

DRAGONHEAD

DRAGONHEAD is a fantasy adventure game for two to six players questing for gold and glory in a dangerous land. It is played using paper, pencils, dice and imagination.

If you swear you have heard this all before, that is because you have. Dragonhead is an OSR game, meaning Old School Rules, meaning it was designed to carry the feeling of role-playing games from the late 1970's and early 1980's. Think of it as a faster, smoother, less demanding way of playing the games many of us played back then.

This book, the **Banger's Handbook** or *BHB*, contains the main rules of the game. If you have never played an RPG it is good to understand that *you do not need to know all the rules to play the game*. Unlike a board game, the rules are not here to tell you what you can or cannot do. Your character can do anything you can imagine them doing within reason. These rules exist to make the adventure feel more real.

The **Character Compendium** is a resource book containing all the stuff that goes into the creation of characters, such as classes, equipment and spell-like powers. Often characters are created using the BHB and the Compendium side by side.

The **Dragonhead Master's Guide** or *DMG*, is for the Dragonhead Master to read and everyone else to eventually discover by playing the game. It is critically important that you **do NOT read** the Dragonhead Master's Guide or anything written for the DM unless you are the DM of your group! These books contain secrets that will ruin the surprise of what you are about to encounter.

The **Monsters & Treasure** book is like a character compendium for Dragonhead Masters. It is also for the DM's eyes only seeing as it contains the stuff DMs use to create adventures.

An Ongoing Project

If you are reading this blurb then chances are the game is still in its prototype state. It is playable but it does not yet contain all of the classes, monsters, spells, etc that the final game will contain.

It is highly recommended that you go to the website www.chameleondream.com/dragonhead and join the mailing list to stay abreast of updates to the system.

What You Need

Dragonhead Bangers. Dragonhead Bangers are intrepid souls eager to embark on an epic adventure in ages untold. *This is you!* Your armaments? A freshly printed character sheet and a pencil with a good eraser. Having your own dice helps. Miniatures are optional. Imagination is essential.

Dragonhead Master. The Dragonhead Master controls the world the adventure takes place in. The DM's authority over all that happens in it is irrefutable. If you do not have a DM, everyone at the table should roll 1d20. Whoever rolls the greatest number is now the group's new Dragonhead Master. *All hail the new DM!*

Characters & Creatures. Bangers run characters while the Master runs creatures. For the most part these two terms are inter-changeable and play by the same rules. Unless something says otherwise, what applies to characters applies to creatures and vice-versa.

An Adventure Module. An adventure module should contain everything you need for a few nights of exciting gaming. It is up to the Dragonhead Master to acquire an Adventure module and read it through before the game begins.

If you have just been thrust into the role of DM be sure to check out the starting adventure in the front of the Dragonhead Master's Guide. It was made to be used with little to no preparation.

Funny Looking Dice. You need at least one set of polyhedrals containing a **d4**, **d6**, **d8**, **d10**, **d12**, **d20** and **d00**. It also helps to have three d6's and a few extra d20's.

If you don't know dice, the d-number is the number of sides on a die so a d6 is your standard six-sided die. A number tacked on the front is the number of times you roll it. A 3d6 translates to "roll three six-sided dice" or "roll a six-sided die three times" and add up the total. If a number has been added onto the end of a roll, such as 3d6+2, roll the dice and add two points to the total.

Mojos. Mojos are plastic gold coins often sold as *Pirate's Treasure* in costume shops. Poker chips, checkers or normal coins will work just as well but we highly recommend the

plastic gold ones. You will also need a small bowl to drop them in as they are spent during the game.

Every gaming session should begin with each banger at the table rolling to see how many Mojo's they start with. What you roll depends on the number of bangers present.

- One to Three = **2d6 each**.
- Four to Six = **2d4 each**.

Drawing Supplies. In addition to a pencils, it is good to have on hand at least one pen and a pack of highlighters.

A Place to Play. Preferably a large table with nice seats in a room without much noise. Ultimately, all role-playing games are spoken-word games, meaning if you cannot hear what the other people are saying then you cannot play the game.

Snack Food. Because you have friends coming over, snacks are a must! If you are going over to someone else's place, be sure to pick up something to share or be ready to throw in for pizza.

Always Round Down. The math in this game is nothing complex, but every now and then it will leave you with a decimal point. When that happens - **round down** - discard the decimal and go with what is left. Both a 3.5 and a 3.99999 round down to 3.

A Smart Phone. PSYCHE! You do not need a smart phone to play Dragonhead. Power it down, put it away and do not take it out until after the game is over. You will thank yourself later.

Gaming Style

How you choose to play depends on who you play with and what you enjoy. Every group is different but two major styles predominate: Immersive and Omniscient gaming.

Immersive Gaming. In immersive gaming each player has one character and they play that character the way an actor plays a role. While seated at the table you become your character. You speak as that character might speak and use its name in place of your own. If someone calls you by your actual name you are honor-bound to stare at them funny and act as if you have no idea what they are talking about. It is only when you stand up from the table that you return to being yourself.

Omniscient Gaming. Instead of actors, in an omniscient game you and your friends are more like unacknowledged gods presiding over the adventure spread out before you. You roll the dice of fate and lead your heroes about. Sometimes you speak as your characters. Other times you talk as if they were standing in the room with you. Often it can feel as if the group runs the party of heroes more-so than any individual player, yet in the end it is the player holding the character sheet who has final say on what a character will do.

Choosing a Style. How you choose to play is between you and your friends, but this is something you should nail down before the game begins. Dragonhead supports both styles and doesn't consider one to be better than the other, although it will admit that Immersive gaming works best with large groups of people while Omniscient gaming is better for small ones. What does not work is having some at the table playing Immersively while the others are playing Omnisciently.

Games Without End

If you haven't figured it out by now, Dragonhead is not a board game where you race around a maze and whoever makes it to the end first is the winner. This a *game without end*. You win it by having fun while playing it. An adventure can last a single night or ramble on for years.

Unfortunately, real life has a terrible way of trampling long campaigns, so if you must leave early, be sure to hand your characters off to your friends. Yes, they may make your barbarian walk around with his bearskin speedo on his head, but at least the adventure can continue without you.

For the same reason, at the end of the night ***all character sheets go back to the DM***. This way the group can pick up where it last left off, even if not everyone who played the last time around could make it.

Character Creation

It is good to create your character with everyone at the table. Adventure parties often need a decent mix of classes and the last thing you want is to have everyone showing up with a Warlord.

These steps you will want to follow in order. Go through it once while creating a character to get an understanding of the process. Afterwards you should be able to create characters quite quickly using just our **Character Creation Cheat Sheet** as a guide.

If you don't have a character sheet, visit the website at www.chameleondream.com/dragonhead for a downloadable PDF. Otherwise, wrangle up some dice and let's go!

1.) Choose a Class

Your class best describes your character. What do you want to play? No idea? Roll 1d12.

1 - 3 Fighter

4 - 5 Cleric

6 - 7 Wizard

8 Rogue

9 Dwarf

10 Elf

11 Warlock

12 Warlord

Most tables are expressed using ranges with two numbers separated by a dash. Fighter is 1 - 3, meaning a roll of 1 to 3. If you rolled a 1, 2 or 3 you are now a fighter.

Class descriptions are found in the *Character Compendium*. It is good to give your class a read to see if it is something that interests you. If not, roll again. Note that some classes have restrictions. A few require literacy which will be explained later in *Languages*.

Male or Female? Can't decide? Roll a die. An odd number is male while an even one is female. In the next step, when you roll your abilities, you can leave them as is or create a more masculine character by taking a Muscle +1 and Charisma -1 or a more feminine character with a Muscle -1

and Charisma +1. For an overly masculine or feminine character change these 1's to 2's.

Body Size. Most classes are Medium in size, meaning you can ignore anything pertaining to body size. Others may be smaller or larger than this and will require some extra work. For more on Body Size see its entry in the Adventure section. And yes, body size is the reason why the Halving does not appear in step 1. It's a good to stick with medium-sized characters until you have a fuller understanding of the game.

2.) Roll Your Abilities

Roll **3d6** seven times, re-rolling any roll of 5 or less, and writing the totals on a piece of scrap paper. On the whole...

16 - 18 is Excellent.

13 - 15 is Pretty Good.

9 - 12 is Average.

6 - 8 is Sub-par.

3 - 5 is Pathetic.

Assign each roll to an ability. For help, look to your class. The **Primary Abilities** are those that the class has the most use for. You don't have to put your best rolls into them but that is the idea. As far as what the abilities stand for...

- **Spirit** is the will to do what needs to be done. It helps a character harness magical forces and hold their ground in the face of fear.
- **Muscle** is what it sounds like. This is the meat that makes things go. You need it for lifting, pushing and pulling things around.
- **Intellect** is the muscle of the mind. It is used for grasping big concepts or recalling large amounts information with accuracy and detail.
- **Wisdom** is a mix of perception and intuition. Wise characters have a good understanding of how the world works. They are very observant and rarely surprised.
- **Dexterity** is about precision and coordination. It is a pivotal ability for making combat attacks, defending oneself and moving when you need to move.

- **Constitution** is a character's health, natural good looks and sturdiness of frame. It helps prevents sickness, disease and death.
- **Charisma** is the ability to think fast and say what needs to be said to entice others into doing your bidding.

Abilities are often known by the first three letters of each name. On a character sheet where it says **Con** that is short for **Constitution**.

3.) Choose A Level

A character's **Level** is a general measure of power. Traditionally, all characters start at 1st level but you may want to create a higher level character for a higher level adventure. If so roll 1d12.

- 1 - 4: use the lowest recommended level.
- 5 - 8: use a level from the low middle.
- 9 - 10: use a level from the high middle.
- 11 - 12: use the highest recommended level.

If the adventure module recommends character levels 4 to 7? The lowest level would be 4. The low middle is 5. The high middle is 6. The highest is 7.

Write your level on the character sheet next to your class. Near the bottom of the sheet write in the number of experience points or **XP** it takes to get to that level.

Ability Increases. For every level add a **+1** to an **ability score** of your choosing. A character starting at 4th level gets a +4 that could be dropped all on one ability or spread across four of them or any combination in-between.

Class Bonus. You also get a class bonus **equal to your level**. This helps your character do the things someone of that class should be able to do, such as a Wizard trying to make sense of some mystical glyphs, a Rogue eavesdropping in on a conversation or a Fighter rambling on and on about weapons and armor.

While the uses of a class are open to interpretation, each class comes with a **Class Bonus List** to let you know what the class bonus can be used with - *no questions asked* - if Melee is there then your melee attacks gain the bonus. If a $\frac{1}{2}$ appears after an item, such as *Melee $\frac{1}{2}$* , then you only gain half the class bonus. If a modifier appears, such as

Melee +1, then you get your class bonus as well as an additional +1.

The space beneath the class on your character sheet is for jotting down notes about the class. Leave out the first line of class bonuses and copy the rest to your sheet.

4.) Hit Points

Hit Points keep you alive. They come from a **Base HP** provided by your class added to what your **Spirit, Muscle** and **Constitution** scores take from the following table.

3	-	4	=	-6
5	-	6	=	-4
7	-	8	=	-2
9	-	10	=	0
11	=			+2
12	=			+4
13	=			+6
14	=			+8
15	=			+10
16	=			+12
17	=			+14
18	=			+16
19	=			+18
20	=			+20
21	=			+22
22	=			+24
23	=			+26
24	=			+28
25	=			+30
26	=			+32
27	=			+34
28	=			+36
29	=			+38
30	=			+40

If your class gives you a Base HP of 6 and you have Spirit 12, Muscle 11 and Constitution 12 this adds up to $6 + 4 + 2 + 4 = 16$ hit points.

Should your scores be so bad that your hit points added up to a negative number then congratulations! *You just died during character creation.* Go back to step 2 and start over.

Damage. Using a Pen - **yes a Pen** - draw a circle around one silver circle for each hit point, moving left to right and down when needed. Split the total hit points in **half** and count backwards that amount from the last point. Draw a

slash between it and the next circle. Do this again using a **quarter** of your total hit points. Here is what it should look like for a character with 16 hit points.



Rege & Stun. Your **Regeneration Rate** and **Stun Point** come from your hit point total divided by **5** with a minimum of 1. Put these where it says Stun and Rege on the sheet.

5.) Secondary Abilities

Secondary abilities are an open-ended collection of attributes that come from combinations of your primary abilities. They go in the diamonds in the center of your character sheet. Everyone will have the following five. Depending on your class and the needs of your DM you may have more.

Agility. **Mus + Dex / 2.** This is your character's ability to move ones whole body with strength and precision.

Melee. **Mus + Mus + Dex / 3.** This is used with any attack made using your hands such as punches, sword swings or axe blows. Yes, it does use two servings of your muscle.

Throw. **Mus + Dex / 2.** This is used with muscle powered ranged weapons such as the bow, javelin, or sling.

Ranged. **Dex + Wis / 2.** This is used with weapons that need to be aimed like a crossbow.

Luck. **Cha + Wis / 2.** Luck is often used for checks where no other ability fits the bill.

Calculating Scores. Add together the scores of the abilities mentioned above, divide by the number behind the slash, and that is your score.

For Agility, if your character has Muscle 15 and Dexterity 12? Combined this makes 27, divided by 2 and rounded down gives you Agility 13.

Class Ability Bonuses. Unlike your primary abilities, the secondary abilities may be increased by your class. For each of them check your class bonus list. If the ability is mentioned add your class bonus to it (hint, it's always the first line). If a $\frac{1}{2}$ follows it, such as **Magic $\frac{1}{2}$** , add only half the class bonus.

6.) Equipment

Classes come with **free** equipment. This is the stuff your character has accumulated on the way to becoming who they are. You may swap out these items for similar items of an equal or lesser value, but all of it will be in used condition. Try to hock any of it and you will find it worth barely half the market value.

Everything else you need to buy. Typically, shopping is done in character once the game begins. Use the tables found in the equipment section of the *Character Compendium* but also realize that not everything is available everywhere.

Currency. The world of Dragonhead runs on coins. Each weighs a hefty tenth of a pound. **Iron** is the base currency of the realm and it is just what it sounds like, a chunk of iron or steel melted down and cast as a crude coin, often with a hole in its center so it can be strung on a cord. Anything with a dollar sign next to it is in Irons. Other coins you might encounter...

1 Copper Piece or CP = \$10

1 Silver Piece or SP = \$20

1 Gold Piece or GP = \$100

These are *old world coins*. They are often found stamped with a design whose meaning has long since been forgotten yet is still treasured since a nicely stamped coin probably has not been filed down to make it worth less than it is.

