

# Chapter Two: Schools

*"Poison Clan rocks the world!"*

—*Five Deadly Venoms*

When martial arts originated, they were closely kept secrets. Now you can find martial arts schools by looking in the telephone directory. As a result, new styles and new schools begin almost constantly. While some die out, others flourish. As the Introduction explains, heroes who dedicate themselves to a particular style of unarmed fighting are assumed to have joined a school that teaches that style.

## Achieving Mastery

Martial arts schools are neither feats nor prestige classes. When heroes meet the prerequisites for a school, they gain the school's benefit and may use it within the restrictions of the rules. Schools have several degrees of mastery, with more benefits for more dedicated students. Heroes may master as many schools as they wish, provided they meet all the prerequisites for each school.

Unless otherwise specified, the abilities granted by mastery of a school are extraordinary abilities.

**Note:** Prerequisites marked with an asterisk (\*) are new feats that appear in Chapter Three of this book.

See Chapter Four: Secret Techniques for descriptions of secret techniques.

## Ballistic Fist

*"The Gun Kata treats the gun as a total weapon. Each new position representing a maximum kill zone, inflicting maximum damage on the maximum number of opponents, while keeping the defendant clear of the statistically traditional trajectories of return fire."*

—*Equilibrium*

Ballistic Fist is an entirely fictional martial arts style that focuses on firearms similar to the way other styles focus on swords. Students of this school learn to anticipate the movement of opponents and calculate their fields of fire from moment to moment, ensuring that the Ballistic Fist practitioner can emerge from a firefight virtually unscathed.

**Note:** When a hero takes a level in Gunslinger, she may choose not to take a class ability and instead take a feat that is a prerequisite for mastery of Ballistic Fist, or a Ballistic Fist secret technique.

### 1st Degree Mastery—Ballistic Fist

**Prerequisites:** Dex 13, Int 13, Wis 13, base attack bonus +1, Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Burst Fire, Combat Expertise, Combat Martial Arts, Dodge, Double Tap, Improved Initiative,

Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Quick Draw, Knowledge (tactics) 6 ranks, Sleight of Hand 6 ranks, Tumble 6 ranks, Close Combat Shot class ability, Evasion class ability, Uncanny Dodge class ability, Weapon Focus class ability.

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 bonus to initiative, but you must draw the firearm with which you have Weapon Focus and attack an opponent with it in the first round of combat. Otherwise, you move to the end of the initiative order for the rest of the encounter. (You can, as always, change your place in the initiative order by delaying or readying.) This bonus stacks with the bonus from Improved Initiative.

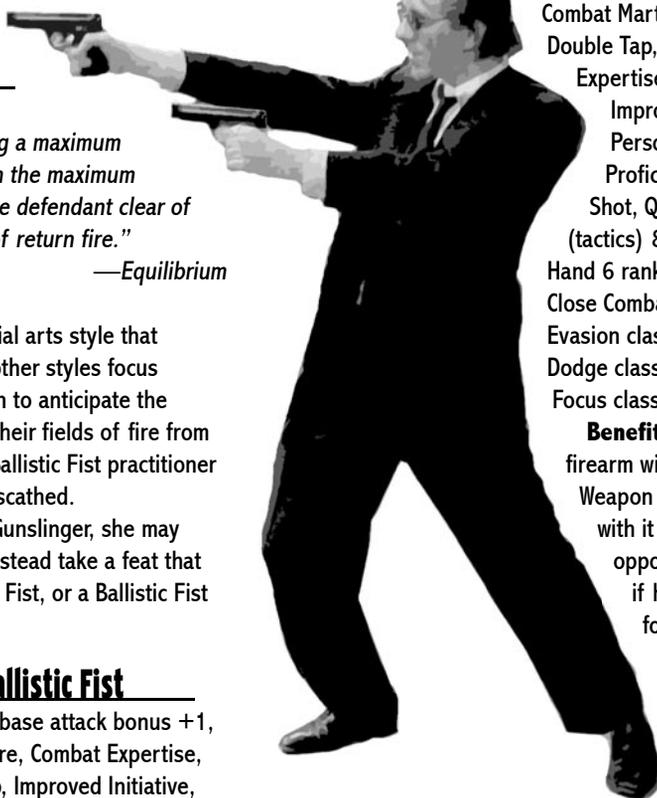
When you use the firearm you selected for your Weapon Focus ability, the threat range for that weapon increases by one. For example, a Colt M1911 normally threatens a critical only on a natural 20. In the hands of a 1st Degree Master of Ballistic Fist who selected the M1911 for his Weapon Focus ability, the threat range increases to 19–20.

