



Making Race Count:

Utility Powers for Dwarves, Half-Elves, Halflings, and Humans

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The stone golem advanced, its cracked fists raised. Lurri could see the glittering ruby dangling from the censer behind the guardian. The halfling knew she had no chance against the golem head-on. She had no intention, however, of leaving this room without that gemstone. She crouched, waiting for the right moment. The golem swung its arm in an arc, and for a moment it seemed the fist would strike true. But Lurri ducked at the last moment and rolled forward to vault up through the golem's grasp, putting her within reach of the treasure she sought.

Durven watched Lurri's stunt with amazement, then quickly realized that the golem she had evaded was now coming

for him. The human was a capable fighter, but the creature was far more than he could handle on his own. He lashed out with his sword, chipping away at the construct's rocky exterior, and twisted away from the thing's massive fist. Durven knew his cause would be hopeless unless he could get away.

He needed to escape across the chasm, but the rope bridge spanning the gap had fallen. Durven, in between dodging the golem's attacks, searched for the place where the crevice was at its narrowest. He set off for the edge at a sprint, pushing himself harder than he thought possible. He leaped at the last possible moment, hurtling through the air to land on the opposite side.

Character race is a key decision you make when you create a new character. The traits you gain from your race provide significant benefits, ranging from ability score modifications to potent powers that give you an edge in battle. When race is combined with class, you have the fundamental building blocks in place to carry you forward through all thirty levels of adventuring.

Yet after you choose your race and record its benefits, that choice often does not affect your character's development. It's true that certain feats might interact with your racial traits, and many races have access to racial-themed paragon paths. Although these options can help develop your character, the most interesting gains can come through the choices granted by your class whenever you gain a level.

To help you enhance the importance of your character's race, this article introduces racial utility powers. Racial utility powers represent an awakening of natural talent and capability inherent within all peoples in the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® world. Taking a racial utility power demonstrates your character's ability to call upon his or her heritage and natural abilities.

This article presents options for many prominent races in the game, with racial utility powers up to 16th level. Future installments in this series will provide options for other races in the game. Regardless of the race you choose, to maximize your racial traits beyond those powers presented here, consider choosing a paragon path exclusive to your race when you reach the paragon tier.

Gaining a Racial Utility Power: Racial utility powers are similar to utility powers granted by a class, except that you must be a member of the race to gain and use a race's powers. Whenever you gain a level that grants you a utility power from your class, you can choose a racial utility power in place of a class power. The racial utility power must be of the same level as or lower in level than the class power you would have gained.

You can use retraining to replace a class power with a racial utility power or vice versa, as long as the new power is of the same level as or lower in level than the replaced power. You cannot replace a utility power from a paragon path or an epic destiny with a racial utility power.

Spellbooks and Racial Utility Powers: The wizard's spellbook class feature allows you to add two wizard utility powers to your spellbook when you reach a level where you would normally gain a utility power (2nd, 6th, 10th, and so on). If you choose to take a racial utility power, you do not add any wizard utility powers to your spellbook at that level. If you later use retraining to take a wizard utility power in place of a racial utility power, you do not add any powers to your spellbook.

DWARF

"A dwarf never forgets."

In ages past, dwarves ruled the mountains from within an impregnable fortress raised to guard the treasures they wrested from unyielding stone. Their fabulous wealth drew greedy monsters to their doors and precipitated a series of wars whose results were ruin and death. Their fabulous kingdoms fell and their people scattered to the world's four corners. Although the dwarves have fallen far, they have never forgotten the ancient foes or the wonders they surrendered to the darkness.

Dwarves pride themselves on their toughness and durability. They pass on tales of the affronts against their people and use these memories to motivate them to exact vengeance from their ancestral enemies. Some dwarves further their training, feeling driven to build their muscle and endurance so they can escape the fate their ancestors faced.

You must be a dwarf to gain and use dwarf powers.

Avalanche Rush

You benefit from a strong, almost elemental, connection to earth and stone. As a doughty member of your race, you find that the rocks underfoot give you the same sort of power as that offered by the sylvan forests to the fey folk. With your strong link to earth, you can feel new strength flowing through your feet, and you use this strength to become a living avalanche, tumbling through your foes with tremendous force.

Avalanche Rush

Dwarf Racial Utility 2

The mountain's strength helps you shove an enemy from your path.

Encounter

No Action

Personal

Trigger: You successfully bull rush a target.

Effect: You can increase the push by a number of squares up to your Constitution modifier, shifting into each square the target of your bull rush leaves.

Dwarven Pride

A dwarf never forgets an insult, and nothing twists your beard harder than being pushed around. Although you dig in your heels to keep yourself from being moved when you don't want to be, if an enemy somehow knocks you back, you can use *dwarven pride* to show the enemy the mistake it just made.

Dwarven Pride

Dwarf Racial Utility 6

No one shoves you around and gets away with it.

Encounter

Immediate Reaction

Personal

Trigger: You are pulled, pushed, or slid.