Starting Cash. While your DM may say otherwise, the standard amount of starting cash for beginning characters is **2d6 Irons** and **1d6 Copper** multiplied by the character's level.

Arms & Armor. Classes often come with a number of taboos surrounding the weapons a character can wield and the armor one can wear. Why? Because what a character wears says a lot about who they are. The other members of the class tend to care immensely about this and what it says about the class as a whole.

While you may break a cultural taboo - you can be *that wizard who wears armor* - it will come back to haunt you. Most level advancement comes from schools run by the classes. If they hear of your misconduct they may choose not to teach you anything and stymie your level advancement.

Encumbrance. How much stuff can a character carry? As much as you can imagine the character carrying. Granted, the more muscle a character has the more stuff one should be able to haul around, but even the brawniest barbarian will have a hard time doing anything with a treasure chest stuffed under each arm.

The specifics of the matter are left to the imagination, yours as well as the DM's. If you try to carry too much stuff you may find your actions becoming harder to perform.

Bulk. With that said, certain heavy pieces of equipment - notably armor and shields - come with a **Bulk** penalty. This hinders **Magic** and **Agility** checks. Total up what is in your equipment list and write it in on the front of your sheet.

7.) Attacks

Attacks are typically weapons and magic spells. If your equipment list includes weaponry, you should write them in as attacks.

Hit. This is the hit score used by the attack. Weapons are typed as either **Melee**, **Ranged** or **Throw** and they use your secondary abilities of the same name. Add to this any other modifiers from your character sheet which may apply (class bonuses, quality, etc). Your hit score should be something you can quickly use with little more than a risk roll. Hindrances are left out because they change so often.

Quality. The +1 on the classic *Long Sword +1* is a quality bonus. Magic may have had a hand in its creation, but it is actually just a very well-made sword. Quality bonuses should **always** be added to an attack's hit score even though it sits on the end of a weapon's name right next to it.

Damage. Damage is a die roll and a letter. The die roll produces the force of the attack. The letter tells us its damage type: **p** = Pierce, **s** = Sharp, **m** = Mixed, **b** = Blunt, **i** = Impact. More on this will be explained in Combat.

Punches & Kicks. Even if you don't mean to use them, it doesn't hurt to have these two on your sheet. Both Punch and Kick are **Melee** attacks. Punch does **1d4i** for damage and a Kick does **1d4+1i**.

8.) Magic

Magic using characters have supernatural powers that should be written in as attacks on your character sheet. Feel free to skip this step if your class does not use magic.

There are three big divisions in the world of magic. **Spell-Casters** learn what they know from studying spell books. **Divine Power** users have their prayers answered by divine powers. **Natural-Casters** simply come upon their magical powers naturally. For more on these, see their entries in the Adventure section.

Magic. This is the secondary attribute which makes it all work. When you cast a spell, it is essentially a check of your ability to use that power. What creates your Magic score depends on the class itself. Some take it from a single ability. Others will add up different abilities and average them out.

Spell Count. The number of powers you can have in your attack list is your spell count. How this number is found depends on what your class has to offer. Typically it involves adding your magic score to your class level and dividing by 2.

When it comes to choosing the spells you can cast, that will also change from class to class so be sure to read up on what your class has to offer.

Hit. Spells are not the easiest things to cast. The greater the spell level the harder it will be to pull off. Typically a spell will have a **difficulty** equal to its level as a penalty. This you should combine with your Magic score and any Bulk penalty you may have when writing it in as an attack.

$$\text{Hit} = \text{Magic} - \text{Difficulty} - \text{Bulk}.$$

If your character has any other constant magic modifiers (such as a focusing tool) be sure to add these in too. A wizard with Magic 15 trying to cast a 3rd level spell while dealing with Bulk -2 but with the help of a Wizard's Staff +1 would have a (15 - 3 - 2 + 1) Hit 11.

Can Wizards Wear Armor? While the classes may have their taboos, the only thing actually stopping a magic-user from wearing armor is its Bulk penalty. Divine power users, such as the Cleric, are not effected. This is because divine forces are casting the spell for the character. The cleric is not doing anything more than asking for it to happen.

Spell Books. Spell-Casters who are just starting out should be given a spell book as a piece of equipment. Its pages contain the arcane knowledge necessary for casting the spells you have chosen. *Guard this with your life!* Lose your spell book and eventually you will lose the ability to cast spells.

Spell Swapping. Spell-Casters and Divine Power users can swap spells out of their attack list and replace them with others. Typically this takes **an hour** of reading in ones spell book or praying to a deity to swap out each spell. Natural-Casters cannot do this. They are stuck with the powers they have whether they like them or not.

How Many Times Can I Cast a Spell? As often as you like or are willing to try. Depending on your class, failure in casting a spell can be detrimental. Crashing a spell can be devastating.

The same mentality stands behind the matter of "what level spells can I cast?" You can attempt to cast any level spell you have access to, but a low-level wizard is going to have an incredibly hard time getting a ninth level spell to work.

If you are going to play a magic-using character, be sure to read up on the spells you have before the game begins. Nobody appreciates being asked to wait while you go look something up.

9.) Armor Class

Armor Class comprises two layers of protection. The first keeps you from being hit. The second reduces the damage when you are hit. AC is kept in the shield on your character sheet and is often two numbers separated by a slash.

Full AC. The first number is your **FAC**. It is your Agility plus any FAC Class Bonus you may have and any Bulk penalty you may be carrying.

$$\text{FAC} = \text{Agility} + \text{FAC Class Bonus} - \text{Bulk}.$$

Suck AC. The second number is your **SAC**. This is used against surprise attacks, back attacks or pretty much any situation where your defenses start to suck. It is your Luck score.

$$\text{SAC} = \text{Luck}.$$

If your SAC is somehow greater than your FAC then use SAC for both of them.

Size AC. Characters of all sizes gain an AC bonus based on their own size verses their opponent's size. For a medium-sized character write this on your sheet.

Size AC: Lar +1, Ext +2, Big +3, Hug +4.

The three letters are the first three letters of each size category. Hug is short for Huge. It has nothing to do with giving a creature a hug.

Armor. Armor is the second part of Armor Class and what it does is absorb damage after a blow has landed. This is what the Armor value of your armor and shield and helmet adds up to. Tally it in your equipment list and write it on the front of the sheet above your damage circles.

If your character is carrying a shield it's a good idea to write in two numbers for Armor. The first is everything you have and the second in parenthesis is your armor without the shield.

Armor quality, such as a Shield +1, adds to the item's armor value. It does not effect AC.

Magical Protection. Certain powers and magical items create force fields that repel attacks. Mage Armor, Rings of Protection and Bracers of Defense in particular. Gamewise these add to your AC, both FAC and SAC. They also tend to repel each other. Unless something says otherwise you get just one magical protection. Put on ten Rings of Protection +1 and you still only get a single AC +1.

10.) Movement

Movement is the speed your character travels at, comparable to *miles per hour* for long overland travel. In combat it is the number of steps your character can take per round, aka your *steps per round* or **SPR**. With miniatures on a battleboard, each square or hex is one step.

Movement = Class Move + Agility Bonus - ½ Bulk.

To find a movement speed, start with the move speed provided by your class, add in a bonus brought by your agility using the table below, and subtract from it half your Bulk penalty. If less than 1 it stops at 1.

3	=	-4
4 - 5	=	-3
6 - 7	=	-2
8 - 9	=	-1
10 - 11	=	+0
12 - 13	=	+1

14 - 15 = +2
16 - 17 = +3
18 - 19 = +4
20 - 21 = +5
22 - 23 = +6
24 - 25 = +7
26 - 27 = +8
28 - 29 = +9
30 = +10

If your class comes with a body size distance multiplier, be sure to multiply your speed by it, with a minimum of 1 SPR.

If the movement mentions a class bonus then you gain it to your speed. A level 2 character who gets *Walk 4 + ½ Class Bonus* would have a class move speed of 5

11.) Alignment

Alignment is the great cosmic divide between the forces of Good and Evil. Neutral is the natural unaligned state of the world and exists somewhere between the two. Choose the alignment (**Good, Neutral, Evil**) that best describes your character and pencil a circle around the letter with a dot above it representing that alignment.

Basically, as you commit resoundingly good acts the circle moves left. Commit a resoundingly evil act and the circle moves right. What qualifies as a good or evil act is between you and the DM. As your actions push your character to becoming more good or evil, divine forces will take notice and take this into consideration when it comes to using divine power to help or harm the character.

12.) Languages

The language of trade is called **Common** because it is the most common language spoken in any place. To find what you speak, compare your **Intellect** to the following table. An additional language is learned with every 2 points after 20.

3 - 4: Grunts, snorts and an occasional word of Common.
5 - 7: Crude Common only.
8 - 10: Common only.
11 - 12: Common + 1 language.
13 - 14: Common + 2 languages.
15 - 16: Common + 3 languages.

17 - 18: Common + 4 languages.

19 - 20: Common + 5 languages.

Read & Write. All characters start as functionally illiterate and only able to read simple things like signs and menus unless they have spent a language on **Read & Write**. Once possessed, a character should be able to read and write any language they speak.

Fantasy Language. While the actual languages available will change from place to place the following languages exist in most fantasy worlds. Arranged from common to obscure...

- **Dwarvish:** the chant-like grunting of dwarves.
- **Elvish:** the high lilting sing-speak of elves.
- **Law:** the secret language of the forces of Law.
- **Chaos:** the secret language of the forces of Chaos.
- **Gnomish:** the jibber-jabber-jargon of gnomes.
- **Goblin:** the screech of goblins and other subhumanoids.
- **Reptilian:** the susurrus of the reptile people.
- **Subterranean:** the rare tongue of the deep underground.
- **Draconic:** the exceedingly rare telepathic language of dragons. You need to be telepathic to speak it.

Fluency. If loading up on languages does not interest you, you may opt to add a +1 fluency bonus to a language you already speak instead. A character with an Intellect of 16 could choose Common and Elvish +2 instead of Common and three different languages. This would give the character a +2 when speaking Elvish and be more likely to impress any elf who hears the character speak.

Gamewise, fluency is used in place of a class bonus. Typically you would use it with Spirit when trying to get a rise out of someone, Intellect when trying to impress them with your smarts or Charisma when trying to seem cool.

13.) Personality

For a quick personality, pick 2 positive traits, 1 neutral trait, and 1 negative trait from the list of personality traits at the back of the *Character Compendium*. Write them down where it says **Personality** on your character sheet.

On the back of your character sheet is space for writing more about your character such as a back story and how they came to be an adventurer. For those who are graphically

inclined there is even a 4 x 4.5 inch space for a character portrait.

With this said, it is good not to dive into this task without knowing that your character is going to stick around for a while, especially with low level characters who may bite it on the very first encounter.

14.) Name the Character

Hopefully by now an image of the character has coalesced in your mind. Give it a name that sums it up. If you can't think of anything then go with a working title (ex: My Fighter) until something better comes along.

15.) Level Up

This is not a step in creation but it is worth mentioning since you will want to revisit character creation once you acquire enough **Experience Points** or **XP**s to advance in level.

Changing Levels. This is the purpose of the Level Advancement tables at the end of the class descriptions. The Fighter's 2 = 4,500 means that second level is reached once you have 4,500 XP under your belt. Go to step **3.)Choose a Level** and follow it from there forward, readjusting abilities, bonuses, hit points, etc.

Changing levels can be quite time-consuming, so it is best to save it until after the game is over and people are starting to pack up and head home. Remember **character sheets stay with the DM!** If you truly need to leave then give your sheet to the DM and level up at the start of the next game.

Gaining XP. Experience points are often gained by accomplishing adventure goals and seeking out training. Adventure goals and how much they are worth is left up to the DM. Generally speaking, the more important and intrepid the goal the more XP you should get for accomplishing it.

Training usually happens in-between adventures at a university, guild, dojo or some other place of learning. It takes roughly **1 year to increase 1 level**. For tuition, every **1 XP costs \$1**. Think of this as a good place to unload all that treasure you acquired on your last adventure. Money spent to acquire XP in this way is gone for good. The institution takes it into their coffers, cackles maniacally and your loot is never seen again.

Welcome to higher education.

Sample Character Creation

Alright. So let's build a brand new character from the ground up.

1.) Choose a Class. I don't have anything in mind so I roll for a class and the Warlord turns up. For a sex I roll 1d6 to a 4. That's an even number so she is female.

I read the class description for Warlord and jot down a few notes on my character sheet. Most of it are uses of the class bonus brought on by being a Warlord.

- Battle Initiative.
- Detecting Surprise Attacks.
- Reaction Checks.
- Grappling.
- Helping others defend against fear.
- Slip-Thru.

And of course the complications...

- Primadonna. Will not work with other warlords.

2.) Roll Abilities. I roll 3d6 seven times to get: 9, 7, 12, 13, 11, 10, 12. Not bad, kinda average all around but that is what the 3d6 is supposed to create. I take a look at the Warlord class and see that Charisma, Spirit and Wisdom are its prime abilities so I decide to give her...

Spirit 12

Muscle 9

Intellect 7

Wisdom 11

Dexterity 10

Constitution 12

Charisma 13

3.) Choose a Level. Our adventure module says it is for levels 4 to 7. I roll a 1d12 and a 2 turns up. That puts her at 4th level. This gives her a +4 class bonus which I scribble on the sheet.

It also gives her four extra ability points. I don't like that Intellect 7 and decide to increase it to 9. Warlords may have mental abilities as their primes but they are

basically fighters so I also send her to the gym and put the two other points behind her muscle.

Spirit 12

Muscle 11

Intellect 9

Wisdom 11

Dexterity 10

Constitution 12

Charisma 13

Being 4th level also gives her 20,000 XP. This I write in near the bottom of her calling info.

4.) Hit Points. Warlord provides a base 6 hit points. She has Spirit 12, Muscle 11 and Constitution 12. This translates to $6 + 4 + 2 + 4 = 16$ hit points.

With a pen I draw rings around 16 circles. Split in half makes 8 so I count back eight circles from the end and put a slash between the 8th and 9th circles. I cut the eight in half to make 4 and count back four circles from the end to put another slash between the 12th and 13th circles.

For Stun and Rege, 16 divided by 5 is 3.

