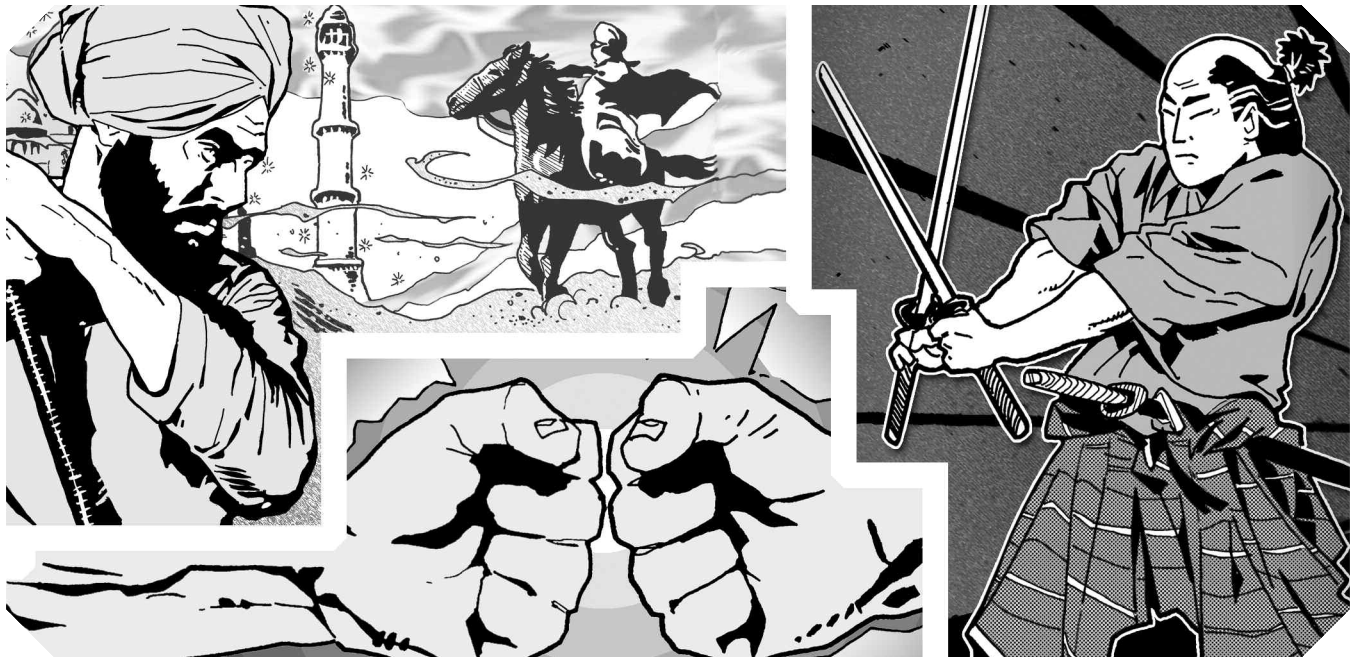


**GURPS**

Fourth Edition

# MARTIAL ARTS

**YRTH FIGHTING STYLES™**



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*This is the century of the soldier.*

*– Fulvio Testi, 1641*

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# INTRODUCTION

Caithnesser knights riding out to repel the orcish hordes. Sahudese samurai deciding the fates of entire noble houses in single combat. Megalan soldiers hefting crossbows or halberds and awaiting battle in the Dragon Emperor's name. The world of **GURPS Banestorm** is one of conflict and heroism, of dozens of peoples and cultures waging war for land, for their beliefs, or for survival.

**GURPS Martial Arts: Yrth Fighting Styles** takes you into this world, detailing the skills, secrets, and styles of the many fighting men and women of Ytarria. In this book, you'll walk the sand of the Arena at Megalos, cheer with the crowds at the Great Games in al-Wazif . . . even do battle *underwater* alongside sea elves and mermen.

Read on, and prepare to take your place among the heroes of Yrth's growing history . . .

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

This work draws on many of the historical and fantastic styles from **GURPS Martial Arts** and fleshes them out for **GURPS Banestorm** campaigns. It discusses their place in Ytarrian society and offers new character templates and lenses. It also provides over 20 new styles unique to Yrth, including styles for shapeshifters and aquatic races.

