

Yet Another Weapon Guide - Sword and Shield

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Intro

The Sword and Shield is a fast, versatile weapon, capable of a little bit of every other type of weapon. It has the ability to block, forward roll, has gapclosers, has both strong and weak attacks, and can even do a little bit of KO damage. The main draw to Sword and Shield is the ability to use items whilst unsheathed, making this a perfect weapon for newcomers to the series. With the addition of oils, SnS play is a bit deeper for those who have already mastered SnS.

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By no means will contact result in changes to the guide.

Purpose

This guide is meant for new players of Monster HunterGenerations Ultimate (MHGU) or for players who haven't played Blademaster in the old-schoolgames, and wish to play as Sword and Shield. Note that this guide will not assume any priorknowledge, regardless of games played before in the Monster Hunter series.

Guide Contents

This guide will contain a comprehensive guide on Sword and Shield controls, commentary on SnS styles and combinations, recommendations on progression SnSs, and a final note on matchups against all monsters in the game.

At A Glance

How Do I Play Sword and Shield?

- X-Button attacks are typically fast but deal less damage. A-Button attacks are more powerful but they have different effects, depending on if you hold in a direction during those attacks or not.
- X + A from idle is a leaping slash that takes you a little bit forward. Is effective when used to start attacking a monster.
- Pressing and holding R will let you guard incomingattacks in the direction you're facing. The SnS Guard is particularly weak, so this should be treated as an emergency use only.
- Pressing R and Y at the same time will let you consumeany currently-selected item in your item bar without sheathing first. This lets you do stuff like heal, sharpen, lay down traps, or apply oils without the need to sheathe.
- If you bring Oils, you may use them on your Sword and Shield to provide various effects.

Hot Tips

1. **The leaping slash attack provides knockback resistance for a while after using it.** So, you can perform things like knockback-less item use while doing so.

2. **Some styles have a Back + A Charged Slash attack.** Make sure you release A when the flash occurs, otherwise you'll just perform a short-range slash.
3. **Certain SnS attacks can knock your teammates around, so it's advisable to not use them.** Otherwise you might get angry teammates as well as an angry monster.
4. **Pressing X + A mid-combo will instantly make you perform the Roundslash.** Use as a combo finisher.

Meta Stuff

- **SnS loves long Sharpness grades.** Similarly to DBs, SnS hits a lot, making longer Sharpness bars more valuable than a shorter, higher grade of Sharpness.
- Also like DBs, **SnS loves elemental and status damage due to their hit count.** Unlike DBs though, SnS's status values are actually somewhat considerable, making Status SnS better than Status DBs.
- SnS's Oils should be selected partially based on the monster, but **the Oils typically used are Affinity Oil and Mind's Eye Oil** the former for obvious reasons, and the latter for its sharpness-restoration effect when combined with Chaos Oil.
- **Striker SnS is the most popular way to play SnS due to its access to 3 HA slots.** The only thing you lose with Striker is the backstep charge attack to extend your combos, which isn't really needed unless you're fully locking down the monster. SnS has fantastic arts as well, which we'll get to later.
- Guild SnS has the full combo chaining capabilities of SnS but lacks the HA slot that Striker has.
- Aerial SnS can perform the same thing Guild SnS can when jumping off a ledge, except at any time you can hop off of a monster instead of being restricted to ledges.
- Adept SnS has the unique ability to perform Adept Dodges via backstepping as well as by rolling normally and counterattacks with the leaping slash.
- Valor SnS's crazy gameplay involves lots of backflips which have iframes and cover a lot of distance, as well as letting you precisely control where you go.
- Alchemy SnS removes SnS's more... questionable attacks in favor of faster access to the Round Slash and the Alchemy Barrel.

- **All of SnS's HA are fantastic, and you can't go wrong with any of them..** mostly. Sword Dance being a lengthy offensive HA is used less though it has the potential to deal lots of elemental damage when a monster is down.
- Round Force is sometimes treated as a more offensive version of Absolute Evasion though I swear to *god* if you use the level 3 version online I will find you.
- Shoryugeki has the potential to deal a ton of KO damage even without Stamina Oil applied. Just have to be accurate with it.
- Finally, Chaos Oil applies the effects of *all* oils in the game at once and lets you stack regular oils *on top of that*. I hope you like to fight HyperSilver and Hyper Gold at the same time to unlock the level 3 version though.
- Deviant Boost is really valuable since gameplay focuses on getting your fantastic HAs up and running, especially Chaos Oil. So much so that all of the best SnSs are Deviant-sourced. I hope you like grinding.