5.) Secondary Abilities. For secondary abilities, Agility and Throw all use $Mus + Dex / 2$. That's easy enough, just remember to round down, $11 + 10 = 21 / 2 = 10$. Melee uses $Mus + Mus + Dex / 3$ which is $11 + 11 + 10 = 32 / 3 = 10$. Ranged uses $Dex + Wis / 2$ which is $10 + 11 = 21 / 2 = 10$. Luck uses $Cha + Wis / 2$. That is $13 + 11 = 24 / 2 = 12$.

Warlord is a fighting class. From it she gets a full +4 class bonus for Melee, Ranged and Throw.

6.) Equipment. From the Warlord class description I quickly jot down its list of equipment on the back of her sheet.

Sword. Dagger. Chain Hauberk. Medium Shield. Cloak. Leather Boots. Heavy Gloves. Money Pouch. Backpack. Large Sack. Flint & Tinder. Whetstone. Dry Rations. Waterskin. Signal Whistle.

The Chain Hauberk has Armor 5 and Bulk -1. The Medium Shield has Armor 4 and Bulk -1. On the front of her sheet I pencil in Armor 9 (5) and Bulk -2. The (5) being her armor sans shield.

I also roll for starting cash - 2d6 Irons and 1d6 Copper - multiplied by 4 since she is 4th level. This leaves her with 36 Iron and 24 Copper.

7.) Attacks. Under Attacks I write in entries for her weapons. Sword, dagger and shield are all melee weapons so they get a Hit 14 from her Melee ability.

Sword. Hit 14. Damage 1d8s.

Dagger. Hit 14. Damage 1d4p. Balanced.

Medium Shield. Hit 14. Damage 1d6b. Slow.

8.) Magic. Warlords have no magical abilities so we skip this step.

9.) Armor Class. And her ACs? Warlord does have FAC in its class bonus list so...

FAC = Agility 10 + Warlord 4 - Bulk 2

SAC = Luck 12

AC = 12 / 12

Since her FAC and SAC equal each other I just put a 12 in the shield.

10 Movement. Warlord has Walk 5. She receives no agility bonus but half her Bulk -2 will drop her movement speed to Walk 4.

11 Alignment. She's one of the good guys. I draw a circle around the G with a dot above it.

12 Languages. With an Intellect of 9 she speaks Common and cannot read or write, at least not complex things. I write this in under her class info.

13 Personality. Let's see, 2 positive traits, 1 neutral and 1 negative. I pick...

- Brave
- Bodacious
- Relentless
- Instigator

14. Name the Character. Always the hardest part. She needs a name. I want to call her Morgan but Morgan sounds like a guy's name. How about Megan? *Megan Ironblade*. A little too on the nose? *Megan Brightblade*. A little too bright and shiny? How about *Megan Steelblade*? Not bad.

I riffle through an collection of fantasy character images and come up with one in a chainmail dress with sword and shield, as well as a bow and quiver. *I'll have to go back and give her a bow*. She has this huge 1980's lion mane of hair and, wait. Hmmm....

Megan Steellion? Megan Stellion? Not bad. Megan Steelion?
That's it! Right there. She'll probably pronounce it *Steel-*
eon, but basically its *Steellion* without the annoying
double e's and double l's right next to each other. *Megan*
Steelion. I like that. I think our party has just found its
new leader.

[sheet image]

Action

The game begins. The DM tells you what kind of a mess your characters have gotten themselves into and you - *the Dragonhead Bangers* - carry it forward from there. You tell the DM what your characters are doing. You speak on the character's behalf. The DM listens to what you have to say and tells you what comes of it.

Most of the time, if what you are doing sounds reasonable enough you just do it. You cross the bridge. You peek around the corner. You jiggle the door handle to see if it is unlocked.

Ability Checks. Other times the DM will ask you for an **Ability Check**. *You do not use your abilities.* You do things and your abilities are tested by them. You are literally checking to see if your character can do what you are trying to get that character to do. The DM will tell you what ability to check.

Megan jiggles the door handle on the back of the wizard's guild to see if it is locked. Sneaking into the wizard's guild late at night? Probably not a good idea, but it is what our party is doing.

There are three characters in this party. Ralph Cabbagehammer a dwarven rogue, Grudge Orcslayer a dwarven warrior, and Megan Steelion is its leader.

Most examples in this book are written in dialog, filling us in on what is actually being said at the table. Observations of the game mechanics are kept in parentheses (like so).

DM: You jiggle the door handle to find it is locked.

Megan: Ralph? Think you can open it?

Ralph: I don't know. I crouch down to take a look.

DM: Well, it looks pretty high-end, not your normal house door lock by any means. Do you have your lock picks on you?

Ralph: Indeed I do.

DM: Alright, if you want to try it, give me a Dexterity check.

Class Bonus. When doing something a member of your class should know how to do you get its class bonus. If the class only half covers the activity you only get half its bonus.

Unlike your abilities, a class bonus is something you do use during the game. It is up to you to know what your character class is good for and mention it to the table when bringing it into play.

Hard & Easy. If the DM describes a check as being Hard or Easy, this is a way of talking in numbers without having to mention any. Each Hard puts a -2 on the check. Every Easy gives it a +2. While there is no limit to how hard or easy a check can be, rarely does it go beyond six points in either direction.

Triple Easy = +6

Double Easy = +4

Easy = +2

Hard = -2

Double Hard = -4

Triple Hard = -6

Talk it over with your DM. If you can think of some interesting or innovative way to make an action easier the Dragonhead Master might just decide to let you off easy. Taking your time does help and practice makes perfect. When given the chance to practice something before doing it, this generally makes the task easier but not dramatically so.

Ralph: I'm going to use my rogue's ability to open locks with this. That should give me a +3 (which is Ralph's class bonus in Rogue) and I have 11 Dex, so it's a 14, not bad.

DM: Okay, but wait! Just as you kneel down to do this, the sky above you breaks open with a torrential downpour. That combined with the dark night makes it a *double hard* task to do.

Grudge: *Somebody doesn't want us to go in there.*

Ralph: Double hard! (the -4 of the double hard brings his 14 down to an 10)

Megan: I drape my cloak over Ralph to keep the rain off of him.

Grudge: And I hold the hooded lantern steady and close to the lock to give him some light.

DM: Ok, that does help, somewhat. *Single hard*. And on a possibly unrelated note, you hear distant booted footsteps on the cobblestones.

Grudge: What do they sound like?

DM: Soldiers, possibly the night watch. At least they don't sound like they're in a hurry but with the rain coming down they are definitely not taking their time.

Ralph: How many chances do I have before they get here?

DM: (rolls a 1d6, a 1 turns up) Oh, I'd say one.

Ralph: *Cabbages!*

Ralph: Alright, *let's do this*. Any idea of what I need?

DM: No way to know until you try. And you hear those boots tromping ever closer.

Ralph: Ok. I've got Dex 11, +3 for the class and -2 for the rain. A total of 12. It's going to be close.

DM: Roll the dice.

Risk Roll. A check begins with an ability score, different bonuses and penalties are added to it and it all ends with a roll of the dice known as your Risk Roll. Roll the **d20** or **Sign Die** and the **d6** or **Try Die** together. The sign die tells us what the try die turns into.

20 = Critical

11 - 19 = Bonus

2 - 10 = Penalty

1 = Stumble

Roll 14 on the sign die and 4 on the try die? That's a +4. Roll 7 on the sign die and 3 on the try die? That's a -3. Basically, if the sign die rolls a double-digit number it's a bonus while a single-digit is a penalty, with the exception of 10 which you just have to watch for.

Strength. Add everything together and the total is the **Strength** of your action. A strength is a measure of performance. Where an ability score gives us your character's potential, a strength tells us how you actually did.

Critical, Stumble & Crash A critical is a bonus that **doubles** the value of the try die. A stumble is a penalty that does the same. A crash happens any time your strength drops to **zero or less**. You fail and some horrendous unexpected calamity strikes your character. What actually happens is left up to the DM to either consult one of the game's many crash tables or simply dream something up.

Success. Sometimes all we need is a strength. Other times we need to turn it into a **Success**. For that we take it to the Success Table.

51 & up = 9 = Mind-Blowing

46 - 50 = 8 = Stellar

41 - 45 = 7 = Amazing

36 - 40 = 6 = Fantastic

31 - 35 = 5 = Incredible

26 - 30 = 4 = Excellent

21 - 25 = 3 = Terrific

16 - 20 = 2 = Great

11 - 15 = 1 = Average

6 - 10 = $\frac{1}{2}$ = Little

1 - 5 = 0 = Fail

0 or less = Crash!

A Success is a description and a count. A 17 is a great action. It creates two successes, something often called a *Double* because in combat the 2 means you do double damage.

While it is good to be as successful as you possibly can, more often than not all you need is a strength of 11 or better to succeed.

Little Success. Although called a success, the little success is a murky area straddling success and failure. A little success in combat only does half damage. If you were trying to jump a ravine, a little success would leave you dangling by your fingertips on the other side.

Try Hard. Characters are always trying to get things done but sometimes they need to try harder. Before rolling the dice, tell the table you are *Trying Hard*, *Harder* or your *Hardest*. This will exhaust you through wear damage but you get to add extra dice to your roll.

Try Hard = 1 wear, add 1 die.

Try Harder = 2 wear, add 2 dice.

Try Hardest = 3 wear, add 3 dice.

To increase your chances of rolling a bonus (aka *trying hard to get it right*) add sign dice to your risk roll. To increase the bonus itself (aka *trying hard to do better*) add try dice. Try dice come with a hierarchy: d6, d8, d10, d12. If you add one try die to the base d6 you would roll a

d6 and d8. Add two try dice and you would roll a d6, d8 and d10. Add three and you roll d6, d8, d10 and d12.

Roll the dice but do not add them together. Instead **use the best rolls** you make. If you try harder and roll d20, d20, d6 and d8? And the sign dice roll 7 and 15 while the try dice roll 5 and 8? You would use the 15 and 8 for a +8 bonus.

Rolling more than one 20 or 1 on the sign dice adds another instance of the try dice to your total. With the roll above if you had rolled two 20's on the sign dice? The first 20 doubles the 8 to +16. The second 20 adds another 8 for a whopping +24.

Try Hard does not work with everything. It can only be used with situations where the character is aware of the check and has some control over it. Try Hard often does not work with Luck checks, SAC and saving throws against things like poison. *Ask your DM.*

Mojos. *Don't like what you just rolled?* If you have any of the gold coins known as Mojos you can spend one and roll again. This can be done up to three times per action. With every re-roll the previous roll is lost. Mojos can overturn a failure but they cannot stop a crash.

Ralph: Hmm. I've got one chance, let's not blow this. I try hard to get this right (marks down a point of damage and picks up another d20. *Shake Shake Shake* and the dice hit the table with a 1 and 3 on the sign dice and a 4 on the try die. A -4. This brings his 12 down to 8 and a little success. It's not the 11 or better he had been hoping for. Ralph looks uneasily at the DM. The DM looks uneasily back at Ralph).

Ralph: Heh. Heh. (Ralph tosses a mojo into the discard bowl and tries again. This time the sign dice roll 9 and 14. The try die rolls a 6 for a +6 bonus) Yes! An 18! A great success!

DM: The lock pops open and the door effortlessly slides inwards. A darkened room awaits beyond it.

Megan: Everyone, quick, inside before the night watch gets here.

DM: You all hustle in out of the rain, presumably closing the door behind you (no one speaks up, so it happens). Just as the door closes shut an armed contingent of guards carrying torches goes marching by.

Ralph: Whew! I look around the room. What do I see?

DM: You find yourself in a parlor of sorts. You know this because candles all around the room suddenly burst alight and you find yourselves standing before a wizard. Complete with cloak and staff and metal skullcap, he doesn't look happy to see you and yet he doesn't seem perturbed either.

"You could have knocked," he says, with a completely straight face.

DM Fiat. While events pertaining to your characters should follow the rules, outside of them anything can happen. A dragon and an efreet can fight for hours on end without a single die being rolled and yet the outcome is completely legit.

If the DM says it happens then it happens.

This is known as **DM Fiat**. In the example above, the wizard Zothabar uses magic to cause some candles to burst alight. This is a minor feat of magic that any wizard of his stature should be able to perform. If the characters were to try it a spell would need to be cast and the dice rolled to see how they fared, but since Zothabar is a creature and the action will in no way impact the characters we just let it happen.

DM & The Dice. The same goes for the DM's use of the dice. Risk rolls are often skipped for creatures. When it comes to damage rolls sometimes the **middle** is taken, aka *the best that could be rolled cut in half*. With a 1d8+4 the best roll is a 12 so the middle is a 6. All of that is DM Fiat. While this may not seem very exciting, it helps immensely when three hundred goblins storm the castle gates.

Character Tables & Notes. You may have noticed that there are four pages to the character sheet PDF. These are designed to be printed on the fronts and backs on two sheets of paper. The first sheet is your character sheet. The second is the **Tables & Notes** page. Most of it is space for writing down notes, but in the margins of it are the tables mentioned in this section.

The idea is that you play with the Tables page lying under your character sheet but just off to the side so you can see the tables and your character sheet at the same time.

[image]

Challenges

With a check we simply want to know how well you did. Beating a 10 is good enough. With a challenge, forces are

conspiring against you. If you are trying to cause something to happen that puts you on **Offense**. Trying to stop the thing from happening puts you on **Defense**. Where the two collide you get a challenge often phrased as **Offense vs Defense**. *Hit vs AC, Muscle vs Dexterity, Magic vs Hard Spirit* - these are all challenges with the offense on the left and the defense on the right. Notice that last one has a Hard tacked onto it to make it extra challenging for the defense.

Victory! In a challenge, if the offense can beat the defense by at least **1 point** then the action happens as planned. Otherwise the defense stops it dead in its tracks.

Beat & Defeat. Another way to know you are dealing with a challenge is through the words **Beat** and **Defeat**. If called to beat a strength that puts you on offense. Defeating it puts you on defense. *Defeat = Defense*.

It's good to keep in mind that defeat is not the same thing as failure. An action fails when it comes up with a strength of 5 or less.

Much talking has happened since the party entered the Wizards Guild. In short, Zothabar wants them to seek out an old tomb rumored to be high in the snowy mountains and bring back a powerful sword known as the Dragonslayer. Megan and Ralph are all for it. Grudge is not. The bangers talk it over while walking to a tavern but Grudge will not budge leaving them stuck at a logger-head of indecision.

Grudge: I don't like it. Zothabar's up to something I just know it!

Ralph: Oh come on. They're mountains! We're dwarves. Mountains and dwarves. Dwarves and mountains. We go together like, like? Like Mountains! And Dwarves!

