

Shining Soul II Brawler Guide

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Brawler FAQ/Guide for Shining Soul II
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This FAQ was written using the font Courier New, size 10.

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0. Why update after nearly 3 years?
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I stayed away from the game for quite a while. But after checking out the SS2 messageboard again after nearly 3 years, I encountered this post about the Counter and Evade skill (by a fellow GameFAQs messageboard poster, username Snarky_Dudbear**). Of course, I responded in accordance to what was written in my FAQ (plus a little sarcasm), but out of nothing I decided to test these two skills out, and found out a shocking discovery: Evade does not seem to work, at all!

After that I decided to play the game again, and began testing out Counter, and found out all sorts of things about the skill too. I found out that it is a worthy investment because of all sorts of reasons (see the description of this skill for details).

After that, I found it tedious to level my brawler up the old fashioned way, so I downloaded myself an emulator and used the assistance of gameshark codes to aid in my "research".

When I tried to update the info regarding Evade and Counter, I found out how "biased" my FAQ was towards knife users, and how lacking discussions were. I read it all over again objectively, and I felt that it disregarded plenty of things and seem to only lead you to using the Knife and forget everything else. Yes, shame on me.

Add to the fact that there were a lot of grammar (not only spelling) mistakes too. A long time has passed indeed.

So, even though no one would care and the fact that greater than 4 years had already passed since the release of this game, I updated my FAQ nonetheless. We can't have wrong info running around, can we?

If you've read my FAQ/Guide before, you may notice that it has bloomed in file size significantly (from 67kb to 122kb). This is by far the biggest update this FAQ/Guide has ever had; it's like a whole new FAQ/Guide (hopefully, it won't be the last update).

I've added a lot of things and tried to be as detailed as I could in all the discussions that I have made. I also changed the point of view of the FAQ/Guide to be as objective as I could (except perhaps for Evade, which again, I tell you: Evade does not work). Check out the Version History to find out ALL the updates I made.

If you somehow still care about the game like I do, and find things you might like to add, correct, ask or clarify, don't hesitate to e-mail me. Just provide

a little something in the title of your e-mail to let me know it's about SS2. And must you send me hate mail, be my guest. It's better to blow out your hate through an e-mail to someone you don't know than go out and shoot people in the streets.

** Snarky_Dudbear, if you are interested of being cited properly, post in the SS2 messageboards in GameFAQs using that username. Yes, I consider what you did a contribution to this FAQ/Guide.

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1. Legal Stuff
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This is an unofficial FAQ/Guide for Shining Soul II. Some information, such as the skill descriptions, came from various sources (i.e. from the game manual itself, other guides, and other gamers).

You may publish this guide or a portion of it provided that it was published as it appeared in this guide and you at least credit me for any info you might have taken.

This document can be found in GameFAQs**, Neoseeker, and Supercheats. Should other Walkthrough/FAQ/Guide sites be interested in hosting this file, may do so, provided the terms mentioned above are met (and please send me an e-mail that you did too, just to give me a heads up).

** You could be sure that the copy in GameFAQs is the most updated copy of this document.

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2. Introduction
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Before anything else: You may read things in this guide that some of you may or may not consider as spoilers. You're reading at your own risk anyway...

2.1 About this FAQ/Guide

Welcome to the unofficial Brawler FAQ/Guide for Shining Soul II. This guide will give you suggestions on how to raise an effective Brawler; a rundown on the Brawler's skills and an idea on what stats you need to turn him into a strong character.

Remember, I do not consider myself an expert of Shining Soul II, nor have I mastered playing as a Brawler. Corrections (including grammar lapses) and suggestions are very welcome; you can just tell me by e-mail, or using the GameFAQs.com message boards (SS2, of course). Please indicate anything related to SS2 or the Brawler in the Subject.

Also, this is not a walkthrough, it is only a FAQ/Guide (basically it's only a Guide). I didn't bother with a walkthrough since Alex Ngo's FAQ covers that very well. The story is linear anyway, no matter what character you choose.

I know this guide is a bit late, considering the game has been around for quite a while now, but anyway, I hope it helps all those who are new to the game, especially with the Brawler.

Another thing, you may find a lot of referencing and comparison to Diablo 2. I am a big fan of both game series, and I find a lot of similarities between the two. Might help in the explanation of certain things, too, if you are a fan of the Diablo franchise also. If you have never played Diablo 2, or is not familiar enough with it to understand the references, just ignore them.

2.2 Why play as a Brawler?

The Brawler is probably the most beginner-friendly character in the game. All of his skills are passive and are also almost equally valuable (except for one which is utterly useless, Evade, more on to that later) which make him easy to use.

His weapons of choice may seem weak but they are among the fastest weapons in the game. The description "...but has somewhat low defense" may discourage you from choosing the brawler. True that the brawler will have lower defense than some of the hardy characters in the game, but his skills make up for it.

The only real reason why I chose to play the Brawler as my first character was because he looked like a wolf, which placed "he looks strong" in my mind, and the reason I thought of that was because Kevin from Seiken Densetsu 3 can turn into a wolf, which was strong.

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3. Stat Analysis
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Stats, a basic element in RPGs. Each character class start out with a different set of base stats. For the brawler, starting base stats are: STR 16, DEX 17, INT 5, and VIT 12 (provided you do not use cheatcode names). There is also a sort-of hidden stat, SPD, which is your character walking speed. It is hidden from the Status screen, and thus you cannot increase it directly by status points (only through bonuses from equipment, or in the Ninja's case, his Speed skill, but that's not your concern). Only the four visible stats are discussed here, for more info on SPD see Item Properties Discussion > Walking Speed +xx.

The Brawler is a melee character, thus his stat point distribution should be appropriate for one. What I suggest you do is to follow a regular stat point distribution every time you level up, and adjust that only when you need to (i.e. attacks miss too much, dying too often etc.) or when you find stat boosters. I also suggest that you do not consider +stat equipment in adjusting you stats (except for INT), equipment with +stats come and go in this game. It's bad when you replace a +VIT armor and only find out that your HP has become short. Remember, consider +stats from items a bonus.

3.1 Strength

Each point you allocate in here directly increases your attack power by 1. That +1 per STR isn't in percentage, but an actual +1 to your attack. This is unlike in Diablo 2, wherein the attack boost from STR is calculated as a percentage.

Since you are a melee character, this is where most of your stat points should be going into, both for the additional ATK it will provide, as well as covering STR requirements of items later on.

What must never ever happen is when you find an item you want to use, but you couldn't, because you cannot meet the minimum STR requirements.

Charged attacks enhance your attack power (more on to this later, see Charged Weapon Attacks), so you want more here. The skill Counter multiplies the amount of STR stat by 4 to calculate its damage (see Counter), so that in itself could reach astronomical levels.

It seems that marginal hits (those hits indicated by yellow numbers and do not flinch/recoil) is also related to the amount of damage you do. You'll often do marginal hits to High DEF monsters.

3.2 Dexterity

Each point you allocate in here increases your chance to hit enemies and evade enemy attacks. Since there is no indication of your chance to hit or chance to be hit (unlike in Diablo 2), it's hard to quantify the benefit you get from this stat. But you WILL notice an improvement in hit and evade rate if you put points here.

I can (only) surmise that Evade/Hit rate seems to be affected by your DEX stat and monsters DEX stat. But coming up with something definitive and categorical is difficult.

Leaving this stat behind will result to you scoring a lot of marginal hits and missed attacks, as well as difficulty to escape mobs.

Always put at least 1 here every level so your hit rate and evade rate don't get left behind. What's the point of having a strong attack power when you can't get your slashes to land?

DEX gains more value since the Evade skill does not seem to work as advertised (see Evade).

Charged attacks have a higher chance to hit than normal attacks.

3.3 Intelligence

Each point you allocate in here increases your spirit points (SP) by 2. This also increases the strength of spells (which you have none). The +2 SP is the same for every character, even casters get +2 SP only.

Can be considered to be a worthless stat for a melee character, like the Brawler, since you don't have any spells to beef up when you increase INT as most of your skills are passive, Guts activates on its own, and weapon damage rely on ATK.

However, charge attacks still cost SP, but that doesn't justify wasting points here. It is only SP that you really need, not INT per se since you can't make use of the spell boost it provides. But since you get SP from raising INT, then +INT items are still welcome, as +SP items are.

+INT and +SP items are easily acquired in the beginning of the game, while SP leeching items can be acquired later in the game. Not to mention that SP recovers over time, regardless of character. Putting stat points here will not

benefit you greatly.

3.4 Vitality

Each point you allocate here increases your hit points (HP) by 3. The +3 is the same for every character, even hardy characters like the warrior and dragonute get only a +3.

This stat is where all spare points go into, as it is not as important as STR and DEX. If you play it smart, you can get away with very little HP. You may not be able to rely on +VIT/+HP items though, since they are hard to come by.

Brawlers (and Archers) also have the Healing skill, which triggers hit point regeneration (see Healing). This skill lessens the need for a large HP pool. Soul weapons (weapons which specifically have 5% HP leech) can also be fused easily late in the game.

Remember, however, that in the middle of a fray, Healing will not save you, and HP leeching weapons need you to be hitting enemies for them to work. If you're on the receiving end of a barrage of attacks, the extra HP this stat provides would be your only chance.

3.5 Stat Point Distribution

I would recommend this stat point allocation: 2 STR
1 DEX
0 INT
1 VIT.

Raise stat points on a per level basis. And with 2 STR per level you'll be sure you can wear any armor you will find.

You can choose to stop raising VIT when it reaches 70 for 210 HP (Healing Waters heal 200 HP), then focus on 2 to STR and 2 to DEX per level, or 3 STR and 1 DEX. Extra HP is always useful, though (besides, with HP leech weapons, you're going to be leeching more than you can hold). If you choose to use Guts, you may want to have a low maximum HP (see Guts).

I really advise that you never sink a single point in INT. This build may start slow since you'll run out of SP very often, after you get the right items (i.e. leeching items) you'll be happy you never invested in INT. But if you really find the need to boost your SP via the INT stat, then you could go 15 INT for 30 SP (exact amount Goddess Tears heal), or 50 INT for 100 SP (exact amount Rays of Hope heal). If you do plan to invest in INT then do it as soon as possible, to milk the benefit for all its worth.

If you plan not to invest in INT, early on buy a Star Pendant (+20 SP) from Ipa's Palace Shop to cover your short SP, then get the Moon Pendant (+40 SP) or Psychic Pendant (SP recover speed +1, +8 Int) until you get your hands on a weapon with the suffix Soul (%4 SP leech) or Spirit (%9 SP leech) mod. Knife brawlers can go for the Blood Knife (and anything that could null the curse, see Item Properties Discussion to find out what a cursed weapon does), for 2% HP/SP leech.

Stats have a maximum value to them. STR, DEX and INT max out at 500 points, while VIT maxes out at 333 points (for 999 HP, SP too maxes out at 999 when

INT is 500). Any additional points after then would come from item bonuses. Any additional VIT after that would be useless, so will additional INT (INT is useless to you from the beginning anyway).