Cool Tips

- You can perform a leaping slash into a ledge to jump up it and attack, like you would when you're going down a ledge using the leaping slash.
- With Stamina Oil you can quickly rack up KO damage since your attacks are fast and furious. Stacking it with Chaos Oil increase that KO and Stamina damage, letting you KO monsters even easier.
- Affinity Oil increases your Affinity by 30%, and stacking with Chaos Oil boosts your Affinity by 60%! Potent enough to drop even WE if you wanted to.
- Destroyer Oil increases your stagger damage by 15% and stacking with Chaos Oil doubles the effect! Use on Astalos or any monster where you need to stagger them to weaken their attacks or effects.
- Mind's Eye Oil does what it says on the tin: Prevents you from bouncing off of monsters. When Chaos Oil is stacked with this effect it instantly recovers 100 units of Sharpness, making these Oils a quicker Whetstone that doesn't make you sheathe afterwards.
- All Oils last for 120 seconds, but the duration can be increased by way of the armor skill "Item Use Up", which will extend the duration to 180 seconds.
- Most items when used via R + Y won't make you sheathe afterwards, except for Whetstones and other items that make you sheathe at the end of the animation.

- The Directional A-Button attacks involving your shield will knock around hunters. If you see a pesky LS user constantly tripping you, knock 'em into the air.
- Attacks involving a sword have a slight sharpness modifier applied to them letting you bounce less.
- After some attacks, like the Rush Slash or after rolling, you can reorient yourself in a direction slightly, letting you be more accurate with your attacks.

Controls & Style Rundown

Guild Style

Two Hunter Art slots (1 SP Art). Endlessly chain your attacks with the potent backstep charge attack, use items while unsheathed, quickly attack with a flurry of slashes, and do a little bit of everything!

- X + A or Forward + X while sheathed - **Rush Slash** (*provides Super Armor for a brief period*) - 18% damage
- After Rush Slash, X - **Up Slash** - 14% damage
- X or after Up Slash - **Down Slash** - 14% damage
- After Down Slash, X - **Side Slash** - 13% damage
- After Side Slash, X - **Shield Combo** - $10\% + 20\% = 30\%$ damage / 2 hits
- A - **Strong Side Slash** - 21% damage
- After Strong Side Slash, A - **Strong Up Slash** - 19% damage
- After any attack, X + A or after Strong Up Slash, A - **Round Slash** - 24% damage
- Forward + A - **Shield Bash** - 8% damage, 10 KO, 15 Exhaust
- After Shield Bash, A - **Shield Thrust** - 16% damage, 15 KO, 25 Exhaust
- After any attack, Back + A - **Backstep Charge** (*requires Stamina to perform*)
- During Backstep Charge, release - **Backstep Charge Attack (weak)** - 17% damage
- During Backstep Charge, wait until flash, release - **Backstep Charge Attack** - $20\% + 34\% = 54\%$ damage / 2 hits, the first hit additionally deals 15 KO, 25 Exhaust
- While in midair, X - **Jumping Slash** - 20% damage
- X + A off a ledge - **Rising Jump Slash** - 18% damage
- X + A up a ledge - **Climbing Jump Slash** - 20% damage
- R (hold) - **Guard**
- While Guarding, X - **Up Slash**
- While Guarding, A - **Guard Slash** - 13% damage
- While Guarding, Y - **Use Item**

Guild Style features all of the classical Sword and Shield moves, including the bad ones which you never want to use. It also features the ability to chain into most other moves at any time, whether it's with the Round Slash or with the Backstep Charge. This makes Guild SnS quite versatile and easy to use to boot.

Recommended Hunter Arts:

- Absolute Readiness
- Chaos Oil III

Basic Hack 'n Slash

X + A, X, X, X, A, A, A.

A basic gap-closing combo.

Quick Hitter

X + A, X, X, X + A, Back + A (hold to flash), release.

An extended combo, featuring the round slash and the charged slash. Use for slightly longer openings.

Extreme Combo Extend

X + A, X, X, X, A, A, A, Back + A (hold to flash), release, (repeat from X)

The legendary infinite combo. In practice you won't use it that much because no monster will let you loop more than once while it's down, but it's there.

Short Sweeps

X + A, X, X, A, (repeat) X, X, A

A shorter infinite variant without the Charged Slash. Round Slash away.

Super Armored Item Use

X + A, R + Y.

This short combo will allow you to use items without knockback. Convenient when you're chugging a Potion.

Striker Style

Three Hunter Art slots (1 SP Art). Lose access to the backstep charge attack in exchange for an additional HA slot, as well as Super Armor whenever you use an item while unsheathed.

- **Cannot Backstep Charge.**
- Has natural Super Armor when using items while unsheathed.

Striker Style only loses the Backstep Charge, which removes your ability to infinitely extend your combo, but gains infinitely more use in the form of that 3rd HA Slot. With it you can run one more of SnS's fantastic arts, which is usually going to be Round Force. Be honest, you weren't *really* using that combo extend capability were you?

