

By all metrics, Pathfinder (and by extension, FFd20) is the most satisfying pen-and-paper game I've ever played. The class balance feels good, the math isn't overwhelming, and the community support is outstanding. However, it suffers from one syndrome that haunts the creation of every new character: feat taxes.

Many veteran players lament that you need three feats to go to the bathroom in Pathfinder. It's a cheeky musing, but one rooted in truth. Pathfinder's feats are arranged in sprawling tiers, often requiring an investment of three or more feats to unlock a single more advanced one. While it's satisfying to work towards a goal, many rungs on the feat ladder are considered either undesirable or overtly mundane. These are feat taxes.

Below I've highlighted a number of revisions to Pathfinder/FFd20's feat tree to help ease the situation. I've focused mainly on combat feats, arguably the worst offenders. Feel free to incorporate these changes into your own house rules or make your own suggestions in the comments.

Martial Mastery

Gone. Combat feats like Weapon Focus now apply to weapon groups instead of a specific weapon by default.

Weapon Finesse

Gone. The "light weapons" category has been renamed to "finesse weapons." Characters can choose to use either their dexterity bonus or their strength bonus to hit with these weapons, no feat required. "Finesse" is also now a weapon attribute like "brace" or "trip," allowing a weapon in another category to be finessed (like the rapier).

Agile Maneuvers

Gone. A character adds their dexterity to the CMB if they're wielding a finesse weapon and their strength otherwise.

Combat Expertise

Gone. Now simple a combat option for any class with at least +1 BAB.

Improved Trip/Disarm/Dirty Trick/Feint/Reposition/Steal

Gone. Replaced with Deft Maneuvers.

Deft Maneuvers

New. You do not provoke an attack of opportunity when performing a trip, disarm, dirty trick, feint, reposition, or steal combat maneuver. In addition, you receive a +2 bonus on checks with these combat maneuvers. Now a prerequisite for the relevant greater combat maneuver feats.

Power Attack/Piranha's Strike/Deadly Aim

Gone. Now simply a combat option for any class with at least +1 BAB.

Improved Bull Rush/Drag/Overrun/Sunder

Gone. Replaced with Powerful Maneuvers.

Powerful Maneuvers

New. You do not provoke an attack of opportunity when performing a bull rush, drag, overrun, or sunder combat maneuver. In addition, you receive a +2 bonus on checks with these combat maneuvers. Now a prerequisite for the relevant greater combat maneuver feats.

Point-Blank Shot

Gone. Precise Shot replaces it as a prerequisite for further archery feats.

Mobility

Gone. Merged with Dodge.

Dodge

Revised. You gain a +1 dodge bonus to your AC. This bonus increases to +4 against attacks of opportunity caused when you move out of or within a threatened tile. A condition that makes you lose your Dex bonus to AC also makes you lose the benefits of this feat.

Improved Two-Weapon Fighting

Gone. Merged with Greater Two-Weapon Fighting

Greater Two-Weapon Fighting

Revised. Prerequisites now Dex 17, Two-Weapon Fighting, BAB +6. In addition to the standard single extra attack you get with an off-hand weapon, you get a second attack with it, albeit at a –5 penalty. Once your BAB reaches +11, you also gain a third attack with your off-hand weapon, albeit at a –10 penalty.

Empowered Touch

Gone. Now simply a combat option for any spellcasting class with at least 1 caster level.

Improved Dodge

Gone. Now merged with Dodge.

Improved/Advanced Power Weapons Wielder

Gone. Now an option for spellcasters of 7th caster level and 13th caster level.

Airship Battle Run/Dodge/Feint/Gunnery/Mobility

Gone. Now merged with Airship Operation.

Vehicle Dodge/Expert

Gone. Now merged with Vehicle Operation.