



SIDEWINDER
RECOILED



SIDEWINDER: RECOILED

“The OGL Electronic Edition”

Credits

Authors: Bradley W. Hindman, Geoff Spakes, Christopher S. Warner

Contributing Authors: Eric Burns, Thomas L. Gregory

Senior Editor: Thomas L. Gregory

Editors: Bradley W. Hindman, Geoff Spakes, Christopher S. Warner

Layout and Graphic Design: Karl Keesler

Cover Design: Karl Keesler

Proof Reader: Faleesha Hindman

Playtesting and Feedback: Lee Buttrill, Mark Durham, Ryan Gaffney, Thomas L. Gregory, Bradley W. Hindman, Faleesha Hindman, Max Kuney, Jamie Noble, John Noble, Richard A. Spake, Geoff Spakes, Michael Strauss, Kirk Veitch, Christopher S. Warner.

Open Game Content

Text, quotes and passages from “Gun Fighters of the Western Frontier,” written by Bat Masterson and Alfred Henry Lewis, were originally published in *Human Life* magazine and are now in the public domain.

All remaining content (excluding Product Identity as listed below) is designated Open Game Content in accordance with section 1. (d) of the Open Game License by Wizards of the Coast. The Open Game Content may only be used under and in terms of this license.

Product Identity

The following is hereby designated as Product Identity:

All “Bat Masterson” sidebar text as indicated by the small Bat Masterson bust icon.

All historical sidebar text as indicated by the newspaper icon.

All chapter introductory fiction.

All basic class descriptive introduction text in Chapter 2.

All occupation descriptive text in Chapter 2.

All firearm and grenade descriptive text in Chapter 5 excluding references to game mechanics.

All advanced class descriptive introduction text in Chapter 6.

All proper character names.

Sidewinder: Wild West Adventures

Sidewinder: Recoiled

Branded for Recoiled

Copyright and Trademark Notice

Sidewinder: Wild West Adventure is a trademark owned by Citizen Games and is used with permission.

Sidewinder: Recoiled is a trademark owned by Dog House Rules (www.doghouserules.net). Copyright © 2003, 2004 by Dog House Rules, LLC. All rights reserved under international copyright conventions.

SIDEWINDER: RECOILED

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction4

On <i>Sidewinder: Recoiled</i>5
Life as a Sidewinder6
On the Trail and in the Town9
Bounty Hunter.....9
Buffalo Hunter.....9
Cowboy10
Gambler.....11
Hired Gun14
Local Law.....15
Outlaw18
Scout19
Trapper20
Have Gun Will Travel21
From Sunup to Sundown in the Old West22

Chapter 2: Characters23

Character Concepts24
Ability Scores24
Basic Character Classes.....26
The Strong Hero.....28
The Fast Hero30
The Tough Hero32
The Smart Hero35
The Dedicated Hero38
The Charismatic Hero40
Starting Occupations44
Action Points49
Allegiances49
Reputation50
Finances, Money & Wealth..51
Wealth System51
Cold Hard Cash51
Multiclass Characters52

Chapter 3: Skills54

Acquiring Skills55
Skill Usage55
Difficulty Class.....56
Opposed Checks56
Trying Again57
Untrained Skill Checks57
Favorable and Unfavorable Conditions ..58
Accumulation of Bonuses and Penalties58
Time and Skill Checks58
Using Skills in Combat58

Tools59
Checks without Rolls59
Aiding Another.....59
Skill Synergy60
Ability Checks60
Skill Descriptions61

Chapter 4: Feats99

Acquiring Feats100
Feat Descriptions104

Chapter 5: Equipment125

Purchasing Goods and Services125
Wealth System125
Cold Hard Cash127
Restricted Goods129
Mastercraft Equipment ..130
Carrying Capacity131
Weapons.....132
Ranged Weapons132
Muzzle-Loading Pistols134
Breech-Loading Pistols137
Single-Action Revolvers137
Double-Action Revolvers138
Muskets.....140
Rifles141
Shotguns142
Exotic Firearms143
Simple Ranged Weapons143
Archaic Ranged Weapons144
Exotic Ranged Weapons144
Ammunition145
Reloading a Ranged Weapon146
Mastercraft Firearms146
Handgun Modifications ..147
Longarm Modifications ..147
Explosives and Splash Weapons148
Melee Weapons.....150
Simple Melee Weapons....151
Archaic Melee Weapons ..152
Exotic Melee Weapons152
Improvised Weapons153
Armor.....153

General Good and Services155

Chapter 6: Advanced Classes163

Qualifying for an Advanced Class165
Bounty Hunter.....165
Brave167
Desperado169
Grifter171
Gunslinger173
Maverick175
Mountain Man177
Pony Soldier179
Preacher.....180
Professor182
Pugilist.....183
Rifleman.....185
Rustler187
Sawbones.....189
Scout190
Showman192
Soldier194
Tin Star196
Wrangler.....198

Chapter 7: Combat200

Combat Sequence201
Combat Statistics.....201
Attack Roll201
Damage202
Defense203
Grit204
Speed204
Saving Throws204
Initiative205
Initiative Checks205
Surprise205
Fast-Draw Round205
Showdowns206
Actions in Combat207
Action Types207
The Combat Round207
Attack Action207
Move Action207
Full-Round Action208
Free Action208
Common Actions209
Attack Actions209
Full-Round Actions210
Move Actions210
Miscellaneous Actions ..212

Special Initiative			
Actions	212		
Attacks of Opportunity	213		
Movement and Position	214		
Tactical Movement	214		
Flanking	214		
Combat Modifiers	214		
Favorable and Unfavorable			
Conditions	214		
Cover	215		
Concealment	216		
Helpless Defenders	216		
Special Attacks	217		
Aid Another	217		
Firearms	217		
Grenades and			
Explosives	218		
Splash Weapons	218		
Attack an Object	219		
Bull Rush	220		
Overrun	220		
Trip	221		
Disarm	221		
Grapple	222		
Mounted Combat	224		
Injury and Death	225		
Effects of Grit Damage	225		
Massive Damage	225		
Nonlethal Damage	225		
Stable Characters and			
Recovery	227		
Healing	228		
Temporary Grit	228		
Character Condition			
Summary	228		
Chapter 8: The Trail	230		
Travel	231		
Travel Rates	231		
Speed	231		
Pace	231		
Terrain	232		
Hampered Movement	232		
Forced March	232		
Mounted Movement	233		
Hazards of the Trail	233		
Darkness and Light	233		
Heat and Cold	234		
Catching on Fire	234		
Smoke	234		
Electricity	235		
Falling	235		
Falling Objects	235		
Starvation and Thirst	235		
Suffocation and			
Drowning	235		
Hanging	235		
Strangulation	236		
Acids and Bases	236		
Alcohol Consumption	236		
The Hangover	237		
Disease	237		
Anthrax	237		
Cholera	238		
Gangrene	238		
Pneumonia	238		
Salmonellosis	238		
Smallpox	238		
Yellow Fever	238		
Poison	239		
Modifier Stacking	239		
Chapter 9: The Corral	240		
Critter Types	241		
Animal	241		
Vermin	242		
Sample Critters	242		
Critter Description	243		
Critter Listings	248		
Alligator	248		
Armadillo	248		
Badger	248		
Bat	249		
Bear, Black	250		
Bear, Grizzly	250		
Beaver	250		
Bison	251		
Camel	251		
Cat	251		
Cattle	252		
Condor, California	252		
Coyote	253		
Deer	253		
Dog	254		
Donkey	254		
Duck	255		
Eagle	255		
Elk	255		
Ferret	255		
Fox	255		
Hawk	256		
Horse	256		
Horse, Draft	257		
Javelina	257		
Lizard	258		
Lizard, Gila Monster	258		
Lynx	258		
Moose	258		
Mountain Lion	259		
Mule	260		
Ocelet	260		
Otter	261		
Owl	261		
Pheasant	261		
Pig, Domestic	261		
Porcupine	262		
Prairie Dog	262		
Rabbit	263		
Raccoon	263		
Rat	264		
Raven	264		
Roadrunner	264		
Scorpion	264		
Sheep, Bighorn	264		
Sheep, Domestic	265		
Skunk	265		
Snake, Constrictor	266		
Snake, Rattlesnake	267		
Songbird	267		
Spider, Black Widow	267		
Toad	267		
Turtle	267		
Vulture	268		
Weasel	268		
Wolf	268		
Wolverine	269		
Chapter 10: The			
 Bunkhouse	270		
Ordinaries	271		
Children	271		
Challenge Ratings	271		
Sample Ordinaries	272		
Heroic Judge Characters	273		
Sample Heroes –			
The Gunter Gang	273		
Hildi Gunter	274		
Melody Gunter	274		
Ezekial “Zeke” Phelps	275		
Lafayette Lillard “Fate”			
Lawson	275		
Jeremiah Samuel Lee	275		
Happy Trails	278		
Index of Tables	279		
Index	281		
References	291		
Open Gaming License	292		
Character Sheet	293		

CHAPTER ONE : ➤ INTRODUCTION ◀

"This is the west, sir. When the legend becomes fact, print the legend."

Maxwell Scott—*The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence*, 1962

Welcome to *Sidewinder: Recoiled*, where the historic Wild West comes alive. *Sidewinder: Recoiled* is designed to be a cinematic take on the Old West with the kind of action found in your favorite Western movies. Characters can perform heroic, and sometimes unbelievable, acts of courage and daring. The gritty life of the Western Frontier is present, just toned down a bit. You won't find any magic or other fantastic elements within these pages, but the modular rules make the addition rather easy.

For those that have purchased the original *Sidewinder: Wild West Adventure*, you will undoubtedly recognize some of the text attributed to Bat Masterson within *Sidewinder: Recoiled*. The gang at Dog House Rules felt that it was important to maintain the feel of the original game while giving us a new framework to build upon for future supplements.

This version of *Sidewinder: Recoiled* has been released under the open gaming license (OGL). As such, *Sidewinder: Recoiled* works from a base set of common rules, making it largely compatible with a multitude of other games that have also joined the OGL movement. The Modern System Reference Document (Modern SRD), a condensed version of this base ruleset (without the Western flavor you will find in these pages), can be downloaded from many sites on the web, including—at the time of this writing— <http://www.systemreferencedocuments.org> and <http://www.wizards.com/default.asp?x=d20/article/msrd>.



On Sidewinder: Recoiled and Living in The Old West

by **Bat Masterson**

When those young guns from the Dog House Gang asked me to come out of “retirement” I told ‘em to let me rest in peace. But given half a chance to tell stories about the West I knew and lived gets my hand reaching for a pen no matter how decrepit these old fingers might be. It’s a pleasure to revisit the Western Frontier, to help you smell the dust of the trail, feel the beautiful balanced weight of a custom hogleg, and hear the howling of coyotes in the hills.

Indeed, this *Sidewinder: Recoiled* reminds me of the articles I wrote so long ago for *Human Life*. The editors have kindly re-printed some of those articles to help me illustrate, with my own words you might say, my memories of the Old West. The frontier was no trifle; in those articles, I spelled out just what it meant to be a gunfighter. It took a trinity of courage, willpower and skill with a weapon to survive. No matter what trail you choose, you’ll need these traits to make good out on the range. The gunfighter, the lawman, the cowboy, the card sharp—yes, even the scallywag or the sidewinder—all need guts and grit to tough-out all manner of dangers and threats to a person’s well-being.

I assume, friendly reader, that you have opened these pages to challenge the frontier. You now enter a world where, not just a tin-badge, but determination, desire and a six-shooter are the law. Here, your horse is your best friend, your gun is your ally and your imagination is your best asset.

I have been asked by *Human Life* to write something about the noted killers of men I am supposed to have personally known in the early days on the western frontier and who of their number I regarded as the most courageous and the most expert with the pistol.