Recommended Hunter Arts:

- Absolute Readiness
- Round Force II (III if solo)
- Chaos Oil III

No new combos.

Aerial Style

One Hunter Art slot (1 SP Art). Loses access to the A-Button Sword-based attacks in exchange for the Aerial Hop to perform Aerial-based attacks whenever you jump on a monster.

- **Cannot Strong Side Slash.**
- A - **Shield Bash**- 8% damage, 10 KO, 15 Exhaust
- B - **Aerial Hop**
- Post-Aerial Hop - **Aerial Rising Slash**- 25% damage
- After Aerial Rising Slash, X - **Aerial Downward Slash**- 20% damage

Aerial Style is kinda underwhelming since it only lets you perform the ledge-based attacks after you Aerial Hop. Plus it makes you lose the Strong Sword Attacks, forcing you to perform the really-bad-to-use Shield-based attacks, which will knock other people around. So I guess you can only use the X button attacks on the ground.

Recommended Hunter Arts:

- Absolute Readiness

Hop 'n Down

B, then Post-Aerial Hop, X.

Uh yeah, this combo is pretty basic. This is basically the only combo you can do after you hop off of monsters, but you can do it after you jump into the air with basically anything?

Short Combo

X + A, X, X, X, X, X + A.

A slightly extended combo string ending in a Round Slash.

Adept Style

One Hunter Art slot (1 SP Art). Dodge attacks to perform an Insta-Evade and counterattack with jumping attacks! Can even dodge backwards with the backstep attack.

- **Cannot Backstep Charge Attack.**
- **Cannot Strong Side Slash.**
- Can trigger Adept Dodge from the Backstep Charge.
- B - **Adept Dodge**
- Post-Adept Dodge, X - **Adept Jumping Slashes** - $21\% + 19\% = 40\%$ damage / 2 hits
- Post-Adept Dodge, X + A - **Adept Lunging Slashes**- $18\% + 20\% = 38\%$ damage / 2 hits
- Post-Adept Dodge from the Backstep Charge, X - **Adept Backstep Counter** - 42% damage

Adept Style removes more moves compared to Aerial Style somehow and puts your power behind more midair-based attacks. Sure I guess you don't need to hop off of the monster anymore or use a ledge, but sometimes dodging attacks isn't really viable or recommended. You can perform really cool

moves with the Backstep Charge Adept Evade though, letting you perform attacks from that if you manage to master it.

Recommended Hunter Arts:

- Absolute Readiness

Post-Dodge Distance Closing

B, then after successfully dodging an attack, X + A, X.

Use this if the monster is far away from you after you Adept Dodge.

Post-Dodge Leaping Assault

B, then after successfully dodging an attack, X, X.

The basic Post-Adept Dodge combo for close-range monsters.

Backstep Strike

X + A, X, X, X, Back + A, then after successfully dodging an attack, X, (repeat from first X)

This combo utilizes the Backstep Charge Adept Dodge and generally makes you look cool as hell if you can pull it off.

Valor Style

One Hunter Art slot (1 SP Art). Charge the Valor Gauge with Valor Sheathe-based attacks to gain access to an enhanced backstep and combos from that backstep!

In any state:

- **Cannot Round Slash.**
- Y - **Valor Sheathe**
- While Valor Sheathing, X - **Valor Lunging Slashes**- $10\% + 9\% + 9\% = 28\%$ damage / 3 hits, the first hit also deals 15 KO, 25 Exhaust
- While Valor Sheathing, A - **Valor Round Slash**- 24% damage

Outside of Valor State:

- **Cannot Backstep Charge.**

In Valor State:

- After Down Slash, X + A - **Valor Backflip**- 14% damage
- After Valor Backflip - **Valor Backflip Followup**- 16% damage
- After Valor Backflip Followup, A - **Valor Round Slashes**- $14\% + 18\% = 32\%$ damage / 2 hits
- After Valor Backflip Followup, X + A - **Valor Rushing Slashes** - $20\% + 10\% + 10\% = 40\%$ damage / 3 hits, the first hit also deals 15 KO, 25 Exhaust

Valor Style locks many of your stronger moves behind Valor State and prevents you from combo extending or finishing off your combos with the Round Slash. Master the backflip however and you can leap all over the place by repositioning quickly, and follow up with strong attacks.

Recommended Hunter Arts:

- Absolute Readiness

Valor Charge 'n Rush

Y, X, X, X, X.

This combo quickly charges the Valor Gauge and leads into the normal combo.

Valor Strong Sweep

Y, A.

This is a truncated form of the above, for shorter openings and situations where you might not be able to execute longer combos.

Valor Backflip Assault

While in Valor State: X, X, X + A, wait for followup, A.