Megan: Come on Grudge, when was the last time you've even seen a crisp line of snow covered peaks beneath a perfectly blue sky?

Grudge: I'm not going.

Megan: Don't be such a wet blanket. We need you there. You're our muscle.

Grudge: (folds his arms over his chest) Nope! Not doing it. Uh-uh.

DM: I think you guys need a **Charisma vs Spirit** challenge (assuming Megan is on offense and Grudge on defense).

Megan: Can I use my class bonus with this?

DM: You are a Warlord.

Megan: (She takes this as a yes. Megan has Charisma 13 and Warlord +4. She risk rolls a +3) Strength of 20. *Defeat that!*

Grudge: (Grudge has Spirit 14) I try my hardest to not agree to you (even though they are just talking he marks down 3 points of wear damage and rolls d20, d20, d6, d8, d10 to a +8) 22! Forget it Megan. We're not going.

Megan: Oh come on. Why not? What do you have against it?

Grudge: Oh no, I won your Charisma challenge. If you want me to go on some stupid frozen goose-chase, you've got to beat me on my own turf. *Arm wrestling!* (Grudge makes a muscle which bulges impressively)

Megan: I can't beat you at arm wrestling!

Ralph: *But I can.*

Saving Throws. A saving throw is a challenge where your character is stuck on defense. In the example above, Grudge is saving against Megan's Charisma.

Nothing really changes, except that most saving throws represent a test of character and not something a character actually does. Characters can only make one action at a time but saving throws can be made endlessly.

Competitions

Unlike a challenge, in a competition everyone is on offense. Actions are made. Dice are rolled. Strengths are compared and the character creating the **greatest strength** wins it. When strengths tie and the competition can end in a tie then it does so. Otherwise, checks should be made again and again until someone finally comes out on top.

With the cacophony of the tavern raging around them Grudge and Ralph lock fists. Ralph has Muscle 15 Grudge has Muscle 16. Characters don't know their own stats so while Grudge does have the advantage, it's not an obvious one. The DM sets them up with a best two out of three rolls competition.

On the first roll Grudge rolls up a strength of 14. Ralph does the same. It's a tie. Their fists waver in the air.

On the second roll both try hard. Grudge rolls a 18. Ralph rolls a 19. Ralph wins it. Grudge's fist leans closer to the table.

On the third roll they grit their teeth and try their hardest. Ralph rolls a strength of 17. Grudge bombs with an 11.

Ralph: Yes! YES! YES! I slam his fist to the table. Jump up and pound a flagon of ale in victory!!!

Grudge: I rub my sore wrist and contemplate a re-match.

Ralph: *Eat it Orcslayer!* We are going to the mountains!

Grudge: Alright, enough already.

DM: Okay, while you've all been doing this, a bunch of orcs sitting at the bar spin around on their stools. One of them smacks the other on the shoulder with a pudgy porcine hand and says, "Ey! Clancy. Was it me or did dat rock-eater over dere just call the other one *Orcslayer?*"

Megan: *Uh-oh.*

Competitions can involve single characters or teams of characters. The three most common team configurations are the Tug-O-War, Star-Player and Weakest Link.

Tug-O-War. Here two teams of competitors directly face off against one another. Everyone on a side makes the same check, successes are added up and the side with the most successes wins it.

The Star Player. Both sides make their checks but only the greatest strengths are compared. When more than one star player emerges, the team with the greatest number of them wins it.

The Weakest Link. The opposite of the star player. With a weakest link competition the side producing the worst strength (or the worst number of worst strengths) loses.

Combat

In combat, characters and creatures do not take turns. Everyone goes all at once trying to beat each other to the punch. They declare what their characters are going to do with the next three seconds, a stint of time known as a **Round**. Dice are rolled simultaneously and whoever creates the greatest strength goes first. The second greatest goes second and so on with the least successful strength going last. This continues, round after round, until the fight is over.

Combat Communication. An important point not to be overlooked is that each round is only **three seconds long**. This means that if you want to strategize your attack with the rest of your party you need to do it in-character and say only as much as can be said in three seconds. If you want to talk and attack at the same time your attack will take a **Hit -2**.

You Snooze, You Lose. Likewise, even when your character is not doing anything, it's good to pay attention to what the rest of the table is doing and plan your actions in advance. While there is no direct correlation between in-game time and time at the table, a ratio of 1 second to 1 minute is not a bad place to start. This means you shouldn't be spending more than 1 minute of table time trying to decide what to do when given the chance to go.

Choke! Spend more than 3 minutes trying to make up your mind and the DM may say - **you choked** - and skip your turn. Basically, you couldn't make up your mind and so your character couldn't either. *Those who hesitate are lost.*

Encounters. The entire fight we call an **Encounter**. This is not just a description but a rough length of time equal to however long it takes or **10 minutes of time** for the characters in the game.

When you see a spell that describes its effects as lasting *1 Encounter* this means it will last for as long as you need it or ten minutes. *Whichever comes first.* While it may be interesting to keep track of time during a game, most combat encounters will not last one minute let alone ten of them, but they all last one encounter.

Battles

When the number of combatants is small comparing strengths is fine, but this quickly grows unwieldy as numbers increase. A **Battle** is a form of combat where we divide everyone up into warring sides and the combat proceeds side by side.

Roll Initiative. The first thing that happens is a leader from each side enters a **Charisma Competition** to see who commands the battlefield. The side producing the greatest strength can either go first or force the other side to.

From there the battle goes **Side-By-Side** with every character on one side making their action for the round before the other side gets to go.

When your side attacks it doesn't matter who goes first since you are all working together to defeat the opposition. No attack order is needed, just go when it makes sense to.

Changing Command. Back and forth the tides of combat flow until either the battle is won or a leader is knocked unconscious or worse. At that point a different character needs to step up and assume command. If no one is willing then the group must rout, leaving the area as quickly as possible or surrendering if escape is impossible.

A Break in the Battle. A battle breaks when a round passes with no one on either side attacking the other. Should the battle suddenly re-ignite initiative should be rolled again.

Move!

When your side goes on offense, every character gets to make one action per round, typically this begins with movement and ends with an attack.

With miniatures your movement rate is the number of spaces or **Steps** you can move your mini. A character with Walk 4 can move 4 squares or hexes across the battleboard. When not using miniatures, just imagine it as best as you can.

Running & Sprinting. Running will **double** your speed but bring a **-2** to your action. Sprinting **triples** it but brings on a **-4**. Running and sprinting can be done with any form of movement even Swim, Fly or Dig.

Attack!

The number of attacks you can pack into your action depends on what is available to you. A character with a single weapon or a two-handed weapon gets one attack per action.

Weapon & Shield. A character with a shield on one arm can choose to bash with it or defend with it. If you bash, the shield's AC bonus will be lost the next time you go on defense.

Weapon in Each Hand. A character with a weapon in each hand can attack once with each of them. The weapon in your off-hand should roll a d4 or less for damage or both of your weapons should roll a d6 or less for damage. To do otherwise brings a **Hit -2** to the entire action. To make your attacks, **risk roll once** and use it with each weapon.

Creature Attacks. Creatures are often able to make multiple attacks, such as a dragon's *claw / claw / bite* attack. These can target separate opponents within reach. Like attacking with a weapon in each hand, **one risk roll** is made and used by all of them.

Spells. Spells and supernatural powers are always a single action. Only one can be cast per round and the character can do nothing except move around while trying to bring the spell into existence.

Other Options. Do realize that there is more you can do than just chip away at your opponent's hit points. Anything you can imagine fitting into three seconds of time is on the table. How to handle this is between you and the DM.

Defend!

Combat is a **Hit vs AC** challenge. **FAC** is used against the attacks you see coming and **SAC** against those you don't. Many spells are defended against using an ability such as Spirit or Agility. If nothing is mentioned then AC is used.

Risk-Rolling AC. Unlike other games, characters do need to risk-roll their ACs when on defense. Usually this is done as the attacks fly at them, but to save time, when attacked by a swarm of opponents the DM may ask for a single defense roll and use it against all attackers from the rest of the round.

Creatures generally don't risk roll anything. They come with set Hit and AC strengths that do not change. This

doesn't mean the DM will never risk roll for a creature, but it is rare.

Doing Damage. When an attack hits, the offense should roll its damage die, multiply it by the success of the attack, and tell the table about it. A sword is a sharp weapon. A swing from one doing 9 points of damage does *Sharp 9* or possibly a *9 Sharp* for damage.

Taking Damage. The first thing you do against an attack is subtract your armor from it. If this reduces the damage to zero then no damage is taken!

Wear Damage. Wear damage is exhaustion. It is a character holding ones own against the force of the blow. This damage you pencil in with slashes through the hit point circles. If 6 points slip past your armor you would slash six circles.

Tear Damage. Tear damage is actual physical damage and it depends on the blow's damage type. These you slash in the opposite direction, X-ing out wounds which already have wear damage in them.

- **Pierce** = 1 tear for every **1** point of wear.
- **Sharp** = 1 tear for every **2** point of wear.
- **Mixed** = 1 tear for every **3** points of wear.
- **Blunt** = 1 tear for every **4** points of wear.
- **Impact** = 1 tear for every **6** points of wear.

If 6 points of Piercing damage slipped past your armor it would do 6 tears of damage. A Sharp attack would do 3 tears of damage. A Mixed does 2 tears. A Blunt or Impact does only 1 tear of damage. If no damage type is mentioned then the attack does all wear and no tear.

Filled in, an attack doing Sharp 6 would look like this, along with one point of scar damage from a previous encounter.



Like Lightbulbs. You can tear a hit point that is holding a point of wear damage but you cannot put wear damage into a torn hit point. Think of them as lightbulbs. A healthy point shines brightly. Wear damage causes the bulb to dim. Tear damage whacks that point with a hammer. That bulb is not going to burn again until it's been replaced. How many clerics does it take to screw in a light bulb?

Hopefully just one.

Stun. If a **single blow** does more **Wear** damage than a defender's **Stun** point that character will lose their next immediate action to recovering from the stun.

Immediate means that the action may be something you have already rolled for but have yet to carry out. *Stun interrupts everything.* Spells being cast will be lost. If a character is desperately holding onto something they suddenly let go.

Knocked Down. If a single blow does **double** the stun point or more, or if someone is stunned and then stunned again before they can recover, they will be **knocked off their feet**. Now they need to recover from the stun as well as spend another action picking themselves up off the ground.

Obviously, this cannot happen to a creature that cannot be knocked down such as an ooze. It takes an extra stun to knock down a four-legged animal. Think of it as taking one stun for each pair of legs a creature possesses. *Good luck knocking down that giant centipede.*

Damage States. Remember the lines between your hit points? These separate them into three damage states: Scratched, Injured and Fubar. The state you are in depends on the amount of **tear** damage taken.

- **Scratched.** Your character is getting dinged up but it's not bad enough to effect performance.
- **Injured.** Your character is starting to feel the damage. A **Damaged -2** hindrance should be taken to all checks. Sprinting is no longer an option.
- **Fubar.** The character is seriously hurt. A **Damaged -4** is taken by all checks. Neither running nor sprinting is possible.

Report It! After a hit lands, people will want to know how your character is doing. If you have just changed damage states or been stunned or knocked down, tell the table about it. After all, characters cannot see their own stats so they won't be able to measure their own hit points, but

it will be pretty obvious when a character has been stunned or injured.

Sacrificial Armor. Instead of taking tear damage, you can opt to let your armor take it instead. Simply remove those points from your armor value. It won't protect you as well in the future but it may save you from dying.

While bits and pieces of damaged armor will drop off your character. You will never lose enough to change your Bulk unless you voluntarily do something like throw away a now worthless shield.

Where this armor damage actually goes (suit, shield, helmet) is left up to you to figure out on a piece by piece basis. In the heat of the moment, just record armor damage on the front of your sheet. Update your equipment list when you get the chance.

Unconsciousness & Death

Take more wear damage than you have hit points and it will knock your character unconscious. Continue marking the excess damage using slashes through the extra silver circles on your sheet. Your character will wake up once this excess damage has been recovered as well as 1 point in your hit point circles.

Take more tear damage than you have hit points and you die. Your character is gone. Time to roll up a new one and jump back in the game. Your next character may be of any class except the one you just played. Its level should be one level less than your previous character unless that level was zero.

Sample Combat

DM: The noise in the tavern dies down as a bunch of orcs get off their stools and sidle up to your table. "Ey!" says the biggest one of the bunch, "my friend here tells me that one of yousall is named Orcslayer. Yoink! Is dat right? Yoink! Yoink!"

Grudge: I stand up out of my chair and dig my thumbs in behind my belt. "Yeah, that's right. *It's an honorific.* You gotta problem with that? *Pigsnout?*"

DM: The orc chortles to his friends, "heh, he called me Pigsnout," and turns and decks you with a right hook.

Grudge: Yeah? Well, before he can do that I punch him in the gut.

Ralph: And I slam one of them over the head with my ale flagon.

DM: Alright, alright, make your hit rolls.

Ralph: Um, I don't have Flagon on my character sheet.

DM: That's fine, just use your Melee score and for damage? I'll say a Flagon does 1d4 blunt.

Grudge: (Grudge's punch attack has Hit 17. He rolls. The sign die rolls a 20. The try die rolls a 4 which doubles to a +8) Yes! *Strength of 25!*

DM: (Orcs have Hit 12. The DM risk rolls a +5.) Strength of 17.

Ralph: (Ralph has Hit 15 and risk rolls a +4) 19.

DM: Ok, Grudge goes first. These orcs have AC 10 so that's a triple!

Grudge: (Punches do 1d4i for damage and Grudge rolls a 4) Twelve points of fist right to the pork belly!

DM: (Orcs have 10 hit points and 7 armor points. $12 - 7 = 5$. The DM marks down five points of damage. Five is double the orc's stun point of 2 so the orc is both stunned and knocked off its feet. Grudge forgot to mention the damage type so the DM doesn't bother with wear and tear.) fff-WHAPP! You hit him hard. Something like ale mixed with whatever he had for dinner goes flying out of his snout and he is laid out flat. Ralph?

Ralph: Strength of 19.

DM: That's a double.

Ralph: (Rolls a 3 on the 1d4) 6 blunt.

DM: (Six points isn't enough to breach the orc's armor so no damage is done) The flagon smashes on the orc's helmet leaving you with just a handle in your hand. He's not damaged or even stunned, but he is looking pretty perturbed.

Megan: So, how many orcs come in a bunch?

DM: Six to be exact.

Megan: I think we need to turn this into a battle. I flip the table over and shout, "ATTACK!"

