

Bone Weaponry

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Some thoughts on bone weaponry from Dr. Corbin Romance, Parapsychologist

In the eyes of archaeology, a bone tool is simply “a tool created from bone”. Even when created as a weapon, it’s still considered a tool for cataloging purposes. Bone tool can conceivably be created from almost any bone, and in a variety of methods.

Bone tools have been documented from the advent of *Homo sapiens* and are also known from *Homo neanderthalensis* contexts or even earlier. Bone has been used for making tools by virtually all hunter-gatherer societies, even when other materials were readily available. Any part of the skeleton can potentially be utilized; however, antlers and long bones provide some of the best working material. Long bone fragments can be shaped, by scraping against an abrasive stone, into such items as arrow and spear points, needles, awls, and fish hooks.

Bone tools had mainly been made from bone splinters or were cut into a useful shape. While tools like spoons, knives, awls, pins, fish hooks, needles, flakers, hide scrapers and beamers were common, weapons were just as prevalent. That being said, bone weapons are never found in as good of shape as other tools, obviously due to their intended purpose and usage.

In the eyes of Parapsychology, mankind was fortunate to have access to and learned to construct bone weapons early, as supernatural enemies like Grave Ghouls and others vulnerable to bone have no doubt been around since mankind’s earliest beginnings. These weapons proved invaluable in defending against them.

It’s interesting to note that some cultures and traditional peoples still craft, create and use bone tools and weapons to this day. While the methods and designs have certainly improved since our humble beginnings, making weapons from bone hasn’t changed much over the ages. Unfortunately, the inherent problems of using bone as weapon material hasn’t changed either.

As an organic material, bone does not survive in a way that is archaeologically recoverable. In other words, bone as a material doesn’t last long term. It chips, flakes, becomes brittle over time and does not hold an edge very well. This means bone weapons require regular maintenance and sharpening (*Whitling* and/or *Weapon Engineer* skills are needed for this) to be useful, and even then, have a limited shelf life. Even the act of using them with too much force will see them shatter upon impact. I myself prefer using sword length bone weapons, but in time and usage they are reduced to knives and shivs, and then to arrowheads or ground down for “bone-shot”.

However, due to frequency of confronting *Grave Ghouls* and other creatures vulnerable to bone, making bone weapons is still a worthwhile endeavor.

Game rules & notes when using bone weapons:

-The names of each weapon includes/ determines the weapon proficiency they can be used with.

-Bone weapons **break** when the damage dealt with them is more than 3x their max damage. The max damage numbers are included for each weapon in parenthesis below. See page 135 for details.

Damaging supernatural beings **vulnerable** to bone: Roll an addition die to damage.

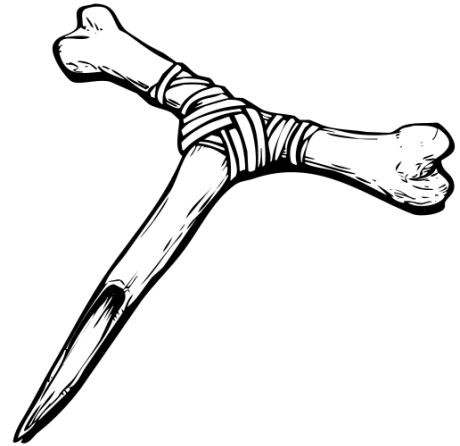
Example: 1D4 becomes 2D4, 1D6 becomes 2D6, 2D4 becomes 3D4, etc.

Damaging *Grave Ghouls* with bone weapons does double damage (roll twice as many dice).

Common bone weapons:

Knuckle Blade/ "Knuckle Bone": does 1D4 damage in addition to punch damage (12+).

This weapon is held in the fist, the pointed end juts out between the middle and ring finger.

