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Monk guide pathfinder

Home Forums > RPG Discussion > General RPG Discussion > RPG Developers > Owlcat Games > Discussion in 'Owlcat Games' launched by Pink Eye, January 21, 2020. Page 1 of 6 1 2 3 4 5 6 Next > If Amazon Associate earns rpgcodex.net to qualifying purchases. Home Forums > RPG Discussion > General RPG Discussion > RPG Developers > Owlcat Games > I'm New to Pathfinder and Almost Completely New to CRPGs in General, Can I Get Some Seriously Basic Help On How to Build a Monk? The character I have in mind is an Aasimar monk who simply uses unarmed attack. Ideally, I wouldn't do much polishing for a fight, if that's possible. I really don't have what I do here now, so my questions are: - What stats should I encourage and which should I trash?- What are the essential performance I need- Which kit is essential?- Which other classes are best to dual in? I think a bit of Rogue might be helpful, for that sweet sneak attack damage- Can anyone recommend a really good guide for how to build a monk? Thanks in advancePage 2Post byu/[deleted]2 years ago 20 comments Last updated: October 15, 2018 I support a limited subset of Pathfinder's content rules. If you want help with Pathfinder player options not covered here, please send me an email and I'm happy to offer additional help. RPGBOT uses the color coding scheme that has become commonplace under Pathfinder building manuals. Also note that many colored items are also links to the Paizo SRD. Red: Bad, useless options, or options that are very situational. Orange: OK options, or useful options that apply only in rare circumstances Green: Good options. Blue: Great options, often essential to your character's function. Introduction Oh, thank you for what pantheon of gods your institution uses. Someone finally fixed the Monk. Since 3.0, the Monk is the laughing stock of the classes. No amount of splat books, errata, archetypes, or alternative class features can make the Monk work. Monks always have two problems: First, they are difficult to play. The Monks largest class characteristics were incompatible. The class was a front-line class with garbage AC and no hit points. Monks needed high scores in each skill score. Second, Monks couldn't do anything. Their best trick was to save things, and actually every martial class in the game could do that better. Brawlers were especially offensive because they dropped all of the Monk's problems, but kept their unarmed struggle. The Unchained Monk dramatically enhances the Monk's adaptable, versatility and utility. A whole host of new options allow Monks to function as a Defender in addition to their existing skills as a Striker, giving them at least the capabilities of a This guide is for the Unchained Monk. For the vanilla monk, see my Monk Handbook. What's new? The Unchained Monk is the most highly changed Unchained class. It drops all of the lingering nastiness that monks retain from 3.5 and eventually makes the monk easy to build build relying on 2+ archetypes to get a functional vanilla monk. Ki Powers: Ki Powers adds a talent-style customization option to Monks, allowing for much more diversity among Monk builds. The list of options includes powers that monks were previously locked in such as Slow Fall and Vibrant Palm, as well as a handful of exciting new options. Qinggong Monks players can find the mechanic familiar. Style Strikes: Unique strikes to add once or twice as rider effects when using Flurry or Blows, and adds many interesting options to the Monk's favorite combat option. Flawless Mind: You'll notice that Unchained Monks get low Will saves. This will fix it, but not until the 19th level. Updated numbers: d10 hit points, full BAB, and low Will saves. All in all, a dramatic improvement that puts the monk on par with the fighter. You fix bad will save with Iron Will, while vanilla monks need to fix their hit points with Toughness and have no way to fix their medium BAB. No archetypes: Every archetype published for the vanilla monk is not compatible with the Unchained Monk. Although the loss of variety is unfortunate, the improvement of class is so important that I think it's a fair trade. Unchained Monk Class Features Hit Points: Finally! The Monk has normal hit points for a martial character. Base Attack Bonus: The Monk's primary offensive option, Flurry of Blows, pretended the Monk had full BAB. Not actually giving Monks full BAB was an absurd and complicated aspect of the class that had no discernible positive effect on the game. Saves: Good Fortitude and Reflex saves. Vanilla Monks also get good Will saves, so this is a minor setback, but monks need wisdom anyway, so your Will save should be good. Congratulations: Monks get a real bizzarre collection of exotic weapons, but many of them offer bonuses to combat maneuvers, and the ability to use Flurry of Blows with monk weapons to build the same number of attacks as a TWF, but with the damage output of a two-handed build to get. Skills: No change here. Monks still have waste skills, making it very difficult for them to fill non-combat roles in the party. AC Bonus (Ex): The Monk AC bonus helps to compensate for the monk's lack of armor. The scaling is pretty negligible, but it still feels good to have. However, your AC will still be terrible without additional items and AC improvements. Flurry of Blows (Ex): This is the monk's iconic attack. It follows the same progression as a fighter maximizing the two-weapon fighting performance, but you don't have off-hand attacks. You don't even need free hands. You use your feet your hands are full. You also freely switch between weapons and unarmed