DM: *Roll for Initiative.*

Megan: (Megan is a Warlord. She is made for this with Charisma 13 and a +4 class bonus. She risk rolls a -6) An 11? *Stupid dice!*

DM: (The DM marks one of the orcs as its leader. Orcs have a charisma of 8. He risk rolls a +3) The orc leader also has a strength of 11. It's a tie so roll again.

Megan: (Megan rolls again, this time with a +6) Yes! POOM! 23!

DM: (Knowing there is no way the orcs can match this, the DM doesn't even bother) Alright, you guys go first.

Grudge: Is there another orc near me?

DM: They are literally crowding around you. *Specifically you.*

Grudge: I haul off and hit another one (He rolls a +1) with an 18.

DM: That's a double.

Grudge: (rolls a 1 on the 1d4) Eh. 2 points impact.

DM: It just bounces off of his jowls.

Ralph: I step in to cover Grudge's back and take a swing at whoever's closest. (Ralph rolls a -1). Strength of 14. (He remembers that the Orcs have AC 10 so it's a hit. He rolls for damage) Impact 4.

DM: Your fist also bounces off his armor.

DM: Megan. You're left.

Megan: Know what? I *try hard* to roundhouse one with a kick (she marks down a point of wear damage for the try hard and rolls up a +7). Yes! Twenty-one! (It's a triple. She rolls 1d4+1i for 4 points of damage). *Twelve-freaking-impact!*

DM: Damn. (12 - 7 = 5 wear. This isn't enough to knock the orc out but it does knock him down.) Your boot connects with his very surprised snout and he is lifted up and sent spinning to the ground.

DM: And now it's their turn. Two of them are struggling to get back up, and two of them come at Grudge with fists flying, making two attacks with a strength of 13.

Grudge: (Grudge has AC 13. Actually 14 because he doesn't have his shield with him but Grudge's player missed this so it is a 13. He risk rolls a +3 against one attack and a -5 for the other) Doh!

DM: (The second orc hits with a single. The DM flips a four-sider to a 2) 2 impact.

Grudge. (Without his shield Grudge has Armor 5) And that doesn't do squat. *Rolls off me like water off a duck's back.*

DM: Another orc picks up a chair and bashes it over Ralph's head with a hit strength of 13.

Ralph: (Ralph risk rolls his AC 15 and gets a -5) A 10! *Cabbages!*

DM: The chair? Well, it's basically a two-handed club, so I'll say it does 1d6+2 for damage. Take (rolls the dice) 7 blunt.

Ralph: Youch! (Ralph has Armor 3 which reduces the attack to 4 points, being blunt it does 1 tear of damage). That's going to leave a mark, still not enough to stun me.

DM: The last orc? The orc leader looks around somewhat nervously and instead of attacking he reaches back and grabs the battle axe slung over his shoulder, and that is his action for the round. (The old round ends and a new round begins).

Megan: Oh, so that's how it's going to be? *I draw my sword.*

DM: Okay, but just as you do that what looks like a crackling cavalcade of purple lightning bolts shoots over your shoulders to wrap around the creature, pick him up and slam him back over the bar. A bunch of bottles smash, chime and tinkle as they fall to the floor. And that orc is out of it. (More DM Fiat, this time using the spell Arcane Lasso).

A new guy just joined your party.

Ralph: Is it Zothabar? The guy we talked to at the Wizard's Guild?

DM: You should be so lucky. This guy's name is Odd Kalis. He's a 3rd level Wizard sent by Zothabar to assist you on your journey.

Grudge: *Or keep an eye on us.*

DM: Kalis is a bit on the puny side, kinda weak and wiry like an old hippie, but he's got some interesting spells. Who wants to run him? (The DM puts Odd Kalis's character sheet on the table for anyone interested.)

Adventure

By now you should have a good idea of how the game is played. On the whole, we like to leave as much to the imagination as possible, but there are a number of situations that do well with some definition. That is what the Adventure section is for.

As has been said before and cannot be said enough - *you don't need to know every rule to play the game* - you just need a general understanding of how Dragonhead is played as well as a willingness to look things up when needed.

No Do-Overs. With this said, it is good to keep in mind that the game only moves forward. If you realize after the fact that you should have had a Charging bonus and it might have caused the battle to go differently? *No, we cannot go back and do it again.* Just try to remember next time. Often through hindsight is how much of this is learned.

The same goes for the Dragonhead approach to rules in general. If you honestly forget about something, such as a bulk penalty, and no one catches it in time then the game moves on. You are still playing it right, just not as well as the game could be played.

Ammo

Weapons that use ammo will eventually run out and need to be reloaded. Those that have the **Reload** aspect will need to spend that many turns reloading the weapon before it can be fired again. Weapons which use ammo but do not have a Reload time are known as **Load & Fire** weapons. These you load and fire all in one action.

Ammo Checks. By all means you should keep track of your ammo. Otherwise the DM might just ask you to make a **Luck** check, usually at the worst possible moment. With an Average or better success you have **half** your ammo count left. A Fail means you're out. A Little leaves you with just one shot left. *Make it count!*

Area Attacks

An area attack is one that floods a space with damage, such as a dragon's breath weapon or a wizard's fireball. The check is made, damage is rolled and multiplied by the

success of the attack, anyone caught in that area will be hit by the same amount of damage.

Dive For Cover. Characters may attempt to reduce this damage by diving for cover, a check that should be made hard or easy depending on just how much cover there is to dive behind. This check is completely optional and most creatures will not take it. Armor does reduce the damage done by area attacks.

Check: FAC

3 Or More: Take no damage.

2 Success: Take quarter damage.

1 Success: Take half damage.

½ Success: Take normal damage.

Failure: You jumped right into it! Take damage and a half!

Area Shapes. Areas come in different shapes identified by a term such as Cone or Wall. When looking down from above...

- **Blast** = a full circle.
- **Stream** = a 15 degree angle.
- **Cone** = a 90 degree angle.
- **Wall** = a 180 degree angle.
- **Pour** = a 270 degree angle.
- **Dome** = a bell jar or bubble.
- **Cloud** = a projected full circle.

Area Size. Also attached to this shape is its size. These all hit the step the blast goes off in as well as an additional amount of space surrounding it best described as its **blast radius**. Most of the time this only applies to miniatures. When not in use we just imagine it as best as we can.

- **Dinky** = the blast hits just the step it goes off in, like a fire-cracker.
- **Small** = the blast hits **every** adjacent step.
- **Medium** = the blast hits every **3** adjacent steps.
- **Large** = the blast hits every **6** adjacent steps.
- **Big** = the blast hits every **12** adjacent steps.
- **Huge** = the blast hits every **24** adjacent steps.
- **Massive** = the blast hits every **48** adjacent steps.

With characters straddling the edge of a blast use a **Luck** check to see if they are in it or not. An average or better success means they avoided it.

Cloud Attacks. A cloud attack is a full circle explosion except that instead of billowing out around the point of detonation this one projects one length of its radius forward and billows out around that point. Doing so protects whatever created the cloud from being hit by it.

Domes. A dome is essentially a sphere whose sides drape to the ground. It covers everything as tall as the sphere as well as standing in the circle it makes on the ground. It even covers the ground beneath the character's feet.

Stream Attacks. When using miniatures, a streaming attack shoots forward in a straight line **double** the length of its blast radius. When not using miniatures a streaming attack can hit **2 different targets per success**.

Simple Explosions. Sometimes things just explode. They are not caused by a spell or anything that a character does other than the pulling of a pin of some sort. Unlike the casting of Fireball, the success one has with it **does not** multiply the damage done.

If you toss the Holy Hand Grenade at an opponent, the success of your check determines just how close it came to landing where you wanted it to land. The damage done by the explosion is a roll of its damage dice.

Aspects

Aspect tags are short reminders of how an attack works. They show up in the Aspects section of an Attacks list. Most but not all are combat related.

2hds. These weapons either take two hands to use or the character's whole body, hence the reason why a kick is a 2-handed attack. You can't use your hands while making it.

Ammo. The number following this tag is the number of shots a weapon can fire before needing a reload.

Armor. The armor value an item supplies.

Area. Area tags are described in *Area Attacks* above.

Bastard. A bastard weapon is a one-handed weapon with an elongated grip that allows it to be used with either one hand or two. When used with two hands it gains **Damage +2**. When a non-bastard weapon is used with two hands it only gains Damage +1.

Nearly any one-handed weapon can be turned into a bastard weapon by lengthening its handle. This alteration increases its price by 25% (round to the nearest \$10). Be sure to attach the word Bastard to its name, such as Bastard Sword or Bastard Mace.

Weapons such as the Spear have Bastard as an aspect because they are made to be used one-handed but can easily be used with two.

Balanced. Melee weapons can be thrown at an opponent, but unless they are balanced for throwing (such as a dagger) they take a **Hit -2**. The range of a thrown melee weapon is always **Close** unless it is a two-handed weapon which can be thrown only 6 steps.

Bulk. The bulk penalty of an item.

Def. Short for **Defense**, this tells us the ability to use when defending against a spell-like power.

Dif. Dif is short for **Difficulty**. Some weapons are just harder to use than others, such as the Stone Sling. This should be added to an attack's Hit modifier and in some places it is known as its Hit modifier.

Dur. Dur is short for **Duration**. This is how long a spell lasts. When just a number it is a number of rounds. If a **ps** follows the number it stands for "per success." A spell with 5 ps is one that will last five rounds per success.

Conc means the spell will last as long as its caster continues to concentrate on making it last. Casting a different spell or making some other action will dismiss it. The caster can move around but that is it.

Enc means the spell will last for the length of the encounter or 10 minutes, whichever comes first.

Fast. These weapons are a bit quicker than most. When comparing strengths to see who hits first they gain a **+2** but only for comparison. This does not change the actual strength of the attack.

Flexible. Weapons on a chain are designed to get around shields. They gain **Hit +2** when used against an opponent who is defending with one.

Fire. This attack might set an opponent on fire. The creature should make a **Luck** check. Fail and **1d6b** damage will be taken every round. A Little success does **1d4b** instead. Armor does not protect against it but stop, drop and roll might.

Great. Like Bastard, this aspect is normally found attached to the name of a weapon. It represents a one-handed weapon made bigger to deal more damage.

Gamewise you must use two hands to wield it and it gains **Damage +3**. The price increases by **50%**. It also gets the **Slow** and **2hds** aspects. If the weapon already has the Slow aspect it also takes a **Hit -2**. This is why Great Swords tend to be more popular than Great Broad Swords.

Range. Range is a single word describing just how far a missile weapon can travel and still be able to strike its target. The big six and their distances in steps are...

- **Close** = 12
- **Short** = 24
- **Medium** = 48
- **Long** = 96
- **Xtra** = 192
- **Super** = 384

Reach. These weapons have the benefit of reach. When comparing strengths to see who hits first they gain a **+2** but only for the comparison and only when first engaging an opponent.

When a number follows the Reach tag, that extends its reach. See the *Miniatures* rules for an explanation. Ignore it when not using miniatures.

Reload. This is the number of actions it takes to reload a weapon.

SEP. This stands for **Single Effect Power**. Each use of the power dismisses any previous cast you made of it. Staves to Snakes turns a staff into a snake. Cast it two times in a row and the snake caused by the first cast will turn back into a staff as the second one transforms.

Slow. These weapons are a bit slower than most. When comparing strengths to see who hits first they take a **-2** but only for comparison. It does not actually change the strength of the attack.

Time is the number of rounds it takes to bring a spell into being. During this time its caster may do nothing but chant and dance and do whatever it takes to cast that spell. If the caster attempts to do anything else or is stunned during the cast the spell will be lost.

Touch. To use this power a character must physically touch what it will effect.

Blindness

Characters who cannot see for one reason or another will suffer a **-6** to everything they do unless the character is permanently blind, in which case it is assumed that they have learned how to deal with their affliction and will only suffer a **-4**. Those activities which absolutely depend on sight cannot be performed. Activities which do not require sight will be left unaffected. Activities which make use of the senses other than sight will gain a **+2**.

Body Size

Characters and creatures come in a wide variety of sizes, to keep it under control we narrow this down to fourteen categories. The default is medium or *man-sized* and changes nothing. The others may have a dramatic effect on how characters and creatures operate.

Teeny. Mass 0.25. HP: 0.4. SDMG -3. Dis 0.5.

Tiny. Mass 0.50. HP: 0.6. SDMG -2. Dis 0.75.

Small. Mass 0.75. HP: 0.8. SDMG -1. Dis 1.

Medium. Mass 1. HP: 1. SDMG +0. Dis 1.

Large. Mass 1.5. HP: 1.25. SDMG +1. Dis 1.

Extra. Mass 2. HP: 1.5. SDMG +2. Dis 1.25.

Big. Mass 4. HP: 2. SDMG +1d4. Dis 1.5.

Huge. Mass 6. HP: 3. SDMG +1d6. Dis 2.

Massive. Mass 10. HP: 5. SDMG +1d8. Dis 4.

Humongous. Mass 20. HP: 10. SDMG +1d12. Dis 6.

Enormous. Mass 40. HP: 20. SDMG +2d10. Dis 8.

Gigantic. Mass 100. HP: 50. SDMG +1d20. Dis 12.

Titanic. Mass 200. HP: 100. SDMG +2d20. Dis 16.

Gargantuan. Mass 400. HP: 200. SDMG +3d20. Dis 20.

Mass. Mass is a multiplier which tells us how the creature relates to Medium. A tiny creature will have only half the mass of a medium-sized character. A huge one will have six times that mass. Mass is often used to size things up or down to fit the creature. A huge giant will carry a shield that is six times larger than a normal shield.

The strength of **muscle** checks is included in this. A tiny character rolling up a muscle strength of 12 would actually produce a strength of 6. Meanwhile a huge creature doing the same would create a strength of 70. For obvious reasons, this should never be used with checks that do damage. Instead add SDMG to damage rolls.

HP. HP stands for Hit Points and it multiplies the amount of damage a character can take as well as the damage one does to oneself with a minimum of 1 point.

When a Massive creature tries hard with a check, instead of taking 1 point of damage they will take 5. When a Teeny creature does the same? A $1 \times 0.4 = 0.4$. Of course, a 0.4 rounds down to 0, but there is a one point minimum which makes sure that it does one point of damage.

SDMG. SDMG stands for **Size Damage**. This is added to or subtracted from any damage dealing attack that a creature makes *before* success multiplies it. Small characters will take an SDMG penalty. This can never reduce the damage done by an attack to less than 1 point.

