

Acrobat

The Acrobat is not a character class, but a variant of *any* character class, most commonly Mystic or Thief although Magic User, Cleric or Fighter Acrobats are possible. The decision to be an Acrobat variant of any character class is made at character generation. Acrobats must possess both dexterity and strength scores of at least 13, and they attack, save and earn abilities, hit points, skills and weapon mastery slots according to their prime character class. Level advancement is simultaneous in both the primary and acrobat classes at the same time, and the required experience for each level is increased by 20%.

An Acrobat trains in physical conditioning to perform a range of feats such as tight rope walking, high jumping, long jumping, pole vaulting, tumbling *etc.* Through rapid motion and athletic prowess Acrobats learn to perform superhuman physical feats that are well beyond the capabilities of other characters.

Acrobatics can only be carried out by lightly armoured (scale mail or lighter) and lightly encumbered (under 500cn) character. An acrobat can wear whatever armour and use equipment as dictated by their prime character class, but it may not be possible to perform acrobatics while wearing heavier armour.

Acrobats have a number of advantages. Firstly, they gain the general skill Acrobatics, without having to use a general skill slot. Secondly, they can perform a range of feats according to their level, as described below.

Character Level	Title	Tightrope Walking (%)	Pole Vaulting	High Jumping	Long Jumping		Tumbling (%)	Falling/ Damage reduction
					Standing	Running		
1	Balancer	50	10'	5'	5'	10'	30	1d6
2	Tumbler	55	11'	5'	5'	11'	32	
3	Equilibrist	60	12'	5'	6'	12'	34	
4	Funambulist	63	13'	6'	6'	13'	36	2d6
5	Athlete	66	14'	6'	7'	14'	38	
6	Trapezist	69	15'	6'	7'	15'	40	
7	Aerialist	72	16'	7'	8'	16'	42	
8	Stuntman	75	17'	7'	8'	17'	44	3d6
9	Gymnast	78	18'	7'	9'	18'	46	
10		81	19'	7'	9'	19'	48	
11		84	20'	8'	10'	20'	50	
12		87	20'	8'	10'	21'	52	4d6
13		90	21'	8'	11'	22'	54	
14		93	21'	8'	11'	23'	56	
15		96	22'	8'	12'	24'	58	
16		99	22'	9'	12'	25'	60	5d6
17		102	23'	9'	13'	26'	62	
18		105	23'	9'	13'	27'	64	
19		108	24'	9'	14'	28'	66	
20		111	24'	9'	14'	29'	68	6d6
21		114	25'	10'	15'	30'	70	
22		117	25'	10'	15'	31'	72	
23		120	26'	10'	16'	32'	74	
24		123	26'	10'	16'	33'	76	7d6
25		126	27'	10'	17'	34'	78	
26		129	27'	11'	17'	35'	80	
27		132	28'	11'	18'	36'	82	
28		135	28'	11'	18'	37'	84	8d6
29		138	28'	11'	19'	38'	86	
30		141	29'	11'	19'	39'	88	
31		144	29'	12'	20'	40'	90	
32		147	29'	12'	20'	41'	92	9d6
33		150	30'	12'	21'	42'	94	
34		153	30'	12'	21'	43'	96	
35		156	30'	12'	22'	44'	98	
36		159	30'	13'	22'	45'	100	10d6

Level Title: An acrobat may add their acrobatic level title to their primary class level title. For example, an eighth level magic-user acrobat is a necromancer-stuntman, a fifth level thief-acrobat is a cutpurse-athlete, *etc.*

Tightrope Walking: Tightrope walking refers to balancing on ledges, ropes, beams, *etc.* and assumes that the character will use this means to cross from place to place. The skill allows ascent up a rope or beam of about a 45° angle (maximum) or descent at a slightly steeper angle, all while upright and with hands free. Use of this skill further assumes that the character will be traveling no more than half of their movement rate (or half of their encounter speed if they also wish to make an attack in the same round). If distance is greater than 60' then additional checks must be made. Moderate winds decrease chance of success by 10%, strong winds by 20%. In strong, gusty wind conditions there is always a 5% chance of failure. In non-windy conditions, a balance pole increases the chance of success by 10%. Failure to perform successfully means that the character falls to the area below, taking damage accordingly. Those characters who are not acrobats can walk a tightrope if they possess the acrobatics skill, but must make a check every 30' and can, at most, move at a quarter of their normal speed. .