The trickiest part of mastering Valor SnS is waiting and not button mashing. Getting through that impulse to buffer your attacks will reward you with powerful attacks.

Valor Backflip Rush

While in Valor State: X, X, X + A, wait for followup, X + A.

This variant uses the Rushing Slashes to close in on monsters.

Alchemy Style

Three Hunter Art slots (3 SP Arts). Lose many of the more annoying attacks to perform Round Slashes faster and earlier in a combo, as well as gain access to the Alchemy Barrel.

- **Cannot Shield Combo.**
- **Cannot Shield Thrust.**
- **Cannot Strong Up Slash.**
- **Cannot Backstep Charge.**
- **Cannot Round Slash mid-combo with X + A.**
- After Side Slash, X or after Strong Side Slash, A - **Round Slash** - 24% damage
- To charge the Alchemy Barrel quickly, perform **Round Slash**.

Alchemy Style is actually very solid on SnS, putting away the really crappy moves that toss around other people in exchange for Round Slash as a combo finisher. You also lack the combo extending capability of other styles but you can even use the Alchemy Barrel after X + A to prevent knockback while you're shaking that barrel.

Recommended Hunter Arts:

- Absolute Readiness (SP)
- Round Force II (III if solo) (SP)
- Chaos Oil III

X Spam:

X + A, X, X, X, X.

This combo is faster and less-damaging. Doesn't charge the Alchemy Barrel much though.

A Spam:

X + A, A, A, A, A.

This combo is slower, but deal more damage and charges the Alchemy Barrel more quickly too.

No-Knockback Barrel:

With Alchemy Barrel selected in the Item Bar and unsheathed X + A, R + Y.

This uses the Super Armor granted by X+A to freely shake the barrel for a few seconds, which can be useful if you're next to the monster for some reason.

The style hierarchy goes Striker > Everything else. Kinda simple right? SnS arts are pretty damn great so having three of them really goes a long way. Guild and Alchemy are slight standouts among the rest with their basic gameplay, Guild having true combo extensions and Alchemy having faster combos and instant barrel-ing from unsheathed. Aerial, Adept, and Valor all have gimmicks tying down their gameplay, but is otherwise okay.

Hunter Arts

Sword Dance

Executes a series of slash attacks with your sword. Increasing ranks of this HA adds more hits to the combo.

HA Rank	To Charge	Total Damage
I	830 (1196 SP)	25 + 14 + 15 + 15 + 40 = 109% / 5 hits
II	920 (1304 SP)	25 + 14 + 15 + 15 + 14 + 15 + 40 = 138% / 7 hits
III	1250 (1700 SP)	25 + 14 + 15 + 15 + 14 + 15 + 20 + 7 + 45 = 170% / 9 hits

The worst HA among the bunch, but that's not saying much since all of SnS's arts are pretty stellar. This even has the saving grace of dealing a bunch of hits, easily applying elemental or status damage without bouncing much. This can, say, let you hit Silver Rathalos's head with a bunch of Water damage. Beyond that though, this HA also suffers from the critical error of all offensive HAs of "needing time to execute the attack".

Round Force

Spins in a circle, damaging anything and everything around you. During execution, you are invulnerable to all attacks and effects.

HA Rank	To Charge	Total Damage	Additional Effects
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I	250 (500 SP)	30%	<i>None</i>
II	250 (500 SP)	20 + 30 = 50% / 2 hits	Wider Range
III	290 (548 SP)	20 + 20 + 30 = 70% / 3 hits	Wider Range + Knocks Hunters into the air.

The most pertinent reason as to why this HA is used is because of the invulnerability effect. The short charge time is equivalent to Absolute Evasion, effectively making this an offensive version of Evasion with damage attached to it. However, you should never, ever run Rank III seriously in public halls. Doing so will net you an instant kick because you're an ass for interrupting other people's combos to knock them up into the air. Providing invincibility and saying that you're 'helping' doesn't excuse the possibility that if you time it horribly, horribly wrong you could cart other hunters. Run Rank II in multiplayer, always. No exceptions.

Shoryugeki

Perform a short shield-based combo that will launch you skyward into the air, shield-first. Has the potential to deal a bunch of KO and Exhaust damage if you land this properly on the monster's head.

HA Rank	To Charge	Total Damage	KO Damage	Exhaust Damage
I	670 (1004 SP)	10 + 60 = 70% / 2 hits	0 + 75	0 + 70
II	750 (1100 SP)	10 + 35 + 60 = 105% / 3 hits	0 + 100 + 50	0 + 50 + 40
III	830 (1196 SP)	10 + 35 + 60 + 30 = 135% / 4 hits	0 + 100 + 50 + 50	0 + 50 + 40 + 40

Used to be used a lot in Gen until Chaos Oil came along and was like "hey bby I can give you 60% Affinity for free" and we were all like "holy fuck". Less used not because it was nerfed, but because it was outclassed. If you do use this as, say, a replacement for Round Force and stack it with Chaos Oil and Stamina Oil you can practically beat the shit out of any monster with your not-Hammer Sword and KO things really easily. The one downside is that you have to aim it properly and hope that the opening slash doesn't make you go past the monster's head.