In making this request, I may reasonably assume the editor did not consider that he was imposing on me very much of a task, and had it embodied nothing more than the question of proficiency with the pistol, such would have been the case; but in asking me to offer an opinion on the question of physical courage as sometimes exemplified by them under nerve-trying conditions, he has placed a responsibility on my shoulders that I hardly care to assume.

—Bat Masterson, “Ben Thompson”
Famous Gun Fighters of the Western Frontier

CO-AUTHOR’S NOTE

We are fortunate to have the perspective of Mr. William Barclay “Bat” Masterson on *Sidewinder: Recoiled*. It is worth noting, however, that Mr. Masterson is the product of a very different era in American history. His perspectives on racial and sexual issues are rough at best, compared with modern politically correct views. He has been gracious enough to allow us a broad hand in editing his work. However, we at **Dog House Rules** must remind the reader that Bat Masterson’s views are his own, and do not reflect the editorial policy or opinions of our company or of Mr. Masterson’s editors and co-authors.

Also, we are very pleased to be reprinting sections of “Gun Fighters of the Western Frontier,” the legendary collection of articles written by Bat Masterson and Alfred Henry Lewis for *Human Life* magazine. These articles are reproduced exactly as they were written, complete with grammar and spelling errors. However, Mr. Masterson has never let the dull facts get in the way of a good story, and readers should be cautioned against using his writing (whether reprinted from “Gun Fighters” or *Sidewinder: Recoiled* itself) as a primary historical source.

You may wonder what sort of person went west, in those days—west of the Mississippi, down to the deserts of Arizona, up to the heights of Colorado, and into the vistas of Wyoming. Why leave the comfortable confines of Boston or Richmond for lands no white man had ever seen? Some did it to make a wage. Common was the frontiersman who hired on as a trapper, a hunter, or a scout for a wagon train. Plenty of ‘just plain folks’ headed west as settlers, to make a new life for themselves, and stake out a homestead. Lots of men became farmers or ranchers—raising cattle, crops and kinfolk. Still others hoped to strike it rich panning for gold or digging for silver—my old stomping ground in Tombstone, Arizona was founded on a rich silver strike. By 1867, the railroads stitched the West and the East together, making them one country, and making it possible for a man who chose his fares right to see both oceans in the same month. In fact, tourists were beginning to do just that.

Naturally, you’re not reading this to find out about the tourist trade in the pueblos off the railroad. You want to know about the gunfighters, the lawmen and the outlaws. The legends of the Old West. What sort of man did *that*?

SIDEWINDER: RECOILED

It is as I said. Heroic men. Men of unsurpassed courage, extraordinary skill, and the will to do hard things when necessary. Sometimes terrible things.

That is the sort of character you'll find in *Sidewinder: Recoiled*. Will you measure up?

Life as a Sidewinder

When one thinks of the Old West, one thinks of tough men riding in the saddle, driving cattle across endless prairie. Of solemn men wearing a gun and a badge, riding into town to become the law. Of battles between Indian braves and white settlers, each believing they had the right of it. One thinks of pretty saloon girls and showdowns at high noon.

The real West was all of those things and none of those things. Events change in the telling and the retelling, and legends are built by men who never saw the true events with their own eyes. I know. I saw plenty, and I heard and read more than my share of the hogwash that was served up about the gunfighters, the killers, the lawmen, and the Indians. For every true story you've heard, you're just as likely to have heard two tall tales and one fantastical humdinger.

The truth of the matter is a man could be many a thing in those days. He could scout for the military, pathfind for the government, mine for gold or silver, keep and raise cattle or horses or sheep, live in the saddle for weeks at a time, wear a badge in one town and be wanted as a low down dirty thief in the next. The frontier was hard in those days, especially before the railroads made conveyance simpler. And for every rustler, gunslinger, marshal or maverick you read about in the dime novels, there were a dozen shopkeepers, blacksmiths, prospectors and saloonkeepers who never wanted any kind of trouble, preferring to earn a quiet, decent (or not so decent) living.

Again, I suspect that you aren't reading this to hear about the locals. At least, when I meet a young man with his head full of glorious tales of cowpunchers and buffalo hunters, I have never heard him say, "if only I could have run the general store in Tombstone!" Nope, he dreams of being the man in the center of the street, his hand on his gun, staring down the no-good rival who done him wrong. Then, at the moment of truth, they both draw. Only one man remains standing.

There are a lot of routes to that street, some bloodier than others. A good number of men (and women—the stories of Calamity Jane, Annie Oakley and the thieving

THE CODE OF THE WEST

Thirty-five years ago Charley Harrison was one of the best known sporting men west of the Missouri River. His home was in St. Louis but he traveled extensively throughout the West and was well-known through the Rocky Mountain Region. He was of an impetuous temperament, quick of action, of unquestioned courage and the most expert man I ever saw with a pistol.

He could shoot faster and straighter when shooting at a target than any man I ever knew; then add to the fact that no man possessed more courage than he did, the natural conclusion would be that he would be a most formidable foe to encounter in a pistol duel.

In 1876 he started for the Black Hills, which was then having a great mining boom on account of the discovery of gold at Deadwood. When Charley reached Cheyenne he became involved in a personal difficulty with another gambler by the name of Jim Levy, and both men started for their respective lodgings to get their pistols and have it out the first time they met.

It looked 100 to 1 that Harrison would win the fight because of his well-known courage and proficiency in the use of the pistol. Little being known at that time about Jim Levy, Harrison was

made a hot favorite in the betting in the various gambling resorts of Cheyenne. The men were not long in getting together after securing their revolvers, which were of the Colt pattern and of 45 calibre in size.

They met on opposite sides of the principal street of the city and opened fire on each other without a moment's delay. Harrison, as was expected, fairly set his pistol on fire, he was shooting so fast and managed to fire five shots at Levy before the latter could draw a bead on him.

Levy finally let go a shot. It was all that was necessary. Harrison tumbled into the street in a dying condition and was soon afterward laid to rest alongside those others who had gone before in a similar way.

That Harrison was as game a man as Levy could not be doubted; that he could shoot much faster, he had given ample proof, but under extraordinary conditions he had shown that he lacked deliberation and lost his life in consequence. The trouble with Charley Harrison was just this—he was too anxious. He wanted to shoot too fast. Levy took his time. He looked through the sights on his pistol, which is a very essential thing to do when shooting at an adversary who is returning your fire.

—Bat Masterson, "Ben Thompson"
Famous Gun Fighters of the Western Frontier



SIDEWINDER: RECOILED

Talents

At 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th level, the Fast hero selects a talent from the following talent trees. Some trees have a set order that the hero must follow, while others provide a list from which to choose. As long as the hero qualifies, he or she can select freely from any of the Fast talent trees. The hero may not select a talent more than once unless expressly indicated in the talent description.

Defensive Talent Tree

The Fast hero gains the ability to improve his innate defensive talents as he attains new levels.

Evasion: When exposed to any effect that normally allows a character to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage (for instance, a dynamite explosion), the Fast hero suffers no damage if he makes a successful saving throw. Evasion cannot be used when wearing medium or heavy armor.

Uncanny Dodge 1: The Fast hero retains his Dexterity bonus to Defense even when caught flat-footed or struck by a hidden attacker. (An immobilized hero still loses his Dexterity bonus to Defense.)

Prerequisite: Evasion.

Uncanny Dodge 2: The Fast hero can no longer be flanked; he can react to opponents on opposite sides of himself as easily as he can react to a single attacker.

Prerequisites: Evasion, uncanny dodge 1.

Defensive Roll: The Fast hero can roll with a potentially lethal attack to take less damage. When the Fast hero's current grit would be reduced to 0 or less by damage in combat (from a ranged or melee attack), the Fast hero can attempt to roll with the damage.

A Fast hero spends 1 action point to use this talent. Once the point is spent, the hero makes a Reflex saving throw (DC = damage dealt). If the save succeeds, he takes one-half damage. The Fast hero must be able to react to the attack to execute a defensive roll—an immobilized hero cannot use this talent.

Since a character cannot normally make a Reflex save for one-half damage against ranged or melee attacks, the Fast hero's evasion talent does not apply to the defensive roll.

Prerequisites: Evasion, uncanny dodge 1.

Opportunist: The Fast hero can spend 1 action point to use this talent. Once the point is spent, the hero can make an attack of opportunity against an opponent who has just been struck for damage in melee by another character. This attack counts as the Fast hero's attack of opportunity for that round. Even a Fast hero with the Combat Reflexes feat cannot use this talent more than once per round.

Prerequisite: Evasion.

Increased Speed Talent Tree

The Fast hero can increase his natural base speed.

Increased Speed: The Fast hero's base speed increases by 5 feet.

Improved Increased Speed: The Fast hero's base speed increases by an additional 5 feet. This talent stacks

with increased speed (10 feet total).

Prerequisite: Increased speed.

Advanced Increased Speed: The Fast hero's base speed increases by an additional 5 feet. This talent stacks with increased speed and improved increased speed (15 feet total).

Prerequisites: Increased speed, improved increased speed.

Bonus Feats

At 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th level, the Fast hero gains a bonus feat. The hero must select the feat from the following list, and some feats may not be eligible for selection until the hero meets certain prerequisites.

Acrobatic, Combat Expertise, Combat Throw, Defensive Martial Arts, Defensive Riding, Double Tap, Elusive Target, Focused, Improved Disarm, Mobility, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Sidewinder, Slip Hammer, Stealthy, Weapon Finesse.

❖ THE TOUGH HERO ❖

"If the shooting starts, I'll live long enough to kill you."

Clint Burton – *Flaming Star*, 1960

Toughness is as much a state of mind as it is a physical manifestation. The Tough hero can gut out the most treacherous travail, whether it's a long and bloody fist fight, a trek across the desert on foot with only a half canteen of water, or the need to stay awake all night guarding the herd from rustlers.

Thus, just about any profession can benefit from taking a level as a Tough hero. A gunfighter might prefer the ability to take a bullet without going down to a super fast draw. A mountain man might decide the best chance of survival during the long winter is pure endurance, including the ability to resist illness and stomach the same dried meat for weeks on end. A gambler could benefit from the ability to stay sharp while drinking snakehead during an all night poker tournament.

But regardless of the reason for choosing the Tough hero, a character in this class values good health, fortitude and endless endurance. That's just as much the mentality of the Tough hero as it is a physical trait. Tough heroes are strong-minded, sometimes to the point of stubbornness. The Tough hero often prefers to take a beating if it means continuing to do things her way. She'll stick to her ways and endure hardships rather than compromise or cut a deal. These qualities make Tough heroes a force to be reckoned with—they will stay in a fight long after others have withdrawn and will often stand up and fight for another person's welfare or cause, even when others have given up hope.

Tough heroes come from all walks of life and they turn up in all regions of a *Sidewinder: Recoiled* setting. Whether a lawman, a cowboy or a mountain man, the Tough hero relies on steadfast endurance of mind, body and spirit to achieve success and build a reputation.

Tough Hero Vitals

Ability: A high Constitution score is a must for the Tough hero—the ability to endure physical pain, ward off illness and mentally stick to her guns all depend on it. And it never hurts to have a dose of raw power to back up that stubborn streak, so Tough heroes usually place a respectable score in Strength. Of course, nimble hands and sure feet make a difference too, especially for characters that tend to get into fistfights and tight spots. Finally, it is hard to endure when you don't know why you're doing it; so Tough heroes often place a good score in either Wisdom or Intelligence.



Grit Die: 1d10

Action Points: Tough heroes gain a number of action points equal to 5 + one-half their character level, rounded down, at 1st level and every time they attain a new level in this class.

Class Skills: The Tough hero's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are:

Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (mechanical, structural) (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (current events, popular culture, streetwise) (Int), Operate Vehicle (watercraft) (Dex), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Ride (Dex), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis), and Survival (Wis).

