

IRON HEARTBREAKERS 1.51

By John Bell

This is a rules-light adaptation of d20 fantasy heartbreakers. PCs have very limited access to magic and must rely on their swords, armour and cleverness to survive.

Attributes

Characters have three attributes: **Strength (STR)**, **Dexterity (DEX)**, and **Mind (MIND)**. Each attribute has an associated modifier.

To generate a character's attributes, roll 4d6 and drop the lowest die. Assign it to one of the character's attributes. Repeat this for each attribute.

A character's attribute modifier is calculated by the following formula: $(\text{Attribute} - 10)/2$. Round towards zero if a fraction results.

Characters have a number of **Hit Points (HP)** equal to their STR modifier + 1d6 per level. If their HP total reaches 0 they are dead.

Backgrounds

Each character has a background: Where they came from before they became an adventurer. Pick one for your character:

City-Dweller +2 to Knowledge +1 to DEF

Farmer + 2 to Athletics +1d6 HP

Noble +2 to Interaction +1 to MAB and RAB

Tribesman +2 to Skulduggery +2 to damage

Fighting Style

Each character has a fighting style. Pick one for your character. Characters normally start at level 1 of their fighting style.

Bruisers wear any kind of armour and use shields. They have a +2 bonus to Athletics. They add their STR modifier again to all damage rolls. This increases by +1 at 5th level and every five levels on. They can add their STR modifier to their armour's DR. This increases by +1 at 5th level and every five levels on.

Sneaks wear light armour. They have a +2 bonus to Skulduggery or to Interaction. They can add their DEX modifier again to their AC. This increases by +1 at 5th level and every five levels on. If they successfully sneak up on a foe they can add their DEX modifier to their attack roll and their Skulduggery skill rank to the damage of their next attack. If they successfully distract, bluff or feint a foe, they can add their DEX modifier to their attack roll and their Interaction skill rank to the damage of their next attack.

Tacticians wear light or medium armour and use shields. They have a +2 bonus to both Knowledge and Interaction. They add their MIND modifier to all attack rolls. This increases by +1 at 5th level and every five levels on.

Skills

There are four skills: **Athletics**, **Interaction**, **Knowledge**, and **Skulduggery**.

Athletics governs climbing, jumping, running and swimming as well as lifting and moving heavy objects.

Interaction governs persuasion, oratory, lying, intimidation, insight into another's motives or behaviour and other means of manipulation and expression.

Knowledge governs a character's education, reasoning, memory for trivia and common knowledge of the world around them.

Skulduggery governs sneaking, hiding, and larcenous talents such as picking locks and concealing objects on the body.

Your **Skill Rank** in each skill is equal to your level plus any modifiers you have for your background and/or class.

Characters make skill rolls by rolling a d20 and adding their skill rank and the modifier of an appropriate stat. They try to roll over a **Difficulty Class (DC)** assigned by the DM.

A DC of average difficulty is 15 + level of the challenge.

Characters may also need to oppose other characters with their skills. They each make a skill roll. Whoever gets higher wins. Ties reroll. Monsters may add their attack bonus instead of their attribute modifier and skill rank.

PCs may need to make saving throws to resist the effects of poisons, spells, diseases, and other environmental hazards.

Resist Physical Effect (Fortitude) = Level + STR modifier

Dodge Effect (Reflexes) = Level + DEX modifier

Resist Mental Effect (Will) = Level + MIND modifier

The DC for saving throws against spells cast by monsters is equal to 15 + the caster's level unless otherwise listed in the monster entry.

Combat

Roll for initiative at the start of combat. Each PC and monster rolls a d20 and adds their DEX modifier. Higher results go before lower results.

Each combatant gets one action a round. A round is approximately 6 seconds long.

In a round, a PC can move a number of metres equal to his Dexterity attribute, or they can move a number of metres equal to half their Dexterity attribute and perform an action (attacking, digging something out of their pack, etc.).