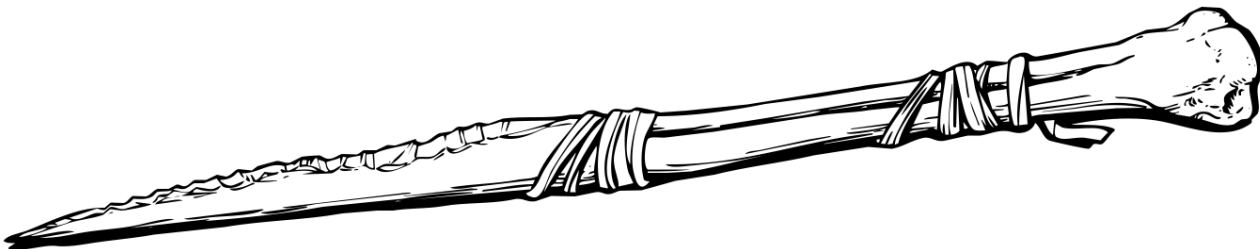


Bone Knife/Shiv: 1D6+1 damage (21+).

Often wrapped in athletic tape, duct tape or other material to help with gripping the weapon.

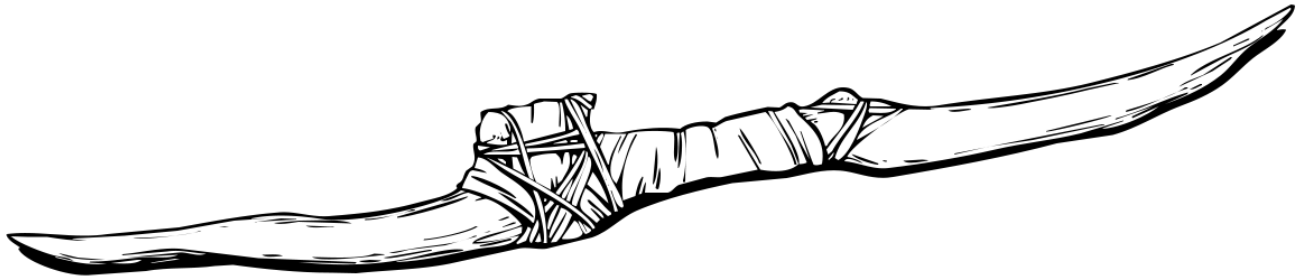


Bone Swords: 1D8 for short sword length (24+), 2D4+2 for long sword length (30+).

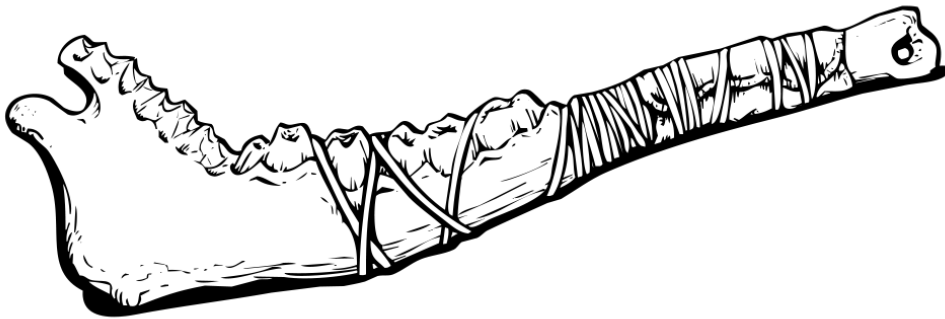


Double bladed bone sword: 2D4+1 for either end (27+).