strikes, and you disarm, sunder, and replace travel combat maneuvers for unarmed attacks. Unarmed Strike: This is why you generally play a monk: because you want to hit things with your bare hands/feet/etc. The damage dice starts out quite small, but if you hit d8 at level 4, it starts to Whatever weapons you're fighting with. At level 12, your fists are big words. You also treat non-lethal damage without penalty, which is situationally useful. It's important to note that your unarmed strike damage is highly tailored based, so you want to do everything you need to increase your effective size. Get magnified and throw Impact on an Amulet of Mighty Fists. It's also interesting to note that damage progression stops at 20th level, so items like a Monks Belt stop being useful at high levels unless you're multiclass. Brawler / Monk Unarmed Strike Damage by size and level small medium large large giant colossal 1st-3rd 1d4 1d6 1d8 2d6 3d6 4d6 4th -7th 7th 1d 1d6 1d8 2d6 3d6 4d6 6d6 8th-11th 1d8 1d10 2d8 3d8 4d8 6d8 12th-15th 1d10 2d6 3d6 4d6 6d6 8d8 16th-19th 2d6 2d8 3d8 4 6d8 8d8 20th 2d8 2d10 4d8 6d8 8d8 12d8 This table is derived from the 3.5 lines. They should be the same in Pathfinder, but Pathfinder does not offer official rules for monks smaller than small or larger than large. Contact your GM before using this table. Bonus performance: With the addition of the Advanced Player's Guide and Ultimate Combat, the Monk has a lot of great bonus feat options. And the best part: A monk does not have any of the conditions that are normally required for these performance to select them. This is especially great for the high level style performance because a lot of the conditions are pretty awful. 1st Level Catch Off-Guard: There is no time when an improvised weapon will do more damage than a Monk's Unarmed Strike. Combat Reflexes: Attacks of Opportunity lets you control the battlefiend, and this combines well with Greater Trip. Deflecting Arrows: Very situational. Dodge: The Monk generally has a low AC, and an extra point is a big help. Improved Gripper: Essential for any gripper.. Scorpion Style: You give up your full attack for a slightly nasty debuff. Oh, and if you miss or they save you're completely hosed. Throw everything: Monks are usually not varied characters, and those who use bows or thrown weapons. Gorgon's 6th Level Fist: Getting this without conditions makes it non-functional because Gorgon's Fist only works on enemies already affected by Scorpion Style. Improved Bull Rush: Too situational. Enhanced Disarming: Bypass your combat expertise, but this is still situational. Improved Feint: You're not a Rogue. Improved Trip: To Do This Without Combat Expertise is fantastic. Mobility: If you're within range of something, you should punch. 10th Level Improved Criticism: Going from 20 to 19-20 is not a big enough jump to warrant a performance. Ki Throw: Very situational. Medusa's Wrath: Skipping Scorpion Style and Gorgon's Fist make this extremely powerful. Lead a combo with Stunning Fist and get two free attacks! On level 12 you can leave enemies for 1d6+1 rounds, so you can continue to use this performance without extra AI. Snatch Arrows: Situational and ineffective issue. Spring Attack: You must attack to do damage as a monk. 14th level binding throw: this is a hard performance to make work. You need Ki Throw, but if you have both you can easily start a grab with an opponent you just tripped. Improved Ki Throw: Still very situational, and skipping the prereq will get you nothing. Stunning First (Ex): Another iconic Monk ability, gorgeous fist gets better as you progress. A bewildered creature drops everything kept (free disarm!), can't take actions, takes a -2 penalty to AC, and loses his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any). This makes the rest of your iterative attacks much better, and prevents the target from taking attacks when you make Combat Maneuver attempts instead of your iterative attacks. At higher levels you instead aim tired (-2 to CMD due to reduced str and dex), get sick (-2 save so you can more reliably apply other affects), spread out (just one action per turn), permanently blinded or deaf (permanently flat feet or permanently bad in casting spells), and finally paralyzed (lol). The only problem is that it is a fortitude store, which is usually high for monsters. Evasion (Ex): Always fantastic, Evasion works well with your reasoanbly high agility and strong saves. Quick Movement (Ex): Extra speed put you in position to stop moving earlier. Last Round 1, hope you don't need that much speed. Ki Pool (Su): Damage reduction is the biggest problem for builds that rely on large numbers of attacks with relatively low damage. Ki Pool lets you treat your attacks as magic, silver, cold iron, legitimate and finally adamant. While very few things have DR/legal, the others are excellent and cover a wide spectrum of enemies. At low levels, you may need to carry weapons to treat DR silver and DR cold iron, but Ki Pool will treat things at higher levels as long as you have a point in your KI Pool. Spend your points from your ki pool as a swift to get an extra attack, increase your speed or boost your AC. If it gets serious, these boosts can make or break your monk. Ki Power: Ki Powers are the talent equivalent of the Unchained Monk, and they open up some really fun and exciting options for customizing your Monk. Abundant Step (Su): Sometimes your speed can't get you where you need to go, and you use this a motion action. However, please note that you will not take any additional actions after you use them. Make sure you do something with your other actions before teleporting, even