Pole vaulting: This includes any jumping which employs a leverage device to assist the individual in gaining height from momentum; i.e., a teeter board or springboard might serve as well or better than a pole in some cases. This can allow the acrobat to get on top of or over obstacles or, at higher level, leap so far over an opponent that they cannot be attacked. A successful pole vault requires at least a 30' running start and a pole of at least 4' greater height than the vaulter. The pole is dropped when the vault occurs. The vaulter can land on his or her feet atop a surface of ½ less height than the maximum height of the pole vault if so desired, assuming such a surface exists. Otherwise, the vaulter lands, tumblerolls, and is prone for the rest of the round. Non-acrobats cannot usually effectively pole vault. No character can pole vault and either attack, cast a spell or activate a magical item during a single round.

Jumping: This includes all sorts of unassisted leaps - high jumping and long jumps (both from a standing and a running start) being included. All jumps occur in the movement phase of a round, and if the acrobat has moved less than their combat speed (including running to make a jump but not the distance of the jump) they may still attack as normal in the same round.

High jumping: This requires at least a 20' running start. The high jumper clears the obstacle in a near horizontal position but lands on his or her feet. If some elevated step, or a series of such steps, enables the character to maintain rapid motion, he or she can then high jump from such an elevated step just as if doing so normally. The jumper can opt to land atop a higher surface. This surface must be no more than 4' above the level from which the jump is made, or 2' under the maximum height for normal high jumping, whichever is the greater. In either case, the acrobat lands on his or her feet at the end of their movement phase. Non-acrobats can high jump about 3' without difficulty.

Long Jumping: A running long jump requires a run of at least 20'. In standing jumps, the acrobat can leap forward up to the maximum distance, or backward up to half the maximum distance, in order to attack or avoid being in attack range, if this is deemed possible by the DM. All jumps assume the character will land on his or her feet. If the character wishes to leap in an extended position, 2' of additional distance can be gained, but the character will then land prone and remain prone for the rest of the round. A 3' extension can be attempted, but this has a 25% chance of failure and no further actions will be possible that round; a 4' extension has a 50% chance of failure, an extension of 5' has a 75% chance of failure. Non-acrobats can perform a standing long jump of up to 4' in distance and a running long jump of up to 8'.

Tumbling: This includes leaps, somersaults, cartwheels, leaps from ropes *etc.* Any of a range of manoeuvres or moves are covered by this ability. This has multiple practical uses. Firstly, a tumbling acrobat can, upon making a skill check, cross rough terrain at either running or combat speed with no penalty to movement rate. Secondly, while moving at combat speed an acrobat may use this skill to roll through an enemies legs, leap over opponents to attack from behind, *etc.* The chance to manoeuvre thus during combat is modified according to the level or HD of the acrobat and any enemies present. Per level or HD that the acrobat is above their foe, add a 5%, and per level below subtract 5%, with each subsequent foe within 5' of the manoeuvre also penalising the attempt by 30%. A successful attempt will (if there is room) allow the acrobat to disengage a foe with no penalty or risk of attack, or allow an acrobat to manoeuvre between locations within a melee without provoking an attack. In a round in which an Acrobat tumbles to attempt to disengage foes, he may make no attack, but gains a bonus to armour class of 1 per 5% he has made his disengage check by whether this check is successful or not. For example, an Acrobat who has a 70% chance to tumble who rolls 20% gains a -10 bonus to armour class in that round, but cannot make any attacks, regardless of whether they have successfully tumbled out of the fight that round.

Falling/Damage Reduction: Acrobats are able to reduce the damage incurred due to falling, this ability improving with experience. Whenever an acrobat takes falling damage, roll the number of d6 indicated by their level, and remove that amount from the damage taken. It is possible to reduce the amount of damage suffered in a fall to zero using this ability.

When subject to an area of effect damage spell, (such as for example *fireball* or *lightning bolt*) or other effect (such as dragon breath) an Acrobat who has yet to act may choose to evade instead of taking any offensive action that round.

To do so, they leap or tumble to the edge of the area where damage is suffered, and a successful check will reduce damage by the amount stated. Note that while this can be an effective means of reducing damage taken it is not without risk. For example, an acrobat on a ledge might leap out of the area of a dragons breath, but may still have to deal with falling from the ledge.

Acknowledgements

This variant of the Acrobat class is based both on the Mystic Acrobat in the D&D Masters Set, by Frank Mentzer, and the Thief Acrobat in the AD&D Unearthed Arcana, by Gary Gygax. I've tried to bring the best of both to this RC/BECMI compatible class variant.