In addition, the starting occupation selected can provide additional class skills from which to choose.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (3 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 3 + Int modifier.

Starting Feats: In addition to the two feats all characters receive at 1st level, a Tough hero begins play with the Simple Weapons Proficiency feat.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Tough hero.

Talents

At 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th level, the Tough hero selects a talent from the following talent trees. Some trees have a set order that the hero must follow, while others provide a list from which to choose. As long as the hero qualifies, she can select freely from any of the Tough talent trees. The hero may not select a talent more than once unless expressly indicated in the talent description.

Damage Reduction Talent Tree

The Tough hero has an innate talent to ignore a set amount of damage from most weapons, but not from energy. Before she can select a talent from this tree, the hero must have previously selected at least one talent from the Energy Resistance or Unbreakable Talent Tree.

Damage Reduction 1: The Tough hero ignores 1 point of damage from melee and ranged weapons.

Prerequisite: One other talent from either the Energy Resistance Talent Tree or the Unbreakable Talent Tree.

Damage Reduction 2: The Tough hero ignores an additional 1 point of damage from melee and ranged weapons (DR 2 total).

Prerequisites: Damage reduction 1, one other talent from either the Energy Resistance Talent Tree or the Unbreakable Talent Tree.

Table 2.3: The Tough Hero

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Features	Defense	Reputation
1st	+0	+1	+0	+0	Talent	+1	+0
2nd	+1	+2	+0	+0	Bonus feat	+2	+0
3rd	+2	+2	+1	+1	Talent	+2	+1
4th	+3	+2	+1	+1	Bonus feat	+3	+1
5th	+3	+3	+1	+1	Talent	+3	+1
6th	+4	+3	+2	+2	Bonus feat	+3	+2
7th	+5	+4	+2	+2	Talent	+4	+2
8th	+6/+1	+4	+2	+2	Bonus feat	+4	+2
9th	+6/+1	+4	+3	+3	Talent	+5	+3
10th	+7/+2	+5	+3	+3	Bonus feat	+5	+3



Calamity Jane proved she was as tough as any man during her career on the frontier. With a reputation as a fearless rider, a mighty good shot and a person you could count on when the chips were down, she personifies the *Sidewinder: Recoiled* incarnation of the Tough hero.

Born as Martha Canary, Calamity Jane never let anything stand in her way. No challenge was too great, no task too difficult, and no crisis too overwhelming. Over the years before she settled down, she served as a scout, a soldier, a wild horse breaker and a pony express rider. But her greatest ability was her mental toughness, her single-minded focus on whatever she was doing at the time. She could break the stubbornness' horse, because her own relentless drive always outlasted it. She could laugh off a hazardous ride through the Black Hills to deliver the mail—a route no one else wanted—because she refused to believe it couldn't be done. She could save a rider's life with nothing more than dogged determination. Which is how she got her nickname, as it happens, out on Goose Creek River in 1873, as her cavalry unit found itself in a skirmish with a band of Sioux. Turning back from her position at the point, she saw her captain falling from the saddle after taking a hit. She spurred her mount and raced to his side, getting there just in time to catch him and ride to safety. She was named Calamity Jane that day; a nod to her uncanny ability to gut it out and do the job every time.

And if that doesn't convince you, how about the time she tracked down the desperado who had murdered Wild Bill? It's said that she captured him armed only with a meat cleaver from the butcher shop. That's right, she went straight after him, didn't even go to fetch her guns first. She wasn't about to let that snake leave town and that cleaver was all she needed to bring him in. That's toughness in my book.

Damage Reduction 3: The Tough hero ignores an additional 1 point of damage from melee and ranged weapons (DR 3 total).

Prerequisites: Damage reduction 1, damage reduction 2, one other talent from either the Energy Resistance Talent Tree or the Unbreakable Talent Tree.

ROTGUT WHISKEYS



Snakehead was the nastiest of the “whiskeys” of the old west. Take one barrel of pure grain alcohol add two pounds of black powder, four plugs of chewin' tobacco to give it the proper color, and one or more rattlesnake heads for “bite”. Iffin' it don't kill ya out right when ya drink it, you sure will in hell wish it had the next day. And that's one of the “tamest” recipes. As to some of the stuff traded to the natives, well...

“Teddy Blue” Abbott wrote: “You take one barrel of Missouri River water, and two gallons of alcohol. Then you add two ounces of strychnine to make them crazy — because strychnine is the greatest stimulant in the world — and three plugs of tobacco to make them sick — because an Indian wouldn't figure it was whiskey unless it made him sick — and five bars of soap to give it a head, and half a pound of red pepper, and then you put in some sagebrush and boil it until it's brown. Strain into a bottle and you've got your Indian whiskey; that one bottle calls for one buffalo robe and when the Indian got drunk it was two robes. And that's how some of the traders made their fortunes.”

Energy Resistance Talent Tree

The Tough hero is particularly resistant to certain kinds of deadly energy effects. The hero can select these talents in any order.

Acid Resistance: The Tough hero ignores an amount of acid damage equal to her Constitution modifier.

Cold Resistance: The Tough hero ignores an amount of cold damage equal to her Constitution modifier.

Electricity Resistance: The Tough hero ignores an amount of electricity damage equal to her Constitution modifier.

Fire Resistance: The Tough hero ignores an amount of fire damage equal to her Constitution modifier.

Sonic/Concussion Resistance: The Tough hero ignores an amount of sonic or concussion damage equal to her Constitution modifier.

Unbreakable Talent Tree

The Tough hero is particularly resilient thanks to the following talents.

Remain Conscious: The Tough hero gains the ability to continue to perform actions when she would otherwise be considered unconscious and dying. When the Tough hero's current grit reaches -1, the hero can perform as

though she were disabled, making either an attack action or a move action every round until she reaches -10 grit (and dies) or her current grit returns to 1 or higher. The hero can choose to succumb to unconsciousness if she thinks that doing so might prevent her from taking more damage.

Robust: The Tough hero becomes especially rugged, gaining a number of total grit equal to her Tough level as soon as she selects this talent. Thereafter, the hero gains +1 total grit with each level of Tough hero she gains.

Second Wind: The Tough hero can spend 1 action point to gain a second wind. When the hero does this, she recovers a number of grit equal to her Constitution modifier. This talent cannot increase the Tough hero's current grit beyond her total grit.

Stamina: The Tough hero heals and recovers twice as fast as normal, regaining 2 grit per character level per evening of rest, 2 points of temporary ability damage per evening of rest, and awakening in one-half the normal time after being knocked unconscious.

Prerequisite: Robust.

Bonus Feats

At 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th, and 10th level, the Tough hero gains a bonus feat. The hero must select the feat from the following list, and some feats may not be eligible for selection until the hero meets certain prerequisites.

Alertness, Athletic, Brawl, Confident, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Improved Brawl, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Feint, Knockout Punch, Mechanical, Power Attack, Streetfighting, Toughness, True Grit.

➤ THE SMART HERO ◀

“Hey, that boy’s so smart he’d dry snow and sell it for sugar.”

“Honey” Wiggin – *The Virginian*, 1929

Sometimes the best way to win a fight or overcome a challenge is by using one’s wits rather than brute force. The Smart hero chooses to live that way all of the time, preferring to use his superior intellect to build an authoritative reputation, defeat adversaries, and make a mark on the world.

That’s not to say that a Smart hero won’t wear a Colt on his hip without knowing how to use it. But most of the time, he would rather it stay cleanly oiled in his holster, using it only when his education, power of reason and clever plans don’t figure—for instance, you just can’t reason with a mountain lion springing from the rock ledge above you.

Smart heroes take many forms, and they gain their mental prowess by different means. Some might be bookish types from back east or overseas, getting their smarts from book learning or other formal education and passing it on to others by living as a teacher or advisor. Others might be born geniuses and inventors, applying their incredible powers of deduction in a big city laboratory or small town smithy. Still others might be

DAMAGE TYPES



The Tough hero has several talents available to her that reduce the damage taken from certain types of attacks. In particular, damage reduction works against melee and ranged attacks and energy resistance works against different varieties of energy attacks. However, what about explosions? Does damage reduction work against the blast from several sticks of dynamite? Does energy resistance work? Determining the type of damage an attack inflicts will resolve such questions. There are four types of ‘physical’ damage: ballistic, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing. There are five forms of energy damage: acid, cold, electricity, fire, and sonic/concussion. Damage reduction works against the four physical damage types while energy resistance works against the type of energy selected when the talent was taken. The type of damage that a weapon or other damage source inflicts is always listed with the description of that weapon or source. For example, a knife does piercing damage (see Table 5.13: Melee Weapons, page 151) and dynamite does concussion damage (see Table 5.12: Explosives and Splash Weapons, page 148). Therefore, while damage reduction reduces the damage dealt by a knife, it is ineffective against dynamite, because concussion damage is an energy damage type. Only the talent energy resistance (sonic/concussion) would reduce damage from a dynamite blast.

plain folks that have learned through experience, like the clever lawman who gets inside the heads of the outlaws to solve crimes, entrap the guilty or hunt down a runaway. Yet another might be a high-ranking military officer (perhaps retired) known for resourceful battlefield tactics and strategy.

Smart heroes are often travelers because they crave new intellectual challenges. Adventure beckons even those who tend toward a sedentary lifestyle. A character that chooses a level in Smart hero can benefit in many ways, no matter what their profession—knowing how to figure out a puzzle or gathering the knowledge needed to accomplish a goal comes in handy even if your only ambition in life is to find that elusive mother lode of silver or gold.

SIDEWINDER: RECOILED

might entail buying more expensive drinks, not necessarily offering a character extra money). Increase the Wealth check DC by 2 (or double the purchase price) for each +1 (up to a maximum of +5) circumstance bonus the character wants to add to the skill check.

If the Judge deems that the situation does not require the expenditure of money, a Wealth check (or cash expenditure) is unnecessary.

Try Again?: Yes, but it requires 1d4+1 hours for each check, and a character may draw unwanted attention if repeatedly pursuing a certain type of information.

Special: A character can take 10 when making a Gather Information check, but cannot take 20.

Synergy: A character with 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (streetwise) receives a +2 synergy bonus on Gather Information checks to acquire information about the local black market.

Time: A Gather Information check requires 1d4+1 hours.

Handle Animal (Cha)

Trained Only

The character is an experienced hand at dealing with animals, whether wild or domestic, and has extensive knowledge in the breeding, rearing, caring and training of animals. The character can use this skill to drive a hitch of horses pulling a stagecoach across a river ford, raise an orphaned bear cub, or drive a herd of stubborn longhorns up the cattle trail.

“A horse is a man’s slave, but treat ‘em like a slave and you’re not a man. Remember that.”

Jeremy Rodack – *Tribute to a Bad Man*, 1956

Check: The time and the DC required depend on what the character is trying to accomplish.

Table 3.32: Handle Animal Tasks

Task	Time	DC
Handle an animal	Move action	10
“Push” an animal	Full-round action	25
Teach an animal a trick	1 week	See text
Train an animal for a purpose	See text	See text
Drive a Team	Move action	See text
Rear a wild animal	See text	See text
Tame a feral domestic animal	1 week	See text

Handle an Animal (DC 10): This means to command a critter to perform a task or trick that it knows. The DC increases by +5 if the critter is wounded or has taken any ability score damage. If the check is successful, the critter performs the task or trick on its next action.

“Push” an Animal (DC 25): To push an animal means to get it to perform a task or trick that it does not know, but is physically capable of performing. If the check is successful, the critter performs the task or trick on its next action.