Chaos Oil

Lunges forward, then slash horizontally while applying the effects of all Oils to your sword. For a while afterwards, your sword-based attacks has the effects of all oils applied at the same time.

HA Rank	To Charge	Duration	Base Effects
I	920 (1304 SP)	135 seconds	15% Affinity, 4 KO, 5 Exhaust, 10% Stagger, Mind's Eye

II	1000 (1400 SP)	180	15% Affinity, 4 KO, 5 Exhaust, 10% Stagger, Mind's Eye
III	1000 (1400 SP)	120	30% Affinity, 7 KO, 8 Exhaust, 15% Stagger, Mind's Eye

The opening slash deals 30% damage, and doesn't apply this HA's effects. While this HA is active, you apply oils in one stroke, rather than three. Furthermore, you may apply one more oil on top of Chaos Oil, improving its effects, as shown below:

HA Rank	+Affinity Oil	+Stamina Oil	+Destroyer Oil	+Mind's Eye Oil
I/II	30% Affinity	8 KO, 10 Exhaust	+20% Stagger	Restores 100 Sharpness
III	60% Affinity	12 KO, 13 Exhaust	+30% Stagger	Restores 100 Sharpness

Chaos Oil makes you become a god for 2 minutes when you use level 3. The other two levels, while nice, only apply oils at half strength rather than at full strength, and overlaying oils on top of them only brings their effectiveness back up to their original level. But holy crap look at the 60% Affinity from overlaying Affinity and Chaos Oil at the same time. It's insane. That alone skyrockets this HA to almost-permanent use. Despite how godly this is though you can't really use this all the time due to the lengthy charge time and the fact that the rank 3 version of this art is locked behind Hyper Silver Rathalos and Hyper Gold Rathian at the same time. If you do get this art however, this is basically a must-use on any style with more than one HA slot.

What SnSs to Use?

SnSes focus on element first and foremost due to their hitcount, which is second only to Dual Blades. With their potent HAs, endgame SnS users should aspire towards Deviant weapons, and particularly elemental Deviant weapons due to the Deviant Boost effect speeding up HA gain. Finally, SnS relies on longer Sharpness grades rather than higher Sharpness grades, again due to the high hitcount of the weapon.

Progression Recommendations

Low Rank (Village 1-6*, Hub 1-3*)

- **Petrified Sword**
Decent raw and Green Sharpness once you get this SnS to level 4, but also works for self-defense while you're going out and grabbing materials for things in general early game.
- **Velocidrome Bite**
Made from Velocidrome materials and has a bunch of Green Sharpness as early as Village 2*, which makes it great to use this early in the game. Also has decent raw, so you'll use this throughout Village 2* and 3* before you get the Petrified Sword up to the right level.

- **Hidden Edge**
Nargacuga's SnS has a ton of Green Sharpness, decent raw, and great Affinity to use it after Petrified Sword gets hard-locked in terms of upgrades, and it's nice later due to the time at which you can upgrade it.
- **Djinn**
A solid Fire SnS that you can get by first downing a Rathalos. Has a decent length of Green Sharpness with solid raw and a great amount of Fire, with 24 when first crafted. Maintainable in early High Rank, though it does upgrade later than the Glavenus SnS, making this SnS slightly less usable until you get to High Rank Rathian.
- **Hana no Nagoriwo**
The Mizutsune SnS is the best Water SnS you can get by this point with great raw and solid Water, as well as a slot to boot. It also upgrades again early on in High Rank, gaining another edge over the other Water SnSs.
- **Verdant Rapier**
The Astalos SnS is solid in terms of stats and is upgradeable early on into High Rank, needing just Carbalite Ore to do so. It's also one of the only Thunder SnSs that gets Blue early on in High Rank.
- **Frost Edge**
Nothing's better for Ice damage than a literal icicle, right? This weapon is a little lacking on the raw end and it doesn't upgrade well into High Rank, but you should keep this upgraded for some solid Ice damage.
- **Sucher-Ankh**
Likely the only Dragon SnS you'll have access to by this point and it's not that bad either. Decent raw and Dragon, good length of Green Sharpness, and some Affinity as well.

