

Echelon

New Talents

<http://www.echelond20.org/>

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1 Introduction

Be aware that “balance” is a nebulous thing. I aim for “balance of awesome. If you can’t pick between two talents because they’re both so awesome?

That is the balance I aim for.

I want any *obvious* talent choices to be driven by how the talent fits the character, not by perceived power. I want players to go “ooh, I want to be able to do *that!*”, not “hmm, this gives me a little better Armor Class and doesn’t cost me much...”.

2 Cornerstone Talents

At a high level, creating a character in Echelon is much like creating a character in other games. Come up with a character concept and fill in the mechanics to model the character concept.

2.1 Steeped in Magic

Steeped in Magic and Caster Training stack, to a maximum Caster Training Bonus equal to half your level rounded up.

Incomplete, wants some secondary effects. Secondary effects should not stack with or overlap Caster Training. I'm leaning toward some kind of innate magic, starting with the ability to *detect magic*.

Tier	Effect
Basic	+1 Caster Training Bonus
Expert	+2 Caster Training Bonus
Heroic	+3 Caster Training Bonus
Master	+4 Caster Training Bonus
Champion	+5 Caster Training Bonus
Legendary	+6 Caster Training Bonus
Epic	+7 Caster Training Bonus

2.2 Warrior Born

Warrior Born and Martial Training stack, to a maximum Martial Training Bonus equal to half your level rounded up.

Incomplete, wants some secondary effects. Secondary effects should not stack with or overlap Martial Training.

Tier	Effect
Basic	+1 Martial Training Bonus
Expert	+2 Martial Training Bonus
Heroic	+3 Martial Training Bonus
Master	+4 Martial Training Bonus
Champion	+5 Martial Training Bonus
Legendary	+6 Martial Training Bonus
Epic	+7 Martial Training Bonus

3 Capstone Talents

Capstone talents mark achievement or alignment to archetype. Where common talents may be taken by many characters and creatures who share abilities, capstone talents should generally focus on abilities unique to characters with the capstone talents.

These talents fill a role somewhat similar to prestige classes in the RSRD, and in fact may be derived from these classes.

4 Structural Talents

These are common talents that directly affect character scores.

4.1 Caster Training

Steeped in Magic and Caster Training stack, to a maximum Caster Training Bonus equal to half your level rounded up.

Incomplete, wants some secondary effects. Secondary effects should not stack with or overlap Steeped in Magic cornerstone.

Tier	Effect
Basic	+1 Caster Training Bonus
Expert	+2 Caster Training Bonus
Heroic	+3 Caster Training Bonus
Master	+4 Caster Training Bonus
Champion	+5 Caster Training Bonus
Legendary	+6 Caster Training Bonus
Epic	+7 Caster Training Bonus

4.2 Great Fortitude

Tier	Effect
Basic	+2 base Fortitude save, +2 base hit points, Endurance
Expert	+4 base Fortitude save, +4 base hit points, Diehard
Heroic	+6 base Fortitude save, +6 base hit points, Immune to Natural Disease
Master	+8 base Fortitude save, +8 base hit points, Immune to Natural Poison
Champion	+10 base Fortitude save, +10 base hit points, Immune to Unnatural Disease
Legendary	+12 base Fortitude save, +12 base hit points, Immune to Unnatural Poison
Epic	+14 base Fortitude save, +14 base hit points, Immune to Negative Energy

4.2.1 Endurance

As RSRD feat.

4.2.2 Diehard

As RSRD feat.

4.3 Iron Will

Incomplete, needs secondary benefits.

Tier	Effect
Basic	+2 base Will save, +1 base magic point
Expert	+4 base Will save, +2 base magic points
Heroic	+6 base Will save, +3 base magic points
Master	+8 base Will save, +4 base magic points
Champion	+10 base Will save, +5 base magic points
Legendary	+12 base Will save, +6 base magic points
Epic	+14 base Will save, +7 base magic points

4.4 Lightning Reflexes

Incomplete, needs Champion-Epic secondary benefits.

Tier	Effect
Basic	+2 base Reflex save, +5' movement, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative
Expert	+4 base Reflex save, +10' movement, Uncanny Dodge
Heroic	+6 base Reflex save, +20' movement, Evasion
Master	+8 base Reflex save, +30' movement, Abundant Step
Champion	+10 base Reflex save, +40' movement
Legendary	+12 base Reflex save, +50' movement
Epic	+14 base Reflex save, +60' movement

4.4.1 Combat Reflexes

May apply interrupts (such as attacks of opportunity) while flatfooted.

