

# *Level Up* Playtest #8

## Berserker

Welcome to the 8th *Level Up* playtest document. This playtest contains a candidate for the game's berserker class. The berserker is our proposed name for the barbarian, as we wanted the class to encompass a wider variety of rage-powered characters alongside the wilderness warriors the class has traditionally represented.

### **What this is**

This is a playtest document. We'd love you to try out the rules presented here, and then answer the follow-up survey in a few days.

### **What this is not**

This is NOT the final game. It's OK if you don't like elements of these rules; that's the purpose of a playtest document. Be sure to participate in the follow-up survey in a few days. All data, positive or negative is useful.

### **What we use this for**

Your survey responses help form the direction of the game as it goes through the development process.

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# Berserker

*The elite elven Queensguards, resplendent in their shining armor, wade into the fray, entering an uncontrolled berserker fury that will only end when every foe has been slain.*

*With a roar, the tiefling calls up the infernal power within himself, rage manifesting as unholy fires that dance along his arms and across his weapon. With both his massive double-headed axe and body aflame, he throws himself into the thickest part of the battle. The longer the fires burn, the higher they leap.*

*Laughing heartily, a dwarf swings their broadsword into their enemy's ribs, sending the man flying backwards. "Like I told you, human: everyone's shorter when they've been knocked on their backside."*

Berserkers are well-trained at tapping into that most primal of emotions: rage. In mastering its utility they also master a variety of techniques and preternatural abilities to bring a tactical edge to crushing their foes.

## Adherents of Rage

No matter what walk of life they come from, berserkers all shine brightest on the move. Far from lumbering brutes, the inner reserves they draw on sharpen senses and reflexes along with the cut of their blade.

While they are classically thought of as wandering nomads or members of remote villages, berserkers do not restrict themselves to such environs. A highway robbers' camp, a coliseum's sands, an elite strike force, and a tavern's common room brawl are all places that would appeal to their skills. No matter where they are berserkers cut imposing figures even in repose, causing many to give them a wide berth—a wolf is still a wolf, even if it runs with the watch dogs.

## A Life Lived Fully

Berserkers are terrors on the battlefield, wading into the fray where they rely on their reflexes and ability to shrug off massive damage to keep them alive for another day. It's a dangerous life, but one that a berserker lives to its utmost. Let it not be said that berserkers do not practice strategy, however. Their ability to control their adversary's place in the battlefield by stunning, frightening, or just plain knocking down enemies makes them invaluable at one's side and a nightmare to face.

## Creating a Berserker

How did you discover the rage inside you and what do you do with it? Were you raised to focus your anger and channel it in specific situations? Were you instead set upon by hungry wolves in the forest, forced to feats of strength and stamina in order to protect your younger sibling?

Consider your call to adventure. Is it merely a way to make money in the trade that suited you best? Did a primal patron call you to a destiny beyond the horizon? Perhaps the people you grew up around become fearful of your abilities.

## Class Features

**Hit Dice:** 1d12 per berserker level

**Armor:** Light armor, medium armor, shields

**Weapons:** Simple weapons, martial weapons

**Tools:** None

**Saving Throws:** Constitution, Strength

**Skills:** Choose four from Animal Handling, Athletics, Intimidation, Nature, Perception, Stealth, and Survival

## Equipment

You begin the game with 125 gold which you can spend on your character's starting weapons, armor, and adventuring gear. You

**Table: Berserker**

Level	Features	Rages	Rage Hit Points	Knacks Known	Maneuvers Known	Maneuver Degree
1st	Battle Defense, Exploration Knacks, Rage	2	+2	1	-	-
2nd	Danger Sense, Furious Critical, Martial Maneuvers	2	+2	1	2	1st
3rd	Versatile Exploration, Warrior Borne, Way of Wrath	3	+2	2	3	1st
4th	Ability Score Improvement	3	+2	2	3	1st
5th	Crushing Blows, Extra Attack	3	+2	2	4	2nd
6th	Primal Presence, Way Feature	4	+2	3	4	2nd
7th	Evasion	4	+2	3	5	2nd
8th	Ability Score Improvement	4	+2	4	5	2nd
9th	Battle Moxie	4	+3	4	6	3rd
10th	Way Feature	4	+3	5	6	3rd

can select your own gear or choose one of the following equipment packages. Also consult the Suggested Equipment section of your chosen Background.