High Rank (Village 7-10*, Hub 4-7*)

- **Obsidian Sword**
Due to being a raw-focused SnS, this SnS has quite a bit of raw damage backing it up, and when you upgrade it with High Rank materials it gains a little bit of Blue Sharpness, which only increases with level. Good for getting you through the first bits of High Rank.
- **Hidden Edge**
Nargacuga's SnS gains a little bit of natural White Sharpness when you upgrade it later on in High Rank, which makes it more useful than the Obsidian Sword by the end of High Rank.
- **Burning Prominar**
Glavenus SnS finally starts to scale up better than Djinn at this point, mostly because you probably don't have the resources to upgrade it to Daze Eye, which requires Hyper Hunter

tickets in order to upgrade. When you do get this, it gains Blue and a high amount of raw, which is pretty respectable by this point in the game.

- **Hana no Nagoriwo**

Mizutsune's SnS is the most solid option among the Water SnSs you have access to by this point in High Rank, as it has a touch of Blue Sharpness and a solid amount of raw - 170 - with a little bit of Affinity and 28 Water.

- **Verdant Rapier**

The other Thunder SnS options fall short of Astalos's SnS. With a high amount of Blue, and with Hyper materials, a touch of White Sharpness and a bunch of Thunder damage, you can't go wrong here.

- **Icicle Spike**

Barioth's SnS shares many of the same attributes as a Nargacuga SnS, but with actually good raw, high Ice, and a high Affinity in exchange for having lower Sharpness grades than a typical Nargacuga weapon. But this weapon still packs one hell of a punch.

- **Silverwing Swiftblade**

The Valstrax SnS has a ton of White Sharpness which helps with Sharpness upkeep greatly. One of the few SnSs you can make earlier in the game and have it be good endgame, and is one of two best Dragon SnSs.

G-Rank (Hub G1-G4*)

- **Elder Sword**

With a touch of White Sharpness and 260 raw, you can never go wrong when it comes to the Elder series of weapons when you progress through G-Rank.

- **Daze Eye**

Upgrading from Djinn using Hyper materials yields you this Rathalos SnS. When you upgrade it with G-Rank Rathalos materials from G3, you'll get a very solid SnS with solid raw, high Fire, and natural White Sharpness.

- **Dual Crustacio**

The Hermitaur/Ceanataur SnS finally gets its time in the limelight, since the other Water SnSs require HR Break in order to be useful. You can even fully upgrade this SnS before HR Break since the latest requirement of Hyper Ceanataur is from G3. It packs natural Purple, some Defense, a solid 310 raw, and an average 31 Water.

- **Dread Razor**

The Khezu SnS can be fully upgraded before HR Break and packs a solid array of stats, with 320 raw, 40 Thunder, 15% Affinity, and natural White Sharpness, making this a force to be reckoned with, and the choice for fighting Ahtal Ka.

- **Nardebosche**

Barioth's SnS without taking the sidegrade is infinitely better since it has an okay 270 raw, 37 Ice, 30% Affinity, and natural White Sharpness. Solid all-around, especially for fighting Ice-weak monsters.

- **Dragonstar Alcor**

Has a solid amount of raw at 280, Dragon at 42, and 2 slots make this a great Dragon weapon. Oh, and the infinite White doesn't hurt either.

Endgame SnS Recommendations*(includes Deviants)*

- **Firewaltz Edge**

The power of Deviant Boost, high Fire, solid raw, and Purple with Sharpness +2 means that this is the Fire SnS of choice. I hope you can stomach Dreading for 15 levels though, just like other weapons on this list.

- **Sanitsurau**

The Souseur SnS packs Deviant Boost and hits a solid balance between raw and element, with 320 raw, 30 Water, and 20% natural Affinity (!). With this setup you can even drop Weakness Exploit and rely on Chaos Oil + Affinity Oil to boost your Affinity to 80% without armor skills, and slapping Critical Eye +2 on top grants 100%. Potent!

- **Thunderlord Skybolt**

Has a great amount of Thunder, solid raw, and Purple with Sharpness +2, as well as Deviant Boost to boot. Is definitely better than the other Thunder Deviant, Boltreaver's SnS purely due to the numbers outweighing Boltreaver's equipment.

- **Oppressor's Bounty**

In recent times, the standard Zinogre SnS has found itself to be a worthy competitor to the Thunderlord SnS, surpassing it in some situations. Fairly easy to build, compared to the Thunderlord SnS as well.

- **Elderfrost Giant Slalom**

I dunno what a 'slalom' is but Elderfrost's SnS really packs a punch with a monstrous 380 raw and White with Sharpness +2. The only places where it falls short on is the Ice, which is miniscule, and the low natural Affinity, but Chaos Oil + Affinity Oil mostly solves that issue anyway. Compounded with Deviant Boost, this SnS is pretty great for those raw-weak monsters.