This supplement is designed to be used alongside **Banestorm** and **Martial Arts**, and refers to a great deal of material in both books. Additionally, several other **GURPS** titles may be relevant or useful. **GURPS Fantasy** discusses fantasy warriors in some detail. **GURPS Martial Arts: Gladiators** provides background material and several new styles useful for games set in the Great Arena at Megalos. *Pyramid* #3/26: *Underwater Adventures* details rules for underwater activity, and is strongly recommended for the GM who wants adventures set in Yrth's oceans (pp. 21-22).

**GURPS Powers** is invaluable for the GM who wishes to include divine, magical, and shamanic warriors with exotic powers in his campaign. **GURPS Power-Ups 1: Imbuements** introduces Imbue, a new advantage ideal for magical warriors in a high-fantasy game. **GURPS Power-Ups 2: Perks** offers several combat perks not given in **Martial Arts**.

**GURPS Thaumatology: Magical Styles** presents mages' repertoires and methods with a "martial-arts style" treatment, and provides some more perks for spellcasting martial artists. This is particularly relevant for Imperial Legion Field-Wizard Training (p. 18), which is more of a magical style than it is a martial art.

## PUBLICATION HISTORY

Some of the material in this book first appeared in the article "Martial Arts of Yrth" in *Pyramid* magazine, Volume 2, and has been revised to **GURPS Fourth Edition** and considerably expanded. Sylvan War Lore appeared in **Martial Arts** for **GURPS Third Edition**, and has likewise been updated. The perks Blocking Spell Mastery and Staff Attunement first

appeared **Thaumatology: Magical Styles**; Combat Vaulting, in **Power-Ups 2**. The underwater combat rules presented on p. 22 are summarized from the article "GURPS Fathom Five," in *Pyramid* #3/26: *Underwater Adventures*.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Thomas Moore is a lifelong gamer and passionate geek. He first played a roleplaying game in 1986, and first played **GURPS** with his brother in 1990. He has been published in *Pyramid* magazine several times, but this is his first supplement for Steve Jackson Games. Australian by birth, David lives in Reading, Berkshire, in the United Kingdom with his wife, Tamsin. You're glad you met him.

## About GURPS

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*Errata.* Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata pages for all **GURPS** releases, including this book, are available on our website – see above.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition**. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

## Tredroy

If Cardiel is a melting pot, the City of Three Laws is even more so. The most culturally, racially, and religiously mixed city in the world, Tredroy offers a dizzying array of weapons and traditions. It is home to a number of boxing, wrestling, and knife-fighting contests, and to the largest Alquetalle (p. 12) tournament in the world, held every August in East Tredroy.

The Assassins' Guild (*Banestorm*, p. 147) teaches no single assassination technique. Rather, it encourages its masters to study and train in a range of styles to suit different missions. An economic dagger style (use Fairbairn Close Combat Training, with the optional skills Garrote and Poisons/TL3) is common, but assassins may use any style suitable for their calling. Chinese assassins often know Chin Na, and assassin-mages use a style similar to Death Fist.

Tredroy's Chinatown, on the Street of Artificers (*Banestorm*, p. 148), is the largest Ytarrian Chinese community outside Sahud. A number of schools of Kung Fu (*Martial Arts*, p. 155) are known and taught behind closed doors, although it is essentially unknown for white students to be trained. There may even be one or more triads (*Martial Arts*, p. 9) operating behind the scenes.

The samurai warrior caste knew Bajutsu, Kenjutsu, and Kyujutsu, among other Japanese styles. Their Chinese contemporaries knew Wing Chun and Chinese Spear Fighting. A small group of Korean monks brought Um Yang Kwan (a precursor of Hwa Rang Do). By the 16th century, Japanese styles dominated among the aristocracy, but other influences can still be felt today, especially among the more remote eastern clans. Indeed, some provincial samurai practice more-or-less pure Chinese or Korean styles, hidden under the same names as the Japanese-origin styles practiced closer to Kinkaku.

Many Sahudese martial arts are tied to the country's convoluted religious beliefs (*Banestorm*, p. 80). Sumo holds a similar place in the Sahudese religion as it does in Earth Shinto, with formal, ceremonial bouts conducted in honor of the Heavenking. Kinkaku hosts the greatest of these twice a year at the equinoxes. The winner is conveyed into Uulinn to receive the blessing of the Heavenking in person.

