**The Complete Beginner’s Guide To Starting A Ranger In D&D**

Rangers are the elusive forest ninjas of *D&D*. Don’t mistake Rangers for only being bow users (although they are some of the best in the game with a bow), because they have the option of taking fighting styles that can really push their melee damage up as well. Rangers are a great class who marry a useful group of combat abilities with incredible deep roleplay opportunities. I mean, at level 1 you have to choose a favored enemy and simply delving into the reason why your Ranger hates them can be a great hook into your character. As always, be sure to check out our [tips for beginner roleplayers](http://geekandsundry.com/new-rpg-players-everything-you-need-to-know-about-character-building/) if you need help filling in the backstory and personality of your Ranger, as throwing dice is only half the battle (the other half is knowing).

**STATISTICS**

Statistics in *D&D* represent how your character interacts with the world and what they can (and cannot) accomplish. Work with your DM to ensure you are generating your statistics the same as the rest of your group and whatever method chosen, you will generate 6 different numbers; 1 for each attribute. When you have your numbers, it’s important to prioritize your statistics to get the most out of them.

Regardless of whether you are focusing on ranged combat with a bow or melee combat, you should prioritize Dexterity as your primary attribute. Dexterity can be used as the primary stat on melee weapons that have the “finesse” quality, as well as being the primary statistic for ranged combat. Not to mention the fact that stealth (a specialty of yours), acrobatics, Armor Class, and even Initiative in combat are all helped with a high Dexterity. Rangers also have the ability to cast spells (starting at Level 2) and your casting attribute is Wisdom, so this should become your 2nd place statistic. Your statistics breakdown should look something like this:

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

Normally I would follow up statistics with a breakdown of the subclasses available, but for Rangers, I don’t think they need an in depth breakdown. There are two Ranger Archetypes available and they both focus on one specific thing. The Hunter archetype focuses on turning your Ranger into a combat monster. Alternatively, the Beast Master archetype gives you an animal companion and abilities that help make it better.

**SPELLS**

As mentioned earlier, Rangers have access to spells and some spellcasting abilities. This isn’t to say that they are fantastic ninja forest wizards (those are [Druids](https://geekandsundry.com/the-complete-beginners-guide-to-starting-a-druid-in-dd/)) but their magic allows them to gain an edge in situations that arrows can’t solve on their own. At level 2, Rangers can learn 2 level 1 spells from the Ranger spell list and they are only able to swap out spells when they earn a level. Combine this with only having 2 spell slots (at level 2), and you want to find choices that have really great utility.

The first spell that every Ranger should take is Hunter’s Mark. This is an excellent spell whose effects increase your own combat capabilities, and you can even transfer it after a target is reduced to 0 HP, as long as your concentration is not broken. In addition to increased damage, if the target you have marked attempts to run away, you have advantage on your perception or survival checks to assist with your tracking of it. The best part? This spell requires a Bonus Action so you can still attack it with your weapon after you cast it.

The second spell I would recommend taking is Cure Wounds. While there are some really cool spells that increase damage and do other cool things (like Ensnaring Strike & Hail of Thorns), these also require concentration and as a result, you would lose your Hunter’s Mark if you cast them. Since Hunter’s Mark has a concentration duration of an hour, you are much better taking a spell that doesn’t require concentration and provides a really cool effect. Cure Wounds is a great healing spell and that’s why it gets my vote.

*Unearthed Arcana released updated rules for the Ranger class. Whether you are playing from the Player’s Handbook or from there, this information is all still valid. If your DM wants you to use those rules instead of the Player’s Handbook, you can find it* [*here*](http://dnd.wizards.com/articles/features/unearthed-arcana-ranger-revised)*.*