if it's just to fight defensively for the AC bonus. Cobra Breath (Su): Very situational. Diamond Body (Su): The vanilla Monk's version is passive, and don't eat your AI. At high levels many enemies use poison, which the original Diamond Body can be very Instead of this, buy a stack of antitoxins. Diamond Mind (Su): Situational, and anxiety effects tend to be pretty soft. Diamond Resilience (Ex): DR can be fantastic for low-AC melee characters like Monks, and the scaling is decent. Diamond Soul (Ex): its very scary, but monks already have one of the best saves in the game, so you shouldn't have to worry about them too much. Elemental Fury (Su): Not always convenient depending on the resistances of your enemies, but with the Monks crazy number of attacks it's easy to get quite a bit of damage out of this. Elemental Burst (Su): Decent damage in a cone. Empty body (Su): Punch ghosts and run through walls. Feather Balance (Ex): Very situational. Shapeless Mastery (Ex): Works only against enemies in an attitude of a style achievement. Go grab each Bestiary volume and count how many of those there are. There aren't any. Then count how many NPC monks you've ever fought. Probably single digits unless you've played a far east style game. Furious Defense (Ex): Formless Mastery is strictly better. You use both together, but spending 3 AI to boost your AC for a round seems a bit expensive. High Jump (Ex): Jumping is stupid in a game where flying is so easily accessible. Potions of Jump cost 50 gp. Insightful Wisdom (Su): This allows you to give your allies a reroll on save-or-die roles. Everybody needs this. Ki Blocker (Su): Too situational. Ki Guardian (Su): This is hard to use because it requires your allies to stay beside you, but it's great against traps and ambushes. Ki Hurricane (Ex): You could use this once. You will immediately realize that it eats half of your daily AI pool, then never use it again. If you really need to move during your attacks, grab the Flying Kick Style Strike. Ki Metabolism (Su): Very situational. Ki Mount (Su): This is actually copy+ pasted from the Sohei Monk. Ki Mount you take any everyday mount and turn it into an effective option for a few hours. If your horse dies, grab another one and enter it an AI point and you're back in business. Ki Range (Su): Only useful for thrown weapon builds. Ki Visions (Su): Interesting, but if you have divination magic you have to go find a spiritual. Ki Volley (Su): Situational. Light steps (Ex): Too situational. One Touch (Su): You shouldn't depend on this, but it can be a great way to take out difficult enemies using Stunning Fist. Qinggong Power (Su): The Qinggong Monk was one of the biggest power boosts monks saw prior to the Unchained Monk. Many of the Qinggong Monk's powers are fantastic and add them to the unchained Monk's list of available Ki Powers adds a host of additional options. See my Monk Archetypes Breakdown for help choosing Qinggong powers. You select this option moret han once, so in theory you could only rely on Qinggong powers. Vibrant Palm (Su): Miles better than the original version just because you do it more than once a day. Slow Fall (Su): Buy a Ring of Feather Falling if you're worried about thise Sudden speed (Su): Seriously? Aren't you fast enough? This is only useful if you frequently use the Flying Kick Style Strike to move around during your Flurry of Blows. Water Sprint (Su): Too situational. Wind jump Wind jump This is nice, but it prevents you from fully attacking mid-flight. Get a broom of flies instead. Body Wholeness (Ex): At the end of the day when you're about to rest, this is a good way to empty your Ki Pool, but I don't think it will see much use if you still have things to fight today. Still Mind (Ex): Your saves are already great, but a bonus against spells and compulsion can save you from some really terrible effects. This is especially useful because the Unchained Monk has low Will saves. Purity of the body (Ex): Immunity to diseases is fun, but rarely useful. With the exception of infection spell, you typically have enough time to have someone cast Delete Disease before the disease becomes a problem. Style Strike: Style Strikes add some versatility and utility to the Monk's Flurry of Blows, so you can add some useful bonus effects to one or two of your attacks every time you have a flurry. You get 5 choices over time, which is perfect because 5 of the options are worth it. If you use the Enforcer feat, Elbow Smash becomes a good 6th option, and if you skip Improved Trip for any reason, Leg Sweep becomes a good 7th. Defensive Spin: AC is one of the Monk's biggest problems, and +4 is a significant bonus. It only applies to the target of the attack, so look for other options when faced with multiple enemies. Elbow Smash: An additional attack is great, but it's non-lethal damage. If you plan to use the Enforcer feat, this may be an option. Flying Kick: The ability to move and complete attack in the same corner is a powerful and very powerful power. This won't get you very far at low levels, but if your fast movement bonus increases your range on the battlefiend will greatly increase. Foot Stomp: Unless you pick up improved trip (and you really should), monks don't have many options to prevent enemies from moving beyond the Monk's reach. This tackles that problem very nicely, and if the goal wants to move they waste their Standard Action just to attempt to do so. The action economy on this is spectacular. Hammerblow: Nothing special: just a big pile of damage. Sometimes that's all you need. Captain Kirk would approve. Head-Butt: Staggering an enemy is a good trick, but Stunning Fist can already do