Attacking: Roll a d20 and add the appropriate attack bonus. If you roll equal to or higher than your opponent's DEF you have hit them. On a natural 20, you automatically hit and do double damage.

Your **Melee Attack Bonus (MAB)** is equal to your level + STR modifier

Your **Ranged Attack Bonus (RAB)** is equal to your level + DEX modifier

Your **Defence (DEF)** is equal to your level + 10 + DEX modifier + Shield bonus (if any)

If characters wield light weapons, they may use their DEX modifier in place of their STR bonus for their MAB.

Characters can wield two weapons. They take a -2 penalty on every attack they make while wielding them, but can make one extra attack each round with the second weapon.

Characters may execute manoeuvres like tripping, disarming, targeting a weak point, etc. on their foes by beating them in opposed attack rolls. Ties are rerolled. These may add bonuses to hit or to damage on attacks or otherwise affect their opponents at the discretion of the DM.

i.e. A Tactician wants to trip his opponent. Both roll d20 + their MAB with the higher result winning. If the Tactician wins, he successfully trips his opponent. If he fails, his attack does not succeed.

Damage and Health

After you hit successfully, roll weapon damage + STR modifier. If you are wielding a melee weapon in two hands, it is weapon damage + (STR modifier x 2).

Defenders roll their **Damage Resistance** for their armour. They subtract their roll from the damage. If a positive number is left after DR is subtracted from damage, lose that many HP.

i.e. An attacker attacks and deals 12 points of damage. You roll DR and get 9. You take 3 points of damage. An attacker attacks and deals 7 points of damage. You roll DR and get 9. You do not take any damage.

Characters heal a number of HP equal to their level + their STR modifier each day (minimum 1).

Hazards

Characters take 1d6 points of damage for each ten feet they fall. They can make an Athletics + DEX modifier check with a DC equal to the number of feet they fell to not be damaged.

Poisons can be resisted with a level + STR modifier check. Some poisons will still deal partial damage even on a successful save. Most poisons deal damage and have effects like unconsciousness, nausea or disorientation.

If PCs are not wearing protection while exposed to extreme climates, they must make a level + STR modifier check (DC 15 +1 per each previous check) every ten minutes or take 1d6 damage.

While swimming in adverse conditions, a PC must make an Athletics + STR modifier check (DC 10 + 1 per every previous check) every minute or start drowning. Drowning is 1d6 points of damage every thirty seconds (5 rounds) until the PC can make the check or someone can pull them out.

Equipment List

Exchange Rates

1 platinum piece equals 10 gold pieces equals 100 silver pieces equals 1000 copper pieces.

Starting Money

All characters begin with 100 gold pieces. They may spend this on equipment. They may keep any money left over from this process for when play begins.

Weapons

The **Cost** entry of a weapon includes the minor equipment required to maintain it as well as a scabbard, holster or sling to carry it.

The **Damage** entry is the damage it deals on a successful hit.

The **Range** increment of a weapon is the number of metres it can be fired or thrown without penalty. For each full increment beyond the first, the attack suffers a -2 penalty. Thrown weapons can be thrown up to five range increments. Bows and other missile weapons can be fired up to 10 range increments.

i.e. A dagger can be thrown up to 5m without penalty. If it was thrown 8m, the attack would take a -2. If it was thrown 10m, the attack would take a -2. If it were thrown 14m, the attack would be a -4. A dagger cannot be thrown more than 25m.