SO HOW COME MY HORSE AIN'T AS SMART AS THOSE IN THE MOVIES? OR “THE TRIGGER RULE”



Under the standard OGL rules a horse is a horse is a horse. No matter how hard a character tries, his steed will never be able to know more than six “tricks” or one “general purpose.” However, this is not what we remember from our favorite Saturday matinees or television shows. Trigger was down right brilliant, and Silver came to the Lone Ranger’s rescue on more than one occasion. So, to help those characters (and Judges) who want their favorite steed or critter to be like those we so fondly remember, *Sidewinder: Recoiled* introduces the following optional rule:

An animal with an Intelligence of 2 is no longer limited to a maximum of six tricks. Instead, the limit is equal to 6 plus the critter’s Wisdom bonus. A critter with a Wisdom penalty can still learn up to six tricks. For every trick that a character attempts to teach a critter after the sixth trick, the character incurs a cumulative -5 penalty to the Handle Animal check. So, for the seventh trick the penalty would be -5, for the eighth trick -10, and so forth.

Teach an Animal a Trick (DC varies): With one week of work and a successful Handle Animal check the character can teach an animal a specific trick, such as “attack” or “stay”. A critter with an Intelligence of 1 can learn a maximum of three tricks, while a critter with an Intelligence of 2 can learn a maximum of six tricks.

Possible tricks include, but are not limited to, the following.

Attack (DC 20): The critter attacks apparent enemies. The character may point to a particular foe to direct the critter to attack that enemy.

Come (DC 15): The critter comes to the character, even if the critter normally would not do so (such as charging into a saloon).

Defend (DC 20): The critter defends the character (or is ready to defend the character if no threat is present). Alternatively, the character can command the critter to defend another specific character.

Down (DC 15): The critter breaks off from combat or otherwise backs down.

Fetch (DC 15): The critter goes and gets something. The character must point out a specific object, or else the critter fetches some random object.

Guard (DC 20): The critter stays in place and prevents others from approaching.

Heel (DC 15): The critter follows the character closely, even to places where it normally would not go (such as following the character onto a river barge).

Loyalty (DC 0): The character can teach a critter to obey only the character. Any others attempting to make the critter perform a trick incur a -10 penalty on their Handle Animal check. A critter that knows the Loyalty trick is more difficult to train. All subsequent tricks are taught with DC's that are increased by 5. If the critter already knows some tricks, whether taught by the character or others, it cannot be taught to obey only the character.

Perform (DC 15): The critter does a variety of simple tricks such as sitting up, rolling over, and so on.

Seek (DC 15): The critter moves into an area and searches for something of interest. It stops and indicates the first thing of interest it finds. What constitutes an item of interest to a critter can vary. Critters almost always find other critters or characters interesting. To understand that it is looking for a specific object, the critter must make an Intelligence check (DC 10).

Stay (DC 15): The critter stays in place waiting for the character to return. It does not challenge other creatures that come by, though it still defends itself if it needs to.

Track (DC 20): The critter tracks the scent presented to it.

Work (DC 15): The critter pulls or pushes a medium or heavy load.



Train an Animal (DC varies): Rather than teaching a critter individual tricks, the character can train a critter for a general purpose. Essentially, a critter's purpose represents a specific set of interrelated tricks that fit into a common scheme. A character can train a critter for only a single general purpose. However, the critter may still have the capacity to learn additional tricks beyond those included in its general purpose. Training a critter for a purpose requires fewer checks than teaching individual tricks.

Combat Riding (DC 20, 6 weeks): A critter trained to bear a rider into combat knows Attack, Come, Defend, Down, Guard, and Heel. A critter trained in riding may be "upgraded" to a critter trained in combat riding by spending three weeks and making a Handle Animal check (DC 20). If the critter was trained in other tricks (in addition to those provided by training the critter for riding), those tricks are completely replaced by the combat riding tricks.

Fighting (DC 20, 3 weeks): A critter trained for combat knows the following tricks: Attack, Down, and Stay.

Guarding (DC 20, 4 weeks): A critter trained to guard knows the following tricks: Attack, Defend, Down, and Guard.

Laboring (DC 15, 2 weeks): A critter trained for heavy labor knows Come and Work.

Hunting (DC 20, 6 weeks): A critter trained for hunting knows Attack, Down, Fetch, Heel, Seek, and Track.

Performing (DC 15, 4 weeks): A critter trained for performing knows Come, Fetch, Heel, Perform, and Stay.

Riding (DC 15, 3 weeks): A critter trained to bear a rider knows Come, Heel, and Stay.

Driving a Team (DC varies): Driving a horse or ox drawn conveyance uses the Handle Animal skill. Generally, the only trick that the animal needs to execute is Work. Performing simple maneuvers with a trained team does not require a skill check. However, a Judge may require a character to make a check for unusual circumstances (taking a stage off road), dramatic situations (a chase or attack), or driving at an unsafe speed (trying to reach the next stage stop before nightfall). Driving a Team is a move action and the DC depends on the ground conditions.

Rear a Wild Animal (DC varies): The character can raise an infant or juvenile wild critter so that it becomes tame. A character can rear a maximum of three critters simultaneously, and the critters must be of the same type. The character can teach the tamed critter tricks during the rearing process or at a later time. Taming a wild animal is not the same as domesticating it. Wild animals can never be truly domesticated, and if abused or left alone for any extended length of time will revert to their natural ways. Rearing a wild animal requires 12 weeks for an infant or 24 weeks for a juvenile. The DC to rear a wild animal is equal to 15 plus the number of grit dice that the animal will have when fully mature.

Tame a Feral Domestic Animal (DC varies): Some domestic animals become feral when raised away from human contact. A classic example, are the mustangs that roam the west. Unlike wild animals, a character can tame

VEHICLES AND SKILLS



Folks got around in a variety of fashions in the Old West. Of course, the standard was your own two feet; however, horses, coaches, wagons, trains, and riverboats were also common conveyances. How does a cowpoke in *Sidewinder: Recoiled* use or operate any of these means of transportation? The answer is with skills.

There are five skills in *Sidewinder: Recoiled* that deal with conveyances. Handle Animal allows a character to perform as a teamster, driving an animal-drawn wagon or coach. The Ride skill allows a cowboy to ride a horse (or camel, ox, etc.). Less commonly used is the Operate Vehicle skill. The Operate Vehicle skill encompasses three categories: aircraft, ground vehicles, and watercraft. These skills allow a character to use vehicles that travel in the air, on the ground, or in the water.

In order to determine which of the many forms of transportation each of these skills covers, all vehicles are separated into **classes**. Each class is exclusively governed by a particular skill, which may also control the use of other classes. Listed below are all vehicle classes appearing in the Wild West, along with the skill that governs their use.

Airships

Operate Vehicle (aircraft)

This class covers hot-air balloons, dirigibles, aerostats and any other flying vehicle that achieves lift through buoyant gases.

Animal-Drawn Vehicles

Handle Animal

This class covers all horse and ox-drawn wagons, carriages, and coaches.

Human-Powered Boats

Operate Vehicle (watercraft)

This class includes all boats propelled by paddles, poles, or oars. Canoes, kayaks, rafts, and skiffs all belong to this category.

Human-Powered Ground Vehicles

Operate Vehicle (ground vehicles)

This class includes the bicycle and related vehicles.

Motorized Ground Vehicles

Operate Vehicle (ground vehicles)

All stream-powered ground vehicles fall into this class. This includes the Iron Horse as well as, in later years, the horseless carriage.

Riding Animals

Ride

This class of transportation covers the riding of all animals, including horses, camels, oxen, etc.

Sailing Ships

Operate Vehicle (watercraft)

Any ship with sails, independent of size or the possession of steam engines and screws, belongs to this class.

Steamships

Operate Vehicle (watercraft)

This class covers all ships exclusively powered by steam engines. The most common vehicle of this sort in the Wild West was the paddle wheeler.

Submersibles

Operate Vehicle (watercraft)

This class covers all vehicles that travel underwater, including diving bells and submarines.

(or “break”) even fully mature specimens of these critters. Taming a feral domestic animal requires one week. The DC to tame a feral critter is equal to 10 plus the number of grit dice that the animal possesses.

Try Again?: Yes for handling, pushing, taming, teaching, or training animals. Maybe for driving a team. When driving a team, however, most failed Handle Animal checks have consequences that eliminate the option to try again. No for rearing a wild animal.

Special: A character can take 10 or take 20 when handling, pushing, taming, teaching, or training animals. When driving a team a character can take 10 but not 20. A character cannot take 10 or take 20 when rearing a wild animal.

An untrained character uses Charisma checks to handle and push animals as well as to drive a team. Untrained characters cannot tame, teach, rear or train animals.

A character that has the Animal Affinity feat gains a +2 bonus on all Handle Animal checks as long as the character has at least 1 rank in the skill.

Synergy: A character with 5 or more ranks in Handle Animal receives a +2 synergy bonus on Ride checks when riding a mount that the character has trained.

Time: See above. Teaching, rearing, taming, or training an animal requires a number of days. The character does not have to spend every hour training the critter; 3 hours per day is enough. (Spending more than 3 hours per day

does not reduce the number of days required.) However, the days spent in training must be consecutive; if the character does not complete the training during a period of consecutive days, the effort is wasted. When teaching, rearing, taming, or training an animal the Handle Animal check occurs halfway through the time required. If the check succeeds, the character must still invest the remainder of the time to complete the training. If the check fails, the character must begin again if attempting to teach, tame or train a domestic animal. However, if the failed check was for rearing a wild animal the critter proves to be untamable and the character need not complete the rearing.

Hide (Dex)

Armor Penalty

Using this skill, a character can use shadows to conceal movement, or use the cover of dense mesquite brush to slowly approach a Comanche encampment unseen, or avoid being spotted while following a bounty through the streets of Laredo.

“If you can see them, they’re not Apaches.”

Captain Kirby York – *Fort Apache, 1948*

Check: A character’s Hide check is opposed by the Spot check of anyone in a position to see the character. The character can move up to one-half normal speed without incurring a penalty to a Hide check. At more than one-half and up to the character’s full speed, the character incurs a –5 penalty. It is nearly impossible (–20 penalty) to hide while attacking, running, or charging.

In addition, the size of the character will determine a modifier to the Hide check:

Table 3.33: Hide Check Modifiers

Size	Modifier	Size	Modifier
Fine	+16	Large	–4
Diminutive	+12	Huge	–8
Tiny	+8	Gargantuan	–12
Small	+4	Colossal	–16
Medium-size	+0		

If people are observing the character, even casually, the character cannot hide. The character can run around a corner, duck out of sight, and then hide. However, the observers will still know where the character last went.

Cover and concealment grant circumstance bonuses to Hide checks, as shown below. Note that a character cannot hide with less than one-half cover or concealment.

Table 3.34: Cover and Concealment and Hide Checks

Cover or Concealment	Circumstance Bonus
Three-quarters	+5
Nine-tenths	+10

Creating a Diversion to Hide: A character can use the Bluff skill to assist in hiding. A successful Bluff check can give the character the momentary diversion needed to attempt a Hide check. While the others are distracted, a character can make a Hide check if he or she can get to a hiding place of some kind. (As a general guideline, the hiding place has to be within 1 foot for every rank the character has in Hide.) However, because the character has to move fast, the Hide check incurs a –10 penalty.

Tailing: A character can use Hide to tail a person through public places. Using the skill in this manner assumes that there are other people milling about, among whom the character can mingle to remain unnoticed. If a subject is unsuspecting, they make a Spot check (opposed by the character’s Hide check) after each hour of tailing. However, if the subject is worried about being followed, he or she can make a Spot check every course change (turning a street corner, exiting a building, and so on).

Special: A character can take 10 when making a Hide check, but cannot take 20.

Time: A Hide check is a move action.

Intimidate (Cha)

The character has developed the ability to force others to do what he or she desires of them, without immediately resorting to physical violence. A character can accomplish this by bullying, browbeating, insulting, threatening, embarrassing, or using the sheer force of his or her personality or imposing presence.

“He’s a murderer. A hired killer. His nose was bit off in a fight.”

“If I was going to be scared, I’d be scared of the fellow who bit it off, not him!”