Meanwhile, Kung Fu styles are taught alongside both Buddhism and the Sahudese religion. The prowess of the An'Fo'Tama monks (*Banestorm*, p. 80) is legendary across

Sahud; treat their style as Shaolin Kung Fu. Monks of the Dragon Temple (*Martial Arts*, p. 208) travel the roads of Sahud, fighting demons with Dragon-Man Kung Fu and living off the charity of those they protect.

Beneath the lofty heights of the noble families and the monasteries, the common folk of Sahud learn a more mixed bag of ancient and modern styles from a range of backgrounds. Judo and Jujutsu rub shoulders with Native American and Mongolian wrestling styles. Hapkido, Muay Thai, and Te practitioners spar on the docksides in the Ah and Yarohito shipping ports. Fresh *Banestorm* imports are periodically added to the blend, and new styles – fusions out of the chaos of Sahudese martial arts – arise every few years.

Sahudese warfare (*Banestorm*, p. 152) creates two very different uses for the martial arts. In low war, assassination is very much in the cards, and training in hidden weapons and stealth is appropriate. Sahudese ninja learn combat and espionage (see *Ninja and Ninjutsu*, *Martial Arts*, p. 202), although their prankish role in Sahudese politics (*Banestorm*, p. 153) can demand interesting and unorthodox skills. High war, however, involves formal contests under highly restricted terms – unusual or impractical weapons, fighting unarmed, or fighting with peculiar handicaps.

Here, masters of the fighting arts are in great demand. See p. 32 for more on high-war games.

## NOMAD LANDS

The savages of the north brought the fighting traditions of Scandinavia and the British Isles with them from Earth. Most warriors fight with spears, and Heroic Spear Fighting and Viking Spear Fighting are popular. Those who can afford them fight with sword and shield or axe and shield (use Sword-and-Shield Fighting, replacing Broadsword with Axe/Mace and adding the Hook technique). Chieftains and wealthy warriors are likely to fight with a spear from the back of a chariot, changing to sword and shield when fighting on foot. However, some believe that fighting with a greatsword is a better display of their strength and prowess.

Wrestling is a popular pastime and a common test of strength, from formal contests in which combatants use only one hand to all-out matches allowing strikes and biting. Knife skill and the Dagger Fighting style are very common.

## The Ulvings

Lycanthropy (*Banestorm*, p. 200) is common in the Nomad Lands, and not treated with the same superstition and fear as in other lands. In the far, frozen north of the peninsula may be found the lands of an entire *tribe* of werewolves, who have learned a great deal of control over their powers. The Ulvings (“the people of the wolf”) believe that they are descended from Geri, Odin’s wolf, who raped a human woman and begat their tribal ancestor.

Although in many ways a typical Northman tribe, led by a jarl and living off hunting and raiding, the Ulvings have a wolfish outlook to life. Children are grouped into “packs”

of four to six, and live and train together from infancy. An Ulving’s pack is closer than his kin, and he will only leave the tribe to go adventuring if the pack goes together. A pack’s *huscarl*, or leader, is usually the largest and strongest of the group. Another member of the pack may challenge him for leadership, but would otherwise never think of refusing an instruction.

The Ulvings have mastered using their shapeshifting abilities in combat. Their style, Ulvinger Fighting (p. 21), uses such tactics heavily. A sample Ulving character is detailed on p. 36, along with the typical Ulving wolf form.

## Optional Traits

*Advantages:* Animal Empathy; Combat Reflexes; Enhanced Parry (Staff); Weapon Master (Staff).

*Disadvantages:* Code of Honor (Arab); Overconfidence.

*Skills:* Animal Handling (Equines or Ovines); Brawling; Broadsword; Musical Instrument (Drum or Pipe); Singing; Theology (Islam); Two-Handed Sword Art; Veterinary/TL3; Wrestling.

*Techniques:* Disarming (Staff).