- **Equipment Package #1 (cost 117 gp):** chain shirt, greataxe, a shortbow and quiver with 20 arrows, and an explorer's pack.
- **Equipment Package #2 (cost 107 gp):** hide armor, greatsword, 4 javelins, shield, a climber's kit, and an explorer's pack.

## Battle Defense

Starting at 1st level, you decide on how best to protect yourself on the battlefield—relying on barbaric might or encased in weighty armaments. Choose one of the following options.

## Juggernaut

You gain proficiency with heavy armor. In addition, your speed is not reduced by wearing heavy armor, and you do not count the weight of any worn armor when determining your carrying capacity.

## Unarmored Defense

While you are not wearing any armor, your armor class equals 10 + your Dexterity modifier + your Constitution modifier. You can use a shield and still gain this benefit.

In addition, your speed increases by 5 feet while you aren't wearing heavy armor. At 5th level, your speed increases by an additional 5 feet.

## Exploration Knacks

Whether in the ruins of an ancient civilization, the barren terrain of the

hinterlands, or the back alleys of a prosperous city, berserkers are adept at surviving and interacting with their environments.

At 1st level you gain a berserker exploration knack of your choice. Your exploration knacks are detailed at the end of the class description. The Knacks Known column of the Berserker table shows when you learn more exploration knacks.

## Rage

In battle, you give yourself over to the fury within. Starting at 1st level, on your turn you can use a bonus action to enter a rage.

While raging, you gain the following benefits:

- You have advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws.
- Every round that you remain in rage, at the start of your turn you gain a number of temporary hit points that increases as you gain levels as a berserker, as shown in the Rage Hit Points column of the Berserker table. Unlike normal temporary hit points, these temporary hit points stack each round until your rage ends.
- You have resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.
- If you are able to cast spells, you can't cast them or concentrate on them while raging.

Your rage lasts for 1 minute. It ends early if you are knocked unconscious. You can also end your rage on your turn as a bonus action.

Once you have raged the number of times shown for your berserker level in the Rages column of the Berserker table, you must finish a long rest before you can rage again.

## Danger Sense

At 2nd level, you gain an uncanny sense of when things nearby aren't as they should be, giving you an edge when you dodge away

from danger. You have advantage on Dexterity saving throws against effects that you can see, such as traps and spells. To gain this benefit, you can't be blinded, deafened, or incapacitated.

## Furious Critical

Also at 2nd level you learn to maximize the effects of your mightiest blows, empowering your critical hits. Choose one Furious Critical. At 4th level and every even berserker level after, you learn an additional Furious Critical.

Simple damage isn't all that a berserker can deal in combat. With just the right application of force, a berserker can inflict a number of conditions on their opponent. Unless otherwise noted, the DC to resist such effects is equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Constitution modifier. The attack must use a melee weapon that has the Heavy, Two-Handed, or Versatile property. Each Furious Critical can only be taken once and only one Furious Critical can be used per critical hit, unless otherwise stated.

## Dazzling Prowess

*Prerequisite: 5th level*

Your show of martial skill is so stunning that the target can only gape. When you score a critical hit, the target makes a Wisdom saving throw or is stunned until the end of your next turn.

## Deafening Blow

The force of the blow leaves the target with a ringing sensation in their ears, muffling the world around them. When you score a critical hit, the target is deafened for a number of rounds equal to half your proficiency bonus. If the target attempts to cast a spell it must make a Constitution saving throw in order to do so successfully. The DC equals 10 or half the damage the

creature took from the attack that inflicted the condition, whichever number is higher.

## Furious Momentum

Seizing on the fervor of a well-struck blow, you use your fury to fight all the harder. When you score a critical hit, the next melee weapon attack you make before the end of your next turn is a critical hit on a roll of 17–20. Once you have used this feature, you cannot do so again until you have finished a short rest. Alternatively, you can expend one use of Rage to use this feature. The effects of this Furious Critical can be combined with any other.

## Jockeying Blow

When you score a critical hit, you can move up to 30 feet. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks from the target of your attack. In addition, you gain advantage on any ability checks made to jump as part of this movement. The effects of this Furious Critical can be combined with any other.

## Knockback

The sheer strength behind your blow sends the target staggering backwards. When you score a critical hit, the target is pushed 15 feet away from you in a straight line. This Furious Critical can be taken a second time to increase this distance to 30 feet.