Jackson Two-Bears and Frankie Ballou – *Cat Ballou, 1965*

Check: With a successful check, a character can forcibly persuade another character to perform some task or behave in a certain way. An hombre’s Intimidate check is opposed by the target’s level check (1d20 + the target’s character level or Grit Dice). Any modifiers that a target may have on Will saving throws against fear effects apply to this level check. If the check succeeds, the character may treat the target as friendly for 10 minutes, but only for purposes of actions taken while in the character’s presence. That is, while intimidated, the target retains his or her normal attitude, but will chat, advise, offer limited help, or advocate on behalf of the character. (See Table 3.21: Attitudes on page 72 for details).

Circumstances dramatically affect the effectiveness of an Intimidate check. There are limits to what a successful Intimidate check can do. The character cannot force someone to obey his or her every command or do something that endangers that person’s life. If the check fails by more than 5, the target may actually do the opposite of what the character wishes.

Frightening Displays: If the victim is subjected to a

THE BORDER SHIFT



By some accounts “Long-haired” Jim Courtright was a masterful gunfighter, but others said he simply had luck on his side when it counted, until one fateful night outside the White Elephant Saloon in Fort Worth, Texas.

Personal animosity created a feud between former city marshal Courtright, who now operated a detective agency, and part-time gunfighter, full-time gambler and owner of the White Elephant Luke Short. That rivalry ended in gunfire on February 8, 1877, with what has since been described as “the luckiest shot the Old West ever heard of.” Courtright had approached Short about “protection” money which Short refused to pay. The ensuing argument climaxed with both men reaching for iron. While Jim was the faster on the draw, his piece became entangled in his own watch chain. Meanwhile, Short let loose a shot that blew the former marshal’s right-hand thumb clean off. Long-haired Jim frantically attempted a Border Shift but Short calmly pumped three more bullets into him before it could be completed. It is perhaps ironic (in a way that can occur only in the Wild West) that in Luke Short’s last shootout, he lost his left-hand thumb to an opponent’s shotgun blast.

OFF-HAND PENALTIES



While the designers of the Modern system opted to remove the concept of “handedness” from the rules, this causes some consternation amongst those who prefer a little more “reality” in their gameplay, as well as making the Border Shift maneuver practically useless except for cinematic effect. Since the gang here at Dog House Rules wants to accommodate as many gaming styles as possible, it won’t hurt our feelings none if a Judge decides to have characters declare a handedness. If doing so, we suggest that any actions (such as shooting, lockpicking, card-dealing, etc.) performed with the “off” hand suffer a -4 penalty. However, the two-weapon fighting rules already consider this penalty. Therefore, if your cowpoke fights two fisted, he or she shouldn’t suffer this additional penalty. Furthermore, if using this optional handedness rule, the Judge may decide that a cowpoke with the Two-Weapon Fighting feat is ambidextrous, thus eliminating the handedness penalty for any other actions.

“Left handed, hey?”

“I’m saving my right hand to shake hands with friends.”

Dan Hickey and Billy the Kid – *Billy the Kid*,
1941

modifier to this check. Use the Sleight of Hand size modifiers listed in Table 3.48: Concealing Weapons and Objects (see page 94). If the Sleight of Hand check fails, the character fails to successfully holster the weapon. If the check fails by 5 or more, the character drops the weapon.

With a successful DC 20 Sleight of Hand check, the character can combine a Quick Holster with a Pistol Spin maneuver. If the maneuver succeeds, (and if the Judge allows), increase the circumstance bonus on Intimidate checks to +3.

Rifle Spin (DC 15): Cocking a lever-action rifle is normally a free action that requires the use of two hands. With the maneuver known as a Rifle Spin, a character can attempt to cock a lever-action rifle as a free action with only one hand. A Rifle Spin requires a DC 15 Sleight of Hand skill check. If the character fails, a new round is not chambered but the character may retry a Rifle Spin without penalty. However, if the skill check fails by more than 5, the character drops the rifle.

Road Agent Spin (DC 20 or 25): This is a favorite maneuver among the black-hat-wearing crowd. The character holds his pistol or pistols out butt-first, as though surrendering to his opponent. Then, assuming his Sleight of Hand check is successful, he quickly spins and flips the smokewagons, turning them on his opponent as a free action. The character can immediately make a Bluff check with a +4 circumstance modifier (opposed by his opponent’s Sense Motive skill); if he wins the contest, the opponent is surprised and caught flat-footed. Of course, if the character fails the initial Sleight of Hand check, he is left with his guns tangled up in his fingers looking mighty foolish. If he fails the Sleight of Hand check by 5, he drops one gun; if he fails by 10 or more, he drops both guns (if spinning both guns).

Border Shift (DC 25): This maneuver is a favorite among cowpokes who carry two guns but do not fight two-fisted. To use this maneuver, the character must have both guns drawn, one in each hand. When the primary weapon runs out of ammunition, a character

can attempt, as a free action, a Sleight of Hand skill check to make a Border Shift. A Border Shift consists of tossing the two guns from hand to hand, moving the fully loaded pistol to the shooting hand and the empty one to the off hand. The character can continue firing in that round without pause, up to his full number of attacks.

If he fails the roll, the swap takes place, but the character spends the rest of the turn bobbling for his pistols. The character cannot make any further attacks, nor can the character spend a move action. The only action available is a 5-foot step, provided the character has not previously moved in the round. Should the Sleight of Hand check fail by 5 or more, the character bobbles for his pistols, loses all subsequent actions (except perhaps for a 5-foot step), and drops both weapons.

Hammer Down

As a single attack action, the character can hold down the trigger of a single-action revolver while rapidly fanning the hammer with his palm, emptying the revolver for one devastating attack.

Prerequisites: Dexterity 13, Point Blank Shot, Slip Hammer, base attack bonus +6.

Benefit: When using a single-action revolver with at least five bullets loaded, the character may fire five bullets as a full attack against a single target. The

character suffers a -4 penalty on this attack, but deals +2 dice of damage with a successful hit. For example, a weapon that normally deals 2d6 points of damage does 4d6 instead.

Special: In order to use this feat, the character must have both hands free and must be firing a single-action revolver.

Heroic Surge

The character has uncanny speed and is able to perform additional actions in combat.

Benefit: The character may take an extra move action or attack action in a round, either before or after the character's regular actions. The character may use Heroic Surge a number of times per day depending on his character level (as shown below), but never more than once per round. Heroic Surge cannot be used during a fast-draw round.

Table 4.3: Heroic Surge Usage

Character Level	Times per Day
1st-4th	1
5th-8th	2
9th-12th	3
13th-16th	4
17th-20th	5

Hollow Leg

The character can stomach the foulest rotgut the West has to offer. In fact, he likes it.

"I've seen a man take two drinks of that stuff and go out and hunt bear with a willow switch."

"What did he want the switch for?"

Bartender and Reb - *Guns smoke*, 1953

Benefit: A character with this feat receives a +4 circumstance bonus on saving throws to avoid the adverse effects of alcohol consumption.

Home Ground

Like a mother bear protecting her cubs, or a stallion his herd, the character is particularly ferocious when defending hearth and home.

Benefit: A character receives a +1 circumstance bonus to attack rolls and saving throws when defending something in relation to his allegiance (see Allegiances, page 49).

Special: All bonuses granted by this feat are at the Judge's discretion.

Horse Tradin'

The character is particularly shrewd at negotiating the purchase or sale of goods. The character knows all of the tricks of bartering and haggling with other individuals. The character is a shrewd bargainer, able to secure deals that no one else can.



Barrel Length: 2 1/2 inches, **Overall Length:** 5 7/8 inches, **Full Reload Time:** 6 full-round actions.

Breech-Loading Pistols

This class of pistols includes a wide variety of mechanisms that open the breech by sliding or swinging the barrels clear. A single round of ammunition is placed into the barrel (or each of the barrels) and the breech is closed. Both of the pistols detailed here use metal cartridge ammunition; however, breech-loading percussion handguns also exist.

Sharps Pepperbox (1859)

The 4-barrel breech-loading Pepperbox is typically associated with gamblers, ladies of the evening, and as a hide-out gun of outlaws and lawmen on the Western Frontier. Production of the single-action Sharps 4-shot Pepperbox pistols ended in 1874. Obtaining access to the breech requires sliding the four barrels (one solid unit) forward. Unlike the Allen and Thurber Pepperbox, the barrels of the Sharps don't rotate. Instead, the firing pin rotates. The Sharps Pepperbox was produced in .22 caliber, .30 caliber and .32 long as well as the .32 short model detailed here. Due to the large number of barrels possessed by this breechloader, reloading takes a might longer than normal, 2 full-round actions. A character with the Quick Reload feat can load this pepperbox in half that time, 1 full-round action.

Barrel Length: 3 inches, **Overall Length:** 5 1/2 inches, **Full Reload Time:** 2 full-round actions.

Remington Double-Derringer (1866)

The Remington Double-Derringer (also known as the Over-Under Derringer or Model 95 Double-Derringer) was an extremely common stingy pistol that remained on the market for 69 years, from 1866 to 1935. Due to its small size and light weight, this single-action 2-shot model was particularly popular with the "soiled doves" of the frontier. The firing pin automatically switches barrels. Obtaining access to the breech requires pivoting the barrels on a pin located at the top in front of the hammer. Ejecting the spent cartridges accounts for most of the time required for reloading.

Barrel Length: 3 inches, **Overall Length:** 4 3/4 inches, **Full Reload Time:** 1 full-round action.

Single-Action Revolvers

Revolvers contain the ammunition in a cylinder that rotates a fresh load into position during the cocking of the hammer. Pulling the trigger releases the hammer, igniting either a percussion cap or a cartridge primer. When using a single-action revolver (as opposed to a double-action revolver), the hammer must be manually cocked; the cowpoke using such a hogleg first cocks the hammer and then pulls the trigger to fire a shot. This makes for a bit slower draw-and-fire action, but it allows the shooter to use various feats to fire off more than one bullet per attack (see the Slip Hammer and Hammer Down feats, pages 119 and 113 respectively).

Colt Walker Dragoon (1847)

Designed mainly as a cavalry weapon by Captain Samuel H. Walker of the Texas Rangers and Samuel Colt himself, the immense Colt Walker is inhospitable to being worn on a belt. Because of this, characters using a Colt Walker incur a -2 penalty on any Sleight of Hand check to conceal or manipulate the pistol (such as with the Gunplay feat). When a character conceals the weapon on his or her person, this penalty is in addition to the -4 penalty arising because the weapon is medium-sized. As with all percussion Colt pistols, the quickest way to reload is to replace the cylinder with a preloaded one. This requires knocking out a locking wedge and breaking the pistol apart into three pieces: the barrel, the grip, and the cylinder. When a spare cylinder isn't available, the pistol is reloaded by loading a paper cartridge into each chamber, seating the cartridges firmly in place with a ramming lever that is affixed underneath the barrel, and attaching percussion caps to the nipples. This lengthy process takes 2 minutes.

Barrel Length: 9 inches, **Overall Length:** 15 3/4 inches, **Cylinder Replacement Time:** 4 full-round actions, **Full Reload Time:** 20 full-round actions.

Colt New Model Army (1861)

The first Colt Army Revolver went into production in 1850 and evolved in form and mechanism throughout the frontier era. The model detailed here is the 1861 New Model Army Revolver, a single-action percussion pistol. The use of combustible cartridges made this model a major improvement over previous models. By impregnating the paper (or cloth) casings with nitric and sulfuric acid, they would burn away cleanly, leaving little residue in the cylinder. The New Model Army was adopted as military standard issue and this pistol was a common weapon during the American Civil War. The New Model Army is loaded in a similar fashion as the Walker Dragoon.

Barrel Length: 8 inches, **Overall Length:** 13 1/2 inches, **Cylinder Replacement Time:** 4 full-round actions, **Full Reload Time:** 20 full-round actions.

