Fighters in *D&D* are the Swiss Army knife of combat characters. They are capable of anything and lend themselves to being soldiers or mercenaries. The only higher calling they care about is money and they like it that way. Now that’s not to say that every Fighter is a sell sword, it’s just that these are people who train for martial perfection and they’re really, really good at it.

The hallmark of a Fighter is that, no matter how you want to fight (except unarmed, go play a [Monk](https://geekandsundry.com/the-complete-beginners-guide-to-starting-a-monk-in-dd/)!), they can do it. Before jumping into the rest of the article, make sure you check out our [tips for new RPG players](http://geekandsundry.com/new-rpg-players-everything-you-need-to-know-about-character-building/). My first character was a gruff mute and I HATED it. Learn from my failures and make sure your character is fun, interesting and easy to play. This is extra important when playing a Fighter because unlike other classes, Fighters only receive abilities related to combat and nothing to help you roleplay.

**STATISTICS**

Statistics in *D&D* represent all of the ways your character interacts with the world around them. My STR 9 Wizard (RIP) was never going to do a pull up, while the wife’s STR 19 Barbarian could do them with one hand. Wearing a backpack full of armor. As such, it’s important to prioritize your stats so you don’t end up accidentally having a really high Wisdom that does nothing for your ability to fight and simply turns you into a human lie detector.

With every Fighter, you need to have a vision for how you want to fight before you start doing your stats. If you want to be an archer, an abysmal DEX and a high STR just won’t work. For this section, I am intentionally ignoring the Eldritch Knight Martial Archetype; it’s just too different and gets its own section at the bottom. For all of you non-Eldritch Knights, the highest statistic should be your main fighting stat of Strength or Dexterity (stabby vs. shooty). From there, Constitution should be your second place with the non-selected Strength or Dexterity being third. Ideally, you should prioritize like this:

**Strength/Dexterity -> Constitution -> Strength/Dexterity -> Charisma -> Wisdom -> Intelligence**

In addition to your statistics, the type of Fighter you want to play is defined at 2nd level when you select a Fighting Style. Each of these styles focuses on a specific form of combat from Archery, to Dueling, and provide bonuses when fighting in your preferred style.

**MARTIAL ARCHETYPE**

The two non-Eldritch Knight Martial Archetypes are the Champion and the Battle Master. The Champion is the archetype that focuses on pure, individual performance. Their sheer athleticism gives them the ability to inflict critical hits more easily, rely on their athleticism when performing ability checks (which obviously doesn’t help with abilities that are focused on Mental attributes) and even learn a second Fighting Style. Champions are deadly and would probably rock [American Ninja Warrior](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Ninja_Warrior).

Battle Masters, while still incredibly capable fighters, are more similar to a General or Scholarly Warrior. They study fighting and consider it to be an art. They can perform maneuvers in combat that range from personal combat abilities all the way to group support and inspiration.

**ELDRITCH KNIGHT**

Eldritch Knights are basically a hybrid Fighter/Wizard. They combine all of the benefits of being a Fighter (like Heavy Armor mastery, Fighting Styles, etc.) with a careful study of magic and the ability to cast Wizard spells. Because of this, their statistics breakdown needs to prioritize Intelligence in a way that other Fighters just don’t need. As a result, the statistics breakdown of an Eldritch Knight should look like this:

**Strength/Dexterity -> Intelligence -> Constitution -> Charisma -> Strength/Dexterity -> Wisdom**

The abilities of the Eldritch Knight all focus on marrying both the magic and the combat abilities of the character and really create a unique playstyle where you can use weapon attacks after a cantrip or even impose disadvantage on an ability check after you damage them with your weapon (hello Fireball).

When you select this Martial Archetype at level 3, you know 2 cantrips and 3 spells. Eldritch Knights have a few more restrictions on the spells they can learn with 2 of your 3 spells needing to be from the Schools of Abjuration or Evocation.

The first cantrip you should take is True Strike. This requires an action but provides advantage on your first attack against the target during your next turn. While not spectacular from levels 3 – 6 because of the fact that it needs one full turn to setup, this becomes one of your most potent combos at 7th level when you can make an attack after spending your action casting a cantrip. As Eldritch Knights don’t learn their 3rd (and final) cantrip until level 10, I would rather have a good cantrip that becomes amazing than go 3 (long) levels without it. If you want a defensive cantrip, Blade Ward is a great choice. It takes a round, similar to True Strike, and for the same reasons, becomes much, much better at 7th level. Alternatively if you want a cantrip that deals ranged magic damage (which works great if you are playing an archer as you can then attack with both your bow and the cantrip), pick your favorite elemental damage type and choose from Chill Touch (Necrotic), Fire Bolt,  or Ray of Frost.

For your 3 spells, I am only going to offer suggestions from the schools of Abjuration and Evocation, even though one spell does not need to be from those schools. I like Shield because it stacks with your already incredible AC from your Heavy Armor (and maybe shield). It isn’t really necessary but there is nothing like pushing your AC well past the 20’s and shrugging off damage for a turn, especially if you are really low on HP. After that, you should take Magic Missile as it is a useful spell that levels well with you and does not require any to hit rolls. The target simply takes the damage and is great for combats where you physically cannot get to the target for stab o’clock. Finally, I would recommend Burning Hands as this is a spell that focuses from you and allows you to engulf all creatures within a 15 foot cone. If you are ever being swarmed by lots of small creatures like Kobols, this is a quick and easy way to deal a lot of damage to all of them.

As I said before, one of your spells does not need to be from those two schools so feel free to have a look at all of the spells available to you. Eldritch Knights can only swap out the spells they know when they earn a level so make sure that you have spells that are going to be fun and useful.