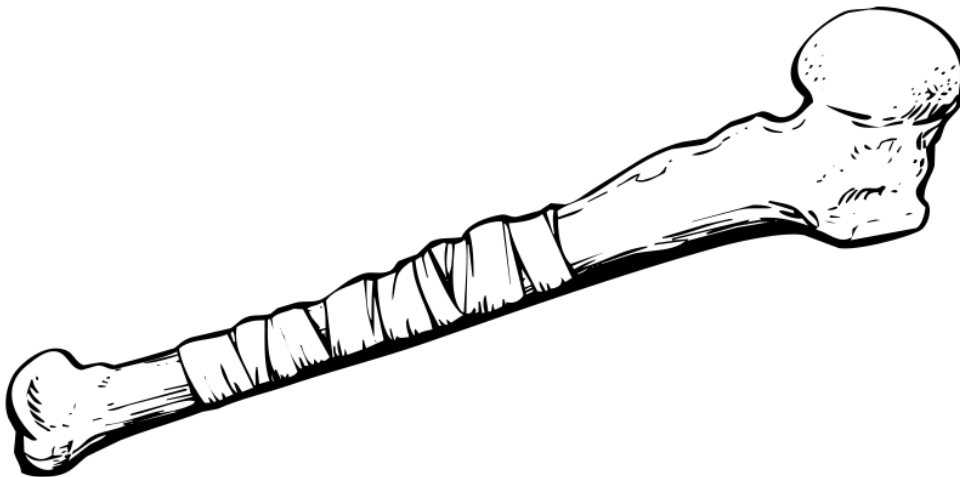
User has a -1 to all combat actions if they don't have *W.P. Sword*, but gets an additional +1 to Parry if user has *W.P. Sword*.



Jawbone Hatchet: 2D4+2 damage (30+).



Bone War Hammer/Cudgel: 3D4 damage (36+).



Note: Other weapons like spears, tridents or even lances can be considered by creating and using bones for the tips. They would do damage comparable to their normal design

Example: Spears typically do 1D8 damage with the pointed end, so they would do 2D8 to beings vulnerable to bone, and double 4D8 damage to *Grave Ghouls*.

Other bone-based weapons of note:

Bone-tipped arrowheads: The arrowheads have a carved bone cover placed over original arrowheads, making them look a little larger than normal. The weight of the bone tip is too light to make truly effective modern design arrows, so they're placed over the original arrowheads. The tradeoff is that the extra weight reduces the maximum range by 25%.

Damage: Comparable to the arrow or bolt being used. Add one additional die to the damage roll if vulnerable to bone. *Example: Modern compound bows* do 2D6+1 damage, but does 3D6+1 damage to beings vulnerable to bone.

“Bone-Shot”: Effectively ground bone fragments that fires and acts like “Rock Salt Ammunition”. While not commonly available commercially (although a few online stores sell them nowadays), bone shot ammunition is easily handmade (with the *Munitions Expert* skill) by replacing an ordinary shot shell’s contents with grains of grounded down bone fragments. When fired, bone shot functions like birdshot and the irregular shaped ammunition rarely does more damage than embedding into the skin (unless vulnerable to bone). While the damage is minimal (even at close range), being shot with bone shot still stings (although not as severely as rock salt.)

Effective Range: 60 feet; ideal as most "across-the-yard" encounters with wild animals and would be thieves are at this range. Beyond this range a few stray pellets might sting the target’s skin but does no real harm.

Damage: Depends on the range.

60 feet (18 m) and beyond: You might scare a dog or some other animal, but you won’t even break the skin. No damage but could require a save vs pain.

20-60 feet (6 m-18 m): You might break the skin with a couple of grains, but nothing serious. 1D4 damage (2D4 if vulnerable to bone) and save vs pain is required.

12-20 feet (3 m-6 m): Getting into the range where you can do a little damage and “sting” the target with jagged fragments. 1D6 damage (2D6+2 if vulnerable to bone) and a save vs. pain (with a penalty of -2) is required.

0-12 feet (3 m): You could cause a wound requiring a visit to the hospital for a human, or maybe the death of a small animal. 2D6 damage (3D6+2 if vulnerable to bone, twice that to *Grave Ghouls*) and automatic pain penalties equal to “significant damage” to targeted area.

Note: The mass of bone shot ammo is considerably light compared to regular contents. Most users say a shell filled with bone shot feels “empty” from its being so light. Also, the recoil is almost nonexistent due to this low mass. The light mass of bone shot limits its effective range and damage potential, but this makes it ideal ammunition for those who desire a “less than lethal” option and is most often used for scaring off animals or intruders.