Remington Pocket Pistol (1863)

The 1863 Remington Pocket Pistol offered the buyer the advantages of easy concealment without the abysmal accuracy of a derringer. Of course, increased accuracy was accomplished through a longer barrel. Therefore, while small, this pistol is slightly larger than many other hold-out pistols.

Barrel Length: 3 1/2 inches, **Overall Length:** 7 3/4 inches, **Cylinder Replacement Time:** 4 full-round actions, **Full Reload Time:** 20 full-round actions.

Reid's Knuckleduster (1869)

An easily concealed stingy pistol without a barrel, the single action Knuckleduster has a unique grip that is useful in any brawl. The Knuckleduster is -1 on all ranged attack rolls, but can be used as brass knuckles in melee (see Brass Knuckles, page 151). The

SIDEWINDER: RECOILED



Knuckleduster came in .22 or .32 caliber and used rim-fire cartridges. Reloading the Knuckleduster requires unscrewing the cylinder pin, removing the cylinder, punching out the spent cartridges and placing in the new cartridges, then returning the cylinder to the frame.

Barrel Length: 0 inches, **Overall Length:** 4 1/4 inches, **Cylinder Replacement Time:** 4 full-round actions, **Full Reload Time:** 20 full-round actions.

Colt Peacemaker (1873)

Originally intended for use by the U.S. Cavalry, the Colt Peacemaker was one of the most popular weapons on the Western Frontier. This model marked Colt's first use of metal cartridge ammunition. The Peacemaker came in many varieties with different barrel lengths, ranging from the 3-inch barrel in the Shopkeeper model to a 16-inch barrel on the custom-made Buntline Special. Another variation, the Colt Frontier, was even chambered to use the popular .44-40 cartridge used by Winchester rifles, which meant a cowpoke only needed to carry one type of ammo for both rifle and pistol. The model described here is the Model P, with a 7.5-inch barrel. Reloading requires the opening of a swing-down loading gate, providing direct access to the cylinder chambers. The spent cartridge is punched out with an ejector rod that fits underneath the barrel. A new shell is loaded and the cylinder is then advanced to repeat the process.

Barrel Length: 7 1/2 inches, **Overall Length:** 13 1/4 inches, **Full Reload Time:** 2 full-round actions.

Smith & Wesson Schofield (1875)

The .45 caliber Smith & Wesson Schofield was manufactured from 1875-1878, with the vast majority of these weapons being purchased by the United States Army. Like other variants of the Smith and Wesson Model 3, it was popular with both lawmen and outlaws in the American West, and was reportedly used by Frank and Jesse James, and Bill Tilghman, among others. One of the major attractions of Smith & Wesson revolvers was the novel cartridge-ejection system. To reload, the gun is broken open at the top, with a hinge just before and below the cylinder holding the gun together. As the hinge opens, rods automatically push the spent shells loose. The user dumps the shells by turning the gun over, places new shells in the cylinder, and closes the revolver. This requires less time to accomplish than reloading a Colt from the same era.

Barrel Length: 7 inches, **Overall Length:** 12 3/4 inches, **Full Reload Time:** 1 full-round action.

Double-Action Revolvers

Double-action revolvers are both cocked and fired by simply pulling the trigger, giving them a slight edge when performing a fast draw. Characters using double-action revolvers receive a +1 equipment bonus to initiative checks occurring during a Showdown. In addition, due to their quick operation, experienced gunfighters can use the Double Tap feat to fire off more than one bullet in an attack. However, as a compensating drawback, due to the

character that recognizes the Desperado (see Reputation, page 50) and attacks him or her in combat becomes shaken unless they succeed on a Will saving throw. The DC of this saving throw is DC 10 + the Desperado's Reputation bonus.

If the character fails the saving throw, the attacking character becomes shaken for a number of rounds equal to 1d6 + the Desperado's Charisma modifier. A shaken character incurs a -2 penalty on all attack rolls, saving throws, and skill checks. Once the shaken condition has expired, the character is immune to the Desperado's Frightful Reputation ability for the remainder of the combat. If the character succeeds on the Will save, he or she is immune to the Desperado's Frightful Reputation ability for 24 hours.

Tough as Nails

An 8th level Desperado increases his or her massive damage threshold by 3 points. This increase stacks with the increase provided by the Improved Damage Threshold feat. This class feature satisfies any prerequisites (i.e. for an advanced class or feat) that require the Improved Damage Threshold feat.

No Time to Bleed

Beginning at 10th level, a Desperado can spend an action point at any time to delay the damage dealt by a single attack or effect for a number of rounds equal to 3 + his or her Constitution modifier.

⇒ GRIFTER ⇐

Never work too hard to earn a living if you can get someone else to do it for you. Many a Grifter has lived by that motto. Grifters make their living by cheating others out of their hard earned silver and gold. That's not to say Grifters don't work hard for their money, they simply prefer to expend their energy figuring out new ways to run a successful scam instead of putting in the sweat and labor required to produce valuable goods or services. The Grifter is often a talented public speaker, accomplished liar or a good old-fashioned confidence trickster, honing skills that enable the fleecing of honest, hard-working folk. Grifters usually prefer to carry out their thieving ways with style, imagination and panache, rather than brute force.

The earliest a character can enter the Grifter advanced class is at 4th level, via the Charismatic hero basic class.

Requirements

To qualify as a Grifter, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Skills: Bluff 6 ranks, Diplomacy 6 ranks.

Feat: Deceptive.



Heh, heh, I cannot help but laugh when I think of the most outlandish grifter I ever guarded my pockets against. His name was Jefferson Randolph Smith, but everyone knew him as Soapy Smith.

After paying his dues as a cowboy, Smith took up gambling. He preferred poker to an honest day's work and got darn good at it. But even making and calling bluffs was too much effort. He met Old Man Taylor in Colorado and took up the shell game, which proved quite prosperous.

Still, Smith was always looking for a better and easier way to make a buck. He learned the original "soap trick" from Taylor, which offered rubes a chance to win a \$100 bill wrapped around a bar of soap—if only they would purchase one bar for \$5. He picked one "at random," unwrapped it and showed them the prize. People lined up to get their chance for easy money and Smith made a killing.

Later he improved the soap swindle, offering multiple prizes and letting some people find one in the bar they bought. Of course, Smith hired all the winners, and finally someone cottoned to the fact it was a scam. Some local tin stars took Smith in after getting a complaint. As it so happened, the arresting officer couldn't remember Smith's first name, but knowing that the swindle involved soap, he wrote "Soapy Smith" in his log—and the name stuck—even after Smith "went clean" as the owner of a gambling house.

Grifter Vitals

The following information pertains to the Grifter advanced class.

Grit Die: A Grifter gains 1d6 grit per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points: A Grifter gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills: The Grifter's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Bluff (Cha), Craft (visual art, writing) (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disable Device (Dex), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Forgery (Int), Gamble (Wis), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Knowledge (art, behavioral sciences, business, civics, current events, popular culture, streetwise) (Int), Perform (act, stand-up)

SIDEWINDER: RECOILED

(Cha), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (none), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Speak Language (none), Spot (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 7 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are features of the Grifter advanced class.

Work the Crowd

At 1st level, a Grifter gains a +2 bonus to all Charisma based skill checks that involve manipulating a crowd. This ability applies to Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Gather Information, Intimidate, and Perform skill checks.



Table 8.5: The Grifter

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Features	Defense	Reputation
1st	+0	+0	+2	+1	Work the crowd	+1	+1
2nd	+1	+1	+3	+2	Silver tongue	+2	+1
3rd	+1	+1	+3	+2	Bonus feat	+2	+1
4th	+2	+1	+4	+3	Cut and run	+3	+2
5th	+2	+2	+4	+3	Bait and switch	+3	+2
6th	+3	+2	+5	+3	Bonus feat	+3	+2
7th	+3	+2	+5	+4	Sow distrust	+4	+3
8th	+4	+3	+6	+4	Slippery	+4	+3
9th	+4	+3	+6	+5	Bonus feat	+5	+3
10th	+5	+3	+7	+5	Elaborate scheme	+5	+4

Silver Tongue

Getting out of tight spots has honed the Grifter's ability to bend the truth. A 2nd level Grifter gets to add a competence bonus equal to one-half his Grifter level (rounded down) on any Bluff or Diplomacy check.

Bonus Feats

At 3rd, 6th, and 9th level, the Grifter gains a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be selected from the following list, and the Grifter must meet all of the prerequisites of the feat to select it.

Alertness, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Confident, Creative, Defensive Martial Arts, Dodge, Elusive Target, Horse Tradin', Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Low Profile, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Run, Trustworthy, Windfall.

Cut and Run

Things don't always go as planned and a good Grifter learns when to cut his losses. A 4th level Grifter receives a competence bonus equal to one-half his Grifter level (rounded down) on all Hide checks. In addition, he also receives a +4 competence bonus on all Bluff checks to create diversions in order to hide. (See Creating a Diversion to Hide under the Bluff skill on page 64).

Bait and Switch

Whether it's the venerable shell game or some other scheme, a Grifter is a master at pulling a fast one. Beginning at 5th level, a Grifter may use the Sleight of Hand skill as a free action (instead of an attack action) when palming an object, picking a pocket, performing legdemain, or concealing an object on his person.

Sow Distrust

A Grifter of 7th level or higher can turn one character against another. The Grifter must spend a full-round action and know the name of the character he or she is attempting to persuade as well as the name of the character toward whom the target's distrust will be directed. The target must be able to hear and understand the Grifter.

The target makes a Will save. The DC is equal to 10 + Grifter's class level + Grifter's Charisma bonus. If the target fails the save, his or her attitude toward the other designated character worsens by one step: helpful turns to friendly, friendly to indifferent, indifferent to unfriendly, unfriendly to hostile (see the Diplomacy skill, page 72). The target makes a Will save whenever subjected to the Grifter's use of this talent. As long as the target continues to fail the Will save, the Grifter can continue taking full-round actions to worsen the

target's attitude toward the designated character. When the target's attitude drops to hostile, he or she attacks the designated character.

A successful Will save doesn't restore previous attitude shifts, but it does render the target immune for 24 hours to further attempts by the Grifter to sow distrust.

Slippery

The Grifter is hard to pin down and adept at surviving. Whenever a Grifter of 8th level or higher is struck by an attack that is a critical threat, the Grifter gains a +4 dodge bonus to Defense for the purposes of the critical confirmation. This bonus doesn't apply to any other separate attacks that may occur.

Elaborate Scheme

Grifters are notorious for complicated plans and confusing schemes. A 10th level Grifter has honed his ability at crafting plans, to such a degree that his machinations can catch opponents unaware and stump them into inaction. Before combat begins, the Grifter must spend at least one minute planning and preparing his scheme. Once combat commences, the Grifter may spend an attack action to bring the scheme to fruition. The Grifter must make a DC 10 Intelligence check. If the check is successful, all opponents within 20 feet of the Grifter are forced to make Will saving throws. The DC of this saving throw is DC 15 + the Grifter's Intelligence modifier. Those opponents that fail the saving throw are dazed for 1d4 rounds. A dazed character is unable to act, but can defend normally (see Dazed, page 228).



The earliest a character can enter the Gunslinger advanced class is at 4th level, via the Fast hero basic class.

Requirements

To qualify as a Gunslinger, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +2.

Skill: Sleight of Hand 6 ranks.

Feats: Personal Firearms Proficiency, Quickdraw.

Gunslinger Vitals

The following information pertains to the Gunslinger advanced class.

Grit Die: A Gunslinger gains 1d10 grit per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points: A Gunslinger gains a number of action points equal to 6 + one-half his character level, rounded down, every time he attains a new level in this class.