Dis. Dis is short for **Distance** and is a multiplier used with anything dealing with speed or distance. When a breath weapon strikes a medium area? That has a 3 step radius. A tiny dragon's breath weapon would only strike a 2 step radius. Meanwhile a gargantuan dragon would strike a 60 step radius.

Size AC. Your body size will give you an AC bonus when fighting something larger than yourself. What you get depends on just how much larger your opponent is.

1 Size = AC +1.

2 Sizes = AC +2.

3 Sizes = AC +3.

4 Sizes or More = AC +4.

On your character sheet this is often written using just the first three letters of each size next to a bonus. A medium-sized character would have:

Size AC: Lar +1, Ext +2, Big +3, Hug +4.

A good thing to remember about Size AC is that it's your responsibility to bring it into play. Forget to mention it and it will be overlooked.

Break Point

A Break Point or **BP** is the amount of damage it takes for a **single hit** to demolish an inanimate object or at least break it until it no longer functions. A vase with 1 bp will shatter after taking a single point of wear damage. Meanwhile a wrench with 12 bp you can hammer on endlessly until a single hit does 13 points of wear damage and breaks it.

Break point is always a suggestion and never the rule since there are so many different ways in which something can be broken. Sometimes it is best to just use your imagination and listen to what it tells you.

Burst Attacks

A burst attack fires off a machine-gun like volley of missiles. After the attack a die is made to see how many missiles actually hit.

Light = 1d4

Small = 1d6

Medium = 1d8

Large = 1d10

Heavy = 1d12

Huge = 1d20

Each one will hit its target with the same amount of strength and damage, providing it can beat the target's AC. Each shot will also have to get past an opponent's armor on its own. For ammo purposes the number of shots fired is equal to the best number on the burst die. A medium burst fires off eight rounds.

Spreading the Burst. You may fan a burst attack out over an area to hit multiple targets but a penalty on the burst roll will be taken for the size of a spread.

Tight concentration (15° angle) = -1

Loose concentration (45° angle) = -2

Wide spread of fire (90° angle) = -3

If this penalty drops the burst roll to zero or less then the burst was spread too thinly and no shots hit anyone. Otherwise divide them evenly among those who are in the area.

DM: A pair of bugbears come rushing in out of the shadows at you, war hammers raised high over their heads to smash you flat.

Odd Kalis: I cast Magic Missile (Kalis only has 6 hit points. He knows he probably won't survive a hit from a bugbear, let alone two of them). No! Make that *Magic Salvo* and I fire off a Small Burst trying to hit them both.

DM: Okay, well, they're standing side by side so I'll say that's a tight concentration.

Odd Kalis: (Kalis has a Hit 17 with Magic Missile) I also try hard to make this work. (Kalis marks a point of wear damage and picks up the dice. With Magic Salvo a small burst brings a Hit -2 reducing his score to 15. The dice hit the table.) A -3? (Kalis tosses a mojo into the bowl and tries again) Come On.... +6! Yes! Magic 21.

DM: That's a triple. Roll for your burst.

Odd Kalis: (A small burst with a tight concentration is a 1d6-1. A 6 turns up.) 6! I mean 5. And for damage. (Magic Missile does 1d6s) A 1? (he tosses another mojo into the bowl and rolls again) A 2? (he tosses another mojo into the bowl, knowing you can only use three per action) Come on... A 6! Now that's more like it!

DM: Wow. So let me figure this all out. That's five missiles, each doing 18 points of damage. Jeeze. We'll say three hit one bugbear and 2 hit the other. They have AC 12 so that's not a problem. Their armor of 4 reduces each shot to 14 points of damage. Bugbears have 24 hit points so (3 x 14 = 42 and 2 x 14 = 28) that is a tremendous amount of damage, enough to splatter the bugbears all over the inside of the hallway.

Odd Kalis: *Hot Patootie!* That'll teach you to pick on an old geezer!!!

Called Shots

A called shot is any instance where you do something out of the ordinary to do more damage with your attack. Instead of just kicking your opponent you hit him with a *jumping side kick*.

Gamewise, the DM thinks about it and comes up with a Called Shot modifier. Usually, each Hit -1 causes a Damage +1. A jumping side kick may be hard to pull off with a Hit -2 but you get a +2 damage bonus if it succeeds.

Charging

Charging puts the force of velocity behind the damage of a melee attack. It depends on the speed you are moving. Every 5 steps per round will add a Damage +1. This begins at 10 steps per round.

1	-	9	=	Damage	+0
10	-	14	=	Damage	+1
15	-	19	=	Damage	+2
20	-	24	=	Damage	+3
25	-	29	=	Damage	+4
30	-	34	=	Damage	+5
35	-	39	=	Damage	+6
40	-	44	=	Damage	+7
45	-	49	=	Damage	+8
50	-	54	=	Damage	+9
55	-	59	=	Damage	+10

Charging has nothing to do with the distance you traveled before impact. It is all about speed. If you moved with a speed of 16 but took only 3 steps before engaging your opponent? You get a Damage +2 bonus.

When dealing with speeds faster than 59? Try dividing the speed by 5, round down and subtract 1. A speed of 60 does Damage +11 ($60 / 5 = 12 - 1 = \text{Damage } +11$).

Chases

Eventually it happens, a character or creature takes off running and the rest go chasing after. The game turns into a series of **Agility Competitions**, each representing a few rounds of movement. The first to win **three** gets their way.

Speed Does Matter. The speed of the slower party, when **doubled**, needs to be greater than or equal to the speed of the faster party for a chase to happen. Running and sprinting do not apply. If character speeds vary then the party speed is the speed of its slowest member.

Time to high-tail it! Megan takes off running with a gang of hobgoblins in hot pursuit. Her movement speed is Walk 4. The hobgoblins have Walk 3.

The hobgoblins are the slower party, but their Walk 3 doubles to 6 which is greater than Megan's Walk 4 and so a chase can happen.

Megan has Agility 10 but also Bulk -2. She tosses her shield to make it Bulk -1. The Hobgoblins have Agility 12 and Bulk -2. Altogether, Megan has Agility 9 and the Hobgoblins Agility 10 so they do have a slight advantage.

Checks are made with the whole gang of hobgoblins being treated as one character. With Megan against the Hobgoblins...

14 & 13 Megan wins.

8 & 12 Hobgoblins win.

6 & 5 Megan wins.

11 & 11 A Tie! Roll again.

15 & 13 Megan wins a third time and wins the chase.

Although the two sides were closely matched, the dice sided with Megan. As the winner she declares that she turns a corner on a city street, doubles back and disappears into the night.

The hobgoblins decide to double back and see if they can find the shield she dropped, hoping that somehow it might be used to lead them back to her.

Hard and easy depends on how convoluted and maze-like the area is where the chase takes place. An urban neighborhood may be a hard check for someone who is new to it yet an easy check for someone who grew up there.

Hazards. At any time during the chase the GM can stop the contest and drop a hazard into the middle of it. This is something the characters need to get around such as a wall to be climbed, a door to be knocked down or a gap between rooftops to be leapt over. While the details may vary, the general idea is that the chased character needs to get past the hazard or be caught. The chasers then need to get past the hazard to remain in the chase.

Climbing

Any creature with the **Climb** or **Cling** form of movement should have no problem climbing a vertical surface, but even monkeys occasionally fall out of trees.

Climbing is an **Agility** check made hard or easy by the nature of the climb. The slicker, more vertical or higher

the climb the harder the check should be. Meanwhile, using climbing gear or climbing a surface the character has climbed many times before will make it easier.

With a **Little** success the character slips and slides down a few feet before catching oneself. That character should make the check again but with a -2 because of the precarious situation.

With a **Fail** the character falls. Roll **1d4** to find how far the character climbed before losing ones grip...

1 = 25% of the way.

2 = 50% of the way.

3 = 75% of the way.

4 = 100% of the way.

If the character was trying to climb a 40 foot ascent, failed the climb check and rolled a 3? That character falls 30 feet. See *Falling* to figure out the damage done.

Typically, just one check is made for the entire ascent, but with a long climb such as up a mountain-side more checks may be needed, each representing the climb to a different stopping point.

As in a chase, hazards may be placed at these stopping points. Characters who are trying to beat each other to the top can compare their strengths to see who wins. Check out *Chases* to see how this works.

Cover

Taking cover means hiding behind something to avoid being hit. While cover can vary it comes in three basic types: Partial, Full and Total cover.

Partial Cover = 50%. Basically half of your body is covered. You can act normally but if you move you will lose your cover.

Full Cover = 80%. Nearly all of your body is covered. Move and you lose it. With a ranged attack you may return fire but will take a **Hit -2**.

Total Cover = 95%. You think you are completely covered and will not move or return fire to maintain it.

With each of these, when a character with cover is attacked the percentile dice should be rolled. If it rolls **equal to or under** the percentage listed the cover will be hit.

Otherwise the character is attacked versus **FAC** for partial cover or **SAC** with full and total.

This cover is not the same thing as *Diving for Cover* which is explained in Area Attacks.

Damage Types

Weapons are designed with a certain damage type in mind but they are not locked into it. Consider the spear. By default it does piercing damage, but you could slash with it to do sharp damage, hit with its butt end to do blunt damage or use it like a staff to do impact damage.

The general rule is that you can do this without problem so long as you are not making the weapon be more lethal than it is. When it makes sense that you can do this, such as using the spike found atop most battle axes to do piercing damage, it will bring a **Hit -2** to the attack.

Divine Power

Clerics or anyone relying on divine power is a *divine power user*. The gods are notoriously distant when it comes to explaining why they do what they do, but with a successful die roll they usually do come through for the faithful and deliver the power a character has prayed for.

Fickle Gods. With that said, the divinities are very territorial. Their focus is on the grand scheme of universal domination, something that even the most powerful cleric is only an infinitesimally small part of. When it comes to the use of divine power those forces will not budge for anyone.

Good divine power can only be used to help good characters and harm evil ones. Evil divine power can only be used to help evil characters and harm good ones. Both may be used to harm neutral characters but will suffer a **Hit -2** when attempting to help them.

When it comes to divine power users of the same alignment, even if the characters absolutely hate each other they may not use their divine powers to directly harm one another. *Indirectly?* The gods are always watching, but they may not be watching that closely.

Doubt! When the casting of a divine power **fails** (or an attempt to Turn Unbelievers, see the Cleric class) that character will suffer **Doubt -1** as a hindrance. This is the

character's faith being chipped away by a perceived failure on the part of the gods to support them. It will effect everything the character does. The only thing that can remove doubt is a religious retreat. Each week spent in prayer and solitude will remove one point of doubt.

The Alignment Bar. The alignment bar on a character sheet is a gauge of just how good or evil a character is on the grand scheme of things. Characters who benefit from divine power need to stay in the range that fits them. If they fall into neutral territory they may remain who they are but will be stripped of their divine powers until they do something to return themselves to where they belong. If they defect to the other side, not only will they permanently lose their divine powers but they may someday be visited by a demoniac or angelic entity seeking to put them out of their misery. Good or Evil, no divine power appreciates a traitor.

Sensing Alignment. Anyone can do this using nothing more than a **Wisdom** check. Clerics and other divine power users gain their class bonus. Essentially, a few rounds are spent steeped in the atmosphere of a place and then the dice are rolled.

Sense Alignment

Check: Wisdom

3 Or More: Not only can you actually see the good or evil hanging about a person or place but you can quite accurately measure its intensity.

2 Success: You home in on the good or evil thing like a metal detector buzzing over a coin lost in the sand.

1 Success: You sense a definite presence of something good or evil but cannot tell what it is.

½ Success: A big fuzzy feel of something good or evil is in definitely in the area.

Failure: Nope. Nothing out of the ordinary here. Must have been something I ate for lunch.

Of course, this check will be made hard or easy by way of just how strong the source of alignment is as well as just how much it contrasts with the background ambiance of the place.

Places can have an alignment just as readily as people and an evil creature lurking in an evil forest will seem to disappear into the miasma. Meanwhile a good creature in the same forest will stick out like a sore thumb.

Doors

Doors exist to bar entry. Sometimes the only way through is to break it down. For this doors often come with a break point, a number fronted by the word **break**.

- **Light Door** = break 10. Something you might find inside a house.
- **Medium Door** = break 20. The door you might find on the front of a house or a room inside a fortress.
- **Heavy Door** = break 40. The door you might find entering a fortress or prison cell.
- **X-Heavy Door** = break 80. The fortified entrance to a fortress or high-security area.

Break. This is the amount of damage it takes for a **single hit** to either bust a door down or knock it off its hinges. Throwing your shoulder against a door uses a **Muscle** check and does **1d8i** for damage.

Battering rams exist to let characters combine their efforts. Basically, everyone on the pole makes a **Hard Muscle** check, damage is rolled, combined and used against the door.

Secret. Secret doors come with a strength fronted by the word secret ex: *Hidden Door (secret 12, break 20)*. To detect it a character needs to beat the secret strength with a **Wisdom** check.

Locked. Locked doors come with a lock strength ex: *Hidden Locked Door (secret 12, locked 14, break 20)*. This is the strength a character would need to beat with a **Dexterity** check to pick it. Picking a lock cannot be done without a set of lock picks.

Hear. This is the strength a **Wisdom** check needs to beat to make sense of any sound coming through the door ex: *Thick Hidden Locked Door (secret 12, hear 13, locked 14, break 20)*.

Falling

When your character takes a fall, the damage done is equal to **half the height of the fall** in damage points. Fall 10 feet and you take 5 points of damage. The damage type depends on what you land on.

None = Water, deep snow, large hay pile.

Impact = Dirt, mud, lawn, field.

Blunt = Concrete, cobblestones, flagstones.

Mixed = Jagged rocks, broken timbers.

Sharp = Sharp rocks, broken glass, rebar.

Pierce = Spikes, stalactites.

Fall Save. Armor does not protect against falling damage but getting lucky might. Make a **Luck** check. Each success changes the damage type of the fall taking you one step closer to None. A little success changes nothing. A fail takes you one step closer to Pierce. The Fall Save is completely optional and creatures often skip it to speed the game along.

Terminal Velocity. In most situations you can only fall so fast before the air itself begins to break your fall. Gamewise, falls max out at 200 feet.

DM: You are knocked over the side of the cliff and go plunging towards the rocky coastline below. It's a good forty foot drop doing 20 points of blunt damage.

Grudge: Um. Don't I get a luck check with this fall?

DM: If you want. It may make the damage type better or it may make it worse.

Grudge: I'll take it and try my hardest.

DM: Well? You can't really try hard with a luck check. Just give it a normal check.

