



GoldenSword Player's Quick Start Guide

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What is GoldenSword?

The GoldenSword RPG system is an open-source tabletop RPG system featuring a simplified rules system and highly consistent core mechanic. It is optimized for medieval fantasy with a scientifically based magic system.

In GoldenSword, you create a character, give him some skills, and equipment, and maybe some magic, then go out adventuring, roll some dice, kill some monsters, get treasure and XP, so he can progress.

What Do I Need?

Before you play, you are gonna need some dice. We use standard die sets as used in D&D and other games.

You will need d20 for attacks, skill checks, attribute checks, and spell casts (pretty much everything). You will also need d4, d6, d10, d12, as these are used for certain weapons damage rolls.

If you want to start playing immediately but don't have any fancy dice yet, there are many dice apps available for smart-phones. Don't like the feel of computerized dice? Try substituting 3d6 for a d20. (3-18 is statistically similar to 1-10) ask your GM about his feelings on this though, he might not allow it. Maybe he'll let you borrow some dice for now

Additionally, your GM may run his campaign with minifigures on a gridded game mat. We suggest lego minifigs and a dry-erase mat. Again, talk to your GM about his expectations and standards.

Character Creation

Each player will create a Character. Use a blank Character Sheet to create a character. (See Appendix - Character Sheet). Distribute 60 points among the following attributes:

- Strength
- Constitution
- Agility
- Charisma
- Perception
- Reason
- Knowledge
- Magery

These attributes directly determine secondary characteristics such as Hit Points & Magic Points, and also affect Skill levels.

- Strength determines the type of armor and shields you can use.
- Constitution determines HP. $HP = 2 \times \text{Constitution}$.
- Agility determines Attack & Defense ratings.
- Most weapons skills are affected by Strength or Agility (or both).
- Magery determines MP and affects spell casting success rolls.
- Reason & Knowledge limit maximum Magery. Magery cannot exceed Reason + Knowledge.

See Appendix - Character Sheet

Character Progression

After each adventure, the GM will award you XP, which you can spend to upgrade your character's attributes and skills.

- Attributes are upgraded at a rate of 50 XP per attribute point.
- Skill levels are upgraded at a rate of 10 XP per level.
- New Skills may be added at the default skill level (as per the GM) for no XP cost, then may also be upgraded at a rate of 10 XP per level.
- Magic Spells are upgraded by reducing difficulty level at a rate of 1 XP per difficulty point.
- New Spells are learned at a rate of 1 XP per spell difficulty point.

Buying Equipment

It is highly recommended that the character “purchase” armor and a weapon as part of the character creation phase. Your GM will tell you how much money your character can start with to spend on supplies. As a worst case scenario, grab an improvised weapon such as a club or a hunting knife. Even a stick or a rock is better than nothing! Additional weapons & armor WILL be found (and can be purchased) during game-play.

Weapons & Armor

Weapons and Armor are the heart of combat, and combat is the heart of an RPG. Your combat rolls are based on your Weapons skills. Having better weapons skills makes it easier to hit your opponent. Your opponent's combat rolls are based on your Armor rating. Wearing better armor makes you harder to hit.

Please see the Combat section for more details on the stats and their effects on combat rolls.

Please see the Appendices for weapons & armor item costs etc.

Other Equipment

Oftentimes, you may find that you really need a certain piece of equipment. It may be a rope, a pencil, or a candle. Well, it might be anything really, so it helps to be equipped. But you can only carry so much! How much is up to the GM. We don't lay out specific rules for this. If your GM has an affinity for accounting, he may estimate the total weight of all your stuff, and set a specific limit based on your Strength attribute or something. Another GM might just make you pay for a horse and cart.

Skills

Characters need skills. The sheer number of possible skills that you might think of is almost limitless, so we do not specify a skills list. Be creative. Let your imagined character tell you what skills he would reasonably have. We give the GM some guidelines as far as what skill levels a normal character may have as starting defaults.

Pick a few skills that you want to start out with. You start at the default level determined by the GM for that skill. During the character creation phase you may spend initial XP on skill upgrades. Ask your GM how much Initial XP he allows. Typically it will range between 20 and 50. This initial XP can be spent on upgrading Skills and/or learning (and possibly upgrading) a few spells.

Weapons use also requires skill. Each weapon specifies a default skill level. This means that when you purchase the weapon, you are assumed to have that level of skill with it. This can be upgraded with XP. Weapons skill are specific to the type of weapon. Switching weapon types means starting at that weapon's default skill level.

Campaigns

Campaigns provide a setting for an adventure to take place. They are made up entirely from the imagination of the GM. A campaign may be a simple one-shot dungeon crawl, or it may be an elaborate world with intricate politics and socioeconomics. Buy your GM a coffee and ask him about the campaign. He will no doubt wax eloquent about his awesome little world.