that, and you don't take a -8 penalty to hit if you're not fighting a humanoid. Knockback Kick: Basically Bull Rush with double the movement distance. Too situational. Leg Sweep: This is very similar to Improvement Trip, but there are some important differences. With Leg Sweep you attack first, then you get the trip attempt when you hit. With Improved Trip, you travel first, but you only get a free attack with Great Trip, which requires Combat Expertise. Put can only be used once or twice per round, while Improved Trip can be used instead of one of your attacks. Improved Trip offers a bonus for trip attacks and can be used for attacking odds, while Leg Sweep should be used as part of Flurry of Blows. Oh, and you use a gun with. With. Travel to get a bonus for your CMB. I think it's fair to say that Improved Trip is a little better. Shattering Punch: Overcoming DR is a big problem for monks because they get by on a flurry of low injury attacks. Overcoming DR on one of those attacks is a nice gurantee, but your damage output will still be very low unless you completely overcome the target DR Spin Kick: This is a great option against enemies with a lot of agility or a dodge bonus to AC. Unfortunately, that's not many enemies. It is also useful to use this with your weakest iterative attacks, which will have the most difficulty normally. Improved Evasion (Ex): Always great and reliable. Tongue of the Sun and Moon (Ex): You talk to everything, but you are not particularly good at it without diplomacy and crappy charisma. Timeless Body (Ex): Stay young and beautiful until you die of old age. Leave a beautiful body. Flawless Mind: A reroll on Will saves will absolutely compensate for the Unchained Monk's low Will saves. Perfect Self: Suddenly you can't use Enlarge Person. The DR is cute, and you become immune to things like Dominating Person, but things that require you to be a humanoid are generally abandoned for different levels. I would say that this ability actually makes you worse because you don't benefit from Enlarge Person. Skills Monks are primarily a striker, and their damage comes from their strength, so strength must be their greatest ability. Str: As a melee character, strength is the monk's main ability. It contributes to your melee attacks and damage, shuriken damage, and combat maneuvers. Dex: Crucial for the monk relatively low AC, and contributes to different monk skills. Reflex saves are also a good point to focus on because you're evasion. Con: Monks are battle characters with d8 hit points, so constitution is crucial. Fortitude saves are also important for battle characters. Int: Dump to 8. Intelligence doesn't help Monks much, but the extra skill points are rarely worth the loss of a second skill point. Wis: Many of the Monk's iconic skills depend on wisdom. However, these skills are still subordinate to the Monk's primary function of hitting things and dealing with damage. Cha: Dump to 7. Completely useless on a monk. 25 Point Buy 20 Point Buy Elite Arrray Str:17 Dex:13 Con:14 In t:8 Wis:14 Cha:7 Str:15 Dex:13 Con:12 Int:10 Wis:14 Cha:8 Races We want races that can give us bonuses to Strength, Constitution, or Wisdom. Extra vision skills are always fun. Because the damage of the Monk output depends so heavily on their injury dying size, small is a serious problem. Dwarf: Although they don't get a bonus to force, a +2 to both constitution and wisdom goes one Way. Their punishment is to dump the Monk's stat, and their low speed is offset by the monk speed bonus. Darkvision is great, and they get a +2 to save against spells on top of the monk's already impressive saves. Unfortunately, the class bonus is worthless. Eleven: -2 record is brutal, and their only useful bonus is a +2 to agility. Many of the eleven bonuses relate to spellcasting, which monks cannot do, and the alternative racial traits are not specifically useful to the Monk. The favorite class bonus offers an entirely unnecessary bonus to the monk's speed. Leprechaun: Little monks? A -2 in strength is crippling, especially since your damage dice will be smaller, and Enlarge Person will not reach you. Half-Eleven: +2 in strength and poor visibility, but that's really all we get here. The alternative racial traits of the Half-Eleven offer nothing useful, and the Half-Eleven's favorite class bonus doesn't help much. Half-Orc: +2 to strength, and Ferocity can be useful if you want to use Bullying. Darkvision is also fantastic. The Half-Orc favorite class bonus is garbage. Halfling: Little monks are usually terrible, but Halflings could be viable thanks to their racial performance. Highlighting Fight Defensively (see my practical guide to fighting defensively) and taking Risky Striker can be a significant damage boost, although the total number of achievements you need to succeed can be prohibitively expensive. Man: +2 power and a performance is pretty nice, but most decent Monk performances are not available at first level. The skill points don't hurt, but they don't do us any great favors. The Human favorite class bonus offers a bonus to the Monk's Ki pool, which is especially useful if you don't take an archetype with which you use your AI. Traits Anatomist (combat) charging: Critical hits are not for monks. Axe to Grind (combat): You spend a lot of time going one-on-one against enemies, and with your multiple attacks, this +1 bonus will earn a lot of points. Bloodthirsty (fight): This is just a bad trait. Bullied (combat): If you build your Monk as an area control defender, this can be useful. You'll probably be even more dependent on reach weapons, but you'll threaten the area within range of your weapon with unarmed