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4. Weapon Discussion
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Each character, even casters, have at least one weapon mastery in his/her skill selection. As a melee character, investing in a mastery is a must, although you should only invest in one. The Brawler has two weapons: Claw and Knife, which means he has two weapon masteries. Investing in the mastery of your weapon choice benefits you in many ways.

4.1 Weapon Requirements

Each weapon has its own level. You increase a weapon mastery to equip stronger weapons. For example, a Manople is a level 4 claw class weapon. In order to equip it, you must have raised Claw to at least level 4 (the weapons you start with on a New Game are level 0 weapons).

Unlike armor/helm/gloves, weapons do not require STR to equip, only the weapon level must be met.

4.2 Increase Weapon Damage

Credit goes to Crux for the Weapon Damage Formula.

It isn't called mastery if it doesn't increase weapon damage now, is it? The formula used in determining weapon damage increment per level is:

$$(\text{Base ATK of Weapon} / 10) \times (\text{Level of weapon mastery}) = \text{ATK bonus}$$

When you max a particular mastery, instead of using 7 as multiplier, it uses 8. Your STR is in no way involved in calculating the damage bonus you get per level, as it directly adds 1:1 to your ATK, which means that the product you get here gets added to your STR. The formula is as follows:

$$(\text{ATK bonus}) + \text{STR} = \text{ATK power shown on character screen}$$

Take note that the ATK power shown on the character screen is not the actual damage you diss out to enemies, as each enemy has different values for their armor. But as a rule: The more, the better.

4.3 Charged Weapon Attacks

Credit goes to Crux for the SP Consumption Formula for Weapon Charges

Each level you add to a weapon mastery allows you to charge your weapon further. Increasing a weapon mastery's level by 1, adds one more level when you charge a weapon. For example, I have Knife at level 3, I can charge any Knife class weapon to 3. Masteries work the opposite way with spells**, as you need a higher mastery to charge a weapon higher, as the level of the weapon doesn't affect the level you can charge it. Level 1 Knives can be charged to 5 if you have a level 5 Knife (the mastery).

Charging consumes a certain amount of SP. The formula is as follows:

$$1 + (\text{Level of mastery}) = \text{SP cost per charge}$$

Level 1 charges cost 2 SP, while level 7 charges cost 8. Remember, the level of the mastery isn't necessarily the level you charge your weapons to, they are only the maximum. For example, I have Claw at level 6, I can only charge Claw class weapons to 6 but can also charge to 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1.

Barring the ATK bonus from increasing weapon masteries, a higher level charge attack also enhance the damage dealt by the charge attack.

Another thing I noticed about the two charged attacks of the brawler is that the enhanced damage increases per attack (both weapons charges from Claw and Knife are multi-hit). This means that the second attack, deals more damage than the first. Succeeding attacks roughly receive an additional 0.75 of the first attack.

For example: A brawler releases a level 5 Knife charge

Initial hit dealt 44 damage
Second hit will deal: $44 + (0.75 * 44) = 77$ damage
Third hit will deal: $77 + (0.75 * 44) = 110$ damage
and so on...

Same is true for the Claw charge. The final slash in the 3-hit combo will hit for more damage than the initial slash. This may vary from monster to monster, though, because of defense.

This favors Knife users greatly than Claw users, since increasing the Knife weapon mastery give it an additional hit per level (see Claw, or Knife).

You could also follow up a charge attack with a super normal attack. "Super" because it does more damage and recoils more, but the animation is a normal attack. After finishing the charge animation of your charge attack, if you hit A at the right time you will perform the super normal attack. It seems that this can only be performed if there is a monster nearby to receive it.

** The maximum level spells can be charged is restricted by the level of the spellbook the character is currently wielding. Even if you have a level 5 spell, but only have level 4 spellbook, you can only charge the spell to 4. Unlike weapons; the level you can charge a weapon into is not in anyway related to the level of the weapon, but only to the level of the mastery.

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5. Brawler's Skills
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Credit goes to Cryptoniyte for the Attack Delay and Recoil info.
Credit goes to Crux for the skill information.
Credit goes to Nekotron for the info that Guts can stack.

Ah, the good stuff. The Brawler may not have any attack spells or casted buff spells (as all of his skills are passive), some of them are the best in the game.

Note about mastering skills: The final level of skills (level 7, the Master Level), usually grant a greater bonus ("usually" because one skill, Healing, has diminishing returns and another skill, Evade, does not seem to work at all,

more on to that below). Take that in mind while investing in skills.

Generally, I advise that you max one skill entirely before moving to another (to utilize the Master Level bonus). I also advise this because it is easier to hoard points early on (as you gain levels faster), which would allow you to quickly master skills that are vital to your build. Unless stated otherwise, I really advise you master skills one-by-one, instead of spreading points.

There is no strict order of maxing skills, but I suggest you take your weapon choice and Critical as top priority in investment. A single point in Healing is great to trigger hit point regen early on.

Note: Weapon masteries come with the weapon's information.

- > Attack Delay is (supposedly) negative attack speed. Although the implementation of attack speed in the game remain a mystery.
- > Recoil is how much the weapon can repel enemies.
- > Both of the Brawler's weapons are melee (obviously).

5.1 Claw (Claw power-up and charge attack)

Attack Delay: 10
Recoil: 6

The claw is the stronger weapon among the two, and pushes enemies farther than the knife. Although the claw is stronger, the difference is very small, about +4 attack power. The Claw charge attack is a fast 3-hit combo rushing forward. You cannot change your facing when the charge is released. Damage is done to any enemy that the Brawler's claws can reach.

Before, I dissed the Claw for its charged attack, and encouraged readers to use the Knife over it. But I've come to realize that both weapons have pros and cons.

Pros:

- More useful normal attack. The claw can reach farther and has more recoil. It is more possible for a claw brawler to use a normal attack to fend off a single enemy.
- Charge attack useful both defensively and offensively. It moves you forward while you hit things in front of you. That doesn't only equate to charging into the fray with claws on both hands, but also running away while shaking off any enemies that might be blocking your way. A level 1 Claw charge is as good as a level 7 charge for escaping, you get the same berserker barrage attack for all levels.
- Equipment sets. It seems the game favors claw brawlers more in terms of sets, since the brawler only sets in the game are for claw users only (see Equipment for the Brawler).

Cons:

- Charge attack doesn't "improve". Well, technically it does, hence the quotes (a higher level charge does more damage per hit). But the 3-hit combo you get on level 1 is what you also get on level 2, 3 or 7. It just doesn't make charging to a high level practical since you'd only get 3-hits regardless of level and for escaping you can at most charge only to level 1. And it can be quite difficult to even get all those 3-hits to connect on a single enemy, reducing potential (especially of a high level charge).

You can choose to max this skill to get the full benefit of the damage bonus, but I advise that you only increase this when you have to and that is when you have to meet a weapon requirement. Increase this one level higher than the level of the claws you see dropping from enemies (or the weapons you can buy in the weapon shop), just to be safe. Be wary though, the level of weapons you can fuse can exceed the level of weapons that can be bought or dropped.

+recoil items are great to a claw brawler since more of this property would increase the "push" your claws do when you strike enemies (see Item Properties Discussion).

If you play PvP with your buddies you might want to take Claw as this statement from SlickAle explains:

" ...claw brawler is better than knife in the Player vs Player aspect. That's because the Knife Brawler's attack could be interrupted by any successful hit, and Claws have more range than the spinning knife, so the knife brawler will basically be a rag doll being hit around. Same goes for every character in the game. What I really want to see is a Knife Brawler vs Knife Brawler. It's be like a game of spinning tops at each other... "

Can't really comment on that, since I've never played PvP before, let alone multiplayer.

5.2 Knife (Knife power-up and charge attack)

Attack Delay: 10 (All knives except Poison Dagger which has 0)
Recoil: 1

The knife may look faster than the claw, but it isn't (I have never seen a Poison Dagger, so I don't know how fast a 0 attack delay is). Knives also has worse recoil than the claw, and even more short-ranged. The knife charge attack makes the brawler spin while holding the knife away from him. You can control the brawler while he's spinning, although he's slow (movement speed-wise) while he's spinning. The first level of the charge hits about 3 times, and additional levels add one more attack attempt. Attack attempts are done to all enemies on all sides of the Brawler, as long as the spin can reach them (ex. 3 monsters surround the brawler, you charge the knife to level 3 for 6 hits, if you connect you can hit all those 3 monsters 6 times each).

Pros:

- Very powerful (nearly broken) charged attack. The knife charge share the same property as that of the sword charge of the ninja or the spear charge of the warrior, in that it gets an additional hit per level. But the Knife differs from the mentioned charges in the following:

- a.) Damage increases with number hits that connect. And at level 7, you close in on nearly 10 attack attempts, this results in a great increase in damage (mentioned earlier in Charged Weapon Attacks).
- b.) Damage is done to all monsters in all directions around the brawler Unlike the spear charge of the warrior, where you only deal damage to the direction you are facing and you cannot change the direction you're facing while performing the charged attack.
- c.) Enemies are not pushed away much when you hit them which means that hapless monsters will take most, if not all, of the attacks since they do not recoil away from you.

d.) Attacks are also done very fast, to the point where the numbers (that indicate the amount of damage you've done) overlap, attack after attack.

e.) Fast, multi-hit attack will result in a lot of critical hits.

Give a knife brawler a decent critical hit chance, and you have yourself a mob/boss killer. Given the right conditions, the final boss can be taken out with a single level 7 knife charge, on Advance Mode.

- The Blood Knife. If the broken charge attack wasn't enough, how about a combo weapon (it's not really broken, since it's cursed). HP/SP leeching in the same weapon, which translate to endless spinning, and you deal a lot of damage while spinning, which mean you'll be leeching a lot. But because it is cursed (see Item Properties Discussion), you can only really use it until you also get yourself a Chaos Ring or a Ritual/Burial/Apostate Set. Still, the Blood knife and the charge attack of the knife is a perfect combo.

Cons:

- Normal attack is not very useful. The knife will not recoil enemies very much, so don't rely on it to fend off enemies when surrounded.
- You're basically an open target while you're spinning. The brawler moves very slowly whilst spinning, and a high level charge will make you spin quite long enough. With 3-5 monsters around you, it is easy to get hit by stray shots, since it would be difficult to dodge them (well, hope your evasion from DEX kicks in). More so when there are ranged monsters and spellcasters.
- Build starts somewhat slow. A level 1-3 knife charge doesn't pack a lot of punch with the available weapons early in the game. Reliance on charged attacks means reliance on SP, which you do not have a lot early in the game. You'd have to attack normally quite a lot in the beginning, and the paltry recoil just doesn't help you in that area.

If you go knife, max it ASAP, and practice using the charge attack. As a knife brawler, you would want to rely more on your charge attack than your normal attack for killing.

Whilst playing you may feel that you can neglect DEX since the Knife charge is so powerful, but later on in the game you might find your Knife charge ineffective: charge attacks attempts miss frequently. If that happens while you're spinning in the middle of mob, you are done for.