## Knockdown

With the right angle, your attack knocks the target sprawling. When you score a critical hit, the target makes a Strength saving throw or is knocked prone. This Furious Critical can be taken a second time to combine its effects with Knockback.

## Mighty Blow

*Prerequisite: 5th level*

You know how to hit so it hurts the most. You can roll one additional weapon damage die when determining the extra damage for a critical hit with a melee weapon attack. This Furious Critical can be taken again at 13th level and additionally at 17th level.

## Pinning Strike

The profound force of your blow breaks the environment, crumbling the stone beneath your target's feet or knocking shattered timber over their legs. When you score a critical hit, the target is grappled (escape DC equal to your Furious Critical DC).

## Relentless Attack

Your blows fall down mercilessly. When you score a critical hit, you may immediately make an additional melee weapon attack as a free action. If this subsequent attack is also a critical hit, this feature can be activated again for a number of times equal to half your proficiency bonus. No other Furious Critical can be activated for these additional attacks.

## Terrifying Force

You focus your rage, unleashing a fear-inspiring strike. When you score a critical hit, each creature you choose within 60 feet that can see you makes a Wisdom saving throw or is frightened of you for a number of rounds equal to half your proficiency bonus. The effects of this Furious Critical can be combined with any other.

## Martial Maneuvers

At 2nd level, you gain the ability to use combat maneuvers. You know two maneuvers of your choice, drawn from the following combat traditions: Adamant Mountain, Mirror's Glint, Rapid Current,

Spirited Steed, Tempered Iron, Tooth and Claw. You gain an exertion pool equal to twice your proficiency bonus. You regain any spent exertion at the end of a short or long rest. The Maneuvers Known column of the Berserker table shows when you learn more maneuvers of your choice, while the Maneuver Degree column shows the highest degree you can select maneuvers from at a given level.

Additionally, whenever you learn a new maneuver, you can choose one of the maneuvers you know and replace it with another maneuver of the same level or lower.

## Versatile Exploration

Beginning at 3rd level, whenever you learn a new berserker exploration knack or replace an existing one, you can choose from fighter exploration knacks.

## Warrior Borne

Also at 3rd level, the ways of combat that have come naturally to you bring new and unexpected lessons. Choose one of the following.

### Agitate

Many battles have taught you how to spot aggressive body language like a pursed eyebrow, tensed temple, or protruding vein, and you've mastered using these cues to unsettle others outside of combat. Make an Intimidation check opposed by the Insight check of a creature you can see and hear within 20 feet. On a success, you subtly press the creature to act out. What exactly the creature does—back away quickly, blurt out something compromising, draw a weapon, look towards a concealed or disguised companion, protectively touch something it is carrying—is at the GM's discretion.

Once you have used this feature, you cannot do so again until you finish a short or long rest.

## Fearsome Reputation

Word spreads of your prodigious strength or how terrifying you can be in battle.

Whenever you are in a settlement, at least one commoner approaches you with a modest gift or bribe and beseeches you to help settle a feud, move a large obstacle, or otherwise make use of your impressive might. In addition to their offering, they are eager to tell you about their home and neighbors.

## Imposing Prowess

When an ally you can see and hear fails a Deception or Persuasion check, you can use your reaction to support them with an intimidating display of strength or unsettling glower. Your ally rerolls the check, gaining an expertise die on the roll.

Once you have used this feature, you cannot do so again until you finish a long rest.

## Way of Wrath

For every berserker there is the spark of rage, ready to be fanned to inferno. The ways they use it however and how it came to be there can differ wildly. Some call upon their bloodline for inner strength, while others force it to a point of furious focus; many attribute it to the spirits that surround them. Still more gain their fury from a far more mundane source, such as betrayal or ill-treatment.

Many "civilized" scholars refer to these various sources collectively as "primal paths", but this can poison the well of discourse, painting individuals or even entire cultures as barbarous or culturally deficient because of these abilities. While many

berserkers revere, draw on, or emulate facets of nature such as ancestral spirits, elemental forces, and animals, these are not the fruits of lesser or superstitious minds.

At 3rd level, you choose a path that defines the source of your rage. Ways are detailed at the end of the class description. Your choice grants you features at 3rd level and again at 6th, 10th, and 14th level.