Effect: Until the end of your next turn, you gain a +1 power bonus to damage rolls for each square of the forced movement.

Stone Stubborn

Mulish, obstinate, determined, bull-headed—call it what you will, dwarves are stubborn. Although this trait can make you difficult to deal with, it does have its advantages. You've learned to turn your one-track mind into a shield against the influences of others.

Stone Stubborn Dwarf Racial Utility 10

You steel your mind to the onslaught, determined to go about your business.

Encounter

Immediate Interrupt Personal

Trigger: An effect would dominate or stun you.

Effect: You are dazed for the effect's duration instead of being dominated or stunned.

Mountainborn Tenacity

Tough as iron, dwarves are tenacious combatants. As a dwarf, you never give ground and never surrender. You also pride yourself on the ability to shrug off injuries that would topple a lesser mortal. Even when the killing blow falls, you can find a way to thumb death in the eye and get back on your feet.

Mountainborn Tenacity Dwarf Racial Utility 16

Just as no mountain fell from a single strike, no dwarf has fallen from a single blow.

Daily ♦ Healing

Immediate Interrupt Personal

Trigger: An attack drops you to 0 hit points or fewer.

Effect: You can spend a healing surge. Until the end of your next turn, you gain resistance to all damage equal to twice your Constitution modifier.

HALF-ELF

"Have we met? No? Well, you look like someone I ought to know. Let me buy you a drink."

Some think half-elves have a hard time in the world. After all, they are a people born from two races. Often, however, a half-elf's mingled heritage is no obstacle to success, and many half-elves find ways to put to good use the characteristics they inherit from both parents. A strong personality, wit, and insight all serve these individuals well, along with resourcefulness and guile. Half-elf adventurers sometimes develop their natural talents to help them move more easily through the world, regardless of the circles in which they find themselves.

You must be a half-elf to gain and use half-elf powers.

Help Is Here

By combining your personable nature with your versatile skill set, you can awaken talent in anyone you choose. *Help is here* gives you the tools you need to help an ally find the inspiration to succeed where another might fail.

Help Is Here Half-Elf Racial Utility 2

An encouraging word and subtle direction help an ally complete his or her task.

Encounter

Minor Action Personal

Effect: You successfully use the aid another action on an adjacent ally.

Sudden Switch

As part of your upbringing, you were taught to be wise to the ways in which people use their body language to communicate intent—all the better to use your own body language to mislead. You use this talent to draw someone close to you during combat and then reverse your positions suddenly, surprising those who thought they knew your purpose.

Sudden Switch Half-Elf Racial Utility 6

You whirl through melee, causing another combatant to be caught up in your dance while catching your enemies by surprise.

Encounter

Move Action Melee 1

Target: One creature

Effect: You and the target swap positions. Until the end of your next turn, you gain combat advantage against enemies adjacent to you after the swap.

Lockstep

Your experience in battle and your instincts about your allies give you a knack for finding the right moment to move as a team. You take the lead in combat's dance, and a friend you choose can follow in your steps.

Lockstep Half-Elf Racial Utility 10

Wherever you go, your friend follows.

Encounter

Move Action Close burst 1

Target: You and one ally

Effect: Each target can shift up to 6 squares as a free action. The targets must end this movement adjacent to each other.

Persuasive Words

After so many adventures and after meeting so many strange and interesting individuals, you know a number of ways to overcome barriers of language and culture. You can communicate with almost anyone. You find it difficult to be at your best all the time, so you marshal your energy for the toughest social conflict of the day. In short, you save your best effort for when you need it most.

Persuasive Words Half-Elf Racial Utility 16

You summon up your personal reserves and put everything into understanding the situation and getting the results you need.

Daily

Minor Action

Personal

Effect: For 5 minutes or until the end of the encounter, you gain a +5 power bonus to Bluff, Diplomacy, Insight, and Intimidate checks.

HALFLING

“What lies beyond the horizon is far more interesting than what goes on here.”

The halflings have never had designs on conquest, and they have never felt the urge to impose their will on others. Instead, halflings prefer the simple life of hearth and home. They take comfort from their extended families and delight from their travels. Few halflings turn down a chance to visit new lands and meet new people. Such willingness to explore goes a long way toward making halflings successful adventurers. Along the way to wherever it is they go, halflings might learn special talents that grow out of their natural agility and uncanny luck.

You must be a halfling to gain and use halfling powers.

Happy Feet

The world is a wondrous and vast place, ripe for exploration. Adventure’s promise excites your imagination and draws you onward. Sometimes you find it hard to keep still.

Happy Feet Halfling Racial Utility 2

It’s hard to keep your feet under control. Sometimes they feel as if they move of their own accord.

Encounter

Immediate Reaction **Personal**

Trigger: A creature you can see starts its turn.

Effect: You shift up to 2 squares.