Play it safe. Even though you can take out monsters the moment they spawn, the short range of the knife will leave out some monsters and you can still get hit and be interrupted when spinning and when that happens in the middle of a mob, it's most probably lights-out for you. Reserve a breathing space in the area just in case your initial attack gets interrupted, which you're sure you can escape to, where you can set up at least a level 3 charge to take out a few monsters off a mob.

-recoil items are good to have as a Knife brawler, since you'd want enemies to get sucked into your whirling dance of death. These are not really necessary though, since most enemies are dead once your knife charge touches them. But best avoid +recoil items, these will make your knife charge difficult to connect. (see Item Properties Discussion).

5.3 Evade (Increases evasion rate)

The in-game description states that this skill increases your evasion rate. But this skill does not seem to work at all. Your evasion rate does not improve even to a small degree even with this skill mastered.

It doesn't improve evasion on melee or missile, physical or magical attacks, and I advise you do not bother with this skill at all.

You're better off boosting DEX if you want a better evasion rate as DEX does increase evasion rate, and you also raise your hit rate with DEX. Or you could choose to boost Guts instead since that skill WILL save you when you need it (see Guts).

5.4 Critical (Increase critical hit rate)

Another straight-forward description. A critical hit is approximately 2x your regular damage, and you'll know when you've dealt one when you see stars around the damage number when the attack connected. Each character has about 2% chance to score a critical hit. Increasing this skill gives you 2% more chance for a critical per level; but it will always be 2x damage.

Although the increment is very little, this skill gives you a lot of bang for your buck. Even though it's only 2%, with this skill raised to a respectable level, you'll notice a significant amount of critical attacks over time.

This skill also seem to stack with the Critical +xx property directly. So brawler with a level 4 Critical skill (+8% Critical Hit chance), wielding an item with the suffix Bane in it (Critical Hit +4), will roughly have an additional 12% critical hit chance added to the innate 2%. With the right setup you can get your Critical hit chance quite high enough to score one every three hits.

Still, the base damage is more important, so you might want to invest in this after maxing or together with your weapon mastery.

For claw users, you might want to raise this (or Stun) and Claw together as you build your character. Knife users, I advise you raise this after maxing Knife.

5.5 Counter (Counter with a kick)

The description more-or-less explains how this skill works. There is a chance for the Brawler to retaliate to attacks (explained later) with a kick. About 5% chance of counterattacking per level (but do note, that you get a higher bonus on master level), and does 4 times your STR stat (for all levels). There are many things to note about this skill:

- Damage is strictly based on STR and not ATK, which means damage is not reliant on weapon currently wielded, is not boosted by any ATK +xx items and is not boosted by Guts. Only STR +xx bonuses boost Counter damage.
- Ignores monsters defense, and delivers the 4x STR regardless of monster defense or monster type.
- Never misses, and never becomes a marginal hit.
- Triggers even if it's a Critical hit that struck you.
- Triggers even if you were interrupted from a spinning knife charge attack.
- Does not trigger on missile attacks, both physical and elemental. Melee elemental attacks (there are such things, if you haven't noticed) are still

counterattacked.

- Does not leech (both HP and SP, imagine if it did, you'd leech more than you were damaged for this skill to trigger).
- Does not critical.
- Does not stun.
- Does not carry-over elemental affinities of weapons to the counterattack kick (see Item Properties Discussion for info on elemental affinity).
- Cursed items do not damage yourself when Counter triggers.
- Does damage to the single monster that triggered it, even if the monsters are tightly clumped. (unlike the dragonute's Breath skill, a counterattack also, as it can damage multiple monsters in a line where the fire trail was released).
- Does not trigger on bosses. Even those who use physical attacks.
- You are invulnerable to (all types of) attacks during the whole counter cycle: pause, kick, pause.

In short, Counter is a straight-to-the-point skill that will deliver a fixed amount damage to any type of monster, for all the time that it is triggered.

There is a slight pause before and after kicks (but as mentioned above, you are invulnerable during these pauses) that can frustrate you sometimes. The duration of the pause doesn't seem to change on levels. It is very short, though, and hardly noticeable, but when you see Counter over and over it can annoy.

This skill will trigger plenty of times when mastered, and there doesn't seem to be a limit to how many times Counter can be triggered in a row.

All in all Counter is a worthy investment. When mastered, this skill will trigger very often, if that's a good or bad thing might depend on your taste. Even if it attacks only one monster at a time, it is a sure kill per kick.

The slight peeve I had with this skill was when you counterattack a monster in the frontline of a mob, which would make you end up in the middle of the fray. That's the risk you'll have to take when investing in Counter, but once you get the hang of this skill (and smart playing), it's not that big an annoyance.

You may notice now that this skill does not play with high DEX (i.e. DEX doesn't help it since it always hits, and you want to get hit for it to work), but with high HP and DEF. If you choose to invest in this skill, find a balance between VIT and DEX. Guts may help this skill too, since it boosts DEF (see Guts), while the extra ATK it provides can be used elsewhere.

This skill may appeal to both Claw and Knife brawlers. Claw brawlers would go toe-to-toe with monsters most of the time, hence a chance to kick it in the face would help. Counter would help Knife brawlers in case they get interrupted during spinning, kicking that monster dead after it interrupted your whirling dance is sweet justice.

Again, Counter will only work with melee attacks.

5.6 Guts (Stronger with more HP)

Dropping below half of your health gives you an aura which boosts damage and defense. You'll know Guts triggered if you see your brawler engulfed in flames. This skill gives +20 ATK and DEF per level for level 1 to 6, +40 to ATK and DEF on Master level for a total of +160 to ATK and DEF if mastered. The aura lasts 20 seconds at all levels. The damage boost gets added to your base ATK and can

be multiplied by a critical hit.

There are many things to note about triggering Guts:

- You must heal above half health then get damaged below it again to trigger it, but that only applies to the current area you are in. When you enter a new area while your health is still below half, the next hit on you will trigger Guts regardless.
- Staying below half health will not retain or reactivate Guts.
- Guts will not trigger again in the current area you are in if you healed over half health using an HP leech weapon or via the Healing Skill. It must be a healing item that took you above half health, or you must use a healing item after you went above half health using leech/Healing. However, when you were healed above half health via leech/Healing then entered a new area, Guts will trigger in the new area as normal.
- You cannot cheat Guts by damaging yourself using Cursed weapons, nor by poisoning yourself by eating Toadstools or other poisonous mushrooms. If you use a cursed weapon or eat Toadstools to bring yourself below half health, Guts will not trigger, but the next hit from a monster will, provided you're still below half health when the monster hit you (or when your health was brought below half by the hit, in which case Guts will trigger as normal). Again, if you cursed/poison yourself below half health, but was healed over half by Healing or leech, the conditions for healing via Healing/leech still apply.
- Any Guts you have activated will be carried over from area to area, but duration does not reset.

Hehe, seems that the developer really took precautionary measures so that this skill could not be abused. These triggering "issues" with Healing and HP leech weapons would come to concern for maps with large areas, like the Forgotten Dungeon.

It is possible to "stack" the Guts effect (thanks to Nekotron for this info). To do this, after having activated Guts the first time, use a healing item to bring your health over half then get damaged below it again. Another Guts will trigger to stack on top of the first. Each Guts activated has its own duration. Keep in mind though, that stacking is only possible with healing items, and that means you're gonna use a lot if you wish to stack a lot of Guts over one another or wish to stack Guts frequently.

By how Guts is activated, I can say that it was not meant to be an on-the-go buff like Bless or Protect (Priestess spells which boost stats and defense, respectively), but a desperation "spell" that helps you when you're in danger. Guts can contribute a lot to survival, once Guts triggers you are nearly invincible (for example, monsters hitting you for 70 damage will suddenly whimper down to 10 damage per hit). Even +20 ATK and DEF is nothing to scoff at, more so when you get this to +100. Sudden deaths are impossible if you have a high-level Guts to back you up (well unless you were mobbed by a bunch of casters, or if it didn't trigger because of the issues mentioned above).

Even so, Guts is the closest thing to a buff skill. Used offensively, Guts may be hard to incorporate to your playstyle because the way to cast-and-recast make it impractical. Issues with the Healing skill and HP leech weapons make this skill less valuable as well. And still, with HP leech weapons, high level Healing, and nimble fingers, sometimes your HP wouldn't even drop below half health. Except perhaps when you're surrounded by casters, but then only the ATK bonus of Guts would help you there.

Guts also lose value later on in the game as DEF becomes less and less of a concern, since you will scoot through melee monsters later on, while missile

physical attackers are few. Still, additional DEF is good, while additional ATK is always useful. Add to the fact that Evade does not work and that Guts is the only skill that boosts DEF, Guts is the next best thing (meh, it's the ONLY thing in this aspect).

Guts does not boost Counter damage, since it boosts ATK, not STR. Still, Counter works great in conjunction with Guts, since you'll take little damage per hit to trigger Counter if you have Guts on.

The duration doesn't improve on higher levels but in a fray it lasts long enough to be useful. Stacking can make this overpowered, and even with the short duration this is possible (and easy to do once you get the hang of it). Guts at level 7 can reach astronomical levels when stacked. All in all, its up to you if you want to use this skill.

If you are going to use this skill, always, always, keep healing items at hand. Especially if you choose to (and I advise that you do) keep Healing and HP leech weapons, since Guts will not activate if you were unconsciously healed over half-health using Healing/leech. In which case a healing item solves everything. Also, you may choose to have a lower maximum HP, so that you'd hit below half easily to have Guts trigger often.

5.7 Stun (Stuns enemies)

No, this is not a spell, which you can cast on enemies to stun them. What it does is add a % chance (yet again) to stun enemies, a state where they cannot attack or move (unlike the Ninja's Shadow Skill, which only makes enemies unable to move but still able to attack), pretty much making them helpless. The first level adds around 5% chance and 3 seconds of stun then the rest of the levels add a +2% and +1 second. Like Critical, the +2%/level may seem little for investment but maxing this skill can cause most of your attacks stun enemies, not to mention the long stun time at high levels. Your enemies will just stand there gazing at the halo with stars above their heads.

Great skill, but not something you'd want to max early on. Before, I always put 1 in here (the third point I get), but when you get the hang of the game, you won't need the help it gives you. Still, that 5% can possibly save you in some situations.

The damage boosts you get from a weapon mastery and Critical is more valuable than having more % chance to stun. But if you raise this skill to a respectable level, the rate you stun enemies can be outstanding.

This skill can be used by Claw and Knife Brawlers alike, but more useful to Claw users as Knife users will likely be killing the target before stunning it. Bosses cannot be stunned (I've yet to see my brawler daze a boss).

5.8 Healing (All - HP recovers over time)

Just like the in-game description, this allows the Brawler (and his allies) to heal gradually. Each level you raise this skill hastens the gradual healing. Initial point regenerates around 1 HP/2.5 sec, while at master level this heals around 1 HP/0.6 sec. This makes the Brawler party friendly as this affects his allies and saves him the healing items.

This skill differs from other skills, in that it doesn't give a constant bonus

per level, and to make it bad, the bonus gets less as you sink in more points.

