three 1-minute rounds to determine the winner unless a combatant is knocked unconscious.
- Any use of magic by the combatant or outside magical influence are grounds for removal from the tournament.
- Each winner of a match will move on to the next tier until there are only two fighters left and one winner will be determined.



The matches are also watched over by several mages that can detect magic and have spells ready to hold the combatants if needed.

## FIGHTS BEGIN

As the fights begin, Vosys explains that sometimes in these fights, combatants get injured and need magical healing. Some of the competitors bring their own clerics in case of such an occurrence; these are usually the young nobles that come in here to have a chance to beat up some commoners.


The first few matches seem to go as expected with some bare knuckle fighting and grappling until one of the fighters is beaten to a pulp, except for one match where the skill of one grappler actually led to them winning fairly quickly by scoring the needed points. This match is the match before one of the players goes out to fight, and is between a burly, shirtless man and a woman of small stature with bright red hair. The red-haired woman seems to smile and enjoy the back and forth blood bath with punches and kicks before the woman finally takes control of the match.

### **Read the following:**

*Hitting the man with several quick punches while seeming to dance around her opponent, the red-haired woman laughs as the man tries to retaliate, his arms seeming to have lost all strength. As she grapples the man to the ground, she has unbelievable control holding him down by straddling his torso. She stabs her thumbs into his eyes and pushes her body weight into the strike as she gives a loud piercing yell. She rolls away from the man and lets him stagger back to his feet while yelling out in pain from his eyes being so violently attacked. The man tries to open his eyes to find his foe as blood streaks down his cheeks. As the man turns to face the woman, she jumps at him in a fast blur striking him in the throat where blood starts gushing out then she grabs his legs to take him down again. The woman laughs hysterically as she jabs her fingers in an open wound until the referee stops the fight and a mage puts a hold spell on her.*

After this match, the players will most likely have questions for Vosys about what seemed like a violent fight. Vosys can give the players more





information about how fighters sometimes sneak in small weapons or objects - that if they don't get caught then they can't be ejected from the tournament. The severely injured combatants have healing help from their hired clerics.


As the first player begins their match, follow the guide for running the grappling tournament to continue the fights as long as you need to. You can let the players face off against each other at some point or attempt to keep them facing other opponents until only one of them is left. If the tournament gets to the point of having only one of the players remaining in the competition, then you can use some rule violation to have them win the match before facing off against the red haired woman as the final match of the tournament. The woman is Zola - her stat block can be found in the NPCs section. The final match determines the champion of the tournament, who receives a prize of 100 gp.

## AFTER THE TOURNAMENT

You can use this encounter to set the stage for future encounters. After the tournament is over, they can get invited to come back to compete again. The players could also choose to contact the authorities to report the illegal activity, using their "in" to set up a sting of sorts. Be aware that some of the city guards are on the take and if the players don't report the activity to a trusted person then they run the risk of being set up themselves.

### EXAMPLES OF FUTURE ENCOUNTERS:

- If one of the players is of non-good alignment, they can be contacted by the "BBEG" that runs the fight club, who wants them to do some work as an enforcer, to collect debts and loans.
- If the players turn in the fight club to the guards and the BBEG is arrested, he can eventually escape prison and serve as an antagonist to the players.



Stats for other characters in this story, such as mages and guards, can be used from the basic rules found [here](#), under the "List of Nonplayer Characters". You can use stats for Bandit, Berserker, Knight, or Thug for the other tournament combatants depending on the levels of your players.

## VOSYS

Medium humanoid (human), Neutral Evil

Armor Class 13 (Leather Armor)

Hit Points 27 (6d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	15 (+2)	9 (-1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

**Skills** Deception +5, Insight +4, Perception +6, Sleight of Hand +4, Stealth +4

**Senses** Passive Perception 16.

**Languages** Common, Dwarvish

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Cunning Action.** On each of its turns, the spy can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

**Sneak Attack (1/Turn).** Vosys deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Vosys that isn't incapacitated and Vosys doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

### ACTIONS

**Dagger.** Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

**Hand Crossbow.** Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

**TECHNIQUES BY NAME**

1. Ankle Sweep - Prone
2. Armbar - Bottom Guard
3. Armbar - Top Mount
4. Arm Lock - Standing
5. Arm Triangle – Top Side Control
6. Bear Hug - Standing
7. Belt Grab - Prone
8. Dodge & Choke – Standing Implement
9. Double Leg Takedown - Standing
10. Dragon Claw Rake - Standing Sai
11. Elbow Flip - Standing Implement
12. Foot Sweep - Standing
13. Guard Pass Escape - Top Guard
14. Guillotine Choke - Bottom Guard
15. Guillotine Choke - Standing
16. Hip Throw - Standing
17. Kimura - Top Side Control
18. Knee & Elbow Escape - Bottom Side Control
19. Lapel Drag - Standing
20. Leg Triangle - Bottom Guard
21. Rear Choke - Standing
22. Roll & Snap – Prone Nunchaku
23. Sai Pin - Prone Sai
24. Scissor Sweep - Bottom Guard
25. Single Leg Takedown - Standing
26. Sliding Ankle Lock - Top Guard
27. Standing Arm Triangle - Standing
28. Sun Dragon Slam - Standing
29. Tonfa Drag - Prone Tonfa
30. Upa Escape - Bottom Mount
31. Windmill Knockdown – Standing Tonfa
32. Wrist Wrap - Standing Nunchaku

**TECHNIQUES BY POSITION****STANDING**

1. Arm Lock - Standing
2. Bear Hug - Standing
3. Dodge & Choke – Standing Implement
4. Double Leg Takedown - Standing
5. Dragon Claw Rake - Standing Sai
6. Elbow Flip - Standing Implement
7. Foot Sweep - Standing
8. Guillotine Choke - Standing
9. Hip Throw - Standing
10. Lapel Drag - Standing
11. Rear Choke - Standing
12. Single Leg Takedown - Standing
13. Standing Arm Triangle - Standing
14. Sun Dragon Slam - Standing
15. Tonfa Drag - Standing Tonfa
16. Wrist Wrap - Standing Nunchaku

**PRONE**

17. Ankle Sweep
18. Belt Grab
19. Roll & Snap
20. Sai Pin
21. Tonfa Drag

**TOP MOUNT**

22. Armbar

**BOTTOM MOUNT**

23. Upa Escape

**TOP GUARD**

24. Guard Pass Escape
25. Sliding Ankle Lock

**BOTTOM GUARD**

26. Armbar
27. Leg Triangle
28. Guillotine Choke
29. Scissor Sweep

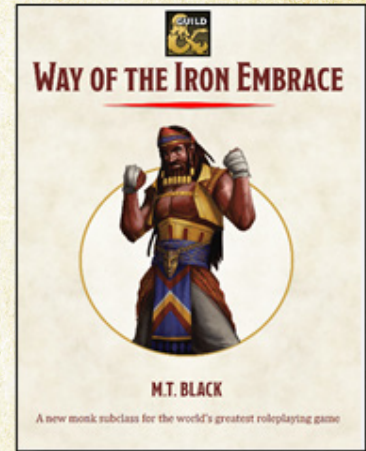
**TOP SIDE CONTROL**

30. Arm Triangle
31. Kimura

**BOTTOM SIDE CONTROL**

32. Knee & Elbow Escape

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