## ULVINGER FIGHTING

4 points

Many shapeshifters exist on Yrth, but most are reviled, and many fear their own natures. Few have the willpower and the patience to truly master their powers. The werewolves of the Ulving tribe (p. 9) are among the latter. They have for many generations trained themselves to change shape quickly and reliably. Their fighting style exploits this ability, fluidly shifting between forms to take advantage of the strengths of each. Training emphasizes unarmed strikes and grapples; Ulvings rarely carry weapons, as they cannot use them in wolf form. Stylists employ the shapeshifting power itself to unbalance and confuse their opponents. Fighting as a pack is valued; children are placed in peer groups, who train together from a young age and are rarely separated.

Ulvings take time to surround an opponent before engaging, to take advantage of Pack Tactics (p. 25). Having engaged, they favor Attack and Defensive Attack, often making Deceptive Attacks. They use frequent Feints. In human form, stylists attempt grapples, takedowns, and disarms. In wolf form, Ulvings make bite attacks. They target the tendons in the legs to bring the opponent down, followed by the neck. Shapeshifting allows the fighter to parry in human form and dodge in wolf form, in addition to aiding mobility and giving bonuses to defenses (see *Shape Mastery*, p. 26, and *Shapeshifting in Combat*, p. 26).

All stylists have Alternate Form (with the modifiers listed under *Shapeshifting*, pp. 23-24). Posture-based techniques allow the fighter to take his opponent off his feet and control him, and Targeted Attacks let him bite for more effect.

Stealth aids in ambushes. Few cinematic skills or techniques are associated with the style, although Ulvings are reputed to possess extraordinary stealth.

Ulvinger Fighting is taught only in the Ulving tribe in the far north of the Nomad Lands. However, dark-elf werewolves in the Blackwoods practice a similar style. Werebears in the Nomad Lands use slams and basic grapples. Ocelots, werejaguars from Bilit Island, use Attack from Above to pounce (p. B372) and rake (p. 28).

*Skills:* Karate; Stealth; Wrestling.

*Techniques:* Arm Lock; Bite (p. 28); Counterattack (Karate); Disarming (Wrestling); Feint (Karate); Ground Fighting (Wrestling); Low Fighting (Wrestling); Targeted Attack (Bite/Hand); Targeted Attack (Bite/Leg Joint); Targeted Attack (Bite/Neck); Trip.

*Cinematic Skills:* Invisibility Art; Light Walk.

*Perks:* Biting Mastery; Ground Guard; Pack Tactics (p. 25); Rapid Retraction (Bites); Shape Mastery (p. 26); Technique Mastery (Bite).

## Optional Traits

*Advantages:* Enhanced Dodge.

*Disadvantages:* Bloodlust; Chummy.

*Skills:* Running; Survival (Plains); Swimming; Tactics.

## UNDERWATER STYLES

The oceans of Yrth (*Banestorm*, p. 178) offer adventurers entirely new challenges, profoundly different from fighting on land. Merfolk, octopus folk, sea elves, and shark men have developed various styles for their environment, and to take advantage of their natural abilities.

### *Merfolk Spear Fighting*

5 points

Although they have adopted sea-elfen net and trident techniques, merfolk historically fought with spears, using an economical thrusting style.

*Skills:* Aquabatics; Spear; Staff; Thrown Weapon (Spear).

*Techniques:* Retain Weapon (Spear); Targeted Attack (Underwater Spear Thrust/Vitals); Underwater Combat (Spear) (p. 28); Underwater Disarming (Spear).

*Perks:* Form Mastery (Spear); Grip Mastery (Spear).

## Optional Traits

*Advantages:* Combat Reflexes; Enhanced Parry (Staff); Terrain Adaptation (Underwater) (p. 24).

*Perks:* Special Exercises (Striking ST 1).

### *Net and Trident Lore*

6 points

Divided from the elves of Ytarria by centuries of history, sea elves (p. 5) nonetheless share a culture with their land kin; Net and Trident Lore is distantly related to Sylvan War Lore. The style employs a melee net and a trident to entangle enemies and dispatch them. The trident is wielded with the Spear skill, one-handed, for offense, and the Staff skill, two-handed, for defense.

*Skills:* Aquabatics; Net; Spear; Staff; Thrown Weapon (Spear).