Class Skills: The Gunslinger's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are: Balance (Dex), Escape Artist (Dex), Intimidate (Cha),

➤ GUNSLINGER ◀

The law of the west comes in the form of a pistol more often than a badge. Those who know the proper way to use one typically rule the day. Because he holds the power of life and death in his hands, exercised with the slightest whim, the Gunslinger is one of the most feared individuals in the Wild West. Possessing lightning quickness and deadly accuracy with a six-shooter, a Gunslinger practices his craft and builds a deadly reputation that will precede him no matter where he may go.

Table 8.6: The Gunslinger

Level	BAB	Fort	Ref	Will	Features	Defense	Reputation
1st	+0	+0	+1	+1	Greased lightning	+1	+0
2nd	+1	+0	+2	+2	Weapon focus	+1	+0
3rd	+2	+1	+2	+2	Bonus feat	+2	+1
4th	+3	+1	+2	+2	Close combat shot	+2	+1
5th	+3	+1	+3	+3	Lightning shot	+3	+1
6th	+4	+2	+3	+3	Bonus feat	+3	+2
7th	+5	+2	+4	+4	Steel-eyed	+4	+2
8th	+6	+2	+4	+4	Greater weapon focus	+4	+2
9th	+6	+3	+4	+4	Bonus feat	+5	+3
10th	+7	+3	+5	+5	Bullseye	+5	+3

Saving Throw Types

For game play, saving throws are divided into three different categories, as follows:

Fortitude: These saves measure a character's ability to stand up to massive physical punishment or attacks against his or her vitality and health, such as poison and paralysis. Apply a character's Constitution modifier to his or her Fortitude saving throws.

Reflex: These saves test a character's ability to dodge massive attacks such as an explosion or a train wreck. (Often, when damage is inevitable, a character is allowed to make a Reflex save to take only one-half damage.) Apply the character's Dexterity modifier to his or her Reflex saving throws.

Will: These saves reflect a character's resistance to mental influence, fear, duress and domination. Apply the character's Wisdom modifier to his or her Will saving throws.

Initiative

Every round, each combatant may perform an activity. The combatants' initiative checks, from highest to lowest, determine the order in which they act, from first to last. In other words, the individual with the highest initiative result goes first while the person with the lowest initiative result goes last. (*Ed. Note: As one who inevitably ends up last in the initiative order, I prefer to think of it as going first in the next round.*)

Initiative Checks

At the start of a battle, each combatant makes a single initiative check. An initiative check is a Dexterity check, and as such, each character applies his or her Dexterity modifier to the roll. Any character with the Improved Initiative feat gets an additional +4 bonus on the check. This determines what order characters are acting in, counting down from highest result to lowest, and each character then acts in turn. On all following rounds, the characters act in the same order (unless a character takes an action that results in a change to his or her initiative; see Special Initiative Actions, page 212). If two or more combatants have the same initiative check result, the tying combatants act in order of total initiative modifier (including Dexterity modifier and Improved Initiative bonus, if applicable). If there is still a tie, roll a die to determine the order, rolling until all ties are broken.

Flat-Footed: At the start of a battle, before the character has had a chance to act (specifically, before the character's first turn in the initiative order), the character is flat-footed. A character cannot apply his or her Dexterity bonus to Defense while flat-footed. Furthermore, whenever a flat-footed character is struck by a successful attack, that attack is an automatic critical threat—regardless of the die roll or the weapon's critical threat range. The critical must still be confirmed as usual.



Joining a Battle

If characters enter a battle after it has begun, they roll initiative at that time. They can then act whenever their turn comes up in the existing order.

Surprise

When a combat starts, if a character was unaware of his or her enemies, that character is surprised. Likewise, a character can surprise his or her enemies if the character knows about them before they're aware of the character. Combatants who are unaware at the start of battle do not get to act in the fast-draw round. Unaware combatants are still flat-footed because they have not acted yet. Because of this, they lose any Dexterity bonus to Defense and any attacks against them are automatic critical threats.

Fast-Draw Round

Every combat begins with a fast-draw round, which occurs before regular rounds. Combatants who are aware of their opponents can act in the fast-draw round, so they must roll for initiative. Initiative rolled during a fast-draw round can be modified by a number of circumstances, as listed in Table 7.2: Fast-Draw Round Initiative Modifiers. In initiative order (highest to lowest), combatants starting the battle aware of their opponents each take either an attack action or move action during the fast-draw round (see Action Types, page 207). Remember, that unless a character possesses the Quick Draw feat, drawing a weapon is a move action.

Table 7.2: Fast-Draw Round Initiative Modifiers

Circumstance	Initiative Modifier
Losing a Showdown	-2
Losing a Showdown badly	-4
Draws first	+2
Draws a longarm	-8
Weapon already drawn	+4
Weapon drawn and aimed	+6
Double action revolver	+1

Losing a Showdown: As explained in Showdowns (see below), a character who loses the opposed check suffers a -2 penalty to his or her initiative check.

Losing a Showdown Badly: As explained in Showdowns (see below), a character who loses the opposed check by five or more suffers a -4 penalty to his or her initiative check.

Draws First: If combat is initiated by one opponent declaring that he is going for his gun, the combatant who decided to draw first receives a +2 circumstance bonus on his or her initiative check.

Draws a Longarm: Due to a longarm's size and bulk, any combatant who draws one during a fast-draw round incurs a -8 penalty on his or her initiative check. This penalty should be applied when drawing any weapon requiring two hands to wield (crossbows, claymores, etc.).

Weapon Already Drawn: If a gunfighter already has his hogleg drawn at the onset of hostilities, he or she receives a +4 circumstance bonus to the initiative check.

Weapon Drawn and Aimed: If a gunfighter not only has a weapon drawn, but is already aiming that weapon at an opponent, he or she receives a +6 circumstance bonus to the initiative check. This bonus should be applied only if the gunfighter intends to fire at the opponent on whom he or she has a bead.

Double-Action Revolver: A fighter drawing a double-action revolver receives a +1 equipment bonus on the initiative check.

Showdowns

Two steely-eyed hombres staring each other down at 60 paces on Main Street at high noon ... the classic Western showdown. A showdown is more than simply drawing a sidearm and firing; your gunfighter's courage must also be taken into account.

No showdown starts without a test of wills. The gunfighters stand and stare at each other, trying to frighten, distract, or otherwise unnerve their opponent. This attempt to impress and size-up the opponent is simulated by an opposed Intimidate check occurring before the fast-draw round that initiates combat. Each participant makes an Intimidate check, and once the bullets start flying, the loser suffers a -2 penalty to the upcoming initiative check. If a participant loses by five or more, the penalty is increased to -4. Remember that an Intimidate check can be performed untrained; thus, any

SHOWDOWN AND FAST-DRAW ROUND EXAMPLE



Fate leans against the hitchin' post outside of the Dry Gullet Saloon, ignoring the surreptitious glances of the townsfolk. *That coward Willy Miller won't show*, he thinks. But soon enough there Willy is, skulking along the street, along with two of Martel's other henchmen.

Fate steps out into the street and the onlookers scatter to porches, doorways and windows. For a moment, Fate wonders if Willy will accept the challenge like a man, or if the three curs plan to gang up on him. Just then, the two others split off and saunter up to the porch of Betty Lou's Bordello.

The two gunfighters square-off, some twenty paces apart. A cloud passes in front of the noonday sun, casting a veil over the street. The gunfighters stare and the crowd hushes. Fate turns to stone, but he sees a shake in Willy's gun hand and a twitch in his shoulders.

In gameplay, Fate and Willy make opposed Intimidate checks at this point. Fate rolls an 8 and adds his Intimidate skill modifier of +13 (10 Intimidate skill ranks, +1 Charisma modifier, and +2 for Fate's Empathy talent) for a total of 21. Willy rolls a 6 and after adding his modifiers gets a 14 (7 skill ranks, +1 Charisma modifier). Since Willy's result is 7 less than Fate's, he suffers a -4 penalty to his upcoming initiative check.

As Fate grins, Willy goes for his gun. It's no use; Fate's Colt has already cleared leather. He squeezes the trigger before the flat-footed fool even finishes the draw. His aim proves true. The bullet strikes Willy just above his heart.

As the gunfighters begin the fast-draw round, they make initiative checks. Fate rolls a 15, adds +2 for his Dexterity modifier, adds +1 for his Greased Lightning class feature (see the Gunslinger advanced class, page 173), and gets a total of 18. Willy rolls a 17, adds his Dexterity modifier of +1, adds +2 for "drawing first" (see Table 7.2: Fast-Draw Round Initiative Modifiers), and subtracts -4 for badly losing the showdown, getting a total of 16. Fate wins initiative, and because he possesses the Quick Draw feat, he can draw and fire during the fast-draw round.

Continued on page 227, Massive Damage Example

cowpoke can participate in a showdown.

If more than two gunfighters face off, all participants must make Intimidate checks. Each gunfighter compares his or her check with the Intimidate checks of all opponents. If a gunfighter's check is less than any opponent's Intimidate check, then the gunfighter receives a -2 penalty to Initiative. If the gunfighter's Intimidate check loses to any opposing check by five or more, the penalty increases to -4.

Combatants in a showdown are prepared for combat and aware of their opponents. Each gunfighter is considered to have a readied action that triggers on either a mutually agreed event (e.g. the ringing of the mission bell) or perhaps on an implicitly understood occurrence (e.g. whenever someone draws). As with all readied actions, the player must fully describe to the Judge what that action will be. For example, in a shootout involving multiple cowpokes on both sides, each fighter must specify at whom he will fire once the fight begins.

Actions in Combat

The fundamental actions of moving and attacking cover most of what a character wants to do in a battle. These fundamentals are described in this section. Other, more specialized options are introduced in Table 7.3: Actions in Combat. If an event arises which isn't covered by these rules, the following section should provide enough information for the Judge to improvise and adjudicate such uncommon activities.

The Combat Round

Each round represents 6 seconds in the game world. Each character involved in a combat is provided the opportunity to take action at least once per round. Anything a person could reasonably do in 6 seconds, a character can do in 1 round.

As explained previously in the Initiative section, each round of activity begins with the character with the highest initiative result and then proceeds, in order, from there. When a character's turn comes up in the initiative sequence, that character performs his or her entire round's worth of actions. (For exceptions, see Attacks of Opportunity on page 213 and Special Initiative Actions on page 212).

For most purposes, there is no significance to the end of a round or the beginning of a round. A round can be a segment of game time that starts with the first character's actions and ends with the last character's actions, but it usually means the span of time from a certain initiative number to the same initiative number in the next round. Effects that last a certain number of rounds end just before the same initiative count on which they began.

Action Types

Combat actions are divided into four types: attack actions, move actions, full-round actions, and free

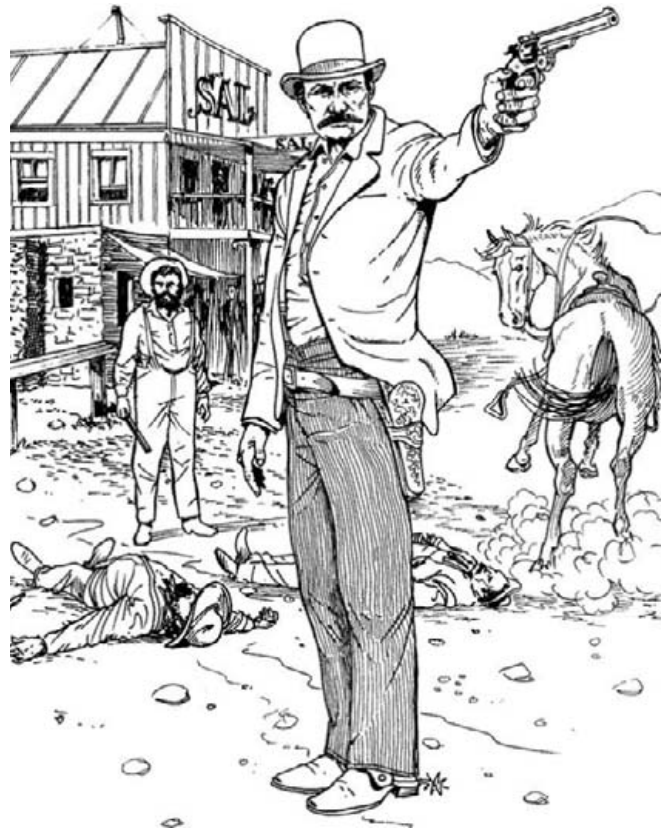
actions. During a normal combat round a character can take an attack action plus a move action, two move actions, or a full-round action. In some situations (such as in the fast-draw round) a character may be limited to taking only a single attack or move action. In conjunction with these attack, move and full-round actions, a character can also perform as many free actions as the Judge decides to allow.