Grudge: (Grudge has Luck 11 and rolls) A +5. That brings me up to 16. A great success!

DM: Alright (thinking, two steps up from Blunt is None) You go spinning through the air and the whole coastline is nothing but sand and big smooth water washed boulders but you just somehow manage to find a small washtub-wide nook between two of them and plunge into the water with a big plume rising up behind you. Take 20 points of damage, all wear and no tear.

Grudge: Whew! (This knocks Grudge down to just 4 wear points remaining) Well, I'm still conscious. Can I swim to shore?

DM: Good question. Can you?

Frequency

Frequency tells us how common something is in the world. These are known by a single/double letter designation.

- A = Abundant.
- C = Common.
- U = Uncommon.
- R = Rare.
- VR = Very Rare.
- XR = Extremely Rare.
- I = Individual.
- M = Mythical.

Shopping. Most of what you find for sale will be abundant or common. Finding anything else will require a decent **Luck** check to beat the frequency of the item. In an urban area you might need to beat a strength of...

- Uncommon = 10
- Rare = 15
- Very Rare = 20
- Extremely Rare = 25

Rural areas may increase these values. Individual items are one of a kind and always hard to find. Mythical items are beyond rare and may not even exist. Mythical items should never be found using a simple ability check.

Grappling

Grappling is wrestling. **Agility vs Agility**. A grappled character will be stuck in the grapple and unable to do anything until they break free. The grappling character will also be stuck maintaining the grapple. Both characters use **SAC** against attacks coming at them while stuck in a grapple.

Trips. A trip is a grapple where you seek to drop someone on their butt. This is a **Hard Dexterity vs Agility** challenge. If won the tripped character will need to spend their next action standing back up. It does **1d4** falling damage where the damage type depends on the surface one lands on (see Falling).

Throws. A throw is where you seek to pick an opponent up and slam them down. It is a **Hard Muscle vs Agility** challenge that does **1d8** falling damage. The damage type depends on what one lands on. Like a trip, a thrown opponent will need to spend their next action standing back up.

Tackles. A tackle is where you body check your opponent, slamming into them with your shoulder. It uses **Muscle vs Agility** and does **1d8i** for damage. It only knocks an opponent aside and not down, unless it stuns them so badly that they are knocked down.

Rushes. A rush is a grapple where all you want to do is push your opponent around. Use **Muscle vs Agility**. A single success or better lets you move at **half speed**.

Scrum. A scrum is a rush between two groups of characters and creatures. Everyone on a side makes an **Muscle** check. Strengths are turned into **successes** and the side with the greatest number of them pushes the other side around. The speed of the scrum is **half** the speed of its slowest member (on the winning side) with a minimum of 1 step per round. Characters caught in a scrum have to choose between participating in it or doing something else with their action.

Type	Check	Damage
Grapple	Agility vs Agility	none
Trip	Hard Dexterity vs Agility	1d4?
Throw	Hard Muscle vs Agility	1d8?
Tackle	Muscle vs Agility	1d8i
Rush	Muscle vs Agility	none
Scrum	Muscle Competition	none

One-Armed Grapple. You can make a normal grapple using just one arm to keep your other arm free but doing so makes the check a **Hard** one. That free arm can make attacks but they will likewise be hard ones.

Pile-On. More than one character can attempt to grapple another. They combine their strengths, but each makes a **Hard Agility** check because of all the confusion this creates.

Defense Methods. With all of these grapples Agility is used by the defender. For someone trying to just avoid or wiggle free of the grapple **Dexterity** may be used. For someone trying to muscle their way out of it use **Muscle**. Characters who are smaller than their opponent may use their **Size AC** bonus with Dexterity or Agility. Characters using Muscle get to multiply it by their **size index**.

DM: The captain of the guard laughs haughtily in your face. *Bah-hahahahaha!*

Megan: Where is Kalis! What have you done with the old man!

DM: (speaking in the voice of the captain) *That is none of your concern.*

Megan: You better believe it is! I draw my sword.

DM: Are you sure you want to do that? There's a contingent of sixteen armed guards standing behind him.

Megan: *You better believe I do!*

Ralph: *Whoa hey!* I step in between the two of them. Arms upraised.

Megan: I push Ralph aside and draw my sword!

Grudge: Before she can do that I jump on Megan and try to grab her, before she gets us all killed.

DM: Know what? Everybody make an Agility check (they have essentially entered a combat situation. The roller of the greatest strength goes first).

Ralph: 8.

Grudge: 16.

Megan: 13.

DM: Alright. Megan, you do push Ralph out of the way, but before you can unsheath your sword Grudge grabs you from behind and locks you in a grapple.

Megan: I slip out of it.

Grudge: Is there an exit to this place I can drag her out through?

DM: Megan, give me a Dex check. Grudge? In a minute.

Megan: 16! POOM!

DM: (Grappling is an Agility vs Agility challenge and Megan is on defense so 16 vs 16 means she defeats it) Megan slips free.

Ralph: I jump in and grab her.

Grudge: I help him, trying to lift her up off the ground.

DM: Give me another round of Agility checks. Ralph, you and Grudge make hard ones but you get to combine your strengths.

Ralph: 7.

Grudge: 14.

Megan: 7.

DM: 21 vs 7? Megan, you're not wiggling free this time.

Megan: As they drag me out the door I point to the captain of the guard and shout, "This is not over!! I WILL HAVE MY REVENGE!!!!"

Hiding & Sneaking

Skulking about is a **Wisdom vs Wisdom** challenge which pits the worst strength of the characters trying to pass undetected against the best strength of any creature that might detect them. Think **Hiders vs Seekers** if it helps.

On the hider's side, studying the area and trying to come up with an interesting way to move through it or hide in it may make for an easier check. Wearing metal armor or carrying something that may rattle or reflect light will make the check considerably harder.

On the seeker's side, they need to be actively searching for something. If just passively milling around and not expecting anything their check becomes a **Hard Wisdom** check.

Hindrances

A hindrance is something wrong with your character. The character is sick or intoxicated or injured, etc. This penalty effects **everything** your character does. Typically hindrances are written down in the Hinders section of your character sheet and erased as they clear up.

Jumping & Leaping

Jumping and Leaping is an **Agility** check made harder by the distance one needs to cover as well as just how intrepid the leap actually is. There is a big difference between jumping between puddles and jumping across roof tops.

Jumping & Leaping

Check: Agility

2 or More: You make it in style, possibly with a backflip or two.

1 Success: You make the leap.

½ Success: You made it but are just barely holding onto the edge of the other side. It will take a Double Hard Muscle check to pull yourself up.

Failure: GAHhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh-h!

Movement. A character's movement speed will make the leap easier with every 5 points of speed providing a +1 bonus. For example....

$$1 - 4 = +0$$

$$5 - 9 = +1$$

$$10 - 14 = +2$$

$$15 - 19 = +3$$

It's good to remember that you can double or triple your speed by running or sprinting, but making the leap is all you can do. If you try to make an action while making the jump the normal penalties for running and sprinting will apply to both it as well as the jump. Characters with the **Hop** form of movement automatically gain a **+4**.

Magic Items

Hooray! You just found the much vaunted *Wand of Fireballs* +3. Now what do you do? Many magical items are known as *Power Items* because they connect you to a power allowing you to cast it without having to learn a spell. Point the wand in the right direction (usually the crystalline thing goes forward) say a command phrase and BOOM!

It's a Luck Check. Gamewise, you should write the magic item in as a piece of Equipment and again as an Attack using the aspects of the power the item links to. For **Hit** use your **Luck** ability and any quality bonus the item possesses. That's it.

$$\text{Hit} = \text{Luck} + \text{Quality}.$$

The difficulty modifier of the power itself **does not** effect the performance of the magic item! Neither does any class bonus you may have when it comes to casting spells.

Fragile Things! **Fail** when using a magic item and there is a good chance you broke it. **Roll 1d4** and it breaks on a **1**.

Quality Items. Quality items such as a Long Sword +1 may have been given their bonus by magical means but they are not actually magical and do not require a Luck check. Something that is obviously magical such as a Flaming Long

Sword +1 does require a luck check, typically made when you ignite the blade.

Potions & Scrolls. Potions and Scrolls are one-shot magic items, meaning they work once and are gone. It takes **3 rounds** of dedicated action to consume a potion or read a scroll and have the magic it contains kick in.

Just like any other magical item, potions and scrolls require a Luck check to use. Fail this check and there is no roll of 1d4. The potion or scroll is simply a dud.

Multi-Classing

There are three kinds of classes in Dragonhead. **Existence** classes are the ones a character is born into such as the Elf, Halfling or Dwarf. Like it or not that is your existence. **Calling** classes are ones a character feels called to pursue such as Cleric, Fighter or Wizard. These represent an obsession that defines a character's life. **Transformation** classes are caused by something that has happened to a character during the game, transforming them into something like a Vampire, Lycanthrope or Valkyrie. A character can only have one existence, but through multi-classing you can have more than one calling or transformation.

For Callings. All you need to do is spend the XP needed to acquire the class at 1st level and your dwarf is on its way to becoming a Dwarven Rogue like Ralph Cabbagehammer from the Action examples. Of course, there are a number of stipulations that need to be heeded when multi-classing.

You Need To Be Smart. A character can only have as many callings as your Intellect score divided by 4 and rounded down. For example...

1 - 7: 1 class

8 - 11: 2 classes

12 - 15: 3 classes

16 - 19: 4 classes

If your intellect ever drops to where you can no longer multi-class you still hold onto your extra classes but can no longer advance them in level.

It Needs To Make Sense. Unless you have a compelling back-story to explain the arrangement, you should not be combining classes that are incompatible with each other. Wizards hate Warlocks and Barbarians despise them both.

Unless you have an excellent reason as to why your character should be a Wizard / Warlock / Barbarian then you probably shouldn't be one.

Talk it over with your DM.

Transformation Classes are Different. They are also exceedingly rare. There is no limit to the number of transformation classes a character can have. Intellect holds no bearing on them. However you cannot simply become a Vampire. Something needs to happen during a game to justify the transformation. Gamewise, this grants you access to the class at **zero-level**. You have to pump XP into it to advance it in level just like any other class.

A character may use a transformation class as their sole class, but they still need to explain how the character got it and have the DM's approval.

Actual Level. Every now and then we need a single number to represent the character's actual level. What kind of multi-classed character can go on a 5th level adventure? Any whose various class levels add up to 5. A character with Dwarf 2 / Rogue 3 is considered a 5th level character.

Another use of actual level is with the **ability increases** that come from it. You gain a +1 to an ability of your choosing with every *actual level* you have.

Hit Points. The base hit point amounts of your different classes **do not combine**. Instead use the greatest value given by your classes.

Class Bonuses. Class Bonuses also **do not combine**. You get the best your classes have to offer. If Cleric gives you Melee +1 and Fighter gives you Melee +2 then you get Melee +2. They do not combine to Melee +3.

Magic & Spells. If you have more than one class providing magic and spells then you need to keep them separate. A Cleric / Wizard would have two magic scores, one for each class, as well as a spellbook for wizard spells and a way of praying for divine spells.

Arms & Armor. The most restrictive requirements apply. A Fighter / Wizard should still not wear armor.

Free Equipment. If your new class supplies you with something that your old class does not then you get it, providing you have a need for it. A Fighter / Wizard should not be getting any free armor if they are never going to wear it.

Movement. Go with the fastest movement provided. If your existence has a size-based movement modifier this applies to all of your character's movement speeds.

Level Advancement. Each class follows a different ladder of XP points. Keep track of them separately and put newly acquired XP where you want the points to go. *All sales are final!* You cannot move XP out of one class and put it into another.

Nutshell. Nutshell is a term that occasionally comes up in reference to multi-classing. It is a statement of all that your various classes adds up to. If your character has Elf 3, Fighter 4 and Rogue 2 then - in a nutshell - your character is a *9th level Elven Fighter Rogue*.

The Human Existence. You may have noticed that there is no existence class for Humans. One reason is because Humans, despite being articulate and having thumbs which are second to none, tend to be a bit boring when compared to elves and dwarves and others. They don't even have big hairy halfling feet!

The other reason is because the one thing which truly does separate the human being from everyone else is its inherent flexibility. Right from the start a human can pour itself into a calling or transformation and treat it like an existence. For this reason all calling and transformation classes are human by default. When it comes to combining them with other existences - anything is possible - *providing it makes sense*.

Ask your DM.

Multiple Attacks

Three seconds is a long time in combat. Watch any movie fight scene and you will see characters easily packing more than one punch into three seconds of time. In Dragonhead you can push an attack to strike more than once but **each extra attack brings a Hit -2** penalty to the entire action.

No matter how many attacks your character makes you only get one hit roll per round, so multiple attacks are handled all at the same time even though they may represent different attacks made by the character during the round.

DM: Alright, that round ends and a new one begins.

Grudge: I hack one of the hobgoblins with my axe and then the other standing right next to him.

DM: That's an extra attack so take a -2. The hobgoblins have AC 12.

Grudge: (Grudge has Hit 17 with his axe, the -2 brings it down to 15. He risk rolls a +4) Strength of 19 (that's a double. For damage he rolls 1d8 twice, once for each blow, an 8 and a 2) doing sharp 16 and sharp 4.

DM: Hobgoblins have Armor 5, so your first hit does a nasty nick of damage and knocks him down, but the second one just bounces off his armor.

If you are using a weapon in each hand it makes no difference. You get two unpenalized attacks and each extra attack after than will bring a -2 to all of them. One risk roll is used by the bunch.

Natural Casters

In the realm of magic-users, natural-casters make up that great swath of characters and creatures who were simply born with the ability to make magic work. Divine power had nothing to do with it nor are they learning to cast spells out of some old musty book. Natural-casters fix their minds on making something happen and it happens.

On the good side, natural-casters do not have to cater to the gods or acquire magic spells to do what they do. When their spell count increases their banger gets to pick a new power. When the use of a power fails nothing comes of it. It just fails. The characters themselves have little innate understanding of magic and no clear idea of why they can do what they do.

No Spell Swapping. On the not-so-good side, natural-casters have little to no control over the powers they have. Once a power is acquired it is there for life. Even if the character's spell count somehow decreases and they lose a power, once it bounces back up again the same powers will be regained.

Parrying

In combat you are always parrying your opponent in small ways. That is a good part of your FAC. When you declare that you are parrying a blow **as your action** then you are really putting your all into it stopping it.