- **Permafrost Edge**

Useful if you're fighting one of those rare but pesky Ice-weak-but-not-raw-weak monsters that pops up every so often. Lacks Deviant Boost, but has a decent 310 raw and a pretty high 48 Ice, and it comes with two slots too.

- **Altheos Zodiarch**

The first of the two Dragon SnSs, the Alatreon SnS has a maxed out Sharpness bar with natural Purple, freeing you from the requirement of S+2. Has a sub-par 280 raw, but has an absolutely powerful 55 Dragon. Use on shorter hunts where the monster is weak to Dragon.

- **Magnastar Akri**

The alternative to the Alatreon SnS, Valstrax's SnS packs an average 300 raw and has 44 Dragon. In addition, it has a ton of White, common amongst Valstrax weapons, and two slots for some set flexibility. Use in longer hunts.

Endgame SnS Recommendations excluding Deviants

I get it; you don't want to hunt Deviants for whatever reason. That's fine. Here's some (lower-grade) recommendations for you guys out there.

- **Golden Riot**

Gold Rathian's SnS. Has fairly comparable stats to the Dreadking SnS, but has less Purple at S+2. Even has a few slots for set flexibility.

- **Agamemnon**

An ore SnS, has comparable Sharpness to Mizutsune. 330 raw in addition to the only-one-less-than-Mizu 34 Water makes it a real house.

Status SnS Recommendations

Status SnS is usually the way to go if you really need to go Status in this game, as Status DBs have had their Status values nerfed.

- **Dreadqueen Rapierina**

Has a below-average 290 raw, but also has natural Purple and 44 Poison, as well as a slight 10% Affinity bonus, as well as the classic Deviant Boost. If you need to poison something, this is the way to do it.

- **Deathgrip**

The classic Gendrome SnS returns from Gen once more as the king of Para in this game. Cannot attain Purple Sharpness through any means, but has an average 300 raw, and a decent 32 Para, along with two slots.

- **Dream Archduke Shura**

One of two solid Sleep SnSs, the Malfestio SnS has an on-par 300 raw and a good 28 Sleep. Use with Sharpness +2 to get Purple, and watch monsters fall asleep quickly.

- **Shadow Nerwithe**

The other Sleep SnS is Nerscylla's SnS. Has less raw than Malfestio's, at 270, and also has less Sleep, at 22. However this weapon does have 30% natural Affinity and a lot of natural White, which can let you drop Razor Sharp and Sharpness+2.

- **Absolute Ruiner Sword**

The Crimson Fatalis SnS is great for multi-monsterhunts, as it has a great 330 raw, solid 34 Blast, triple slots, and the ability to get Purple Sharpness with Sharpness +2.

- **Magma Nova**

The Hellblade SnS has an average 300 raw and a decent 30 Blast, but drops the Sharpness +2 requirement entirely, compared to the Crimson Fatalis SnS. It also packs Deviant Boost, making it more useful for Striker or Alchemy SnS users.

What Skills Should I Use?

In terms of recommended skills, SnS pretty much needs Razor Sharp all of the time, whereas Sharpness +2, like all weapon types, usage can vary based on the weapon. Unlike other weapons though, Weakness Exploit can be dropped since the combination of Chaos Oil and Affinity Oil can get you up to 60% Affinity at a time. However, you can choose to keep it, especially since Chaos Oil needs a little bit of time to charge up first, and you only have a limited amount of Affinity Oil, so it's your choice.

Progression Armor Sets

Low Rank (Village 1-6*, Hub 1-3*)

- **BuJaBu**

The classic recommendation progression option, use Bulldrome Cap, Jaggi Mail, Bulldrome Vambraces, Jaggi Faulds, and Bulldrome Greaves and gem for additional Attack to get Attack Up (L) super early in the game.

- **Ceanataur**

Ceanataur's armor set, with its Critical Eye and Razor Sharp skillset, really helps out SnS, even much so that you should probably replace your BuJaBu set with this. Do note that this early in the game Critical Eye will be less impactful than BuJaBu.

- **Rathalos**

The Rathalos armor set packs both Attack Up and Weakness Exploit, and can be gemmed for even more Attack. This makes this set an upgrade to BuJaBu, and due to the placement in progression, can be used to transition to High Rank easily.

- **Rathalos Mixset**

By using Rathalos Cap, Rathalos Mail, Ceanataur Vambraces, Rathalos Faulds, and Bnahabra Boost, you can trade a few Attack points for points in Razor Sharp, which makes this set way more useful for SnS. I definitely recommend this if you can spare the Defense.