attacks, which can provide an occasional fun attack bonus. Brave (fight): Fear saving throws are generally pretty soft. Special Defender (fight): Small and situational. Deft Dodger (combat): Your saves are fantastic, but more never hurts. Dirty Fighter: If you spend a lot of time flanking, this helps a lot. Indelible Ire (fight): This is bad. Killer (fight): Critical hits are not for monks. Martial Performer : This is only important for the Sensei archetype. Nature's Mimic (combat): Monks don't make good librarians. Reactionary (combat): Initiative bonuses are always good. Reckless (combat): You already get Acrobatics. Resilient (combat): Your saves are fantastic, but more never hurts. Surprise (combat): Only useful for the Drunken Master archetype. Tactician (combat): Reactionary is probably going to give you better results. Vigilant Battler (combat): How many things feint? Birthmark (Faith): Charm and compulsions are his but you'd be better served with an overall bonus for Will saves. Blessed (Faith): This is bad and hard to use. Caretaker (Faith): Healing is a decent option for monks. You have a respectable wisdom bonus, and most of your skills are insignificant. Child of the Temple (Faith): Monks do not make good librarians. Devotee of the Green (Faith): Monks do not make good librarians. Contemptuous Defender (Faith): About half of all spells are divine, so this is a +2 versus half of all spells. Try not to get into fights with other members of your won faith. Ease of faith (Faith): Monks generally don't make a good face. Fate's Favored (Faith): Happiness bonuses are rare, and you have no way to make them. Pointed Disciple (Faith): Identical to birthmark. History of Heresy (Faith): Contemptuous defender gives twice the bonus. Indomitable Faith: Your rescues are fantastic, but never hurt. Inspired (Faith): Skills are not particularly important for monks, but this is still a fantastic trait. Martial Manuscript (Faith): Critical hits are not a big part of what monks do, but this is true of almost every attack you will ever make. Oathbound (Faith): Because your rescues are fantastic, this is very effective. Omen (Faith): Monks generally don't make a good face, but there are a few monk abilities/performances that depend on Bullying. Principled (Faith): Emotion effects are incredibly rare, so The Birthmark is probably better. Prophesied (Faith): Monks generally don't make a good face. Reincarnated (Faith): Anxiety effects are generally mild, but The consequences of death will really ruin your day. Sacred Touch: You have no healing abilities, so this can be a good way to save the healer. I hope you don't need it. Scholar of the Great Beyond (Faith): Monks do not make good librarians. Spirit Sense: A trait that assigns perception as class skill will serve you much better. Air-Touched (magic): bad, and very situational. Classically trained (magic): Spellcraft is not a good option for monks. Dangerously Curious (magic): Powerful, but not UMD is not a good option for monks due to typically low charisma. Earth-Touched (magic): bad, and very situational. Eldritch Delver (magic): Monks don't make good librarians. Flame-Touched (magical): bad, and very situational. Greater Purpose (magic): Reincarnated will be better unless you bleed a huge amount of time to death. Magic Talent (magic): There are really no options that give you anything meaningful. Mathematical Prodigy (magic): Monks don't make good librarians. Reluctant Apprentice (magic): do not make good librarians. Skeptic (magic): Very situational. Storm-Touched (magic): bad, and very situational. Unharmed (magic): Monks have different ways to gain energy resistance, and never hurt again. Water-Touched (magic): bad, and very situational. Acrobat (social): Extremely situational. Adopted (social): Opens many options, and doesn't actually consume a trait slot. Ambitious Ambitious Monks generally don't make a good face. Beast Bond (social): Aimals are generally not in monk's repertoire. Bully (social): Monks generally don't make a good face. Charming (social): Monks generally don't make a good face. Child of the Streets (social): You could be decent at Sleight or Hand, but Sleight or Hand is a very situational skill. Civilized (social): Monks don't make good librarians. Criminal (social): Replace the villain! Fast Talker (social): Monks generally don't make a good face. Friend in every city (social): Monks are neither librarians nor faces. Grief-Filled (social): Terrible. Influence (social): Monks generally don't make a good face. Life of Toil (social): Your rescues are fantastic, but more never hurts. Mercenary (social): Monks generally don't make a good face. Orphaned (social): Survival is situational, but with Monk wisdom you could be good at it. Poverty-Affected (social): Identical to orphan. Savage (social): Monks don't make good librarians. Seeker (social): Perception is the most rolled skill in the game, and with high wisdom you can be very good at it. Style Sage (social): Monks do not make good librarians. Reliable (social): Monks generally don't make a good face. Truth's Agent (social): Monks don't make good librarians. Unintentional Linguist (social): Monks generally don't make a good face, but knowing additional languages is fun. Unnatural Revenge (social): Monks generally don't make a good face, and the list of potential targets is very small. Unpredictable (social): Monks generally don't make a good face. Veiled Disciple (social): Birthmark is better. Weathered emissary (social): Linguistics as a class of skill gets you almost nothing. Worldly (social): Excellent, but you don't have many skills that will cause problems if you don't. Skills With