You gain a +2 bonus on all attack rolls and a +2 bonus on all damage rolls when either pistol whipping or using a rifle butt in melee.

### 2nd Degree Mastery—Ballistic Fist

**Prerequisites:** 1st Degree Mastery of Ballistic Fist, Dex 13, Int 13, Wis 13, base attack bonus +1, Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Burst Fire, Combat Expertise, Combat Martial Arts, Dodge, Double Tap, Improved Combat Expertise\*, Improved Dodge\*, Improved Initiative, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Quick Draw, Knowledge (tactics) 8 ranks, Sleight of Hand 6 ranks, Tumble 6 ranks, Close Combat Shot class ability, Evasion class ability, Uncanny Dodge class ability, Weapon Focus class ability.

**Benefit:** If you draw the firearm with which you have Weapon Focus and attack with it in combat, treat the opponent you attack as if he or she was flat-footed, regardless of whether or not that opponent has acted already in this combat encounter.



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If either pistol whipping or using a rifle butt in melee, you gain the benefits of any unarmed combat feats and you add the weapon damage to your unarmed strike. For example, a hero with Combat Martial Arts and 2nd Degree Mastery of Ballistic Fist who pistol whips an opponent does 2d4 points of damage plus Strength modifier, and chooses whether that damage is lethal or nonlethal. A hero with Advanced Combat Martial Arts, Combat Martial Arts, Improved Combat Martial Arts, and 2nd Degree Mastery of Ballistic Fist who uses a rifle butt does 2d4 points of damage plus Strength modifier, chooses whether the damage is lethal or nonlethal, threatens a critical on a 19–20, and has a critical multiplier of  $\times 3$ .

**Available Secret Technique:** Tactical Training.

### 3rd Degree Mastery—Ballistic Fist

**Prerequisites:** 2nd Degree Mastery of Ballistic Fist, Dex 13, Int 13, Wis 13, base attack bonus +1, Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Burst Fire, Combat Expertise, Combat Martial Arts, Dodge, Double Tap, Greater Dodge\*, Improved Combat Expertise\*, Improved Dodge\*, Improved Initiative, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Quick Draw, Knowledge (tactics) 10 ranks, Sleight of Hand 6 ranks, Tumble 6 ranks, Close Combat Shot class ability, Evasion class ability, Uncanny Dodge class ability, Weapon Focus class ability.

**Benefit:** You gain the benefit of Supreme Dodge (see Chapter Three: Feats in this book).

You gain a +2 bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls with the firearm selected for your Weapon Focus ability. This bonus stacks with the previous bonus from Weapon Focus and with the bonus from Greater Weapon Focus (also a class feature of the Gunslinger advanced class) if the hero also possesses that ability.

When you use the firearm you selected for your Weapon Focus ability, the threat range for that weapon increases by one. This increases stacks with the increase from 1st Degree Mastery. For example, a Colt M1911 normally threatens a critical only on a natural 20. In the hands of a 3rd Degree Master of Ballistic Fist who selected the M1911 for his Weapon Focus ability, the threat range increases to 18–20.

**Available Secret Technique:** Combat Analysis.

### Bare-Knuckle Brawling

While bare-knuckle brawling is not a formal school of fighting, there are certainly people who practice it in unsanctioned boxing matches, prisons, bar rooms, and hockey rinks the world over. The bare-knuckle brawler may not spend a lot of time in training, but he makes up for that by fighting every chance he gets.

### 1st Degree Mastery—Bare-Knuckle Brawling

**Prerequisites:** Str 13, base attack bonus +3, Brawl, Improved Brawl, Improved Damage Threshold, Improved Grab\*, Improved Grapple\*, Power Attack, Streetfighting.