Success Rolls

Success rolls are performed with a d20. Whatever you are attempting to do, the GM will know how hard it is and what your chances of success are. Roll d20. The GM will tell you if you succeeded.

If you roll a 20, it's a Critical Success. Something great happens!

If you roll a 1, it's a critical fail. You failed to do what you intended, and instead, something went horribly wrong!

Combat

Combat in GoldenSword is designed to be simple and straightforward, but still exciting and dramatic.

You get to roll cool dice, but we have minimized the amount of adding you need to do.

Basically, it works like this:

- you have a weapon
- you have skill with that weapon
- your enemy has defenses (determined by his agility and armor)
- the GM tells you what you need to roll in order to HIT (based on your weapon skill vs his defense)
- you do a quick roll
- if you HIT
 - roll for damage (dice determined by your weapon)
 - enemy takes that much damage off his Hit Points

Your attack and defense stats are calculated as:

- $\text{Attack} = \text{Agility} + \text{Weapon Skill}$
- $\text{Defense} = \text{Agility} + \text{Armor} + \text{Helm} + \text{Shield}$

You may carry multiple weapons, but (normally) can only USE one at a time. You can choose which one to use at time of attack (must tell the GM before attacking). Different weapons have different skill level, damage, range, etc

Weapons Skills

Each type of weapon has a default skill level. Typically this is based on the wielder's Strength or Agility, or the average of the two. Weapons skills may be upgraded using XP (see Character Progression). Upgrading weapons skills applies to all weapons of that type; for example if you upgrade your Sword skill it improves your rating with ANY sword, not just the sword you are currently using.

Dealing Damage

Each type of weapon deals a certain range of damage, based on a dice roll. For example, most swords deal d6 damage, daggers deal d4.

Critical Hits

If you roll a 20 on your attack roll, it is a critical hit. You get a bonus! The bonus is your choice of either:

1. Double Damage: roll for damage as usual, then double it.
2. Max Damage: deal the highest possible roll (but don't double it)(eg. For a d6 weapon, deal automatic 6 damage)

Defending

Defense is an automatic action based on your Agility and your Armor & Shield. You do not roll for defense. Your defense is already taken into account in the lookup table for your attacker's attack roll.

Taking Damage

Your opponent's successful attacks deal you damage, reducing your HP. If your HP reaches zero, you are incapacitated and can not act.

Healing

Whatever your HP, healing is possible, either by healing spells, or healing potions. However, during combat, there may not be time to perform the healing.

It is a very good idea to ensure that more than one party member learns some healing spells as soon as possible.

Death

If you remain at zero HP for 24 hours, you are considered dead.

Resurrection

Once a character is considered dead, they can no longer be healed and can only be resurrected by a Raise Dead spell. This spell must be cast within 3 days of death.

Magic

In GoldenSword, there are no wizards - Everyone gets to use magic! However, magic is not exactly commonly known, so you must learn spells - typically by finding ancient spellbooks in a lost dungeon somewhere, or by befriending someone who already knows some spells - if you can find such a person, and he isn't trying to kill you. However, you don't HAVE to use magic if you don't want. But we encourage you to try it. It's easy and fun!

For more info see our website or pick up the GoldenSword Magic Manual.

Appendix - Character Creation Example

Actually, this is 2 examples rolled into one. We will walk through the process, creating 2 characters. One will be a "fighter" type character named Alice, and the other a "mage" named Bob.

You can create any type of character you can imagine. You just have to tweak the balance of attribute points until they make sense for that character. Want an acrobat? - Boost Agility. How about an acrobat who can read people and make them like her? - Boost Agility, Perception, and Charisma.

When you are thinking about this character design, you may also want to look at how attributes influence skills. If you want the character to have a certain skill set, check which attributes those skill are based on.

Give each character a total 60 points distributed across the attributes, in whatever fashion we wish. No need to roll dice or anything. As long as the total adds to 60, it's all good.

Don't forget; Strength influences your armor options (you have to be strong to wear full steel armor. See armor for Minimum Strength rating for each armor type). Constitution determines Hit Points. (HP = 2 x Constitution). Agility is important for combat. Many weapons skills are based on Agility.