more than 4 skill points and low intelligence, you need to choose your skills carefully. Fortuantely, many Monk skills can function with only one rank. Acrobatics (Dex): Mobility is important for any melee fighter, and acrobatics can help you to be in position to do work. You may not have the performance to spend on Dodge and Mobility, so Acrobatics can help you move through combat easily. Climb (Str): While not particularly useful, putting a rank in Climb can save your life. Combined with the class bonus and your high strength, you are counting on a +8 bonus for much of your career. Escape Artist (Dex): I'm not trapped here with you. You're stuck here with me. Escape Artist is very situational, and most of those situations involve getting away from a monk. Add a rank if you save but definitely don't focus on Escape Artist too much. Intimidating (Cha): Intimidating is that you only have interesting charisma-based skill, and Charisma is your dump stat. Unless you have very specific ideas on how to use it, such as the Enforcer feat, Intimidating is a waste. Knowledge (history) (Int): One of the less important knowledge skills, and your intelligence is is is Knowledge (religion) (Int): One of the best knowledge skills. If no one in the party has it, maximize it. Otherwise, take a rank and hope for happy sandwiches. Perception (Wis): Your wisdom is great, and this is the most commonly used skill in the game. Run (Cha): Do you look like a bard? Maybe nice in an RP heavy campaign, but otherwise useless. Ride (Dex): You run faster than a horse by level 6 (9 for dwarves), and don't get a mount. I don't know why this is here. Sense Motive (Wis): You have good wisdom, and this may be your only way to really contribute to social situations. Stealth (Dex): You're not rogue, but your agility is decent and you don't have to worry about armor check penalties. If your party needs a scout, you definitely need a step up. Swimming (Str): Basically underwater climb. One rank, forget it. Performance For the most part, the Unchained Monk's performance looks just like that for a standard Monk. The section below details some notable exceptions, but generally you refer to my Monk Handbook for informaiton on performance. General Feats Power Attack: Absolutely essential on the Unchained Monk. Flurry of Blows no longer punishes your attacks, and you have full BAB, so you get the same damage bonuses as a Fighter. This is especially amazing if you're using a monk weapon two-handed because you still have the extra attacks, but also 50% more damage bonus from your power and from Power Attack. Vital Strike: I wanted badly for Vital Strike to be a meaningful way for the Unchain Monk to use a standard action. Unfortunately, the damage output still doesn't come close to what a weapon weilder can do. Instead, try to find ways to solve your motion problem right away. Weapons Although you'll probably fight unarmed, monk weapons offer you a lot of great options, including bonuses to combat maneuvers. Monks who don't specialize with weapons still have to wear a few to bypass DR until Ki Pool covers the bases, and for bonuses on CMB controls. Monks can use a single weapon for flurry of blows, which removes the need for dual weapons or two-weapon combat. This also increases the importance of damage improvements on your weapon because you have a large number of low-damage attacks. If you plan to use weapons, you need to pick up some damage improvements. bo staff: Actually a quarterstaff with the blocking accommodation. d6 damage, 20x2 crit. Brass knuckles: Like unarmed strike, but less damage and enchanting. Butterfly Sword: Actually a fancy version of a dagger that you don't throw. d4 damage, 19-20x2 crit. Cestus: Makes bludgeoning or piercing damage, which adds some nice versatility. d4 damage, 19-20x2 crit. Dan Bong: Despite doing 1d3 bludgeoning damage, the Dan Bong is It adds an incredibly rare +2 bonus to grab controls, has the blocking feature, and can be thrown. Also it has 19-20x2 crit for some reason. It doesn't really own the Grapple, so you don't apply other weapon bonuses bonuses to control your gripper using a then bong. However, because you don't use it to wrestle, you use your unarmed strike damage when struggling. Double chained kama: The dual property doesn't really matter, but range does. The double-chained kama also has the Trip feature, which means you use it to stumble, drop an ending to avoid you stumbled back, then pick up the dropped end as a free action by pulling the chain. The description mentions using it to disarm, but the list does not mention the disarming property, and the normal Kamas do not disarm. Please note that because this is a double weapon, each end of the weapon may be a different material and can be enchanted separately. Double Chicken Sabre: A short sword with disarming. 