

## BARBARIAN BERSERKER VARIANT

For some barbarians, rage is a means to an end – that end being violence. The Path of the Berserker is a path of untrammled fury, slick with blood. As you enter the berserker's rage, you thrill in the chaos of battle, heedless of your own health or well-being.

The Berserker subclass in *The Player's Handbook* has some pretty glaring issues: your primary feature encourages you to stack exhaustion many times a day, resulting in reduced efficiency in and out of combat if you have more than 1-2 combats a day. In addition, the additional features at higher levels often come with a number of stipulations that make them less useful than the other subclasses available to the player. The result is a subclass that does not get taken often for good reason, and that's sad because the concept of the berserker is really cool.

What follows is our variant version of the berserker, complete with designer notes on why we did things the way we did. We have tried to change as few aspects of the subclass as possible while still fixing the issues inherent in the subclass. Feel free to run this past your game master for approval in your next game!

### FRENZY

Starting when you choose this path at 3rd level, you can go into a frenzy when you rage. If you do so, for the duration of your rage you can make a single melee weapon attack as a bonus action on each of your turns after this one.

**Designer's Note.** The change here is simple: we're removing the exhaustion aspect of this ability. It's not noticeably stronger than what other subclasses get at this level, and it encourages you to avoid two weapon fighting (as you wouldn't gain anything with this ability), so it's helping to set you apart. What you lose in resilience you make up for in number of attacks, which is a good trade.

### MINDLESS RAGE

Beginning at 6th level, you can't be charmed or frightened while raging. If you are charmed or frightened when you enter your rage, the effects are ended.

**Designer's Note.** Instead of just suspending the charm/fear effects this ability ends them. We do this for two reasons. First, it's very situational: there are a lot of combats where no charm/frightening effects are used, and may not be used at all in the campaign. Second, it helps the berserker to embrace what it is: a mindless, driving force behind the person, and it helps the berserker feel more powerful and more unique because you are safer against debilitating effects than other barbarians.

### INTIMIDATING PRESENCE

Beginning at 10th level, you can frighten someone with your menacing presence while raging. At the start of a turn when you are raging, choose one creature that you can see within 30 feet of you. If the creature can see or hear you, it must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw (DC equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier) or be frightened of you until the end of your next turn. On subsequent turns, you can extend the duration of this effect on the frightened creature until the end of your next turn.

This effect ends if the creature ends its turn out of line of sight or more than 60 feet away from you. If the creature succeeds on its saving throw, you can't use this feature on that creature again for 24 hours.

**Designer's Note.** This ability on its own is not as bad as it first looks because your bonus action attack doesn't require you to take the Attack action as your action, but it's still bad as-is because you are dropping from 3 attacks at this level to 1, and in exchange you get a temporary fear effect that 1) may not work, and 2) doesn't really allow you to take advantage of it as it requires your action to continue the effect, so you're staying at 1 attack. The change is pretty simple: you do it at the start of your turn without consuming an action. This is a 10th level ability that is triggered by a limited resource (rages, which is not specified in the original), can be resisted, and can be ended later, so I don't see a reason to also add the tax of costing you your action every turn to maintain it. Furthermore, since this uses your Charisma modifier (which is easily your third if not fourth highest stat), the DC is not that high to start with, so resisting this is not that hard to begin with, so making it a free ability at the start of your turn is not that powerful.

### RETALIATION

Starting at 14th level, when you take damage from a creature that is within 5 feet of you, you can use your reaction to make a melee weapon attack against that creature. If you used your Reckless Attack ability on the turn prior to using this reaction you may benefit from the Reckless Attack ability on this reactionary attack as well.

**Designer's Note.** Only a slight change to this one - this ability is fantastic. I've added a note that if you used Reckless Attack on your prior turn you can gain the benefits of the ability on this attack (as technically Reckless Attack only helps you on your turn), because I feel like it's thematically appropriate here, but that's the only change we'd made.