## Rage Control

You must have the Berserk disadvantage (p. B124) to learn this perk. You are practiced at working yourself into a frenzy, adding +4 to the Will roll to deliberately go berserk. When you go berserk deliberately, you also get +1 to the roll to snap *out* again.

## Shape Mastery

To learn this perk, you must have Alternate Form with Reduced Time 5 (+100%), allowing you to shapeshift *instantly* at the start of your turn (see *Free Action, Powers*, p. 154). Shape Mastery then allows you to shapeshift once per turn at *any time*, even during someone else's turn or in the middle of a maneuver! For instance, you could attack once as a human and

once as a wolf when using an All-Out Attack (Double). This perk is *required* for the options listed under *Shapeshifting in Combat* (below).

## Special Exercises†

A few new specialties of this perk are found in *Yrth Fighting Styles*. Special Exercises (Breath-Holding 1 or 2) enables water-breathing races to learn to fight on the surface. Special Exercises (Compartmentalized Mind 1 with Limited, Magic Only and No Mental Separation) allows mages to train in using spells in the thick of combat. Special Exercises (Magic Resistance up to 5) or (Magic Resistance, Improved, up to 3) makes Magic Resistance a learnable advantage in campaigns where it is normally only available to a starting character. Note that it is the GM's call whether Compartmentalized Mind or Magic Resistance are learnable *at all*; this may be inappropriate for some campaigns.

In high-fantasy campaigns, some styles give access to supernatural powers rather than special training. For this, take the Supernatural Warrior perk (below).

## Staff Attunement

When you pick up any item that could carry the Staff spell, it works as if it did bear that spell while you have it ready. It isn't actually enchanted, and it immediately loses its power when you let go. This is essentially a modified Accessory perk (p. B100).

## Supernatural Warrior†

You have received exotic powers because of training, such as a Berserker's spiritual protection. This is a supernatural version of Special Exercises (*Martial Arts*, p. 51), giving access to a power that might not normally be available in the campaign. The advantage itself must be bought with a power modifier (p. 24) that reflects the source of the special ability. This perk suits a high-fantasy campaign.

# Shapeshifting in Combat

Shapeshifters with the Shape Mastery perk (above) and forms with different Size Modifiers or morphology meta-traits (p. B263) have trained to use shapeshifting actively in combat, changing size and shape suddenly to throw their opponents off-balance.

*Defense:* By altering form during any active defense, the shapeshifter benefits as though he had retreated (p. B377) without having to move away from his attacker. His defense roll is based on his final form.

*Escape, Evasion, and Feint:* When breaking free from a grapple, evading, or feinting with an unarmed combat attack, the were gains +2 if he shifts during the attempt. His roll is based on his final form. If he uses this tactic more than twice against the same opponent, the surprise value wears off; reduce the bonus to +1.

If using *Powers*, these benefits stack with power defenses (*Powers*, p. 167) and using abilities to aid skills (*Powers*, p. 162). The shifter may add half the relevant power Talent, if any, to a defense roll while shifting, or make an IQ roll to add a further +2 to escape, evasion, and feint rolls.

# DISADVANTAGES

Two disadvantages require special attention in campaigns that include *Yrth Fighting Styles*.

## Horizontal

see p. B139

Horizontal creatures have more limited posture options (p. B364) than humanoid. They may neither assume a *kneeling* posture nor *crouch* (p. B368); their choices are *standing*, *sitting*, *crawling*, *lying prone*, and *lying face up*. Further, the only Change Posture option available from lying face up is lying prone. However, Horizontal creatures can go from prone, sitting, or crawling to standing with a single Change Posture, or as the "step" component of a maneuver that allows a step, as though they were kneeling. Furthermore, Horizontal attackers have special modifiers and restrictions for certain attacks (*Martial Arts*, p. 115).

## Special Enhancement

*Gangly:* You have long, awkward limbs, which you must tuck under your body when you sit or lie prone. You may not go from lying prone to standing with a single Change Posture maneuver. Additionally, you may not go from any posture to standing as the "step" component of another maneuver. This is appropriate for giraffes and similarly awkward animals. +50%

## No Legs

see p. B145

Aquatic creatures ignore the Swimming skill cap underwater. They also can make retreating defenses without rolling against Aquabatics (see *Fighting Underwater*, p. 22). The other effects listed still apply.

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