4.4.2 Improved Initiative

+4 to all Initiative checks.

4.4.3 Uncanny Dodge

Opponents do not get advantage against you when attacking by surprise or when invisible. You cannot use this ability when helpless or otherwise unable to move.

4.4.4 Evasion

When you make a successful Reflex save against an area effect that normally does half damage on a successful save, you instead take no damage. You cannot use this ability when helpless or otherwise unable to move.

4.4.5 Abundant Step

You can slip magically between spaces, as if using the spell *dimension door* with a Caster Level of 10.

(As RSRD Monk 12 ability.)

No additional attacks of opportunity but may take a broader range of actions.

I originally included improved evasion, but at +6 or +8 over regular base Reflex I figured it wouldn't come up enough to be worth a high-tier slot.

4.5 Martial Training

Warrior Born and Martial Training stack, to a maximum Martial Training Bonus equal to half your level rounded up.

Incomplete, wants some secondary effects. Secondary effects should not stack with or overlap Warrior Born cornerstone.

Tier	Effect
Basic	+1 Martial Training Bonus
Expert	+2 Martial Training Bonus
Heroic	+3 Martial Training Bonus
Master	+4 Martial Training Bonus
Champion	+5 Martial Training Bonus
Legendary	+6 Martial Training Bonus
Epic	+7 Martial Training Bonus

5 Common Talents

Common talents are gained fairly freely with the slots gained at each level. They do not have prerequisites, instead including what might have been prerequisites in RSRD at lower tiers.

5.1 Armor Proficiency

Tier	Effect
Free	You are proficient with light armor.
Basic	You are proficient with medium armor. You can sleep in light armor without suffering fatigue.
Expert	ACP improves by 2. You are proficient with heavy armor. You can sleep in medium armor without suffering fatigue. Base movement in medium armor is no longer automatically reduced.
Heroic	ACP improves by 4. You have +2 Spell Resistance when wearing light armor or better. You are proficient with superheavy armor. You can sleep in heavy armor without suffering fatigue. Base movement in heavy armor is no longer automatically reduced. You gain 25% fortification while not helpless when wearing light armor or heavier.
Master	ACP improves by 6. You have +4 Spell Resistance when wearing medium armor or better. You gain 50% fortification while not helpless when wearing medium armor or better. You can sleep in superheavy armor without suffering fatigue.
Champion	ACP improves by 8. You have +6 Spell Resistance when wearing heavy armor or better. You gain 75% fortification while not helpless when wearing heavy armor or better. Base movement in superheavy armor is no longer automatically reduced.
Legendary	ACP improves by 10. You have +8 Spell Resistance when wearing superheavy armor or better. You gain 100% fortification while not helpless when wearing superheavy armor or better.

Epic

5.1.1 Armor Usage Summary

The table below summarizes the benefits described above.

(Armor categories abbreviated for space; L = Light, M = Medium, H = Heavy, SH = Superheavy.)

Tier	Prof.	ACP	SR	Move	Sleep	Fort'n
Free	Light					
Basic	Medium			Light	Light	
Expert	Heavy	+2		Medium	Medium	
Heroic	Superheavy	+4	+2/L+	Heavy	Heavy	25%/L+
Master		+6	+4/M+	SH	SH	50%/M+
Champion		+8	+6/H+			75%/H+
Legendary		+10	+8/SH+			100%/SH+

5.1.2 Notes

GreyKnight [wrote up some talents for Echelon](#) and asked for my thoughts on them. This talent was originally pretty boring (better AC, ACP, etc., increasing monotonically), but his [revised version](#) was rather better. Fortification seems a natural addition and much better. I kept (and in fact increased) the ACP reductions and added a 'superheavy' armor group.

This one looks more or less entirely mundane. Fortification can be explained by knowing how to best use your armor to protect your vulnerable areas and prevent critical attacks and sneak attacks.

Reclassifying chain shirt as medium armor fixes a peeve I've held for quite a while. Very few characters *wouldn't* take a chain shirt if they want to keep to light armor (for mobility or proficiency reasons); an item that is such a must-have may be too good for the cost.

GreyKnight's original suggestion for Spell Resistance was written so it had a base value per tier, plus armor bonus. While I'm okay with armor providing SR, the related calculations for it seemed awkward. But then, SR is kind of weird in D&D anyway.

