



## Bullet Points

# Basic Classes, Part 1

By Owen K.C. Stephens

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Welcome to the latest installment of *Bullet Points*. I'm Owen K.C. Stephens, writer of a lot of **Star Wars Roleplaying Game** material and a contributor to the recently announced *d20 Apocalypse* book, plus some other **d20 Modern** projects as yet unannounced. It's my job to answer your questions about the game, offer advice on tricky rules issues, and give you a little peek into the design philosophy of the game.


Every two weeks I pick an issue that's provoked a lot of questions or comments, begin with a general discussion of the topic where applicable, and then answer specific questions related to it. If the mailbox contains any unrelated but pressing questions, I might tackle them at the end of the column, but only if I have room and they can't wait for an appropriately themed column.

## **Basic Classes, Part 1**

This time, we'll take a look at some questions about the first three basic character classes described in the **d20 Modern Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook** -- namely, the Strong hero, the Fast hero, and the Tough hero. In the next column, we'll look at questions about the other three.

## **Questions and Answers**

And now, without further ado, let's get down to those questions!


 **Why is the Strong hero more accurate with ranged weapons than the Fast hero is? I understand why the Strong hero is good with melee attacks, since he gains a bonus from his high Strength, but shouldn't the Fast hero be more accurate with ranged attacks, since they're based on Dexterity? The Fast hero description even mentions that it's a good choice for heroes who depend on ranged weapons, but the Fast hero gains no benefit with them. Why don't the Strong and Fast heroes just have two attack progressions each -- one for melee weapons and one for ranged?**

To keep the game simple, each class gets only one base attack progression. As for your specific question, thematically the Strong hero is geared toward dealing damage. His talent trees, which allow him to deal additional melee damage and ignore hardness, clearly demonstrate this focus. The Fast hero, on the other hand, focuses on avoiding damage, as exemplified by her higher Defense bonus and her uncanny dodge and evasion talents. Thus, it makes a certain amount of sense for the Strong hero to have a higher attack bonus than the Fast hero.


On the other hand, if you wanted to establish a house rule that each of these classes has two attack progressions, feel free to do so. If you decide to go this way, you might also want to do the same with certain advanced classes, including the Soldier, the Martial Artist, and the Gunslinger.

 **Can a Strong hero take 10 or take 20 to gain the indicated bonus while using his extreme effort talents?**

Yes, under the right circumstances. If a Strong hero is in a situation that allows him to take 10 or take 20, he may do so while using an extreme effort talent. (In other words, the talent doesn't prevent a hero from taking 10 or taking 20, but neither does it enable him to do so in additional situations.) Taking 10 still requires a full round in such a case, as does any use of extreme effort, and taking 20 requires twenty times as long as a normal check (a minimum of 2 minutes, since using extreme effort always requires a full-round action).

 **Can the Fast hero use her opportunist ability to make a ranged attack as an attack of opportunity against an opponent who takes damage from another character in melee? The description of the opportunist talent doesn't say that the hero has to threaten the target she attacks, or even that she must use a melee attack.**

Your interpretation of the rules is certainly original, but the answer is no. On page 138 in the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*, under the Weapon Type heading, it states that to make attacks of opportunity, a hero can use a melee weapon or unarmed attacks that count as armed. Since the opportunist ability specifies that the character can make an attack of opportunity, the attack is subject to this restriction. Thus, the Fast hero must use either a melee weapon or an unarmed attack that counts as armed.

 **The speed entry for armor notes that the lower speeds assume that the character has a base speed of 30 ft., but it doesn't say how fast a character with a different base speed (for example, a character with the increased speed talent) can go.**

This question can also apply to certain races from the *Urban Arcana Campaign Setting* that may have a slower base speed (such as gnomes). Use the chart below to determine the speed reduction based on armor for each base speed. If the armor entry indicates a 25-foot move, use Column One. If it indicates a 20-foot move, use Column Two.

Base Speed	Column One 25-ft. Speed Equivalent	Column Two 20-ft. Speed Equivalent
20 ft.	15 ft.	15 ft.
25 ft.	20 ft.	15 ft.
<b>30 ft.</b>	<b>25 ft.</b>	<b>20 ft.</b>
35 ft.	30 ft.	25 ft.
40 ft.	30 ft.	30 ft.
45 ft.	35 ft.	30 ft.
50 ft.	40 ft.	35 ft.
55 ft.	45 ft.	35 ft.
60 ft.	50 ft.	40 ft.