Attack Action

An attack action allows a character to accomplish something other than moving. A character can make an attack, use a skill or a feat (unless the skill or feat requires a full-round action to carry out), or perform other similar actions (see Table 7.3: Actions in Combat). A character can take an attack action before or after performing a move action. During a fast-draw round a character may perform either an attack action or a move action, but not both.

Move Action

A move action allows a character to move his or her speed or perform an action that takes a similar amount of time. A character can move his or her speed, climb one-quarter of his or her speed, draw or stow a weapon or other object, stand up, pick up an object, or perform some equivalent action (see Table 7.3: Actions in Combat).



Mounted Movement

A mount bearing a rider can move at a hustle. The critter can also be ridden in a forced march, but its Constitution checks automatically fail. Since a failed Constitution check results in the mount suffering damage, a mount automatically becomes fatigued from forced marches. See Table 8.4: Mounts and Vehicles for mounted speeds and speeds for vehicles.

Table 8.4: Mounts and Vehicles

Mount/Vehicle	Per Hour	Per Day
Mount (load carried) ¹		
Camel	5 miles	40 miles
Camel (301–600 lb.)	3.5 miles	28 miles
Camel (601–900 lb.)	2.5 miles	20 miles
Donkey	3 miles	24 miles
Donkey (51–100 lb.)	2 miles	16 miles
Donkey (101–150 lb.)	1.5 miles	12 miles
Horse	6 miles	48 miles
Horse (151–300 lb.)	4 miles	32 miles
Horse (301–450 lb.)	3 miles	24 miles
Horse, Draft	5 miles	40 miles
Horse, Draft (301–600 lb.)	3.5 miles	28 miles
Horse, Draft (601–900 lb.)	2.5 miles	20 miles
Mule	3 miles	24 miles
Mule (201–400 lb.)	2 miles	16 miles
Mule (401–600 lb.)	1.5 miles	12 miles
Ox	3 miles	24 miles
Ox (301–600 lb.)	2 miles	16 miles
Ox (601–900 lb.)	1.5 miles	12 miles
Cart or wagon	2 miles	16 miles
Stagecoach	4 miles	32 miles
Locomotive	8 miles	64 miles
Ship ²		
Raft or barge (poled or towed) ³	1/2 mile	5 miles
Keelboat (rowed) ³	1 mile	10 miles
Rowboat (rowed) ³	1-1/2 miles	15 miles
Sailing ship (sailed)	2 miles	48 miles
Sternwheeler (steam engine)	2-1/2 miles	60 miles

¹ Quadrupeds, such as horses, can carry heavier loads than characters can. See Carrying Capacity on page 131 for more information.

² If going downstream, add the speed of the current (typically 3 miles per hour) to the speed of the vehicle. In addition to 10 hours of being rowed, the vehicle can also float an additional 14 hours, if someone can guide it, so add an additional 42 miles to the daily distance traveled. These vehicles can't be rowed against any significant current, but they can be pulled upstream by draft animals on the shores.

³ Rafts, barges, keelboats, and rowboats are used on lakes and rivers.

Darkness and Light

On a moonless night, the open range is a mighty dark place. If you want to catch those rustlers who have been pruning the herd, you might want a source of light. Table 8.5: Light Sources provides the radius of illumination for several standard light sources.

Bright: The area within this radius is brightly lit; all characters can see clearly. A character or critter can't hide in an area of bright light unless it has cover.

Shadows: In an area of shadowy illumination, a character can see dimly. Critters and characters within this area have one-half concealment (see page 216). A critter in an area of shadowy illumination can make a Hide check to conceal itself.

Darkness: In areas of darkness, characters are effectively blinded. In addition to the obvious effects, a blinded character has a 50% miss chance in combat (all opponents are considered to have total concealment), loses any Dexterity bonus to Defense, suffers a –2 penalty to Defense, moves at half speed, and incurs a –4 penalty on Search checks and most Strength and Dexterity-based skill checks.

Duration: The standard length of time that a source lasts without replacement or refueling.



Hazards of the Trail

Not all of the hazards of the Wild West come from the barrel of a gun. The weather, a hangman's noose, or just a man's vices can all lead to a shortened life span.

CAMELS IN THE OLD WEST



“Napoleon when in Egypt used with marked success the dromedary . . . in subduing the Arabs, whose habits and country were very similar to those of the mounted Indians of our western plains . . .

For like military purposes, for expresses, and for reconnaissances, it is believed, the dromedary would supply a want now seriously felt in our service; and for transportation with troops rapidly moving across the country, the camel, it is believed, would remove an obstacle which now serves greatly to diminish the value and efficiency of our troops on the western frontier.” — Report of the Secretary of War, WAR DEPARTMENT, Washington, December 1, 1853

Before the United States acquired California and the southwest from Mexico, even before Texas became a state, there were proposals for using camels to tame the west. Major Henry C. Wayne pushed a hotly debated proposal, finally convincing Mississippi Senator Jefferson Davis that the Army should give camels a trial. When Davis became Secretary of War, he made an official recommendation, and on March 3, 1855, the U.S. Camel Corps was born.

Based 60 miles west of San Antonio out of Camp Verde, in June of 1857, the Camel Corps was assigned to survey the unexplored territory between El Paso and the Colorado River. Led by Edward Fitzgerald Beale, the party consisted of 44 soldiers, 25 camels and numerous horses and mules. Accompanying the herd was a Syrian caretaker named Hadji Ali, whose name, and gregarious nature promptly earned him the nickname “Hi Jolly.” At first, the camels, loaded with 600 to 800 pounds each, would arrive in camp hours later than the horses and mules. Nevertheless, eventually the camels became accustomed to their task, and soon outstripped the other animals. The camels really proved their mettle after the expedition became lost and water supplies began to dwindle. With horses

and mules dropping right and left, the camels pushed on, eventually leading the expedition to a river only 20 miles from camp. While men, mules, and horses desperately gulped water, the camels observed with complete indifference. After triumphantly reaching California, the expedition returned to Texas, leaving the camels behind. Beale would later report.

“The harder the test they (the camels) are put to, the more fully they seem to justify all that can be said of them. They pack water for days under a hot sun and never get a drop; they pack heavy burdens of corn and oats for months and never get a grain; and on the bitter greasewood and other worthless shrubs, not only subsist, but keep fat . . . I look forward to the day when every mail route across the continent will be conducted and worked altogether with this economical and noble brute.”

Although the camels had proved their worth, they remained unpopular with the majority of soldiers because of their habit of kicking and spitting at those who ill-treated them. In addition, the men found the camels odd-look and overwhelming odor frightened horses, burros and mules – which would often panic and stampede at the first sight and smell of these strange immigrants.

Given enough time, the Camel Corps may have become a useful addition to the U.S. Army, but all hope died at Ft. Sumter. The Confederacy, finding even less use for the beasts, allowed many to escape into the desert. Those that remained under U.S. control were sold-off or willfully released into the wild. Both Edward Beale and “Hi Jolly” purchased a few. While Beale’s camels lived out their lives on his ranch, Hi Jolly used his to start a freighting business between ports on the Colorado River and the new mining camps springing up to the east. Eventually though, the business failed and Jolly released his last camel into the desert near Gila Bend, Arizona. Between the escapees and those willfully released into the wilds, camels roamed at will across the Old West for many a year.

Critter Description

Each critter’s description is organized in the same general format, as described in this section. Much of the information on a critter is condensed into table entries, which are divided into the following headings.

Challenge Rating

A critter’s Challenge Rating provides a rough measure of the critter’s toughness in a combat situation. As a

general rule, four characters of a level equal to the critter’s Challenge Rating should exhaust roughly one-quarter of their resources battling it. Situations may arise where a critter’s Challenge Rating doesn’t accurately reflect the difficulty of the challenge.

Size

A critter falls into one of nine size categories. The size categories are described briefly in Table 9.4: Critter Size

SIDEWINDER: RECOILED

Hildi Gunter

(Tough Hero 3/Wrangler 4)

"There's two theories to arguing with a woman. Neither one works."

Will Rogers

Using a sinister scheme of land and power grabs, several larger ranch owners in Trego County, Kansas have made it their business to force out the smaller ranchers. The Gunter sisters' Pa was one of the unfortunate victims. When Hildi and Melody came home one morning after a night-out riding the range, they discovered their house burned to the ground and their father strung up from a nearby tree. Broken arrows, a sloppily taken scalp and other signs seemed to point to an Indian attack. But seeing as the Sioux aren't known

for lynching their victims, the evidence just didn't add up. Certain that Eli Martel and his partners were behind the destruction of Pa Gunter's Diamond Bar Ranch, the Gunter sisters have dedicated their lives to avenging their loss. They aim to foil any dirty plan of Martel's that they catch wind of, hoping to ruin his business prospects and, given half a chance, kill him. They welcome the assistance of anyone willing to help them fight Martel and his cronies.

The eldest Gunter sister, Hildi is the more forceful of the two. While her anger against Martel may be no greater than her sister Melody's, she acts as the ramrod of the group, keeping the goal clearly in mind and fomenting the resistance.

Melody Gunter

(Dedicated Hero 2/Fast Hero 1/Scout 4)

"The quickest way to double your money is to fold it over and put it back in your pocket."

Will Rogers

Being the baby of the Gunter sisters, Melody often adopts a petulant tone and sulky manner. But, don't let her angelic appearance and pouting fool you. She has a mean streak, particularly when it comes to Martel. If you turn your back on her you might just find that Bible she carries knocking you stone cold.

Hildi Gunter

(Tough Hero 3/Wrangler 4)

Challenge Rating: 7

Level: 7

Grit Dice: 3d10+4d8+14 (56)

MDT: 14

Initiative: +3

Speed: 30 ft.

Base Attack Bonus: +5

Grapple Modifier: +5

Fighting Space: 5 x 5 ft.

Reach: 5 ft.

Action Points: 4

Reputation: +1

Defense: 17, touch 17, flat-footed 14 (+4 class, +3 Dex)

Saving Throws: Fort +6 Ref +8 Will +2

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 14

Attacks: Unarmed attack +6 (1d6 nonlethal), Colt new model army +8 (2d6), Spencer carbine +8 (2d10), Bowie knife +5 (1d4/18-20 threat range), lasso +8

Occupation: Ranch Hand (bonus feat: Exotic Ranged Weapon Proficiency (lasso); class skills: Handle Animal, Ride)

Skills: Climb +1, Handle Animal +14, Knowledge (current events) +5, Knowledge (popular culture) +4, Perform (sing) +4, Profession +4, Read/Write Language (English, German), Ride +15, Speak Language (English, German), Spot +6, Swim +3, Survival +3

Feats: Animal Affinity, Blazing Saddle, Brawl, Cavalry Training, Defensive Riding, Exotic Ranged Weapon Proficiency (lasso), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency

Class Features: Bareback Riding, Bronco Bustin', Cool in the Saddle, Damage Reduction 1/-, Robust

Possessions: Colt new model army, Spencer carbine, Bowie knife, lasso, horse (Pacer) various gear and personal items