## Ability Score Improvement

When you reach 4th level, and again at 8th, 12th, 16th, and 19th level, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. As normal, you can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

## Crushing Blows

By 5th level your martial prowess is such that you are able to land attacks to best effect, dealing devastating amounts of damage. Your melee weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.

At 12th level, your melee weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 18–20.

## Extra Attack

Beginning at 5th level, you can attack twice, instead of once, whenever you take the Attack action on your turn.

## Primal Presence

At 6th level your methodology to battle seeps further into the way you interact with others—and how they interact with you. Choose one of the following:

## Forceful

People respond favorably to your vigor. You can always choose to use Constitution when making Persuasion checks.

In addition, in every settlement you visit you inspire a number of followers equal to your proficiency bonus. Your followers perform minor tasks to help you while you are there, feed you and your allies, carry your belongings to nearby destinations, share their mount animals, reveal some of their secrets to try and gain your favor, and ask you for help before turning to the authorities with a problem.

## Mighty

You turn your toughness into a tool when imposing upon others. You can always choose to use Constitution when making Intimidation checks.

In addition, when you enter into a tavern or other social gathering, you can make a DC 15 Intimidation check while loudly declaring that you are looking for something or someone. On a success, most of the people there look at and otherwise point out whoever they believe is the person you are looking for or the person most likely to know about what you are seeking.

## Scary

It's commonly thought that it's best not to ask you for too much clarification or detail. You can always choose to use Constitution when making Deception checks.

In addition, when you fail a Deception check against a creature, it makes a Wisdom saving throw against a DC equal to your passive Deception score. On a failure, it thinks twice about your dishonesty and your Deception check becomes a success.

## Evasion

By 7th level you can evade danger to a preternatural degree. When you make a Dexterity saving throw against an effect that deals half damage on a success, you take no damage on a success and half damage on a failure.

## Battle Moxie

At 9th level, your experiences in combat teach you more about how to live in the world. Choose one of the following.

### Provoking Attitude

You know how to piss people off. You can expend one use of Rage and choose a creature within 60 feet that can hear or see you. The creature makes a Charisma saving throw against a DC equal to 8 + your proficiency modifier + your Constitution modifier. On a failure, it makes or accepts a challenge. The nature of this challenge is at the GM's discretion but is usually a duel or opposed check: archery with Dexterity, arm-wrestling with Strength, competing with a gaming set, distance running with Constitution, wrestling with Athletics, and so on.

### Roaring Pause

When initiative is rolled you can expend one use of Rage to make an Intimidation check (DC 8 + number of creatures that rolled initiative) to briefly unveil the boundless fury within in a furious roar. On a success each creature stops what it is doing and can only make statements and a Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion check on its turn. On a success by 5 or more initiative is rerolled, and you choose a number of creatures equal to your Constitution modifier to gain advantage on their initiative roll.

## Takes One To Know One

You know another warrior when you see one. When you see a creature, you know if it is proficient with more than simple weapons or has access to combat maneuvers



## Exploration Knacks

When you gain access to a new exploration knack, choose one of the following.

### Lead the Pack

Your unfaltering actions inspire your teammates to greater efforts. You gain an expertise die on Athletics or Acrobatics checks made to climb, jump, run, and swim. When your party makes a group Athletics or Acrobatics check, you may apply the results of your roll to yourself and one ally. You can choose which ally to apply your result to after everyone has rolled, but must do so before the GM says whether you succeed or fail.

### Mark of the Wilderness

You have traveled far and seen much, and those around you can tell. You gain an expertise die on Intimidation checks. In addition, you may always choose to use Strength when rolling an Intimidation or Persuasion check.

### Path of Lean Winters

You gain advantage on saving throws made to resist the effects of cold weather as though you were wearing cold weather gear, but without the disadvantages in hot weather. Additionally, you can go without food for a number of days equal to 3 + twice your Constitution modifier (minimum 1) before taking a level of exhaustion.

### Path of Scorching Summers

You gain advantage on saving throws made to resist the effects of hot weather as though you were wearing hot weather gear, but without the disadvantages in cold weather. You also gain advantage on saving throws made to resist the effects of thirst.

## Sharpened Senses

Your time spent drawing on your rage has brought the world into sharp, relentless focus. You gain an expertise die on Investigation, Perception, or Survival checks made to follow a creature's trail.

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