High Rank (Village 7-10*, Hub 4-7*)

- **BuJaBu S**
Basically the same as standard BuJaBu, except for High Rank. You should really only get this if you're really hurting for Defense and you skipped Rathalos's set.
- **Ceanataur S**
Ceanataur's set in High Rank is more of the same from Low Rank Ceanataur's. More Critical Eye while Razor Sharp stays the same. Definitely get for SnS.
- **Rathalos S**
Still more of the same for Rathalos's High Rank set with more Attack points than Low Rank. Because of this it's still a great progression set, and remains useful even for transitioning to G-Rank.
- **Rathalos Mixset S**
Replace all the parts of the Low Rank version of the mixset and you get this version with more points in Attack than before, so this set is quite effective for the SnS user when transitioning to G-Rank.
- **Silver Sol**
Silver Sol is a fine set if you want to suffer fighting Silver Rathalos, and works as an alternative set to progress to G-Rank. Packing both Weakness Exploit and Critical Boost, this set can pack a punch as long as you can hit weakspots consistently, which SnS can't always do.
- **Hayasol**
The Gen meta set of legend makes its return as a late-High Rank set, capable of taking people who are willing to grind for the Hayabusa Feather all the way to HR Break, so long as the user is skilled enough.

G-Rank (Hub G1-G4*)

- **Ceanataur X/GX/XR**
The Ceanataur armor set variants can all be useful for relatively early SnS armor progression, since they all pack Razor Sharp. Depending on the variant, the method to boost Affinity differs, with GX providing Repeat Offender, X providing more Critical Eye points, and XR providing points in Handicraft and Razor Sharp, but being available later.
- **Rathalos X**

Rathalos X provides Attack, Weakness Exploit, and a few points in Earplugs, making this an easy-to-make and easy-to-use progression set, perfect for taking on Ahtal Ka.

- **Rathalos Mixset X**

This variation on the classic Rathalos mixset provides Razor Sharp in exchange for the points in Hearing, which isn't necessarily needed on SnS. To make, simply use Rathalos Helm X, Rathalos Mail X, Rathalos Vambraces X, Vaik FauldX, and Bnahabra Boots X, along with a few appropriate decorations.

- **Jho Ceana**

By itself, Jho Ceana provides Sharpness +2 and Razor Sharp, and features a lot of armor slots, letting you customize this set well. To make, simply put together Esurient XR and Ceanataur XR alternating.

Skill Recommendations

- **Razor Sharp**

Crucial to Sharpness upkeep on SnS, since SnS hits quickly compared to other weapon types. You nearly always need Razor Sharp unless you encounter the rare long length of Sharpness Gauge, such as on Valstrax's SnS.

- **Weakness Exploit**

Provides +50% Affinity when you strike weakspots of monsters. Incredibly powerful, as long as you can hit weakspots, which you might not be able to do as SnS. See: Deviljho's chest.

- **Repeat Offender**

A good alternative for Weakness Exploit for when you can't hit weakspots consistently, this grants up to 30% Affinity when you consecutively hit monsters, making it only a slightly weaker choice of skill when compared to Weakness Exploit.

- **Sharpness +2**

Like all weapon types, this skill's usefulness varies depending on the weapon you use it with. For SnS, there's only a few situations where S+2 isn't useful, such as when you can't get a higher Sharpness grade with S+2, or if the Sharpness gauge on the weapon is full.

- **Critical Boost**

Increases the damage of your critical hits from 1.25x to 1.40x. Needless to say, if you have a ton of Affinity already, which is easy to do with SnS's Chaos Oil + Affinity Oil, this skill amplifies your damage even further. There's not really a situation with SnS where you don't need to use this.

- **Critical Eye +1/2/3**

Classic Affinity booster, most often used to round out a set. Do make sure you don't overload on Affinity though.

- **Challenger +1/2**

An alternative to Critical Eye. Challenger is useful in G-Rank because most monsters enrage frequently and quickly, providing you with a nearly-constant raw and Affinity boost.

- **[Element] Atk +1/2 and Elem Atk Up, Status Atk +1/2**

Since you're SnS, you can take advantage of the unique powers behind SnS and boost your alternative form of damage by taking one of these skills. Doing so won't decrease your damage too much, so feel free to use these as an alternative to the classical crit meta.

- **Elemental Crit**

Elemental Crit combines the potency of the crit meta with the elemental power of SnS. As SnS, you get 35% more Element damage whenever you crit, so if you can stack a lot of Affinity, which again is easy to do as SnS, this skill can be powerful.

Final Thoughts

SnS fares more in the middle of the pack in this game, but Chaos Oil, and all SnS HAs really, are fantastic. SnS isn't LS, where all the styles are above-average in quality, but Striker SnS really is a great style to use. The various matchups don't really change with SnS, though it does suffer against the more mobile monsters. As the basic starter weapon of the game, you can't go wrong with any SnS styles, which matches the 'beginner' weapon aspect that the devs likely wanted to convey with this.

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