Oh, and 2 more rules:

- No attribute may be less than 1
- Magery must not exceed Reason + Knowledge

OK so here is Alice. The height, weight, gender, etc. don't matter for statistics; they are just to give you a good feel for the character. Although the GM may take them into consideration for certain scenarios (like whether you can fit through a narrow tunnel, etc)

Name	Alice the sample fighter			Race	human
Character Belongs To	Ken Goudsward			Height	5'5" Weight 120 lb
				Gender	female Comeliness 12
Attribute					
Strength	9				
Constitution	10			HP	<input type="text"/> / 20 (2xCon)
Agility	12	Armour	3 Leather		
Charisma	8	Shield	3 Small Wooden	Defence	<input type="text"/> 18 (Agil+Armor+Helm+Shield)
Perception	6	Helm	0 none		
Reason	7				
Knowledge	7				
Magery	1	MP	<input type="text"/> / 3 (3xMagery)		Magery must not exceed Reason + Knowledge
Total Level	60				

Weapon	Skill	Attack	Dmg	Favorite Combat Spells	TTC	Diffic	MP
Hunting Knife	14	26	d4				

Attack = Agility + Weapon Skill

Let's compare Alice & Bob - they are optimized very differently

Attribute	Alice	Bob
Strength	9	5
Constitution	10	6
Agility	12	8
Charisma	8	5
Perception	6	6
Reason	7	8
Knowledge	7	8
Magery	1	14

As you can see, their attributes are very different. Alice is pretty strong and tough. Her 20 HP comes from the standard Hit Points calculation. ($HP = 2 \times Constitution$)

Alice's main optimization is for Agility. Most weapons skills are based on Agility or Strength, so Alice has a good foundation to build on for weapons skills. Agility is also the basis for Defense. ($Defense = Agility + Armour + Shield$)

Still, Alice is fairly well balanced. She's no dummy, and has decent perception and charisma too.

On the other hand, Bob is pretty weak. He is optimized for magic use by loading up his Magery attribute to 14. This gives him 42 Magic Points. ($MP = 3 \times Magery$) Bob is hoping to learn some killer spells to wreak havoc instead of messing around with swords.

Bob also has to ensure that his Reason and Knowledge are fairly decent because *Magery cannot exceed Reason + Knowledge*. As Bob progresses, he may want to increase his Magery even more. If he wants to exceed 16, he will also need to increase his Knowledge or Reason as well.

One potential issue for Bob is that his strength of 5 will limit his armour use. He is too weak to walk around in plate mail. But for now, leather armour will suffice, and he can always decide later to upgrade this strength when he gets some XP. On the other hand, he might learn some cool defense spells instead.

Attribute Rules Summary

- Hit Points = 2 x Constitution
 - Most weapons skills are based on Agility or Strength
 - Defense = Agility + Armour + Shield
 - Magic Points = 3 x Magery
 - Magery cannot exceed Reason + Knowledge
-

Adding Weapons and Skills

OK let's go shopping! Usually, the GM will allow you to do some shopping before, or at the beginning of an adventure. Presumably, there is a nearby town which you can purchase weapons etc.

We have given both characters a basic \$100 adventurer's starter kit consisting of basic leather armor, a small wooden shield, and a hunting knife. This really is the bare minimum for survival.

Depending on how much money you start out with, you may want better weapons and armor, but it is typically fairly easy to upgrade after an adventure, once you find some treasure (in fact, there's a good chance some enemy will attack you soon, and assuming you survive, you may take THEIR weapons & armor). Note however, that some of the better armor types are quite heavy and have a minimum Strength requirement.

Our GM has given us the minimal 20 XP for Initial skill upgrades. Even that small amount is going to make a big difference though if we spend it wisely.

Alice

The standard hunting knife has a default skill level = AGILITY, so Alice starts out with Knife Skill = 12. Not bad, but she chooses to spend her 20 initial XP on upgrading that skill. At 10XP/level, she is able to upgrade to Knife Skill = 14.

Bob

Bob decides to spend his XP on Spells. Spells are learned and upgraded at a cost of 1XP per Spell Difficulty. Bob reckons that some healing spells are a fine idea, and with a stroke of luck, the prerequisites work out nicely so that Bob is able to purchase "Heal Injury" and all of the necessary prerequisite spells.

Appendix - Character Progression Example

Let's say Alice & Bob have just completed a quest, and have each been granted 50 XP by the GM. They may spend their XP on upgrades to attributes, skills, or spells; at the following costs:

-
- Attributes are upgraded at a rate of 50 XP per attribute point.
 - Skill levels are upgraded at a rate of 10 XP per level.
 - New Skills may be added at the default skill level (as per the GM) for no XP cost, then may also be upgraded at a rate of 10 XP per level.
 - Magic Spells are upgraded by reducing difficulty level at a rate of 1 XP per difficulty point.
 - New Spells are learned at a rate of 1 XP per spell difficulty point.
-

So what will our intrepid adventures spend their XP on?

Alice decides to beef up her Knife skill. It was originally at 14, so she can spend the 50 XP to improve it 5 levels, up to level 19. Very decent!

Bob wants to invest his 50 XP into some more spells. However, the GM informs him that he cannot learn new spells outside of gameplay; he will need to find a way in-game to get the information. Bob convinces Alice that they should go look for an accomplished mage in a nearby city. For now though, Bob upgrades his Heal Injury spell. It is normally difficulty 10, so Bob spends 9 XP to bring the difficulty down to 1. This will greatly increase his success rate when attempting to cast this spell. He still has 41 XP left that he will save until he finds an elusive mage to learn from, at which point he can learn more spells during gameplay.