I'm still pondering how to best approach SR (one option is to dump it entirely and make everything a saving throw). My current leading option is to change the SR into a bonus to AC against attacks that are spells or spell-like abilities and saves against spells and spell-like abilities. In D&D 3.x terms I would probably reduce a creature's SR to $(SR-CR)/2$.

5.2 Combat Mobility

Should probably look to *Iron Heroes* for this one, they've got some lovely Mastery feats that would fit.

Tier	Effect
Basic	Mobility
Expert	Spring Attack
Heroic	Whirlwind Attack
Master	
Champion	
Legendary	
Epic	

5.2.1 Mobility

Per RSRD feat: +4 dodge bonus to Armor Class against attacks of opportunity provoked by movement.

5.2.2 Spring Attack

Per RSRD feat: may move before and after your other action, to a limit of your movement rate. You do not provoke an attack of opportunity from your opponent.

5.2.3 Whirlwind Attack

As a double action you can make one attack at full bonus against each opponent within reach.

5.3 Shield Proficiency

Makes heavy use of Dexterity pool. No ability scores means no Dexterity score means no Dexterity pool. Reconfigure.

Tier	Effect
Free	Proficiency with light shields.
Basic	Proficiency with heavy shields, tower shields, and shield bashing; Shield Wall.
Expert	Improved Shield Wall, Deflect Arrows
Heroic	Aegis, Shield Protector
Master	Greater Aegis
Champion	Immediate Aegis
Legendary	Spell Turning
Epic	

5.3.1 Shield Wall

When adjacent to another character using a shield and you both have Expert Shield Proficiency you may form a shield wall. Choose a direction to defend against perpendicular to your line, and as long as you stay adjacent to each other you gain both shield bonuses against attacks from that direction. When taking part in a shield wall you lose your shield bonus against attacks from other directions. For instance, if two adjacent characters use large shields and have Expert Shield Proficiency they enjoy a +4 shield bonus attacks from one direction. If the characters stand in a line running east-west they can apply this bonus to attacks from one of the north or south directions (chosen together each round). This may be applied for each adjacent character standing in line (three suitable characters with large shields could have +4, +6, and +4 bonuses respectively).

5.3.2 Improved Shield Wall

As Shield Wall above, but you gain bonuses from and grant bonuses to all adjacent shield wall members that can be 'exposed'. This means that if your shield wall is actually in a square, those with Expert Shield Proficiency on the 'corners' still count as members of the shield wall from both the 'front' and the 'side', granting and receiving bonuses normally. Members on the 'inside' of the shield wall do not count as exposed and thus are not included in the shield wall.

5.3.3 Deflect Arrows

When struck by a ranged attack you may spend from your Dexterity pool and make an attack roll (DC equal to the attack roll that struck you) to negate the attack. This does not apply to exceptional ranged attacks such as giant-thrown boulders. You may not use Deflect Arrows while maintaining an aegis, below.

5.3.4 Aegis

If you are free to use a shield and not maintaining an aegis, you may as an immediate action spend from your Dexterity pool (1/1 per round) to activate a gaze reflection effect that allows you to use your BAB + Shield Bonus in place of your normal saving throw to resist or avoid gaze attacks and rays (such as *ray of enfeeblement* or *disintegrate*). While maintaining an aegis you may not gain other benefits from your shield, including the shield bonus, Shield Wall, Shield Protector, or Deflect Arrows abilities. As an immediate action you may abandon your aegis to use one of these other abilities.

5.3.5 Shield Protector

All adjacent allies (even outside or ineligible for a shield wall) may gain the benefit of your shield bonus in place of their own, if any.

5.3.6 Greater Aegis

You may spend from your Dexterity pool (4/1 per round) to initiate and maintain a *wall of force* (based on your shield direction and facing, choose a direction) or *globe of invulnerability* (centered on your shield). You still gain the benefit of the aegis ability (protection against gaze attacks) while this effect is present (all creatures protected by the *wall of force* or *globe of invulnerability* also benefit), but gain no other benefit from your shield.

5.3.7 Immediate Aegis

If you are not currently maintaining an aegis, you may now spend from your Dexterity pool (4/1 per round) to activate it as an immediate action. Maintaining the aegis is now a swift action rather than a single action. You may choose to spend from your Dexterity pool (2/-) to activate your aegis as an immediate action and the effect lasts only until your next turn.

5.3.8 Spell Turning

If you are free to use your shield, as an immediate action you may spend from your Dexterity pool (4/-) to use a spell turning effect against a chosen spell that targets you. If you are maintaining an aegis you may choose to abandon it (ending the effect immediately) in order to use this ability.