Here's a table showing the returns per level of this skill. This may not be as accurate (since I made the test myself, manually, using a stopwatch), but at least it gives you an idea on how this skill works:

Lvl	Time to heal 1 HP
1	2.5 sec
2	1.7 sec
3	1.3 sec
4	1.0 sec
5	0.9 sec
6	0.7 sec
7	0.6 sec

As you can see, the jump from level 6 to master level gives the least return. But then again, 1 HP/0.6 sec is still fast.

Even with the diminishing return, Healing is a good skill, and since it's the only way in the game that you can be granted HP regeneration, it is somehow indispensable. You must put 1 point in here regardless of whatever brawler you are, it is one of the most cost-worthy points you are ever going to spend.

This will come in handy for post-combat healing, such as the interval from one mob to another. The regen is also still active during cutscenes (most happen before fighting bosses), and by the time the boss is done talking you have probably recovered more than half of your health.

You do not have to max this skill (as you can already see, returns are not so great at higher levels), but make sure you have at least 1 point in it, up to level 4 for 1 HP/sec wouldn't be so bad either. At later levels, you'd have enough points to "waste" on this skill anyway.

Regen is good but it does not make you invulnerable, you still need to rest to recover a hefty amount of HP. Items and leech replace this skill easily, especially in the middle of a fray where this skill does not do as much. Still, the regen will save you a lot of trips back to Klantol.

Healing does not help Guts with respect to triggering (see Guts for a more in-depth discussion).

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6. Item Properties Discussion
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In this section, every possible property that any item can have will be discussed as thoroughly as I could. I will try to give an insight on the importance of a certain item property to a Brawler, whether or not should you bother with them or not.

Having knowledge of the effects, perks, and bugs (if there are any) of item properties will help you decide on what items to get for your build, or if you would plan to pursue completing an item set.

For information on what unique items have these properties or what item suffixes grant an item a certain property, check out the Shining Soul II Shrine (see Other Sources). You could check out the next section of the FAQ for

additional info as well.

I will not include shield-exclusive properties here, since you cannot wear shields. Even though you can get additional blocking from an accessory, blocking in general is not for the brawler.

Abbreviations: RFR - Fire Resistance STR - Strength
 RIC - Ice Resistance DEX - Dexterity
 RLI - Lightning Resistance ATK - Attack Power
 RLT - Light Resistance DEF - Defense/Armor
 RDK - Dark Resistance
 RPN - Poison Resistance

Elemental Affinity (weapons only)

> This property inclines a weapon to a certain element. This is indicated by an icon before the weapon name. When a weapon has an elemental affinity, it is strong against monsters of opposite element (fire to ice, holy to dark, poison and lightning I am not sure) while being weak to monsters of the same element.

Using a weapon with an elemental affinity to a monster opposite that affinity, you'll do an additional 50% damage. To a monster of the same element, you'll do 50% less damage. This applies critical hits as well. This does not affect the damage of Counter (nothing does, except your STR, see Counter).

There is also a chance that the weapon would trigger a special effect. Each element has a different special effect, and how often these trigger, I am not sure. Here are the special effects per element:

Element	Effect
Fire	Sets an enemy on fire for additional* damage.
Ice	Turns a monster to a big chunk of ice. Renders the monster immobile and unable to attack. This lasts about 3 to 4 seconds, but the ice encasing the monster seems to have its own HP, and that will shatter once it receives a certain amount of damage.
Lightning	Stuns a monster for 2 seconds. Similar to the way your Stun skill works**.
Light	Spherical light flashes at the enemy for additional* damage.
Dark	Spherical darkness flashes at the enemy for additional* damage. Nope, enemies don't become dark-colored like you when you get hit by dark attacks.
Poison	Poisons enemies. Monsters lose HP over time, roughly around 1/24th of their total HP per tick (not sure how monster RPN is factored in here).

+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+-----+
* Additional damage from Fire, Light, and Dark is roughly equal to 50% of the damage you dealt on the attack that triggered the special effect.

Elemental effects can trigger on a critical hit. Additional damage from effects (Fire, Light, Dark) are computed using the damage of the critical hit, which could reach impressive amounts.

** I don't know if Stun and elemental effects can trigger simultaneously but I've yet to see a fired-up stunned monster, or a stunned block of ice. Hence, I am not sure if Stun would stack with the duration of the stun from a lightning elemental effect, if ever both occur at the same time.

The chance of triggering of elemental effects seem to be affected by the RES of the monster to the element you used (i.e. poisoning a high RPN monster or setting a high RFR monster on fire is highly unlikely, while turning a low RIC monster to ice will happen quite often).

The problem with elemental affinity is that it somehow limits the usefulness of weapons. Although not entirely, since you can STILL damage monsters with the same weapon element. But I don't think that is such a good idea, is it? It sucks when you find a high-grind bonus level 7 weapon of Spirit (%9 SP leech) that you cannot use as effectively everytime because it has an affinity.

While those elemental effects prove very useful, I wouldn't rely on them too much. Take them as mere bonus when they trigger and avoid factoring them in to your build.

My advise about elemental weapons, if you use them, use them properly (i.e. the right element for the right monsters), or not use them at all. Having different elemental affinity weapons at hand is a good idea, but could be quite tedious to do. You may really find having elemental weapons handy in the Fairy Spring (light), Hottazhek Volcano (fire), Koldazhek Cave (ice), as well as the Beast Mountain both when it is in its tropical (fire) and snowy (ice) weather, since monsters in these areas aren't as mixed up when it comes to elemental affinity.

STR/DEX/VIT/INT/ATK/DEF +xx

> This property will raise a specific stat by xx amount. These are great to have, but remember that items will come and go in the game, and it's best you take these as mere bonuses only, and not rely on these too much.

For example, you find a glove with the Being suffix (+8 VIT), and decide to skip levelling VIT for the next levels, only to eventually find a better glove you could not wear because you're short of HP if you remove the current one. (what that better glove is, depends on your taste, if I find a Bane suffix glove after it, I'd take the critical hit bonus over the VIT bonus anytime).

Consider INT items early on to cover for SP usage. STR and VIT items are useful throughout the game. Remember that these are only bonuses, and you must not rely on the bonuses to get you through. There are also suffixes which boost more than one stat (i.e. both ATK and DEF in one suffix), keep an eye out for those.

DEF bonus is useful when it comes in a large amount in a single item.

An item with a good innate defense, good grind bonus and a +defense suffix (like of Asylum, which adds +9 defense) can really accumulate some hefty defense bonus. These might not be useful later on in the game though, where the real problem comes from elemental attacks. Still, get it if you notice it's physical attacks that are killing you.

Note also that STR +xx is different from ATK +xx, technically STR +xx is better since it helps you meet item requirements, and will add to Counter damage (if you use Counter). But when you're relying on STR +xx items to meet requirements then I'm curious as to what you're planning to do with your brawler.

+% damage to xx

> Where xx can either be Undead or Flying. This property will enhance your damage to the creature it applies to.

For example, +150% damage to Undead means you'll deal 1.5 your normal damage to them. Take into consideration that every dungeon has at least one type of undead and/or flying creature.

This property might be helpful if it is found in a non-weapon item, since this setup would effectively boost your damage instead of switching to a mundane one with this property.

% of damage goes to HP/SP

> This item property will let you leech back the specified percentage of the amount of damage you have successfully dealt to a monster. What I mean by that is that you leech back your net damage (the one where the defense of the monster was factored in), and not based on the ATK or STR displayed in your status screen.

A 2% HP leech dealt with a high damage strike might have a greater effect than a 9% HP leech dealt with a low damage strike. Keep this in mind as you factor leech to your build.

However, these items are still a convenience more than anything, since healing items (both for HP and SP) heal you instantaneously (you do not have to wait for your HP/SP to recover). Not to mention that healing items are cheap. Healing also reduces the need to heal HP between battles.

But if you're not a fan of going back to Klantol every 10 minutes to replenish supplies, then you could get these suffixes (especially SP leech for a Knife Brawler). Also, HP leech is far superior to the Healing skill in a fray. Remember, too, that you cannot go back to Klantol once you enter an area with a red arrow leading to it (i.e. Boss areas).

Between HP and SP leech (these properties are only available in weapons and you can only have one, unless you wield a Blood weapon), a Claw brawler might want HP over SP leech, while a Knife brawler might want (need) SP over HP leech. Still, you can choose to have both suffixes available to you via weapon switching.

HP leech weapons does not help Guts with respect to triggering (see Guts for a more in-depth discussion).

Critical hit +xx

> This property increases your chance to do a critical hit. After some

experimenting, I can confidently say that the xx is a direct additional percentage chance, similar to and stacks with the Critical skill.

With the right setups you can have a decent critical hit chance, whilst having a good base damage to be multiplied on a critical hit.

Before I used to disregard these bonuses, but after finding out how a Critical hit +8 could make a lot of difference, I now give value to these.

Find balance between base damage and Critical hit +xx. I'd personally take a Critical hit +4 glove over a ATK +6 glove.

Attack speed +xx/-xx

- > This property will (supposedly) increase/decrease your attack speed by xx amount. However, the unknown implementation of attack delay make this item property doubtful.

I've experimented the Champion pendant (accessory, Attack speed +10) and a Phantom Charm (accessory, Attack speed -10). And I have indeed noticed a change in the speed of my normal attack. Charge attacks, on the other hand seem unaffected by this property.

The relationship of attack speed and attack delay does not seem to be a simple: $\text{Attack delay} - \text{Attack speed} = \text{final Attack speed}$. Since if that is the case, when I wore a Champion Pendant, my final Attack speed should have been 0, which is equal to the Poison Dagger, and those who have managed to hack the game and obtain one seem to talk how blitzing fast attack is with that weapon. I wasn't really blitzing fast, even with the optimal setup.

My verdict, this item property must be given very little priority, as the benefit is not worth it.

Walking speed +xx/-xx

- > This property will increase/decrease your walking speed by xx amount. Unlike attack speed, which depends on wielded weapon, walking speed is innate and fixed per character, a stat which is like STR/DEX/VIT/INT (walking speed of each character can be seen in the Shining Soul II Shrine, see Other Sources). Brawler walking speed is 432, second highest possible and is tied with the Archer.

Walking speed bonuses, unlike attack speed bonuses, come in hefty amounts. Lowest possible from a single item is +20, highest possible is +50, but only unique items carry these bonuses (i.e. not possible through suffixes).

As with attack speed, the way walking speed is implemented in this game is rather doubtful. But because bonuses come in large amounts, you WILL notice the change, especially with the optimal setup. The optimal setup, if I'm not mistaken, is Walking speed +90, using: Tiger Claw, +20; Dream Hat, +20; Ring of Haste, +20.

Regardless, walking speed bonuses are more or less useless. Since you can't just stride your way through areas in dungeons. You WILL have to kill monsters to advance your way through. And since the brawler has a nice base SPD to begin with, walking speed bonuses are not really necessary. Reserve those item slots for other things.

- > Cursed items, when worn, make you damage yourself per strike, even if you're swinging at nothing. It is not negative leeching per se, since it is not based on the amount of damage you do, and you do not have to strike an enemy for the effect to trigger.