**Benefit:** You may use the +1d4 damage granted by Streetfighting a number of times per round equal to your Strength bonus.

### 2nd Degree Mastery—Bare-Knuckle Brawling

**Prerequisites:** 1st Degree Mastery of Bare-Knuckle Brawling, Str 13, base attack bonus +3, Brawl, Improved Brawl, Improved Damage Threshold ( $\times 2$ ), Improved Feint, Improved Grab\*, Improved Grapple\*, Power Attack, Streetfighting.

**Benefit:** You gain a +2 competence bonus on opposed grapple checks to damage your opponent, move, or to take control of an opponent's weapon. You also use that bonus when attacking with a light weapon while grappling or when attacking with your opponent's weapon while grappling.

When you make a successful unarmed strike, you deal normal damage and your opponent must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10 + your grapple modifier) or become fatigued. If you successfully use this ability against a fatigued opponent, that opponent becomes exhausted (See the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*, Chapter Five: Combat, Character Condition Summary for the consequences of being fatigued or exhausted). Further uses of this ability against an exhausted opponent have no further effect. You must announce the use of this ability before making your attack roll. Thus, a missed attack roll is a missed attempt. You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to your Strength modifier, but no more than once in any combat round.

Creatures that are immune to stunning attacks are also immune to this attack, as are any creatures that are more than one size category larger than you.

**Available Secret Technique:** Canny Grip.

### 3rd Degree Mastery—Bare-Knuckle Brawling

**Prerequisites:** 2nd Degree Mastery of Bare-Knuckle Brawling, Str 13, base attack bonus +3, Brawl, Endurance, Improved Brawl, Improved Damage Threshold ( $\times 3$ ), Improved Feint, Improved Grab\*, Improved Grapple\*, Power Attack, Streetfighting.

**Benefit:** When you make a successful unarmed attack, you deal normal damage and you may force your opponent to succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 10 + your grapple modifier) or become stunned for 1d4 rounds following the round in which you strike him (See the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*, Chapter Five: Combat, Character Condition Summary for the consequences of being stunned). You must announce the use of this ability before making your attack roll. Thus, a missed attack roll is a missed attempt. You may use this ability a number of times per day equal to your Strength modifier, but no more than once in any combat round.

Creatures that are immune to stunning attacks are also immune to this attack, as are any creatures that are more than one size category larger than you.

**Available Secret Technique:** Head Butt.

### The Clothyard Shaft School

Historically, the bow is an ancient weapon. Its fairly simple mechanism for multiplying the muscle power of the archer belies the skill needed to use a bow effectively. In most countries, martial use of the bow fell into disfavor with the introduction of the crossbow or firearms, both of which require far less training to produce competent shooters. However, the very dedication needed to learn the skills kept them alive,

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passed down generation by generation, gradually developing into more than just a difficult way to hunt deer.

Bows and arrows are famous weapons in films and books. Legolas was a great archer, as was Robin Hood. Tales of blind Zen archers are popular in genre literature. The great actor Toshiro Mifune practiced *yabusamé*, a style of *kisha* (Japanese horseback archery).

### 1st Degree Mastery—Clothyard Shaft

**Prerequisites:** Dex 17, Wis 13, base attack bonus +6, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Dodge, Focused, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus: Composite Bow, Concentration 4 ranks.

**Benefit:** If you use the Fight Defensively option, firing your bow does not trigger attacks of opportunity.

### 2nd Degree Mastery—Clothyard Shaft

**Prerequisites:** 1st Degree Mastery of Clothyard Shaft, Dex 17, Wis 13, base attack bonus +8, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Dodge, Focused, Manyshot, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus: Composite Bow, Concentration 6 ranks.

**Benefit:** You may add your Dexterity bonus to damage from your arrows rather than your Strength bonus.

**Available Secret Technique:** Zen Archery.

### 3rd Degree Mastery—Clothyard Shaft

**Prerequisites:** Degree Mastery of Clothyard Shaft, Dex 19, Wis 13, base attack bonus +11, 2nd Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Dodge, Focused, Improved Precise Shot, Manyshot, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run, Weapon Focus: Composite Bow, Concentration 8 ranks.