Appendix - Weapons List

Weapon	Damage	Default Skill Level	Min Strength	# Hands	Price	Notes
Fist	d2	Agility	6	1	free	(includes kicking, head-butt, etc)
Rock	d3	Agility	N/A	1	free	thrown range Strength meters
Club	d4	Agility+2	n/a	1	\$10	
Dagger	d4	Agility	n/a	1	\$30	
Melee Knife	d4	Agility	thrown 10	1	\$10	thrown range 8 meters
Throwing Knife	d4	Agility-1	9	1	\$50	range 10 meters
Warshovel	d4	Agility-3	9	2	\$25	
Quarterstaff	d4	Agility-2	n/a	2	\$10	
Cat o 9 tails	d4	Agility-4	9	1	\$25	
Crossbow - Hand	d4	12	n/a	1	\$600	range 15 meters
Sling	d6	Agility-3	N/A	1	\$5	range 20 meters
Throwing Star	d6	Agility-2	8	1	\$50	range 15 meters
Nunchuck	d6	Agility-4	n/a	1	\$100	
Rapier	d6	Agility-2	n/a	1	\$300	
War Shovel	d6	Agility-3	11	2	\$100	
Sword	d6	Agility	9	1	\$200	
War Hammer	d6	Strength-1	8	1	\$100	
Mace	d6	Strength	8	1	\$100	
Shield (bash)	d4 for small shields, d6 for medium	Average(Strength, Agility)-2	10	1	see Shields	small & medium shields only

Bow - Light	d6	Agility	8	2	\$50	range 20 meters
Crossbow - Standard	d8	13	7	2	\$400	range 20 meters
Battle Axe	d8	Agility-2	8	1	\$170	
Flail - Spiked	d8	Agility-4	9	1	\$200	
Great Club	d8	Strength-2	15	2	\$50	
Halberd	d8	Average(Strength, Agility)-3	13	2	\$250	
Longsword	d8	Average(Strength, Agility)-1	11	1	\$300	
Morning Star	d8	Strength	8	1	\$200	
Battle Spear	d8	Average(Strength, Agility)-1	thrown 11	2	\$10	range 15 meters
Bow - Standard	d8	Average(Strength, Agility)	10	2	\$100	range 40 meters
Bow - Long	d10	Average(Strength, Agility)-2	13	2	\$300	range 100 meters
Bow - Composite	d10	Average(Strength, Agility)	9	2	\$400	range 60 meters
Greathammer	d10	Average(Strength, Agility)-3	16	2	\$200	
Greatsword	d10	Average(Strength, Agility)-3	14	2	\$400	
Crossbow - Heavy	d12	11	12	2	\$700	range 40 meters, 1 turn to reload
Great Axe	d12	Average(Strength, Agility)-3	14	2	\$300	

Projectiles

Projectile	Price	Description
Arrows	\$20	20 standard arrows, for use with bows
Crossbow Bolts	\$20	20 standard bolts, for use with crossbow
Heavy Crossbow Bolts	\$50	20 large bolts, for use with heavy crossbow
Caltrops	\$100	20 caltrops

Appendix - Armor List

Armor Rating is how many points your armor adds to your defense. Defense = Agility + Armor + Shield.

In order to wear a certain type of armor, your Strength must be at least as high as its Armor Rating.

Armor Type	Armor Rating	Price
Padded Armor	1	\$40
Leather Armor	3	\$70
Studded Leather	5	\$150
Scale Mail	7	\$300
Banded Armor	9	\$400
Banded Mail	11	\$500
Chain Mail	13	\$900
Light Plate Armor	15	\$1500
Medium Plate Mail	17	\$2000
Heavy Plate Mail	19	\$3000

Appendix - Helms List

Helm Type	Armor Rating	Price	Min Str
Light Leather Helm	1	\$50	
Hardened Leather Helm	2	\$100	
Scaled Helm	3	\$200	
Chain Helm	4	\$300	
Metal Helm	5	\$500	10
Great Helm	6	\$1000	15

Only Hardened Leather, Metal, & Great Helms may be ornamented with additional fixtures such as horns, spikes, etc.

Appendix - Shields List

In order to use a certain type of shield, your Strength must be at least as high as its Armor Rating.

Shield Type	Armour Rating	Price
Small Wooden	4	\$20
Medium Wooden	6	\$40
Large Wooden	8	\$80
Small Iron	10	\$100
Iron	12	\$200
Large Iron	14	\$500
Great Shield	16	\$1000

- Small shield can be held or strapped to the forearm.
- Wooden shields usually have a band of metal shaped around its edge for additional strength
- Small and Medium shields can be used as an offensive weapon. This technique is called a Bashing attack (see weapons table - Shield)