The formula for the received damage is:

$$\text{HP} \times 0.05 \times (\text{number of cursed items currently worn})$$

Rounding the decimal down (even when it is 0.5 or greater). So a brawler with 36 HP with two cursed items will deal 3 damage to himself per swing. The received damage is unaffected by weapon type, weapon level, defense, STR, ATK, DEF or whatever. VIT affects the damage indirectly since it affects HP.

The effect can be indirectly negated by HP leech. But be aware that leech is calculated differently. Most of the time the curse effect will win over leech, since curse will always trigger per swing and chips a surefire portion of your health.

Of course this is not a useful property... by itself. You'll notice that most cursed items come with great properties such as the suffix Death, which is cursed but adds +15 ATK. Killer Gloves give +12 Critical but is cursed. As well as the ultimate Blood Knife is cursed. If you can null the curse to use these items, do so.

Again, you cannot use cursed weapons to trigger Guts (see Guts for details).

RES +xx

- > Increases resistance to a specified element by xx amount. Note that RES in this game is not applied as a percentage (it does not reduce elemental damage by a percentage), but directly negates damage by the specified number.

For example, you have 0 RFR, a monster does 25 fire damage to you via Blaze spell. You put on a Leather Helm of Malice (RFR +10). The monster now does 15 fire damage to you with the same spell.

Useful, but only if you can get an item with RES to more than one element (i.e. the suffix Suns, as well as item sets mentioned later on). Unlike defense, resistances are useful throughout the game, but I wouldn't really bother with single resistance equipment for general playing.

You could choose to create specialized item sets which you'd only wear for specific situations (i.e. an RDK rig to wear against Gillespie), but I think that's too specific. Still, it is applicable as some areas have monsters that focus on a certain element only.

Charge ATK SP -xx

- > Reduces the SP cost of a charged attack by xx amount. This means that a Charge ATK SP -3 will effectively reduce the amount of SP you consume by 3 points per charge attack you unleash.

For example, you charge your Knife to level 5 (costs 6 SP when released), when you have Charge ATK SP -3 (for example), you'll only spend 3 SP when you release the charge. If you charge to a level 2 (costs 3 SP), you don't use any SP at all, which also means you can charge to level 2 even if you

have 0 SP.

These mods help a in saving you SP (you can even get free charged attacks), but later on when you can already charge weapons to 7, the

-xx SP won't be

much of a help and SP leech items will replace this property. Another problem is that this property will mostly come in the later parts of the game and most items that would carry this property is exclusive for the caster characters only.

You do not gain SP by charging to a level that has a lower SP cost than the amount this property deducts. For example, you're wearing an item with Charge ATK SP -3, you charge to level 1 which only costs 2 SP, you do not gain 1 SP when you release it.

SP recovery speed +xx

- > Speeds up SP recovery. By how much, I'm not sure, as this bonus seems to get diminishing returns if you stack up on it too much. Granted that this does speed up SP recovery noticeably.

Still, there are better things to worry about, since SP healing items are cheap, and that SP leech items are way better than this property (for a melee character, that is). Add to that, characters have an innate SP regen at the rate of approximately 1 SP/0.6 sec, which might not be enough to heal SP in the middle of a fray, but SHOULD* be enough to heal SP from area to area.

* You must never leave town without healing items or an Angel Wing.

-xx charge up time :

- > Reduces the time it takes to charge weapon (and spells, but you have none). 1 charge up time seem to equate to 0.1 seconds, meaning an item granting -5 charge up time would chip off 0.5 seconds off your charge up time.

Only useful for casters, as weapons charge fairly quickly, unlike some spells which take long to charge. A weapon takes about 2.5 seconds to fully charge up to level 7, and the optimal setup would take away 1 second from that (Faith suffix, -5; Spirit Ring, -5). Not much benefit, in my opinion, since you could only really get Faith suffix from weapons (removing a lot of possibly better choices), while the Spirit Ring is not exactly easy to come by.

Also consider that you can walk around and dodge the enemies' attacks while charging, so hastening charge up time may not be very helpful.

+/- recoil

- > Recoil is the amount of "push" you do when you successfully hit a monster. How much a certain amount of recoil pushes enemies is hard to quantify, but getting recoil bonuses past +10 will really make the push noticeable (if you complete a Boxing set for +12 recoil, you push enemies far enough to be out of your claw range).

As mentioned, +recoil for Claw users, -recoil for Knife users. But put little priority in these suffixes since you're better off dealing more damage (especially if you're a knife user) or taking less.

+xx% price

- > Multiplies the selling/vending price of an item by xx percentage. This suffix has no positive effect on your character whatsoever, and must never ever be factored in when assembling your rig. Only useful for earning gold as this can really boost the selling price of items.

Raises immunity to effects

- > No, you do not become unfreezable, unstunnable, unscorchable or unpoisonable (are there such words?) while wearing items with this mod. Frankly, I'm not sure how this mod works. Maybe, this lessens the chance for negative effects to kick in your character, or it lessens the effect (damage or duration, where applicable) of elemental special effects when they kick in. Free slots may be allotted to items with this mod, it might save you unconsciously.

Item appearance +xx/-xx

- > If you check out the Item FAQ by Cryptoniyte, you'll see fractions such as 512/65536 for item chance to drop (i.e. "appear"), as well as percentages such as 0.4%. The relationship of the fraction and the percentage, if I'm not mistaken, is that the decimal value of the fraction, multiplied by 100 is the value of the percentage.

However, the way this item property is applied is rather doubtful, imagine adding/subtracting 1 to/from 512. That would not make a noticeable change to the value at all. But judging by how the Unlucky Hood works (see Equipment for the Brawler to find out what the Unlucky Hood is), it seems item appearance +xx bonuses are not added directly to the scale, neither are item appearance -xx directly subtracted to the scale. Perhaps this property is added/subtracted to the percentage, but I could only theorize. Granted, too, that you could only have as much of this bonus as this bonus only come very low per item (in the +1-2 range only).

Still, there wouldn't be enough room in your inventory for items with this property, except for the Unlucky Hood (and the only reason for that is the bug involved with it). Item appearance +xx items don't give much impact on item drops, and they'd just cancel the effect of the Unlucky Hood, so it's best to avoid this bonus.

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7. Equipment for the Brawler
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Credit goes to Cryptoniyte for the Item info.

In this section, I will list items that are most applicable to the brawler. Most of the items and item sets listed in here are exclusive to the brawler, but there are some items too that can be worn by others, but function very well for the brawler.

Remember that your STR should meet up the minimum requirement, but since you are a melee character (who raises his strength regularly), this shouldn't be a problem. For weapons, you should only meet up the minimum weapon level (explained in the Weapon Discussion).

In this game, like in Diablo 2, there are normal items, magical items, unique items and set items (no rare items, though). The difference is how they are implemented in the game, but the essence is still similar.

Normal items are base items that can be bought in shops and are dropped quite frequently by monsters or obtained as chest items. These normal items can be enhanced by elemental properties (weapons only) and item suffixes, which are equivalent to the magical items in Diablo 2.

Unique items on the other hand, are those which have pre-determined properties to them (but can have random item grind bonuses), and have a unique artwork. These cannot be bought in stores, and are obtained only through specific ways Such as being dropped only by certain monsters or only on a certain difficulty, or obtained only through fusing (more info on fusing can be found on the Forging/Fusing FAQ written by SilverFox79, see Other Sources).

Some normal items and unique items can be worn together for an additional effect. These are equivalent to the set items in Diablo 2. Sets usually share a certain theme: like being made of the same material (i.e. Studded Set), or having a certain name on them (i.e. Robin's Set), or having a common reference to them (i.e. Ancient Set is comprised of items referencing to Ancient Egyptian religion). You'll notice that the items would be shaking up and down in your inventory (that's an indicator that you've completed a set). To check on the set bonus, on your inventory screen put the pointer to your character and press SELECT.

Sets can be exclusive by having pieces which can only be worn by certain characters. This applies to Normal and Unique item sets.

I won't be listing all the weapons for the Brawler as it is no longer needed. There are various sources where that info can be obtained (see Other Sources).

Note that +DEF/+ATK stats disregard grind bonuses. And Min Req. stands for Minimum Requirements.

7.1 Normal Items and Item Sets

Again, put in mind that the normal item stats in here are the base stat for each. These items can have affixes which can be either great or bad, as well as grind bonuses that modify the +ATK/DEF (and are always welcome of course).

Normal item sets play a very minor role in the game, and you should never complete one for the set bonuses (since they do not give much impact). The only time should you ever complete a normal item set is when you decide to wear the pieces because their individual mods complement your build.

There are a plethora of normal item sets in the game, but I will only list those which are brawler exclusive.

Set Name	Name of Pieces	+DEF/+ATK	Min Req.	Modifiers	Set Bonuses
	Headband	+21 DEF	36 STR	N/A	+2 STR
Fighter					+2 DEX
	Judo Uniform	+25 DEF	36 STR	N/A	+4 Recoil

	Mask	+36 DEF	50 STR	N/A	+3 STR
Mask					+3 DEX
	Fighter Outfit	+40 DEF	50 STR	N/A	+8 Recoil
+-----+					
+-----+					
	Headgear	+48 DEF	83 STR	N/A	
					+4 STR
Boxing	Boxing Gloves	+42 DEF	83 STR	N/A	+4 DEX
					+12 Recoil
	Boxing Shorts	+52 DEF	83 STR	N/A	
+-----+					

Notice that the exclusive normal item sets for the Brawler work well for a Claw user (you do not want +recoil on a Knife brawler, no matter how small the amount). The +recoil is the only revealing set bonus of these sets, but should your Claw brawler be given the chance (and conditions) to complete them, then very well do so.

7.2 Unique Item Sets

These sets can only be found through item-hunting or fusing. Remember that set pieces which can only be obtained through item drops can only be hunted in Normal Mode.

Unique item sets are usually plagued with the difficulty in completing them as individual pieces themselves are hard to obtain.

Like normal items, there are tons of Unique Item sets, but I will only list brawler exclusive sets as well as other sets which are not exclusive but might prove useful to your brawler.

Set Name	Name of Pieces	+DEF/+ATK	Min Req.	Modifiers	Set Bonuses
	Anubis Mask	+22 DEF	26 STR	+4 DEX	+20 DEF
					+32 Critical
Ancient	Mummy Armor	+13 DEF	15 STR	-10 RFR	Cursed
				-10 RLT	
	Sphinx Claw	+29 ATK	Claw:lvl-2	+4 DEF	

Yep, that is not a typo but it is really +32 Critical. You'll be scoring critical hits nearly every next hit, with this set and the Critical skill maxed. However, the downfall of this set is its weak weapon and the cursed property. By the time you complete this set you might have already found a better item combination that is much stronger (even with the +32 critical factored in).

The set (or any item for that matter) is impossible to use if it is still cursed (even with very high leech and Healing Skill), which render this set pretty much useless until you can nullify the curse. To do that, the only way is to wear a Chaos Ring. And I can assure you now, by the time you get your hands on a Chaos Ring, you'd already have much, much better items (possibly a high-grind blood knife waiting to be worn with the Chaos Ring).

| In the end, the difficulty to piece this set together as well as the
 | cursed property on it, does not make the additional critical chance
 | worth it. You're better off wearing a higher damage weapon and maxing
 | the Critical skill.