1d6 cutting damage and 19-20 crit. A solid choice, but not very exciting. emei piercer: The wording is confusing. Despite the d3 damage, the description says that may piercers put unarmed strikes in piercing damage. General consensus in the rules discussions seems to be that the weapon overrides unarmed strike damage, but is treated differently as an unarmed strike. If you just need a source of piercing damage, there are better options. Fight Fan: Leave these for ninjas. Poison is not your thing, and neither is feinting. jutte: 1d6 bludgeoning damage and disarm. Not terrible, but you'll be better served getting a weapon with a different type of damage so you don't have to carry a stack of weapons. kama: 1d6 cut damage and travel. One of the best options in the core rulebook. It's light, which doesn't do much for monks. Kusarigama: Similar to the double-chained kama, but the kusarigama trades some of the off-hand weapon damage for the grab property. The Grapple property gives you a +2 to wrestle, and you add weapon enhancement bonuses to your grab controls, but you use the damage of the weapon when wrestling instead of your unarmed strike damage. kyoketsu shoge: The description doesn't seem to match the statistics: it says you're swinging the ring around, but the statistics don't say you're dealing with bludgeoning damage. For what it does, the Kusarigama and double-chained kama are better options, but the sword can do cutting or piercing damage, which covers both of your missing damage types. Lungchuan tamo: 1d4 damage, piercing or cutting damage, and throwable. This is a very versatile option if you don't plan to use combat maneuvers. monkss path: 1d6 damage of each type. The table is a bit misleading, though; the two ends do different types of damage. This seems like a solid option, but it's two-handed, which limits your options in a fight, and it doesn't give you bonuses to fight maneuvers. nine-ring broadsword: Monk battle bedax. Solid Cutting damage, and x3 crit, but nothing for combat maneuvers. Nine-section whip: 1d8 bludgeoning damage, 19-20x2 crit, block, distract, and travel. Blocking and trip on one item is great, but the damage is not spectacular because it's bludgeoning. bludgeoning's. this would be a great item at low levels before your unarmed strike damage exceeds 1d8. You hold it in one hand to take advantage of the blocking property while still fighting unarmed, which is great for Tap Style monks. nunchaku: 1d6 bludgeoning damage and disarm. Not terrible, but there are better options. Quarter hour staff: Bo Staff is strictly better. Rope Arrow: 1d4 piercing damage, block, distract, and throwable. sai: Less damage than the nunchaku, but also offers a +2 bonus when underestimating weapons. Sundering is not a particularly popular option, so the nunchaku is probably a better weapon. Sansetsukon: 1d10 bludgeoning damage is quite large, and meets your unarmed strike damage to level 12. 19-20x2 crit is great, and blocking and disarming are great on a weapon. The damage is good enough that, even at high levels where your unarmed strikes damage more than 1d10, the Sansetsukon can be a viable option. The ability to attack with a two-handed weapon with as many attacks as two-weapon combat builds means that the additional damage of Strength (not to mention Power Attack if you use it) can easily close the gap in damage output. However, you still have to overcome the RAW numerical advantage provided by permanent +5 unarmed strikes, which will be difficult to do. Seven-branched Sword: 1d10 cutting damage with x3 crit is pretty good, and it has disarm. You also take a near-trip to flatten goals for a round, which is a weird situationally useful trick. shang gou: 1d4 cutting damage, but it can be used for disarming or travel, which adds some excellent versatility. shuriken: Because they are drawn as free action such as ammunition, shuriken with flurry of Battles can be used. However, they are destroyed when they are used, which makes it difficult to enchant them. Wear a few everyday shuriken for the rare case where you don't just run and punch things. siangham: 1d6 piercing damage. There are options that deal the same damage and have special features. Tiger fork: 1d8 piercing damage, and it can be brought at cost. Actually, a bad trident. tonfa: 1d6 bludgeoning damage and block. Nine-section whip is strictly better unless you need a light weapon for some weird reason. Tri-point Double-Edged Sword: Sword is somewhat of a minsomer; This thing is more of a polearm. 1d10 cut damage, x3 crit, and reach. Despite being in the monk weapon group, it lacks the Monk property, so you don't use it with Flurry of Blows. unarmed strike: Tried and true. Your damage scales with level, you don't be disarmed, and you technically don't need your hands free to fight unarmed. Urumi: 1d8 cutting damage an impressive 18-20x2 critical. Distracting won't distract you much, because monks generally don't shine. Despite the fact that in the monk weapon but misses the Monk property, so you don't use it with Flurry or Blows. Wushu Dart: 1d3 piercing damage and throwable. There are many more interesting options. I recommend to have a If you have primary weapon due to the high damage and critical threat range, just be prepared to drop it once you have Ki Strike if you need to bypass DR/magic, or leave completely once you get improvement bonuses on your fists reliably. The sansetsukon can also be used to disarm, but if you stop using it as your primary weapon replace it with something lighter like a double chicken saber (for cutting damage). Also wear a double-chained kama for tripping and reaching. If you can afford it, make the ends of your double-chained kama cold iron and silver. Piercing damage is not that important, but wearing a Lungchuan Tamo or two just to be safe. Armor Monks can't use armor, so I recommend to someone in your party to throw Mage Armor at you. With hours/level duration even a low level wizard can cover you for the full adventuring day. If your pet Wizard is stingy with his spell slots, drop 1000 gold pieces to buy him a Pearl or Power 1 so you can both share Mage Armor from a slot. The +4 bonus from Mage Armor is enough to make the most of the AC gap between a Monk and typical front-line character as a Fighter. Magic Items Weapons Blade of the Sword-Saint (75,350 GP): 18-20 threat range and you use it with two hands. I'm not sure it's worth the cost, because Ki Stepping isn't very good, but sometimes you just really want to