

MANEUVER CONSTRUCTION EXAMPLE

Using the system to construct a maneuver can feel daunting so here is an example to help through the process.

This maneuver will be a greatsword maneuver. The greatsword master holds the sword with right hand near the crossguard and left hand down near the pommel, holding it almost like a baseball bat. He reverses his grip by turning over both hands, tucking the blade beneath his right arm; now he holds it almost as if he were drawing the weapon. That was step A, the drawback. For step B he sweeps the blade up, still using the reverse grip; this is just a raking strike though, meant to slash across the front of the target while he continues to build momentum. He uses the momentum from step B to spin 180 degrees; with his back to his target the greatsword master needs to plan how to strike from memory; by adjusting his swing with his body blocking the view of the sword, he can gain an advantage on the final step. In step D he finishes the spin, thrusting the greatsword point-first according to the plan from step C.

Phase 1: Assign the bonuses

Step A is a drawback, nothing happens here so you can put zero's in all the rows. Step B feels like a pretty standard attack, but since there was no step A and the drawback allows some aiming let's treat step B like the first attack in a sequence; this gives it a bonus of +5 (neutralizing the usual -5 penalty for being the second attack in a full attack sequence). Step C involves an aiming attack; this should occur at a penalty since the character has his back turned to the target, let's make it small though; -2. Step D is the big payoff, best to give it a large bonus out the gate; grant a +10 here.

Step	Bonus	Factor	Chance	Special	eDam
A	0	0	0	0	0
B	+5	.5			
C	-2	0			
D	+10	8			
E (na)					
Total Effect					

Phase 2: Damage Factors

As before, step A doesn't do any damage, so place a zero in the factor column. Have step B do half damage (round up) to represent how it's just a raking strike. Step C also does no damage since it's just a targeting attack.

Step D is special, let's give the attack some special effects, perhaps it targets nerve ganglia or another vital bit of the body. We'll start with double normal damage then add 2 effect, stunned for 1d6 rounds and 1d4 points of temporary Constitution damage. Let's give this a Fortitude saving throw DC of 18 + Strength bonus; this makes the multiple 1.

That adds up to a base factor of $2 + (2 + 4) \times 1 = 8$.

Step	Bonus	Factor	Chance	Special	eDam
A	0	0	0	0	0
B	+5	.5			
C	-2	0			
D	+10	8			
E (na)					
Total Effect					

Phase 3: Chance

We'll do this one a few times, one for 25, 20, and 15. Remember that values are capped at .95 and cannot go below 0. The values in this column equal your percentage chance to hit if your attack bonus is higher than the target's armor class by the amount at the top of the column.

Step	Bonus	Factor	Chance (25)	Special	eDam
A	0	0	0	0	0
B	+5	.5	$(25 - 5 + 5) \times .05 = .95$		
C	-2	0	$(25 - 10 - 2) \times .05 = .65$		
D	+10	8	$(25 - 15 + 10) \times .05 = .95$		
E (na)					
Total Effect					

Step	Bonus	Factor	Chance (20)	Special	eDam
A	0	0	0	0	0
B	+5	.5	$(20 - 5 + 5) \times .05 = .95$		
C	-2	0	$(20 - 10 - 2) \times .05 = .4$		
D	+10	8	$(20 - 15 + 10) \times .05 = .75$		
E (na)					
Total Effect					

Step	Bonus	Factor	Chance (15)	Special	eDam
A	0	0	0	0	0
B	+5	.5	$(15 - 5 + 5) \times .05 = .75$		
C	-2	0	$(15 - 10 - 2) \times .05 = .15$		
D	+10	8	$(15 - 15 + 10) \times .05 = .5$		
E (na)					
Total Effect					

Phase 4: Special

There's only one time you need the special for this maneuver, that's step D. The character must hit with step C in order for step D to have a chance; so enter the Chance value for step C into step D's Special column. All other steps may place a 1 in the column.

Step	Bonus	Factor	Chance (25)	Special	eDam
A	0	0	0	0	0
B	+5	.5	$(25 - 5 + 5) \times .05 = .95$	1	
C	-2	0	$(25 - 10 - 2) \times .05 = .65$	1	
D	+10	8	$(25 - 15 + 10) \times .05 = .95$.65	
E (na)					
Total Effect					

Step	Bonus	Factor	Chance (20)	Special	eDam
A	0	0	0	0	0
B	+5	.5	$(20 - 5 + 5) \times .05 = .95$	1	
C	-2	0	$(20 - 10 - 2) \times .05 = .4$	1	
D	+10	8	$(20 - 15 + 10) \times .05 = .75$.4	
E (na)					
Total Effect					

Step	Bonus	Factor	Chance (15)	Special	eDam
A	0	0	0	0	0
B	+5	.5	$(15 - 5 + 5) \times .05 = .75$	1	
C	-2	0	$(15 - 10 - 2) \times .05 = .15$	1	
D	+10	8	$(15 - 15 + 10) \times .05 = .5$.15	
E (na)					
Total Effect					

Phase 5: Effective Damage

This phase fills in the final column; because of the numbers you'll likely need a calculator or spreadsheet. Figuring out the numbers is easy though, simply place each row's Factor \times Chance \times Special in this column. Write down the total $\times 10$ in the lower right square.