	Mercenary Cap	+27 DEF	40 STR	+2 STR	
Mercenary	Mercenary Garb	+39 DEF	45 STR	+2 STR	+20 ATK
	Mercenary Glove	+9 DEF	18 STR	+2 STR	+50 DEX
	Combat Claw	+31 ATK	Claw:lvl-3	+2 STR	
				Fire Aff.	

| Arguably better than the Ancient Set, since it's not cursed and that
 | +50 DEX will help a lot in connecting normal attacks which make this
 | set very good for the claw brawler. The Fire Affinity on the weapon
 | may or may not appeal to you.

| Like the Ancient Set, it suffers from being too rare. And by the time
 | you complete even get to complete it, it would already be useless.
 | Unless you have a friend to trade with early in the game, it would be
 | very difficult to piece this set together at the time where it would
 | at least be useful to you, since there are so many parts to it.

| Using this set is also restrictive since you're going to have to allot
 | 4 gear slots to accomodate it.

	Soul Cap	+40 DEF	41 STR		
				+20 RFR	
	Soul Robe	+49 DEF	41 STR	+20 RIC	
Soul	Soul Glove	+37 DEF	41 STR		+10 ATK
					+20 DEF
	Claw	+47 ATK	Claw:lvl-5	5% HP leech	Soul Charges Faster
	Soul Knife	+41 ATK	Knfe:lvl-5	5% HP leech	

| An easy item set to put together, because pieces are obtainable
 | through fusing (using 3 Orihalcons per set piece, and Orihalcons are
 | abundant late in the game). And from the exclusive unique item sets,
 | this is arguably the best, both in terms of the availability and
 | individual item properties.

| Each armor piece (cap, robe, glove) gives +20 RES to Ice, Fire and
 | Lightning element, which can be stacked to +60 RES. To top that, the
 | weapon leeches HP too! Both claw and knife brawlers will find use for
 | this set as the game goes, HP leeching becomes rather important later
 | in the game, and so does RES to elements (especially ice).

| If you incorporate the usage of Soul power to your playstyle, you may
 | find the set bonus helpful.

| Uses up 4 gear slots like the Merc set, so you may find this set a
 | restrictive one also.

| Keep in mind that any class in the game can wear a soul set (this is |
 | not a fully exclusive set). Provided it's weapon is applicable to the |
 | class. |

	Hood/Helm	+28/+30 DEF	21/41 STR	+10 RLT	
				+10 RDK	
					+10 RLT
Burial	Robe/Armor	+32/+33 DEF	21/41 STR	+10 RLT	+10 RDK
				+10 RDK	Nulls
					Curses
	Gloves	+24 DEF	21 STR	+10 RLT	
				+10 RDK	
	Hood/Helm	+38/+47 DEF	36/88 STR	+15 RLT	
				+15 RDK	
					+15 RLT
Ritual	Robe/Armor	+47/+52 DEF	36/88 STR	+15 RLT	+15 RDK
				+15 RDK	Nulls
					Curses
	Gloves	+35 DEF	36 STR	+15 RLT	
				+15 RDK	
	Hood	+48 DEF	45 STR	+20 RLT	
				+20 RDK	
					+20 RLT
Apostate	Robe	+53 DEF	45 STR	+20 RLT	+20 RDK
				+20 RDK	Nulls
					Curses
	Gloves	+43 DEF	45 STR	+20 RLT	
				+20 RDK	

| These sets can be used by any character, but can prove useful to the |
 | brawler. During the course of the game, you might consider using cursed |
 | weapons (see Item Property Discussion > Cursed, to know why), and |
 | these sets could null the curse for you. |

| These sets will work just as good as a Chaos Ring in nulling curses, |
 | albeit requiring more item slots (save weapon and accessory slots). |
 | The difficulty in assembling these sets compared to the difficulty of |
 | obtaining a Chaos Ring will vary from player to player. |

| Still, these sets provide an alternative to the Chaos Ring, especially |
 | if you've managed to hoard quite a handful of Dark Matters early on. |
 | Each item piece is fusable using a combination of one Mithril, Dark |
 | Matter, and Orihalcon. |

| The RES bonuses per piece plus the set bonus is not shabby, either, |
 | since dark element attacks become abundant in the later dungeons. |

7.3 Non-exclusive Items

Item Name	+DEF/+ATK	Min.Req.	Modifiers
-----------	-----------	----------	-----------

			2% HP leech
Blood Knife	+47 ATK	Knife:lvl-5	2% SP leech
			Cursed

THE weapon of the Knife brawler. HP leech and SP leech in one weapon coupled with the high damage and speed of the knife charge attack is a very deadly combination. Dual leech mean unlimited spinning and HP, which make gameplay convenient too if you have this weapon (less trips to Klantol to restock on healing items).

The one thing that will make you not use this item if ever you manage to get lucky and fuse one, is that cursed property on it. And in case you're having thoughts about it, the HP leech will not make up for the HP you lose whilst using this weapon, and you must null the curse to make this weapon usable.

You can null the curse using a Chaos ring or by using a Burial/Ritual/Apostate set (mentioned above).

The Blood Knife can be obtained through fusing 3 Dark Matters.

Killer Gloves	+31 DEF	24 STR	Critical hit +12
			Cursed

Another cursed item, for a good reason. That critical hit chance bonus is nothing to scoff about, and will add to the rate significantly.

Killer gloves can be obtained by fusing 3 Dark Matters. I am not sure if you could get these via monster drops.

Again, you need to null that curse, otherwise it is a useless item.

Eyeball Ring	N/A	N/A	Critical hit +8
--------------	-----	-----	-----------------

Gotta love them bonuses to critical hits. This ring grants a hefty bonus to your critical hit chance. What makes it great too is that it is not cursed and is possible to obtain very early in the game.

This ring can be obtained from monsters of the Eyeball family on Normal Difficulty only. Eyeballs are those floating brain-looking squids that have one eye, and use elemental missile attacks.

It's a shame though that you cannot wear an Eyeball Ring and Killer Gloves simultaneously (well, technically you could, but Killer Gloves without the Chaos Ring spell death for your brawler).

Unlucky Hood	+34 DEF	24 STR	Item appearance -1
			Cursed

You may be wondering why this item is listed in here. On first look it seems that this item is utterly useless. But wearing the Unlucky Hood, will increase your item appearance astronomically, provided you do not

| have any item appearance +xx on you. |
| |
| I am not sure if this item is indeed bugged, or if the programmers |
| really meant for this to function this way, but it works that way |
| nonetheless. C'mon, cursed and deducts from item appearance? Seems |
| its negative properties are just hinting that there's an easter egg in |
| it that's just waiting for the curious player to find out. |
| |
| You obtain the Unlucky Hood by fusing 3 Dark Matters. You can avail of |
| this item early in the game, since it doesn't require expensive DM's |
| but that cursed property (which can only be nulled by the Chaos Ring), |
| make this a very late game item. |
+-----+

Chaos Ring	N/A	N/A	Nulls Curses
------------	-----	-----	--------------

| The infamous Chaos Ring. Its only property is that it null curses. To |
| players who never use cursed items these may seem unimportant, but to |
| those who appreciate the use of Blood weapons, as well as other strong |
| cursed items, would want this item. |
| |
| The problem is, it's not very easy to come by since the chances of |
| dropping one is very rare and only one type of monster drops it: Chaos |
| Fairies. You can start hunting in Normal though, since it is not an |
| mode-specific item. |
| |
| Hunting for Chaos Ring is worth it, though, since finally obtaining |
| one will allow the use of a lot of godly cursed items. |
+-----+

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8. Miscellaneous Stuff for the Brawler
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8.1 Boosting Innate Resistances

By end-game, the real nemesis are the monsters that use elemental attacks. And you could only really counteract them by boosting your resistances.

As mentioned in the previous sections, items can give RES bonuses. In fact, items are the primary source of RES, since you can only get a lot of RES if you wear the right items. Except perhaps for the Dragonute, who can get +64 RES to all from a skill, or the Priestess who use a buff to boost RES to all as well, but that's not our concern.

The brawler, like all characters, can also boost his resistance to an element by getting hit by that element over and over. Yes, this method is dangerous, and yes, it requires a lot of healing items, but what makes this method favorable is that it boosts your innate resistance. A point in RES obtained this way is yours for the keeping, making it worth it.

The way this works, though, is obscure. I don't know if your RES get boosted by chance or if you've met a certain damage limit to an element. In the end, getting smothered by elements over and over is the only way.

Increment of RES using this method is +1 per go. Tideous, I know, but remember

that it's your only way of boosting innate RES. And since RES reduces elemental damage by point (not by percentage), a +1 gives a noticeable change.

There is also a perk to this, a negative one at that. While you can raise your RES this way, you could also reduce it the same way; a RES will receive -1 if you get killed by a certain element (for example, you get killed by a Blaze spell from a dragon, you get -1 RFR). So be cautious and have those healing items ready, and an angel wing for extreme scenarios.

By end game, having an innate +30 or higher resistance will make your brawler's life easier, and I advise you to do so if you have the time and patience.

Here are a list of the elements, their elemental effects (same concept as weapon affinities, see Item Properties Discussion), and how to boost them.

Note: It takes a long while before you can get more innate RES past 20.

But 20 is not the maximum innate RES you can get, it just takes longer to get increases after that.

Fire (RFR)

> Fire is a very easy element to deal with. You'll only ever encounter this element from the Blaze spell fire monsters use. I've never seen any monster use Inferno (if anyone has, let me know). Blaze is that fireball that travels quite quickly in a straight line, making it very easy to dodge. Still, having 3-4 fire monsters in one screen firing Blaze spells can be deadly.

Like the weapon elemental effect, fire spells can also set you on fire for additional damage.

To boost RFR, use the small bonfire (?) outside the tavern in Klantol. You can easily get +20 RFR through this method. After that, use the lava spills in the Hottazhek Volcano or the glowing red floors in the Chaos Castle to boost fire resistance even further.

Ice (RIC)

> A very difficult element to deal with. You encounter this element from the Freeze spell that monsters use. Unlike Blaze though, Freeze automatically targets you, making it very difficult to avoid, especially if you have a screen full of Freeze casters.

The elemental effect of this element, however, does not turn your character to ice (unlike ice weapons do) and we must be thankful that it doesn't. Instead, it just slows you down, albeit greatly. This is indicated by a your character turning blue. This adds to the deadliness of elemental attacks, since you're basically an open target to homing ice spells while you're slowed down.

The difficulty of dealing with ice, make it a very difficult RES to boost as well. You can only boost this RES by getting hit by spells monsters use, as there are no ice tiles in the game (which you can just step on and wait for RES to kick in). It would also be difficult to run away when you're slowed down, making an angel wing a requirement should you venture out to boost this RES.

There really is only one place to raise this, and that is the Koldazhek Cave, where ice monsters roam every area of the dungeon. A safer (but harder to get to) way, is by fighting Clione. She fires slowly which you

can dodge easily if you get too low on HP, just remember to carry healing items before entering her lair, as you cannot go back once you enter and you cannot use angel wings either.

