



Optional Rule: Skill Groups

Legend of the Five Rings Second Edition rules introduced the concept of Bujutsu skills, which tied together groups of weapons under a single skill. A character can thus become adept with a large number of weapons by spending a minimal amount of skill points. In Second Edition, skills are more useful than they have ever been, so the conservation of experience points by consolidating these skills can help immensely, especially at low Ranks.

Unfortunately, non-weapon skills have no such groups. Those who do not have the extra points to spend may find themselves adrift in some non-combat situations, with no similar skills to call upon. For this reason, this supplement introduces the concept of Skill Groups.

Learning a Skill Group

Purchasing a Skill Group costs the same amount as purchasing a skill, but each Skill Group comprises several specialized skills. When a character chooses a Skill Group, he selects up to four skills from the list associated with that group. These are the skills he is somewhat familiar with, and can use with his Rank in that Skill group. Any skills that are not chosen are considered to be unskilled, though the character may attempt to use a similar skill as usual. If a character takes a Skill Group that contains Low Skills, he does not lose Honor for learning them, only for using them. He can, however, choose not to learn them to remove the temptation entirely.

Skill Groups represent a broad base of knowledge rather than a specific area of expertise. As a result, any skill rolls made when using a Skill Group have their TN increased by 5.

If a character should later learn one of the specific skills within one of his Skill Groups, he must learn it as a separate skill and pay for it normally. However, there are benefits to specializing with one of the skills within a previously known group. If a character uses a specific skill which is also in one of his Skill Groups, the character

may add his Rank in the Skill Group to the total of his roll. There is no cumulative benefit to having a skill in multiple Skill Groups, and only one may be added to any skill roll.

No matter how many skills may be listed in a Skill Group, a character may only choose a particular Skill Group once. Broad, general knowledge can only take someone so far.

As this is an optional rule, a GM should be careful to consider giving skill groups to previously published NPCs as well as PCs.

The current Skill Groups are as follows. Some skills (such as Instruction and many skills from *Way of Shinsei*) are not in any group at all, as they represent a far too specific range of knowledge to be included in a Skill Group.

Skill Groups

Animal Group

Animal Husbandry
Falconry
Horsemanship
Hunting

Athletics Group

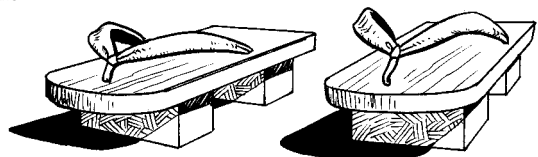
Athletics
Climbing
Kemari
Stealth

Courtier Group

Courtier
Diplomacy
Etiquette
Gossip
Heraldry
Manipulation
Sadane
Sincerity

Kagaku (Science) Group

Explosives
Herbalism (Merchant Skill)
Medicine
Poison





Literature Group

Bard
Calligraphy
Oratory/Rhetoric
Poetry

Lore Group

History
Lore (Ancestors)
Lore (Festivals and Ceremonies)
Lore (Ghosts)
Lore (Literature)
Lore (Maho-Tsukai)
Lore (Nemuranai)
Lore (Shadowlands)
Lore (Shugenja)
Lore (Tropical Fish)
Any other Lore Skill
Research



Magic Group

Astrology
Calligraphy
Cipher
Lore (Shugenja)
Omens
Spellcraft
Spell Research

Magistrate Group

Hunting
Intimidation
Investigation
Law

Medical Group

Advanced Medicine
Autopsy
Medicine
Torture

Meditation Group

Lore (Bushido)
Meditation
Shintao
Tea Ceremony
Theology

Merchant Group

Appraisal
Commerce
Forgery
Gambling
Kuenai

Performance Arts Group

Acting
Dance
Music
Puppeteering

Shadowlands Group

Goblin Culture
Lore (Shadowlands)
Lore (Maho-Tsukai)
Ratling Speech

Siegemaster Group

Armorer
Engineering
Locksmith
Siege
Traps
Weaponsmith

Thief Group

Hisomu
Kuenai
Mimic
Poison
Sleight of Hand
Stealth