5.4 Two-Weapon Fighting

I'm reasonably happy with the Basic, Expert, and Heroic tiers (though Rend seems a little weak), Legendary looks okay now, but Master could use a bit of awesome and Champion doesn't have *anything* yet.

Tier	Effect
Basic	Two-Weapon Defense
Expert	Extra Attack
Heroic	Rend
Master	Improved Extra Attacks
Champion	
Legendary	Web of Steel, Swift Extra Attack
Epic	

5.4.1 Two-Weapon Defense

When fighting with a melee weapon in each hand, you may choose to use one weapon defensively. You gain a +1 shield bonus and any other benefits available from that weapon.

5.4.2 Extra Attack

Once per round when fighting with a melee weapon in each hand, as a single action you may make an attack with each weapon at full attack bonus.

5.4.3 Rend

When fighting with a melee weapon in each hand, if you successfully hit a single target with both weapons in a single action, you may viciously rend the target. Damage for both weapons is doubled.

5.4.4 Improved Extra Attacks

Twice per round when fighting with a melee weapon in each hand as single actions you may make an attack with each weapon at full attack bonus.

5.4.5 Web of Steel

When fighting with a melee weapon in each hand, you may spend from your Dexterity pool (4/1 per round) to activate a *blade barrier* doing 20d6 damage, as the spell. Activating and maintaining this effect requires an action each round. Unlike the spell the web of steel is limited to twice your reach but may be moved or reoriented as a standard action (part of movement, sweeping the area between the original position and the new position — all creatures in the area of effect may make a Reflex save for half damage). The web of steel also provides cover (+4 AC, +2 bonus to Reflex saves) against attacks made through it.

Copied from the website. We no longer have ability scores, so the pool mechanic will need to be rejigged.

5.4.6 **Swift Extra Attack**

Once per round when fighting with a melee weapon in each hand, as a swift action you may make an attack with each weapon at full attack bonus.

6 Skill Talents

These are common talents that replace skills as presented in the RSRD.

Basic tier almost always gives +4 to all checks with the skill and you are considered 'Trained' in the skill, which may have additional effects.

Master tier almost always gives Skill Master, which allows you to always Take 10 on the skill checks, even under pressure.

6.1 Spot

Makes heavy use of Wisdom pool. No ability scores means no Wisdom score means no Wisdom pool. Reconfigure.

Tier	Effect
Basic	+4 to Spot checks, Trained
Expert	Eyes in the Back of Your Head, Sharp Eyes
Heroic	Piercing Gaze, See Invisible
Master	Skill Mastery, Clairvoyance
Champion	Far Sight, Shoot Around Corners
Legendary	True Seeing

6.1.1 Eyes in the Back of your Head

You are unusually alert and are never considered to be distracted (the -5 penalty to Spot checks usually suffered when distracted does not apply to you).

You can no longer be flanked if you are aware of and can see the flanking opponents (you may still be flanked by *invisible* opponents and those you are not aware of). Sneak attacks may only be made against you by those with Sneak Attack at a higher tier than you have Spot.

6.1.2 Sharp Eyes

Any range penalties you would take on Spot checks are halved (-1 per 20 feet instead of -1 per 10 feet).

6.1.3 Piercing Gaze

Your vision can reduce concealment penalties. Miss chance due to concealment or full concealment is halved.

6.1.4 See Invisible

You can spend two points from your Wisdom pool to *see invisibility*, as the spell, for ten minutes, and maintain it for one point of Wisdom pool per ten minutes.

6.1.5 Skill Mastery

You may always Take 10 on Spot checks, even under pressure.

6.1.6 Clairvoyance

You may spend two points from your Wisdom pool to activate *clairvoyance*, as the spell, for one minute, and maintain it for one point of Wisdom pool per minute.

6.1.7 Far Sight

Any range penalties you would take on Spot checks are further reduced (-1 per 50 feet instead of -1 per 10 feet).

6.1.8 Shoot Around Corners

Your opponents gain only half the cover bonus they normally would against your attacks. This affects cover and improved cover (situations where the opponent normally gets double bonuses and the effect of improved evasion), but not total cover.

6.1.9 True Seeing

You may spend four points from your Wisdom pool to activate *true seeing* for yourself for one minute, and maintain it for one point of Wisdom pool per minute.

7 Templates

7.1 Template

Tier	Effect
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Basic	
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Expert	
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Heroic	
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Master	
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Champion	
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Legendary	
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