A note from Matt Velky:

" Another easy way to add Ice Resist: On the floor with the kitchen and dining room table at Wizari's (near the end), the face ghosts are Ice Elementals and you can easily kill off 3 and boost ice from there. My brawler at that point only took about 25 damage so you won't have to heal continuously. "

Lightning (RLI)

> Another very, if not the most, difficult element to deal with. You encounter this via the Spark spell monsters use. Unlike Blaze and Freeze, Spark works at an area effect, meaning you can get hit by simply being within the range the spell allows. This makes it impossible to avoid.

If that wasn't enough, the elemental effect of lightning is stun. Yep, you get stunned and become helpless. If this happens to you in the middle of Spark users, you're doomed, as you cannot escape since you get stunned over and over. Carry an angel wing everytime, as you can still use items when you're stunned.

The way Spark works, as well as the elemental effect of lightning make it very difficult to boost RLI. And there are also no lightning damage tiles in the game. Your best bet is the Mist Demon in the Forgotten Dungeon (or anywhere this creature can be found). I recommend Mist Demons in the Forgotten Dungeon because the enemies around them aren't a great threat in case you get stunned.

Light (RLT)

> I can't seem to find an enemy in the game who uses a real light magic elemental attack. Granted that only Shining Aura is the only spell that deals light damage (correct me if I'm wrong). You'd only encounter light damage from elemental effect triggers from melee monster attacks (monsters can trigger an elemental effect similar to yours when you carry a weapon with an elemental affinity), or from Clione's special light spell. What makes this element much less important is that there are very few monsters in the game that deal it.

Like mentioned above, the elemental effect of light element is additional damage, similar to the elemental effect of a light affinity weapon.

This resistance is difficult to boost, only because it is used very rarely in the game. Fairies and Unicorns are the only enemies who has given me a boost in RLT, and even that is only by chance. The best place to boost this (and possibly the only real use for boosting this RES) is by fighting Clione, her light elemental spheres have a hefty chance raise RLT. Again, carry enough healing items to make the visit worth it, since you cannot use angel wings to restock once you enter her area.

Dark (RDK)

> The most common element in the game. This also make it the most useful RES to have. You'll encounter this element via the Demon Breath spell alot of monsters use. You would also encounter monsters that use the Darkness spell but those are very rare (in fact, the only one I can think of is the Dark

Spirit at the end of the Unknown Derelict dungeon).

The elemental effect of dark spells is different from the elemental effect of dark affinity weapons. When you get hit by a dark spell, you become dark colored for a certain duration. Previous speculations in the GameFAQs messageboards say that you get hit for more damage from dark element spells while in this state, but I've yet to confirm it. I notice no real change in damage when my brawler is in darkness status. Maybe it affects other aspects of your character, or its real effect was removed.

I'm not sure if there are dark elemental tiles in the game, if there are, I've yet to step on one. Even so, you have a lot of areas in the game to find dark element enemies in. The best place, in my opinion, is the Chaos Castle, which is looming with dark elemental monsters.

Poison (RPN)

> Like light, this element is very rare. In fact, it seems to be more rare than light since you'll at least encounter a real light elemental spell user in the game (i.e. Clione). There seems to be no real poison element users in the game, and you'd only get poisoned from melee poison attacks of enemies from the toadstool family and other poison monsters. But there are poisonous tiles in the game, but those are found in a few areas as well.

The elemental effect of poison attacks is, well, poison. If you get hit by a poison elemental attack, it seems 100% of the time, you'll get poisoned. This is indicated by your character turning purple in color and having purple bubbles around his head.

The way RPN works is disputable. RPN seems to have no effect on the damage you take when are poisoned, and it seems to be a constant 1/24th of your health (disregarding the decimal value). Perhaps, RPN affects the duration of poison status, but it seems the durations vary from monster to monster that hit you, are is simply applied in random (i.e. there is no categorical or pattern to the change in duration to tell for sure).

RPN also lose value since your Healing skill directly counteracts the effect of poison (provided it is raised to a respectable level). This renders Antidotes useless as well (as far as PvM is concerned).

Still, RPN is very easy to boost must you choose to. Poison monsters might be rare, but you can easily boost RPN by poisoning yourself by eating Toadstools (you can only find these in the Mushroom Forest).

A Note from SlickAle:

"...the poisonous spikes in Chaos Castle that can help with Poison Resistance if you're too lazy to eat Toadstools all day."

A Note from IzualUrashima:

"Poison resistance seems to affect the chance you can be poisoned. At 0-5 Poison Resistance, it's like every hit from a Poison Paste can poison me, but at 25-30 Poison Resistance, I've yet to see one of their hits poison me."

Keep in mind that monsters can run out of SP too, from casting spells. When they run out of SP, they are either helpless or would resort to melee attacks.

8.2 Offensive or Defensive Discussion

I've seen this Offensve-or-Defensive issue for the Brawler in the GameFAQs messageboards. I really am not sure about these Brawler builds, as I believe that there are only two real kinds of Brawlers: Claw or Knife. However, I read that an Offensive Brawler focuses on, well, being offensive. Meaning that his choice of skills are for killing (i.e. Critical and Stun). And the Defensive Brawler chooses skills that aid in his survival (i.e. Healing and Evade).

I turned this into a "discussion" because that was what it has become in the recent updates. Feel free to give opinions here.

Note that at the time this discussion happened, Evade was still given the benefit of the doubt that it worked, so you may find it to be recommended as you read through. But I tell you now, and I confidently do, that Evade does not work at all.

Here's an opinion from SilverFox79:

Defensive...hm...

Opinions only here, take 'em at face value =)

Knife / Crit / Evade / Heal

Good damage, especially with critical, evade to dodge (of course), and heal to stand still and recharge.

Offensive...and this is a build I've yet to try...closest thing I have is the above build with a bolt knife 3.

Knife / Crit / Evade / Stun

Spare points in heal & guts.

Enemies can't hit you if they're stunned, eh? Leaves you time to rack up the damage.

Heal becomes obsolete after getting a weapon that leeches HP (Soul, Blood Knife), so it's secondary...no longer vital that it's mastered.

Guts is kind of a back-burner skill...one point is better than none at all, and it makes a nice secondary place to dump your leftover smilies once your main skills are mastered.

(Separates the 1st message post from the 2nd one, so they don't mix-up)

Will probably toss a few more opinions on here once some posts show up. =)

Told you I'd post some more on this after some thought.

First of all, ANY Brawler will be offense-oriented. =) If you want defense, play a Dragonute. *laughs*

But, for the sake of the topic, offense vs. defense hinges on the 3 Brawler "debates":

- 1) Knife vs. Claw. Pick your poison. I'm a knife fan, personally. =)
- 2) Evade vs. Counter. One or the other, as they contradict each other.
Counter is definately Offensive...dealing 4x your STR in a forceful kick

when hit, but the animation for the kick has a pause, leaving you open to attack. Evade is more the Defensive skill, what with letting you dodge attacks easier. Side note: Evade lets you pass into the midst of enemy groups a lot easier to unleash charged attacks. This makes it useful on the Offensive side, too. This description kind of makes my bias clear. =)

3) Healing vs. Stun. Both great skills, both need to be mastered. The debate is which will grow in levels faster. Heal is Defense-oriented, and carries over to party members in multiplayer. Stun is naturally Offensive, leaving your enemies paralyzed and crying for their mothers when you whip out the Blood Knife...

Critical should be mastered by any Brawler worth its salt.

Guts, as stated before, is a nice back-burner skill. Nice to have points in, but not entirely necessary.

My opinion:

Again, having found out that Evade does not work, it must no longer be contrasted to Counter.

I also agree with SilverFox79 about Healing (see Brawler's Skills) although you may want to raise it once you have everything else in place. I'm not sure whether Healing is to be compared to Stun, though, although I do think Healing is for Defensive and Stun is appropriate for both depending on whether you Stun to kill or Stun to escape.

Guts is appropriate to both builds in different aspects. The way Guts activate (dropping below half health) is a defensive move, and the bonuses it gives is usually more offensive than defensive. Critical, although leaned towards the Offensive side, is a very essential skill for both.

Knife in the skill selection of SilverFox79 can be replaced by Claw obviously.

Remember, that the way skills are classified here are based on its suitability to the aspect of what Brawler, whether Offensive or Defensive.

Reply from SilverFox79:

" And regarding Healing vs. Stun...the only "debate" I stated was which one would level up faster. Heal = Def., Stun = Off. Heal will fizzle out once you acquire a leeching item, but it's -always- a good idea to max it. Leech + Mastered Heal means that unless you take a pasting from grouped magical attacks, you're not likely to die anytime soon. Only times I ever die anymore are when stunned my Mist Demons in the Forgotten Dungeon, or when hit with multiple Ice or Dark spells in Chaos Castle.

Point conceded to you, however, on the defensive properties of Stun. Though ...as a Brawler, or any other character in SFII....why would you be running from anything? =) Just a thought. "

My Opinion:

Ah, I misunderstood that Heal vs Stun thing. Well yeah, he's right since a Brawler can be either Offensive or Defensive in its high levels but once it hits the max level, the customization will be pointless since almost every skill will be maxed*. But nonetheless, we're discussing what to level up early on since most players will not think about slumming there Brawler up to level 200 now, would they?

About Healing, I only mastered it after there's nothing else to max. It's up to you really, but it is really helpful for first time players.

About Stun, he's got a point there although I myself use it as a defensive move for escaping when I was still new to the game. Yes, Stun will lose value when you reach a point in the game where you would kill monsters before even getting the chance to stun them.

* Never sink a single point in Evade until you have mastered all the other 6 skills of the brawler. There will come a point where you'd have no other skill to put points in, and that must only be the time that you should put any point in Evade.

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9. Frequently Asked Questions

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I considered these questions frequent as I see them almost everytime I visit the GameFAQs message boards for SS2. Well, I put them here so you won't have to ask at the message boards very often, although a second opinion is good.

The questions listed in here are may be or may not be related to the Brawler only, as it can apply to other characters as well.

1. Q: Which weapon is better for the Brawler?

A: See the skills selection (Brawler's Skills) for both Claw and Knife, as both the normal and charged attack of each weapon is described there.

2. Q: What skill should I choose over x vs y?

A: Nope, that isn't algebra. Anyway, see the Brawler's Skills for the skill descriptions. The Offensive/Defensive Brawler Section also offer a good rundown on debated skills. Note that Evade is now disputed, and that it does not seem to work at all.

3. Q: I need a Chaos Ring? Where do I get it?

A: Chaos Rings are dropped by Chaos Fairies, these are fairies which are almost black in color. They can be found in the Forgotten Dungeon and the Chaos Castle.

4. Q: I've been killing lots of Chaos Fairies for hours! Still no Chaos Ring!?

A: Remember that the chance for a Chaos Ring is applied in a scale and that still makes a chance for one to appear random. I finally found my Chaos Ring after making about 25+ runs in the Forgotten Dungeon (whether Normal or Advanced it doesn't matter), but some have found theirs when on the 3rd or even 1st visit in the Forgotten Dungeon. Just be patient and eventually you'll find one.