double-down on the far east feeling of a monk swinging a katana. Brawling (+1): Add your enhancement bonus to all your combat maneuvers. Conveniently, unarmed strikes are light bludgeoning weapons, so you could put this on an Amulet of Mighty Fists if you wanted to. Furyborn (+2): The best scenario for this weapon capability is for a monk to put it on an amulet of mighty fists. You have to attack with the same weapon a large number of times to make the possibility work, and monks are the best way to do that. Unfortunately, it is not clear whether the maximum bonus of +5 in total is +5 with other enhancement bonuses (such as your +5 unarmed strikes) or if it is +5 only from Furyborn. If it's the latter, the appeal of attacking with a +10 enhancement bonus is hard to ignore. Of course, you still face the issue that you have to kill enemies too quickly to step this up, in which case you sink a lot of money into a fortune that rarely matters. Ki Focus (+1): If you insist on using weapons, you should have this. Ki Stepping (+2): Basically Ki Focus, but you get to add half of your improvement bonus to relevant special skills. If you are planning to put a lot of money into an improvement bonus this might work, but I would wait until you get a ton of extra money before you even consider this possibility. Improving Your Wisdom Will do more for you for much less money. Wounding (+2): Because the bleeding piles with itself, Wounding works best if you have a large number of attacks with a single weapon, which is where monks specialize. Unfortunately, you usually get more damage Like Flaming because blood damage takes so long to cause significant damage. This can be great against enemies with huge pools of hit points, but even against those enemies you will do more damage by hitting them more on consecutive rounds. Wyroot (1,000/2,000/4,000): An easily overlooked method for repairing AI. Attacking a helpless target is an automatic direct hit, so you use this to edit AI from unconscious enemies. If you do non-lethal damage you beat the same goal repeatedly to fully repair your AI pool, then fill the weapon to charge later. I would only have the first layer of effect unless you are high level and built to emphasize critical hits.. Rings Protection: You have all the AC you get. Wands Cure Light Wounds: You don't use it, so buddy up to someone who can. Your hit points will go up and down very sharply on a normal day, so this will see a lot of use. Mage Armor: You don't use it, so buddy up to someone who can. It has a duration of one hour, which should last through several fights if you have time to throw it in advance. It offers as much AC as Bracers from Armor +4, which cost 16000gp. That's more than 23 wands to GP. If you go through 1 wand per level (I don't know how you would manage to do that) you will still save money. Wondrous Items Amulet or Mighty Fists: This allows you to add special weapon skills to your unarmed attacks. In particular, it doesn't require a +1 enhancement bonus like a weapon does, so you go straight to the fun stuff. The Impact Enhancement is tempting because it allows you to use a larger damage scale, but Paizo has ruled that unarmed assaults count as light weapons and Impact cannot be placed on light weapons. Instead, consider options such as shocking, speed (oh watch more attacks), or sacred. Belt of Physical Perfection: Get one early, and upgrade it often. Bracers of Armor: A wand from Mage Armor offers as much AC as +4 bands, and for the same cost you man a huge box of wands, and get the AC bonus at much lower level. Cloak of resistance: Too crucial to dispense with. Deliquescent Gloves: For just 8,000 GP you +1d6 add acid damage to attacks made with your hands. You have to use your hands for unarmed attacks to get the damage, but if you don't use a weapon, that's probably not a problem. These cost as much as a +2 weapon, so wait to get it until your Amulet of Mighty Fists is already +2-equivalent. Ioun Stone (Dusty Rose): At just 5000gp, a Dusty Rose Ioun Stone offers a cheaper boost to AC than upgrading your Ring of Protection from +1 to +2. The bonus is an insight bonus, making it easy to stack because insight bonuses ac are extremely rare. Headband of inspired wisdom: Get one The extra AC, ki pool, and boost to your saves, but your belt is more important. Monk's Belt: Your belt of physical perfection will be significantly more effective. Monk's Robe: Similar to the Monk's Belt, but you pretend to be 5 levels higher instead of 4 and it usually takes you uselessly Slot. Longarm Bracers: Functionally similar to the Lunge feat, but they only work 3 times a day and they impose no punishment on attack reels for your unarmed strikes. Lunge is too situational to warrant an achievement in my opinion, so these are a fantastic option for covering those rare situations when you need some extra range. Quick Runner's Shirt: Tragically, the errataed version is useless to us. Permanent spells enlarge person: large size brings a nice strength bonus, range, a significant increase in monk's unarmed strike damage, and a size bonus cmb/CMD. Magic Fang: For about 3000gp (2500 for permanent magic fang, 450 for an NPC spellcaster casting Permanency, and probably 90gp for that same spellcaster to actually cast Magic Fang) you permanent +1 to attack and damage. When your party members upgrade to +1 weapons, this is a great cheap option until you can afford +5 Greater Magic Fang. Magic Fang, Bigger: Assuming you find someone with Caster Level 20, permanent +5 to your unarmed strikes costs only 8550gp (7500 for permanent larger magic fang, 1000 for permanence by that same caster or 450 for someone else to do