Minor Threat

The bigger races often feel pity for halflings because of their small stature. It’s ridiculous, of course, but you take advantage of this situation. Being small means you can go unnoticed. And when you’re hurt, it helps to have your enemies’ attention focused elsewhere. You’ve learned to use your perceived weakness to your advantage.

Minor Threat Halfling Racial Utility 6

Clearly you’re no threat to your enemies, injured as you are. You convince them of that by affecting a small and harmless posture.

Encounter ♦ **Stance**

Minor Action

Personal

Requirement: You must be bloodied.

Effect: You assume the minor threat stance. Until the stance ends and while you are bloodied, you have a +2 power bonus to all defenses and to Stealth checks.

Pay Your Debts

Repaying every debt is central to preserving a good relationship. When an ally gives you a helping hand, make sure you give back the same.

Pay Your Debts Halfling Racial Utility 10

You acknowledge an ally’s assistance by making a feint to keep your enemy off balance.

At-Will

Immediate Reaction **Special**

Trigger: An enemy flanked by you moves out of the flanked position.

Effect: Choose one ally who was also flanking the triggering enemy. That ally gains combat advantage against the enemy until the end of your next turn.

Underfoot Hustle

When you combine your small size with your quick-ness, you are truly in your element. *Underfoot hustle* lets you maneuver through an enemy's space so you can strike from an advantageous position.

Underfoot Hustle Halfling Racial Utility 16

You roll between your enemy's legs and spring up on the other side.

Encounter

Move Action

Personal

Effect: You shift up to your speed +2. You can move through squares occupied by enemies, but you must end your movement in an unoccupied square. Enemies whose spaces you move through in this way grant combat advantage to you until the end of your next turn.



HUMAN

"It's time for action. Tell me about the consequences later."

Nerath was humanity's last empire. The descendants of that empire still recall the principles the nation upheld, the justice it preserved, and the virtues it championed. Like many empires, however, rapid expansion combined with human optimism made the empire vulnerable to the foes lying in wait in the dark beyond civilization's lights. It wasn't long before hordes of monsters tumbled out from the desolation to plunder and ruin all that humanity had achieved.

Defeat did little to diminish the pride humans still have in the nation they buried so long ago, and its memory inspires new heroes today. Humans are the most numerous adventurers in the lands, eager to test their mettle against myriad monsters and explore dangerous dungeons to unearth the treasures they hold. Humans bring their natural versatility to bear in the types of training they pursue and are found among every class. Some humans develop their natural talents to aid them in their adventures. Such individuals are determined and aggressive, ready to take on any challenge they might face.

You must be a human to gain and use human powers.

Extra Effort

Humans find ways to overcome adversity and adapt to any situation. *Extra effort* helps you mount the will to escape a dangerous situation.

Extra Effort Human Racial Utility 2

You dig deep to find the strength to overcome an affliction. Doing so leaves you momentarily drained.

Encounter

No Action

Personal

Trigger: You make a saving throw and dislike the result.

Effect: Reroll the saving throw with a +2 power bonus.

The next saving throw you make before the end of the encounter takes a -2 penalty.

Rapid Move

As a human, you seek out ways to succeed where others find only failure. Your ingenuity helps you push harder, move faster, and achieve more than the longest-lived races. This power demonstrates a way you can push yourself beyond your normal limits.

Rapid Move Human Racial Utility 6

You move with surprising swiftness, accomplishing more than most would think possible.

Daily

Minor Action

Personal

Effect: Take a move action.

Flush with Success

No matter what setbacks you face, each success drives you to press on. *Flush with success* rewards you for a victorious effort by giving you new vitality and the drive to move forward.

Flush with Success Human Racial Utility 10

You feel your confidence build with each attack that hits home.

Encounter

Free Action **Personal**

Trigger: You hit with an attack on your turn.

Effect: After the attack is resolved, you gain 5 temporary hit points and can then shift up to half your speed.

Level 16: 10 temporary hit points.

Level 22: 15 temporary hit points.

Courageous Determination

The best and boldest humans learn from their errors and find ways to overcome their mistakes. If failure looms large, *courageous determination* gives you a chance to escape your doom and win the day.

Courageous Determination Human Racial Utility 16

Your enemy's success pales before your stalwart resolve. You refuse to give up.

Daily ♦ Healing

Immediate Reaction **Personal**

Trigger: An enemy bloodies you with an attack or hits you while you are bloodied.

Effect: You can spend a healing surge and shift up to your speed. Until the start of your next turn, you gain a +2 power bonus to all defenses.

About the Author

Robert J. Schwalb has contributed design to or developed nearly two hundred roleplaying game titles for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®, Warhammer Fantasy Roleplay, A Song of Ice and Fire RPG, Star Wars RPG, and the d20 system. Some of his more recent work for Wizards of the Coast LLC. can be found in *Player's Handbook*® 3 and *Player's Option: Heroes of Shadow*™. For more information about the author, be sure to check out his website at www.robertjschwalb.com or follow him on Twitter (@rjschwalb).

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