

Highlander Prestige Class

There are rumors that powerful swordsmen roam through the land. The rumors continue to say that these men sever the heads of their enemies and absorb their life force. These rumors are true. These men are the highlanders, masters of the sword and feared by friend and foe alike.

Classes: Paladins, fighters, and rangers, above all else, make for excellent highlanders. Barbarians, although attracted to the energy absorption trait of highlanders, tend to shy away from the structured battle code. Monks, who are already acquainted with structured lives, find that this class can be beneficial to them. Bards and rogues are used to sneaking around in battle, and thus do not even take a second glance at the class. Clerics view this class differently depending on which god they worship. Druids, sorcerers, and wizards shun this class and rely on their magic to aid them, although there are rare ones that take this class to gain some combat ability. Elves are the best-suited race for highlanders, since swordplay is in their blood. Humans, as always, easily adapt to this class, as well as half elves. Half-orcs are attracted to the raw power this class promises. Halflings, dwarves, and gnomes are not attracted to the highlander class merely because of their size, and are rare to find.

Hit Die: 1d10

Requirements

To qualify to become a highlander, one must fulfill all of the following criteria.

1. Base Attack Bonus: +6
2. Alignment: Any lawful
3. Feats: Dodge, Mobility, Expertise
4. Must be proficient with at least one type of sword (except Two-Bladed Sword)
5. Highlanders always encounter “to-death-and-back” experiences before becoming a highlander. A highlander candidate must gain all of the other highlander requirements before this one. After doing so his next blow that brings him to –10 hit points (death equivalent) places him in a coma for 3 days and at –9 hit points, at the very edge of death. If during this time he does not get killed again, by sword or spell, he will emerge with full hit points at the end of the 3rd day and a highlander. If he is killed during this coma period he is dead permanently. He can not be raise, resurrected, or wished back to life.

Class Skills

The Highlander's class skills are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Gather Info (Cha), Heal (Wis), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), And Tumble (Dex).

Skill Points Per Level: 4 + Int Modifier

Game Rule Information

Dexterity provides the lightly armored highlander with a better armor class. Strength adds to the highlander's damage rolls. Charisma and Wisdom are equally important, as they appear in many of the class skills.

The Highlander

<i>Level</i>	<i>B.A.B.</i>	<i>Fort</i>	<i>Ref</i>	<i>Will</i>	<i>Special</i>
1	+ 1	+ 2	+ 0	+ 0	Highlander Sword, Energy Absorption
2	+ 2	+ 3	+ 0	+ 0	Honed Strike (+1)
3	+ 3	+ 3	+ 1	+ 1	Combat Reflexes
4	+ 4	+ 4	+ 1	+ 1	Honed Strike (+2)
5	+ 5	+ 4	+ 1	+ 1	-----
6	+ 6	+ 5	+ 2	+ 2	Honed Strike (+2)
7	+ 7	+ 5	+ 2	+ 2	Familiar Face
8	+ 8	+ 6	+ 2	+ 2	Honed Strike (+4)
9	+ 9	+ 6	+ 3	+ 3	Timeless Body
10	+ 10	+ 7	+ 3	+ 3	Honed Strike (+5)

Class Features

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Highlanders are proficient with all simple and martial weapons. They are proficient with light armor, but not with shields. Note that armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather (or studded leather masterwork) apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pocket, and Tumble. Swim checks also suffer a –1 penalty for every 5 pounds of armor and equipment carried.

Highlander Sword: When a new highlander is initiated, he is given his own personal sword with his last name inscribed on the hilt. If the new highlander doesn't have a last name, the highlander guild gives him one. This sword is his and his alone. If a highlander loses his sword, he must go the highlander guild and request that a new one is made for him. This costs 2,000 XP. At his initiation, the highlander is read the highlander code (described below).

Energy Absorption: When a highlander severs the head of any humanoid he gains temporary bonuses. However, he must sever the head with his personal sword. The highlander gets a +2 bonus to Constitution, resulting in temporary hit points (1d6 per highlander level). The highlander also gains a temporary +1 bonus to attack rolls. These effects stack for each head the highlander severs within an encounter, and the effects last for one hour after the encounter is over. The bonuses to attack rolls stack with magical effects and/or feats (such as Weapon Focus). The absorption of energy happens instantaneously and doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity. The head of the victim must be severed in combat, not when they are dead or unconscious. A highlander who severs another highlander's head in a duel gets +3 to his Constitution score and 1d10 worth of temporary hit points. Any highlander who has his head severed may not be resurrected in any way, shape, or form.

Honed Strike: Highlanders become very accustomed to their sword as they use it repeatedly over time. Highlanders get a +1 bonus damage rolls when using their personal sword. This bonus increases by one for every two highlander levels. This bonus stacks with the highlander's strength bonus.

Combat Reflexes: At third level, the highlander gains the combat reflexes feat for free.

Familiar Face: Over time, the highlander fights many honorable and fearsome enemies. Highlanders never forget a face, and how it fights, or how it acts. Whenever a highlander fights the same enemy more than once (in different encounters), the highlander gets a +2 bonus to attack rolls against that enemy. Also, whenever a highlander communicates and interacts with the same person on two or more separate accounts, he gets a +2 competence bonus to Diplomacy, Gather Information, and Intimidate checks.

Timeless Body: At 9th level, the highlander has discovered how to preserve himself for the future. Starting at 9th level, the highlander stops aging physically, and cannot be killed by any magical or non-magical diseases. Also, the highlander's lifespan is doubled (not immortality), varying by race. For example, a highlander elf, which normally lives for up to 700 years, now can live up to 1,400 years. The highlander still dies when he reaches -10 HP, is starved or dehydrated, is decapitated, or reaches a venerable age.

Highlander Code: Highlanders live by certain combat codes. Highlanders, whether or not they are facing another highlander, cannot willingly or consciously fight on hallowed or sacred grounds (churches, temples, graveyards, etc.). Churches devoted to evil gods are still considered sacred grounds. When two highlanders are dueling, only those two may fight one another. Highlanders may not take hostages or innocent

bystanders into highlander duels to stop the fight. Duels between two highlanders must either end in mercy or death. A highlander, who is defeated and mercifully let go, must leave and wait for a later date to fight with that same highlander again. Highlanders who were defeated and mercifully released may not attack the highlander they lost to within 24 hours after the encounter. Highlanders may not use another highlander's personal sword. Highlanders also may not use any spells or magical items that enhance their physical abilities because of a belief that true strength lies within them. Any highlander who breaks these rules loses the energy absorption ability, the timeless body trait, and their sword disintegrates. They may not gain any more levels as a highlander. Any non-highlander who tries to interfere with a highlander duel will be attacked by the dueling partners until that person either flees or is killed, depending on the highlander's alignment. After this time either highlander may call the duel a draw to fight another day if he was injured by an outside source. If a highlander purposefully has a non-highlander interfere with a highlander fight or has turned the other cheek to the interference he will lose his abilities as above.

Highlander Sword: Damage- 1d8, Critical- 19-20/Vorpal, Weight- 5 lb., Type- Slashing

Note: The highlander sword is enchanted with vorpal when it is issued. The sword may not be enhanced with any other sword enchantments such as keen, dancing, etc. All attempts to further enchant a highlander's sword automatically fail, and all attempts to remove the vorpal enchantment from a highlander sword automatically fail.