Step	Bonus	Factor	Chance (25)	Special	eDam
A	0	0	0	0	0
B	+5	.5	$(25 - 5 + 5) \times .05 = .95$	1	.475
C	-2	0	$(25 - 10 - 2) \times .05 = .65$	1	0
D	+10	8	$(25 - 15 + 10) \times .05 = .95$.65	4.94
E	+0	1	$(25 - 20) \times .05 = .25$	1	.25
Total Effect					56.65

Step	Bonus	Factor	Chance (20)	Special	eDam
A	0	0	0	0	0
B	+5	.5	$(20 - 5 + 5) \times .05 = .95$	1	.475
C	-2	0	$(20 - 10 - 2) \times .05 = .4$	1	0
D	+10	8	$(20 - 15 + 10) \times .05 = .75$.4	2.4
E (na)					
Total Effect					28.75

Step	Bonus	Factor	Chance (15)	Special	eDam
A	0	0	0	0	0
B	+5	.5	$(15 - 5 + 5) \times .05 = .75$	1	.375
C	-2	0	$(15 - 10 - 2) \times .05 = .15$	1	0
D	+10	8	$(15 - 15 + 10) \times .05 = .5$.15	.6
E (na)					
Total Effect					9.75

Phase 6: Comparing the Totals

This combination maneuver is only good when you've got a large attack bonus against your opponent but it's fun to beat up easy to hit things from time to time. Compare the values for the above sequence to the following table from page 13 of Masters of Arms:

Base Chance	25	20	15
Vanilla eDam	34	24.5	15
Max eDam	41	28	18
Maneuver eDam	57	29	10
Adjusted Benefit	6.7	1.8	-3.5

At base chance 20 it's just about right; the effect is pretty advantageous at higher bonuses but not atrociously so; a character could get close to that damage bonus with the use of Power Attack.

I've also included the **adjusted benefit** for each Base Chance above; this tells you the average damage bonus per 10 points of base damage. You can figure this with the formula (Maneuver eDam - Vanilla eDam) $\times 10$ / Vanilla eDam.

Adjusted benefit is roughly equal to the damage bonus this maneuver would count as giving; i.e. an adjusted benefit of 2 grants a bonus similar to that given by Weapon Specialization, but only in certain circumstances.

In the end the maneuver might be too useful when the player has a large attack bonus advantage, and not useful enough when he has a moderate attack bonus advantage. We could "flatten" the maneuver by decreasing the bonus in Step B to +0, increasing it in Step

C to +10, granting a +10 attack bonus to Step D but lowering the Factor to 4 by having it cause normal damage and reducing the saving throw DC to 12 + Strength bonus; that would probably be a good thing and make the maneuver something players consider using in a wider range of circumstances.

Here's the final write-up without the above fixes:

REVERSE STROKE AND THRUST (EX, COMBINATION) [FIGHTER]

The greatsword master holds the sword with right hand near the crossguard and left hand down near the pommel, holding it almost like a baseball bat. He reverses his grip by turning over both hands, tucking the blade beneath his right arm; now he holds it almost as if he were drawing the weapon. He then sweeps the blade up, still using the reverse grip; this is just a raking strike though, meant to slash across the front of the target while he continues to build momentum. He uses the momentum to spin 180 degrees; with his back to his target the master plans how to strike a vital area from memory. He finishes the spin, thrusting the greatsword point-first.

Prerequisites: Weapon Focus (greatsword)

Allowed Weapons: greatsword

Benefit: Sacrifice step A of this four step combination. You receive a +5 combination bonus to hit in step B but cause only half damage (round up). In step C you must make a targeting attack at -2; this causes no damage. If the targeting attack in step C fails, you lose your fourth attack. If it succeeds, you receive a +10 combination bonus to hit with your fourth attack, cause normal damage, and the victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 18 + your Strength bonus) or suffer 1d4 points of temporary Constitution damage and be **stunned** for 1d6 rounds.