**Benefit:** The range increment for your bow increases to 60 feet. When using your bow in ranged combat, every time you miss because of concealment, you can reroll your miss chance roll one time to see if you actually hit (see Concealment in Chapter Five: Combat of the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*).

**Available Secret Technique:** Heaven's Arrow.

## The Cloudy Night School

The Cloudy Night School developed from a need for people who could do things the warrior classes were prohibited from doing, if not by law then by their own codes of behavior. Such things included espionage, murder, sabotage, and theft. The basis of Cloudy Night is very similar to Japanese ninjutsu (also called *taijutsu*) and Chinese *an ch'i*.

The essence of Cloudy Night is deception. Its training emphasizes subtlety, stealth, and improvisation. Contrary to popular belief, practitioners rarely dress in head-to-toe black except for training sessions. Schools are easy to locate using the Internet and the telephone directory.

### 1st Degree Mastery—Cloudy Night

**Prerequisites:** Base attack bonus +1, Acrobatic, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Athletic, Combat Martial Arts, Climb 4 ranks, Hide 4 ranks, Move Silently 4 ranks, Tumble 4 ranks, Evasion class ability.

**Benefit:** You gain Dodge and Stealthy as a bonus feat. You must meet the prerequisites for Dodge in order to use that feat.

### 2nd Degree Mastery—Cloudy Night

**Prerequisites:** 1st Degree Mastery of Cloudy Night, base attack bonus +1, Acrobatic, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Athletic, Combat Martial Arts, Defensive Martial Arts, Martial Weapons Proficiency\* (see Chapter Five: Weapons for a list of appropriate choices), Climb 7 ranks, Hide 7 ranks, Move Silently 7 ranks, Tumble 7 ranks, Evasion class ability.

**Benefit:** You gain Mobility as a bonus feat. You must meet all prerequisites in order to use this feat.

You also gain Improved Evasion. If you are exposed to any effect that normally allows a character to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage (such as getting caught in a grenade blast), you suffer no damage if you make a successful saving throw and only half damage on a failed save. Improved Evasion can only be used when wearing light or no armor.

**Available Secret Technique:** Spirit Needles.

### 3rd Degree Mastery—Cloudy Night

**Prerequisites:** 2nd Degree Mastery of Cloudy Night, base attack bonus +4, Acrobatic, Archaic Weapons Proficiency, Athletic, Combat Martial Arts, Deceptive, Defensive Martial Arts, Focused, Improved Combat Martial Arts, Martial Weapons Proficiency\* (see Chapter Five: Weapons for a list of appropriate choices), Bluff 4 ranks, Climb 7 ranks, Disguise 4 ranks, Hide 7 ranks, Move Silently 7 ranks, Tumble 7 ranks, Evasion class ability.

**Benefit:** You gain Spring Attack as a bonus feat. You must meet all prerequisites in order to use this feat.

In addition, if you make a successful Bluff check as a standard action you may immediately make a normal Hide check as a free action provided there is sufficient terrain or furnishings to conceal you. Your hiding place must be within 1 foot for every rank you have in Hide (so if you have 10 ranks in Hide, your hiding place can be as much as 10 feet away).

**Normal:** If you make a Bluff check to create a diversion before hiding, you suffer a –10 penalty to the Hide check.

**Available Secret Technique:** Hypnotic Gaze.

## The Deft Touch School

The Deft Touch School developed in countries with detailed medical systems, such as the Vedic knowledge of India and the Taoist medicine of China. Many of the masters of this and similar schools are doctors of traditional medicine. They expect their students to learn their traditional medical knowledge and techniques in order to treat the training injuries of junior students.

Deft Touch combat techniques use precise fingertip strikes to specific pressure points and nerve clusters. It is a gentle-looking art that relies on education and accuracy rather than brute strength.

### 1st Degree Mastery—Deft Touch

**Prerequisites:** Dex 13, Wis 13, base attack bonus +4, Defensive Martial Arts, Stunning Fist\*, Medical Expert, Craft