Weapons	Cost	Damage	Range
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Light Weapons

Dagger	1 gp	1d4	5m
Rapier	20 gp	1d8	-
Short Sword	10 gp	1d6	-
Throwing Axe	5 gp	1d6	5m
Unarmed Strike	-	1d3	-
Whip	2 gp	1d4	-

One-Handed Weapons

Arming Sword	10 gp	1d8	-
Battle Axe	30 gp	1d10	-
Bastard Sword	30 gp	1d10	-
Flail	10 gp	1d8	-
Mace / Club	5 gp	1d6	-
Lance	15 gp	1d10	-
Short Spear	5 gp	1d6	5m
War Hammer	30 gp	1d10	-

Two-Handed Weapons

Great Axe	40 gp	2d10	-
Great Club	25 gp	1d20	-
Greatsword	40 gp	3d6	-
Halberd	25 gp	2d8	-
Longspear	5 gp	2d6	-
Poleaxe	40 gp	2d10	-
Quarterstaff	5 gp	1d8	-

Ranged Weapons

Hunting Bow	30 gp	1d8	25m
Javelin	2 gp	1d8	15m
Recurve bow	75 gp	1d10	50m
Net	1 gp	-	5m
Sling	1 gp	1d6	25m

Armour Type	Cost	Damage Resistance
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Light Armour

Leather Overcoat	5 gp	1d2
Studded Leather Jack	25 gp	1d4

Medium Armour

Chain Hauberk	35 gp	1d6
Scale Mail	50 gp	1d8

Heavy Armour

Half-Plate	250 gp	1d10
Plate Mail	1000 gp	2d6

Shield Type	Cost	Defense Bonus
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Buckler	2 gp	+1 vs. melee attacks only
Light Shield	5 gp	+1
Heavy Shield	25 gp	+2

Converting Monster Entries

Monster abilities that are expressed in feet should be converted to metres, rounding down. Monster abilities that are expressed in 5' squares should be rounded up to 2m squares.

Monsters without attributes listed in their entries should use their attack bonus in its place.

Monsters with d12 Hit Dice have DR equal to their HD. Monsters with d8 Hit Dice have no DR except from armour.

A monster's DEF is equal to its AC.

A monster's STR is the higher of its Strength and Constitution scores. A monster's DEX is its Dexterity score. A monster's MIND is the highest of its Wisdom, Intelligence or Charisma scores.

Advancement

All monsters have an **Encounter Level (EL)** equal to their Hit Die. Double the EL each time the number of monsters doubles. e.g. 2 EL 1 monsters are an EL 2 encounter; four are EL 3.

Add the EL of each encounter you survive together. When the total number of ELs is equal to your current level x 10, you advance to the next level.

Every time a character gains a level he gains:

+1d6 HP

All the bonuses based on his level (MAB, RAB, Skill Rank) go up by 1.

If the character has just achieved a level that is divisible by 5, their class gives them an additional bonus.

If the character has just achieved a level that is divisible by 3, they may add 1 point to their STR, DEX or MIND

Version Notes

- 1.1 Healing rules added. Minor rewrites for clarity throughout.
- 1.2 Spell system removed. Sorcerer class removed. Additional bonuses for races. Additional abilities for Sneak class, additional armour proficiency (medium) for Tactician. The word "modifier" replaces "bonus" everywhere in the text except for MAB and RAB. "Armour Class" replaced by "Defense". "Converting Monsters" becomes its own section. Shrunk the size of the license's font down.
- 1.3 Rewrote attribute section for clarity. Renamed "Races" to "Backgrounds". Removed armour and weapons to separate equipment section.
- 1.4 Changed the names of the skills for clarity. Introduced movement rules. Defined the length of a round. Clarified DM's purview in combat in the combat section. Saving Throws are now all level + modifier. Additional material about distances in the Convert Monster section. Opposed skill rolls added.
- 1.5 Bonuses for backgrounds and classes reduced to +2s from +3s. "Classes" renamed "Fighting Styles". Brief skill descriptions included. Last vestiges of the tyrannical reign of the "Physical" skill removed from Hazards section. Added the equipment list into the main text. Fixed minor spelling and grammatical errors. Changed how HP are calculated. Removed Reserve Points. Added opposed attack rolls for maneuvers.
- 1.51 Some minor clarifications and terminology changes.

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