5. Q: Where do I get the pieces for x unique item set?

A: Most of the pieces can be found on Driazhek Desert on Normal Difficulty. I'm not sure about other levels, whether item pieces can be found there but I've completed the Ancient Set when I was doing Driazhek runs on Normal. For a more in-depth answer, check out Cryptoniyte's Item FAQ.

6. Q: How do I make a Blood Knife or Soul Knife/Claw/Set?

A: Simple, take 3 Dark Matters which are a minimum of 2000 to a maximum of 3000 gold each (was that right?), put 'em in the forge and hope for the Blood Knife to appear.

As for the Soul Set, Orihalcons worth 3500 each will give you a good chance. Remember that all of the pieces of the Soul Set is forged this way, so you may get a Soul Robe when you really want a Soul Claw. But still, if you want the Set then horde as much Orihalcon as you could.

7. Q: I've been forging for hours! I can't still get x to be forged! Why?!?

A: Remember that forging is random, but how random it is I don't know. I don't think that it is applied in a scale like item appearance is. Just save, forge then reload when your favored equipment didn't appear. As for anything random: Patience.

8. Q: I'm stuck! The game doesn't progress any longer! What am I missing?!?

A: Before anything else, thanks to SilverFox79 for telling me the second point in the game where you could possibly get stuck. Here they are:

- a. When you didn't rescue the princess in Wizari's Palace, which will not make the game progress past the Fairy Spring. The key to the prison is in the shelf in the place where you get the scene Colonel Gobovich's forces are talking to each other.
- b. When you didn't thaw the princess in the Koldazhek Cave when she was found frozen by yetis. You need the password for the Demon Tower from her and keeping her frozen will not make your game progress. Just hit the ice again and again or throw bombs or use a Soul's power.

As for anything else, well, there's the Walkthrough of Alex Ngo for your rescue (see Other Sources).

I read that ROM users which have an outdated version (1.5) of the VisualBoyAdvance can get stuck in the Demon Tower while fighting the boss. You ought to update it of course with v1.7.

For questions not seen in this FAQ (such as "How do I make an Unlucky Hood?" or "How do I dupe items in this game?") check out other FAQs as some questions are answered there as well; or the GameFAQs message board itself, where other SS2 players would answer your queries.

I've seen this "its not on any of the FAQs" or "the FAQs doesn't help" on some message posts. Well, three things could be possible in here: (1) Your question has never been raised before meaning it wasn't answered before, or (2) You have a different version of the game (I have the US version), meaning the info here may not be correct for you, or the more possible is that (3) You didn't scan the FAQs well. Please read carefully and your question will (hopefully) be answered.

I don't think that anymore questions would get added here as the GameFAQs messageboards for SS2 is already dead.

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10. Other Sources
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For all your SS2 info needs on character/weapon/item/accessory stats you can visit the Shining Soul II Shrine (<http://tartarus.rpgclassics.com/ss2/>).

Alex Ngo's Walthrough/FAQ provides all the walkthrough-needs you might have, as well as info on a lot of things about the game too (such as the arena, side quests etc). You can find this in GameFAQs also.

SilverFox79's Forging/Fusing FAQ is the ultimate source of info for item

fusing. Check this one out in GameFAQs.

Crux's Character Skill Guide and SilverFox79's Forging/Fusing Guides are also great reads. Found also in GameFAQs.

Cryptoniyte's Item FAQ and Monster Dictionary provide everything that you need to know about items, item drops and monster stats. These are not on GameFAQs, though (none of his FAQs are), but you can check out Neoseeker. He is also the site maintainer of the SS2 shrine, and knows a lot about the game.

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11. Version History
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v1.0 (June 18, 2004)

- Started from Scratch
- Created everything from a few contributions

v2.0 (June 19, 2004)

- Fixed a very stupid mistake in the About this FAQ/Guide
- Fixed a mistake in the Weapon Discussion > Weapon Requirements
- Added a small comment on Brawler's Skill > Counter
- Added a small comment on both weapon masteries
- Fixed a small mistake on Equipment for the Brawler
- Added more info to Equipment for the Brawler > Effective Suffixes and Mods
- Added info on Miscellaneous Stuff for the Brawler > Boosting Resistances
- Added Miscellaneous Stuff for the Brawler > Using Charge Attacks Effectively
- Added Miscellaneous Stuff for the Brawler > Offensive or Defensive

v2.02 (June 19, 2004)

- Two updates in a day! Thanks to Crux for correcting my Credits section
- Changed Credits Section
- Gave Nekotron the proper credit for the info about Guts

v2.05 (June 20, 2004)

- I just realized that I entirely left the unstarted Boss and Mid-Boss Guide after rushing an update
- Added more on the Boss and Mid-Boss Guide (although it is still unfinished)

v2.1 (June 23, 2004)

- Added a new section: Frequently Asked Questions (this is a FAQ afterall)
- Added SilverFox79's opinion and more info on the Offensive/Defensive Brawler
- Added SlickAle's info on Miscellaneous Stuff for the Brawler > Boosting Resistances
- Added SlickAle's info on Miscellaneous Stuff for the Brawler > Claw vs Knife Debate

v2.11 (June 26, 2004)

- Changed a few unclear statements here and there
- Added neoseeker.com to the sites I permit this FAQ can be uploaded
- The Boss and Mid-Boss section remains unchanged (I don't why I put that here but it reminds me that I should continue it)
- Still lots of things and contributions to add that still remain on my scratch textfile

v2.15 (June 28, 2004)

- Added SilverFox79's reply on the Offensive or Defensive Discussion
- Corrected an answer in the FAQ section
- Minor additions on the Claw vs Knife Debate (DM price range)

- Boss and Mid-Boss Guide still unfinished (I'm thinking of taking it off)

v2.2 (August 5, 2004)

- I finally took off the Boss and Mid-boss Guide as I don't think I'll ever find the time to finish it. (goddamn school)
- Final Version? Perhaps. But nothing is final.

v2.25 (June 15, 2005)

- I never thought I'd still have the chance to update this FAQ. But thanks to Matt Velky, his info gave me a reason to do so.
- Added Matt Velky's info on Miscellaneous Stuff for the Brawler > Boosting Resistances
- Added another reminder on the Introduction section.

v2.26 (June 16, 2005)

- Added Super Cheats (supercheats.com) in the FAQ locations list.

v2.26b (February 28, 2006)

- Corrected an answer in the FAQ section.

v3.0 (October 29, 2008) a.k.a The 67 to 122 Update

- Changed the Legal Stuff section. (Host this file all you want, just give me credit).
- Removed the note regarding the hate mail I received. I found this no longer necessary.
- Corrected a plethora of grammar and spelling mistakes. Changed a lot of trite and cliché expressions, as well as removed all IMHO and BTW in the text (Reading my own FAQ after two years, I now understand why I got hate mail for using IMHO and BTW excessively).
- Changed the point of view of the FAQ greatly. I was biased towards Knife before, now I tried to be as objective as I could.
- Stat Analysis section gets major revamp. Discussions are now more detailed. Here are some things I added:
 - a. Added starting stats.
 - b. Added possible maximum stats.
 - c. Pointed out SPD as a starting stat.
 - d. Added Stat Point Distribution section for more in-depth discussion of the subject.
- Brawler's Skill descriptions get major additions, corrections, and modifications. Discussions are now more in-depth than they were. Here are some of the major things that has changed:
 - a. More in-depth weapon discussions for both Claw and Knife.
 - b. Evade does not work (This alone required a lot of changes in the FAQ).
 - c. Updated Counter description. Lots of new things pointed out.
 - d. Updated Guts description: its issues with Healing and HP leech. Corrected Guts duration (it's 20 sec, not 15). As well as pointing out that master level gives more bonus.
 - e. Updated Healing description. Added returns per level and pointing out the diminishing returns per level.
 - f. Critical skill is found out to stack with Critical Hit +xx items.
- Corrected damage calculations for charged attacks.
- Revamped the Effective Suffixes and Mods section to give more in-depth discussion of item properties. Removed this section from Equipment for the Brawler and gave it its own. Renamed it to Item Properties Discussion also. Here are some major changes and additions:
 - a. Added Elemental Affinity.
 - b. Item properties are now actually discussed, instead of just recommending whether you get them or not.
 - c. Correction on Curse: It is not negative leeching. Formula for self damage is also added.

- d. Critical Hit +xx bonuses stack with the Critical Skill.
 - e. Corrected a rather stupid statement in Item Appearance +xx.
 - f. Added some optimal setups for each item property.
- Revamped Equipment for the Brawler section. Added new item sets, as well as other non-set items (like the Blood Knife, Unlucky Hood, Eyeball ring, etc.)
 - Added new section: Other Sources.
 - Removed sections: Claw vs Knife Discussion, Using Charged attacks effectively. These are now incorporated to the weapon discussion in the Brawler's Skills section.

v3.0b (October 30, 2008)

- Minor spelling corrections.
- Patched up the Item Properties Discussion > Elemental Affinity > Ice. Forgot to add the duration of elemental effect.
- Added to Item Properties Discussion > Raises Immunity to Effects.
- Some clarifications.

v3.0c (February 2, 2009)

- Made some corrections on various areas (thanks to IzualUrashima).

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12. Credits
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Credits are written in the body of the FAQ, but here they are anyway. Additions and Corrections are always welcome. Remember that I will give proper credit. The way your contribution is written in here maybe different from the way it was submitted, since I make sure that I all the information in this FAQ/Guide remains orderly. I may remove, but not add, some info on your additions, but please bear with the fact that it needs to fit the constraints so I can submit it to GameFAQs.

Cryptonyte (cryptonyte@hotmail.com)

1. Information on the Attack Delay and Recoil of Claws and Knives.
2. Statistics of set pieces and set bonuses.

Crux (crux@bga.com)

1. Information on the Weapon Damage Formula.
2. Information on the SP Consumption Formula for Weapon Charges.
3. All of the skill descriptions.

SilverFox79 (quicksilverfox79@yahoo.com)

1. Opinions about the skill selection of an Offensive/Defensive Brawler.
2. Correcting an answer in the FAQ section.
3. Pointing out the maximum price range of Dark Matters which can possibly forge a Blood Knife.

Nekotron

1. About Guts' ability to stack.

SlickAle

1. Additional info on Boosting Resistances (Poison).
2. Additional opinion on Claw vs Knife Debate.

Matt Velky (kordaihn@hotmail.com)

1. Additional info on Boosting Resistances (Ice).

friend765 (feedmeplz985@yahoo.com)

1. Corrected an answer in the FAQ section.

Snarky_Dudbear

1. For the post about Counter and Evade that sparked my interest in this game again.

Yann Jullien/IzualUrashima (for-izual@hotmail.com)

1. Pointed out that SP maxes out at 500 INT, not 333.
2. Corrected fusing recipe for Burial/Ritual/Apostate set.
3. Pointed out that the Chaos ring can also be found in Normal Mode.
4. Additional info on Boosting Resistances (Poison).

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"Hoy! Pinoy Ako! Buo ang aking loob... May agimat ang dugo ko!"

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