 **I have a Tough hero with DR 3/-. The description of his damage reduction ability says he ignores 3 points of damage from melee and ranged weapons. This statement brings up a number of**

questions. Does my character's DR work against a flamethrower, which is actually a ranged weapon? Does it work against pepper spray, possibly allowing the character to subtract the DR value from the number of rounds he is blinded, since blindness is the "damage" that pepper spray deals? Does it work against a taser (a ranged weapon), and if so, does it reduce both damage and the number of rounds paralyzed? Does it work against damage from a fragmentation grenade? What about C4? Neither of these items is defined as either a melee or ranged attack. Does it matter if the grenade is fired from a grenade launcher, which is a ranged weapon? Does DR work against acid or a Molotov cocktail, which aren't documented as ranged weapons, even though they are presumably thrown? Does it work against a stun gun, which is described as a melee weapon? Does it work against damage dealt by a character with the Combat Martial Arts feat? What about *ray of fatigue*, *finger of fire*, *fire bolt*, or *electric charge*? And what about *claws of the bear*, *lesser bioweapon*, and *greater bioweapon*, all of which specify that they work as melee weapons?

Wow, that's a big, complex question. The description of the Tough hero's damage reduction talent does say that it applies against damage dealt by melee and ranged weapons, but that definition is really a simplified, "shorthand" description. In fact, a Tough hero's damage reduction follows the same rules as the DR of other creatures, as defined on page 226 of the *d20 Modern Core Rulebook*. Read that section first, then come back and read the rest of this answer.

First, damage reduction as a class feature is always of the ignore-some-damage type rather than the quick-heal type, unless the description specifically indicates otherwise. Second, DR applies only to hit point damage, never to secondary effects (such as blindness, stunning, or paralysis). As a rule of thumb, DR works against attacks that deal slashing, bludgeoning, piercing, or ballistic damage, but not against other forms of attacks. So when deciding whether it applies to damage from a given source, you must ask the following questions.

1. Does the damage originate from (or emulate) a normal source?
2. Is the damage energy-based (acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic)?

For the purpose of answering these questions, all weapons, unarmed attacks, and natural weapons are considered normal sources. (An illithid may seem a far cry from normal, but DR does apply to damage dealt by its tentacles.) If the answer to the first question is yes and the answer to the second question is no, then DR applies. In any other circumstance, it doesn't.

Now let's take a look at some of your specific questions. Your Tough hero's DR doesn't work against damage dealt by a flamethrower, taser, stun gun, Molotov cocktail, or acid, because all these weapons deal energy-based damage. It doesn't work against *finger of fire*, *fire bolt*, or *electric charge* for the same reason. Furthermore, it doesn't work against *magic missile* because a spell isn't a normal source, and this particular spell doesn't even emulate a normal source.

Your hero's DR does apply to damage from fragmentation grenades, unarmed damage dealt by someone with the Combat Martial Arts feat, and damage from *claws of the bear*. The first two are normal sources of damage, and *claws of the bear* duplicates a normal source -- namely, bear claws.

The determination isn't quite as easy for damage from *lesser bioweapon* and *greater bioweapon*. However, since their descriptions specify that they deal bludgeoning damage (a normal damage type), DR does apply. It does not apply to concussion damage, since concussion is considered an energy form just as sonic is (though if you want to resist concussion damage, be sure to take the sonic/concussion resistance talent). Similarly, DR would

apply to damage taken from falling or being caught in a landslide, but not from disease, poison, drowning, smoke inhalation, radiation, or the vacuum of space.



### What kind of action is spending an action point to use the second wind talent?

It's a free action. Spending an action point to activate a class feature takes no time unless the feature is an attack or a form of movement, or its description specifies that activating it requires more than a free action.

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Do you have a rules question about the d20 Modern Roleplaying Game? Send it to [bulletpoints@wizards.com](mailto:bulletpoints@wizards.com). For the quickest possible answer, please put the topic of your question in the subject line and keep the question as succinct as possible. If you have more than one question, feel free to send two or more emails -- but for best results please include only one question per email unless your questions are very closely related to one another. Please don't expect a direct answer by email. Check back here every other week for the latest batch of answers!

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### About the Author

Owen Kirker Clifford Stephens was born in 1970 in Norman, Oklahoma. He attended the TSR Writer's Workshop held at the Wizards of the Coast Game Center in 1997 and moved to the Seattle area in 2000, after accepting a job as a Game Designer at Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Fourteen months later, he returned to Oklahoma with his wife and three cats to pick up his freelance writer/developer career. He has author and co-author credits on numerous **Star Wars** and *EverQuest* projects, as well as *Bastards and Bloodlines* from Green Ronin. He also has producer credits for various IDA products, including the Stand-Ins printable figures.

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