Gamewise, make your attack and roll for damage. These become **Parry Points** that can be used to reduce the damage

of in-coming attacks for the length of that round. The catch is that parry points disappear as they are used. Generate 10 parry points, use 6 to stop one attack and that will leave you with 4 to stop other attacks. Any parry points left unused will vanish at the end of the round.

DM: The hobgoblin brings its halberd careening down towards Odd Kalis.

Ralph: I step in and block it with my short swords.

DM: Give me a hit roll.

Ralph: (Ralph has Hit 15 with his pair of short swords. He risk rolls a -3) *Damn it!*

DM: Well, it's a parry so you don't actually have to beat anything but a 10. Roll for damage.

Ralph: (Rolls 1d6, once for each sword, a 5 and 5 turn up) 10 parry points.

DM: The hobgoblin has a Hit 14 and does (rolls 1d12s for the halberd) 8 sharp, all of which are blocked by your parry with 2 points to spare.

Kalis: Thanks!

Fast & Slow. Some attacks are better at parrying than others. Any bearing the **Fast** aspect should gain a **Hit +2**. An attack with the **Slow** aspect should suffer a **Hit -2**.

Missile Parries. You may use a melee attack to parry a ranged attack but it won't be easy. The speed of the missile effects your ability to parry it. All of the parry points generated must be used against this one attack.

- **Slow** = Hit -2 (thrown spear or rock)
- **Medium** = Hit -4 (arrow or sling stone)
- **Fast** = Hit -6 (crossbow bolt, etc)

Parrying with a missile against a melee attack is possible but it always takes a **Hit -4**.

Shield Parries. Most shields just sit on your arm, passively absorbing damage. You may parry with your shield but you lose its Armor value when you do for the extent of that round.

Picking Pockets

Picking pockets is a **Hard Dexterity vs Wisdom** challenge. Beat your mark and you get to lift a small and presumably valuable item off their person. The more successful you are

the longer it will be before the defender notices something is missing.

This check is made hard by just how well protected the item is (maybe it is chained to the character or hanging around their neck) and made easier by just how distracted the defender might be. Describing the scene and having other characters do things to somehow distract the mark is a good way of making the attempt easier.

Poison

Poisons come with an offensive strength that the poisoned needs to defend against, such as *Hemlock 16*. This is a **Poison vs Constitution** save. What happens next depends on the nature of the poison as well as its success. Here are some of the more common poisons a character may encounter.

Lethal Poison. The character will die in **1d6 minutes** minus 1 minute for each success. With less than a minute the character dies instantly.

Knock-Out Drug. This knocks a character unconscious for **1d6 hours** per success.

Paralytic Poison. The character will be immobilized yet still aware of all that is happening for **1d6 hours** per success.

Hallucinogenic Drug. The character trips through wild dreams, barely conscious of the actual world. It lasts **1d6 hours** per success.

Intoxicant. Each success saddles the character with a **Intoxication -1** hindrance. It takes 2 hours for each -1 to work its way out of the character's system.

Irritant. Typically a spray such as a stinging or stinking mist, characters defend using **Spirit** instead of Constitution. When the irritant succeeds it causes the character to flee and be unable to do anything for **1d6 minutes** per success.

Overdose! While some poisons are less lethal than others, there are no truly safe poisons. When a save crashes the character overdoses and dies.

Venom. Poisons are imbibed. Venom is injected. Snake bite, scorpion sting, a poisoned dagger - all of these need to do at least 1 tear of damage to deliver a dose of poison.

Antidotes. An antidote is a reverse poison. If administered within **10 minutes** of a poisoning and if its strength can

defeat the strength of the poison it will neutralize the effect. In the case of lethal poisons, if the poison actually killed a character the antidote brings them back from the brink of death.

Reactions

When characters and creatures first meet each other and don't know what to think, a Reaction check should be made. This is a **Charisma** check made by the first character to open their mouth and say something. It uses the table below where **Opposed / Neutral / Same** refers to the alignment of the characters in relation to the alignment of the creatures.

Opposed means one side is Good and the other is Evil.

Neutral is one step removed, such as Good and Neutral or Neutral and Evil. **Same** means that both sides have the same alignment. If alignments are not obvious then Neutral should be used.

Charisma	Opposed	Neutral	Same
>= 0	Attack	Attack	Attack
1 - 5	Attack	Attack	Hostile
6 - 10	Attack	Hostile	Uncertain
11 - 15	Hostile	Uncertain	Friendly
16 - 20	Uncertain	Friendly	Ecstatic
21 - 25	Friendly	Ecstatic	Ecstatic
26 & up	Ecstatic	Ecstatic	Ecstatic

Attack. The worst result. The creature immediately seeks to destroy you.

Hostile. The creature would like to destroy you but might be willing to let you go if you hand over your lunch money.

Uncertain. The creature doesn't know what to think and would prefer you go away.

Friendly. The creature likes you well enough but is not willing to bend or break any rules for you.

Ecstatic. The creature is enamored of you and might be willing to bend a few rules, but nothing crazy or suicidal.

Rest & Recovery

Adventure is an exhausting business and eventually characters will need to recover from it. Rest 10 minutes and make a **Constitution** check. Multiply your **Regeneration Rate** by its success and that is the amount of **wear damage** you can erase from your untorn hit points.

Rest Spots. You also need to mark a rest spot every time you do so. Each will bring a **-1** to your next rest check. Look for the number in the circle you are about to mark to figure out what this is.

Second Winds. During combat a character can force the issue by taking a moment to catch their breath and strengthen their resolve. Gamewise this is your action for the round. A **Hard Spirit** check is made in place of the Constitution check but otherwise it is just like resting to recover wear damage. *It just doesn't take as long.* A rest spot should be marked every time it is done.

Megan: (looks down at her sheet to notice that she is just three points away of being knocked unconscious) No attack this round. I step back to catch a second wind.

DM: Well, the captain of the guard isn't going to let you get away with that, but go ahead and make your roll.

Megan: (She has a 12 Spirit, the hard brings it down to 10. She rolls a +6) Yes! 16! (This is a double so she recovers double her regeneration rate of 3. She marks a rest spot and erases six points of wear damage).

Food & Sleep. Luckily characters completely recover all wear damage and clear out all rest spots with a full meal and eight hours of sleep. If you only get one or the other (the meal or the sleep) you only recover half of it. Get neither and you get nothing. Creatures that have natural attacks with an ammo count, such as the dragon's breath weapon, recover this in the same way.

It's good to keep in mind that a *Day* is not necessarily 24 hours. A day is defined by your ability to get some food and sleep at the end of it. Something that can only be used *once per day* needs this regenerative experience before it can be used again.

Wounds & Scars. Healing tear damage is a far harder business. It requires a **Constitution** check made after 1 **week** spent doing nothing but taking it easy and trying to

recuperate. Multiply your regeneration rate by your success and that is the amount of **tear** damage healed.

Fail this check and it will scar over one count of your regeneration rate in torn wounds. These wounds you blacken in. Scars cannot hold wear or tear damage and will not heal naturally.

Grudge: We're done here? I going to take a week off and bandage my wounds to recover from all of this.

DM: Alright, give me a Constitution check.

Grudge: (Grudge has Con 14 and a Regeneration Rate of 8. He risk rolls a +2. It's a double so he recovers 16 tears of damage) That works! I healed up all but three points so I'm going to take another week off.

DM: Give me another check.

Grudge: (Rolls the dice. This time the sign die turns up a 1. A stumble! It creates a -10 bringing his constitution down to 4 and a fail) Youch! *What'd I do wrong?*

DM: That's gonna scar.

Grudge: (by all means it should scar 8 wounds but Grudge only has 3 unhealed wounds so he blackens them in and dismisses the rest) well, consider it a reminder not to go ticking off frost giants, next time.

Magical Healing. Magic that heals damage typically works like a **blunt** attack in reverse. It will heal what you roll in damage as well as 1 tear for every 4 points. Magic can be used to heal scar damage but not easily. It takes **10** points of wear damage to heal 1 scar.

Shields

Shields put a powerful protective barrier between you and the opposition. Gamewise they mostly just sit there and absorb damage as a part of your armor, but you can use your shield as a weapon provided you don't mind giving up its protection the next time you go on defense. Otherwise the arm stuck holding the shield can do nothing but wield that shield.

Forward Facing. Shields generally only work at defending the front of a character against attacks that they see coming. Gamewise this means defending with FAC against an attack. When an attack is defended against using **SAC** the

shield should not protect against it. Not without good reason.

If you sling a shield over your back, that can be used to defend against SAC attacks coming at your backside, but the shield will only defend with **half** its armor value.

Slip-Thru

In combat you cannot move through a space occupied by another character or creature or a space adjacent to it if they are unfriendly. Not without making a **Slip-Thru** check. This is you ducking under them, sliding past them, or possibly even vaulting over them to move unexpectedly through the area.

Gamewise, slip-thru is an **Agility vs Agility** challenge where if you win you get to move through the threatened space. Lose and you are stuck belly to belly with the creature, the rest of your movement gone.

Back Attacks. If slipping past an opponent is all you want to do then the Slip-Thru becomes your action for the round. If you want to incorporate it into an attack on the creature's backside then your entire action will take a **Hit -2**, treating the slip-thru like a Multiple Attack.

The advantage of this is that if your slip-thru is successful the creature will have to defend against your attack using their **SAC**. Otherwise FAC is used.

Occupied Space. Even if a friendly character is blocking your way and not trying to stop your movement, you still need to make an Agility check to get past them. They won't oppose it the way an opponent would, but the result is the same. Succeed and you move past the character without problem. Fail and you bump into them and lose the rest of your movement.

Spell Casters

Spell-casters traffic in what is often known as **Arcane Magic**. They are not granted their powers by divine forces or natural advantages. Instead they are reaching their minds into the spaces that exist between spaces, grabbing ahold of invisible currents of unfathomable power and spinning them into patterns that will hopefully cause a spell to function and not fry them to a cinder.

Spell Books. All spell-casters start the game with a Spell Book containing the written instructions for casting the spells they have selected. Gamewise this means that both the book and the spells themselves are individual pieces of equipment. They should be written down in your equipment list.

Once the game gets moving a spell-caster can only learn new spells by acquiring the physical pages of that spell. This could mean buying it in a magic shop, stealing it out of someone's spell book or finding the pages stashed away in a treasure trove.

Purchased spells are not cheap! On the black market they often cost **1d6 x Spell Level in GP**. For this same reason, spell-casters are often hesitant to share spells. They paid heavily to discover what they have (in theory at least). Others should do likewise.

Lost Spells. If a spell-caster ever loses the pages of a spell they will take a **Hit -2** for each week the spell has gone missing. This accumulates until the spell can no longer be cast. A spell-caster without a spell book will soon be powerless.

Spell Wipe! Another complexity that spell-casters have to deal with is the occasional spell-wipe. Any time a spell **fails** that spell will be wiped from memory. It is not totally forgotten, the character just cannot remember how to make it work. This lasts until the character has spent at least an **hour** re-reading the spell in their spell book. Gamewise, we often mark wiped spells with an **X** to the left of its name in the Attacks list. This is much easier than erasing a whole line.

Focusing Tools. These are typically wands, staffs, rods or crystal balls that carry a quality bonus given by way of the spell *Create Focusing Tool*. If you have a non-descript Magic Wand +1 then any spell you cast with its assistance will gain a +1.

Only **one** focusing tool can be used at a time. Magic Items, such as a Wand of Fireballs +3, come with a quality bonus but it only works with the power the wand contains. You cannot use a focusing tool to help with a Wand of Fireballs +3, nor can you use this wand as a focusing tool for the spells your character knows how to cast.

Token Items. Some spells such as Scrying and Soul Jar require a token item taken from the character or creature it is destined to effect. This is often a piece of clothing

the person has worn, a piece of equipment they have used for a decent amount of time or something that once was a part of their body such as cut hair, fingernail clippings, a scale or a lost tooth. Basically it is an item that connects the caster to that character and allows magic to effect them from afar.

Fear & Suspicion. There is no getting around it. Magic is a way of letting some people acquire power that others have no control over. The spell Magic Missile may seem quaint if not cute, but the reality of the spell is tantamount to an invisible crossbow that is quick to load, never runs out of ammo and cannot be taken away from those who know how to cast it. To everyday people, Magic Missile is a nightmare made real.

Because of this, magic-users often fall into one of two camps. The first keep everything they do a secret. The second trumpets the fact, dressing and acting in a way that makes sure the world knows they can cast magic spells and are not to be messed with.

In a fantasy world where magic is quite common (which may or may not be yours depending on your DM) public opinion could be quite lax on the matter. Otherwise it is best to have a contingency plan for the next time a crop harvest fails and a torch and pitch-fork wielding mob comes looking for the cause of it.

Steeds

A steed is any creature you ride on the back of. If your character has a history of doing this then you just do it. Otherwise, you take a **-2** to everything you do in the saddle on that first day. This drops to a **-1** for the rest of the first week and then nothing afterwards.

Qualifications. A steed should be at least one body size larger than its rider. At base it will take a **-3 Bulk** penalty to everything it does. This drops to a **-2** if it is two body sizes larger, a **-1** if three body sizes larger, and a **-0** if four body sizes or more larger. It also helps to have a saddle. Going without one will bring a **-1** to everything a character does while riding.

Bucking Riders. The steed also needs to be willing to have you as its rider. Forcing yourself on an animal is never a good idea. It can attempt to buck you with an **Agility vs Agility** challenge. Win and you stay in the saddle. Lose and you go flying.

Flung From The Saddle. Being knocked out of a saddled does **1d8 damage** with a type that depends on what you land on. Being flung from a flying steed replaces this damage with standard falling damage. If the steed is moving fast enough you will also take charging damage (see *Charging* above).

Combat. Once you have learned how to ride a steed, doing so in combat does not change anything except the amount of damage your attacks do. The speed of the steed determines the charging bonus that will be brought to your melee attacks.

If the steed is simply moving it will not effect your attack, but if running (galloping) or sprinting (charging) that will bring a **-2 or -4** to your attacks just as if you had been running or sprinting.

Staying in the Saddle. When you are stunned in combat make a **Luck** check. Fail and you will be thrown from the saddle. When knocked down do it again but with a **Hard Luck** check. In either case you still need to spend actions recovering from the shock.

When you make your steed perform some feat which is daring enough to require an Agility check (such as jumping over a fence), with a Little results you should make a **Luck** check to see if you remain in the saddle.

Surprise Attacks

A surprise attack is an ambush. One group hides in wait for the other and if they go undetected they get to launch a surprise attack. During the first round of combat....

- Initiative is lost.
- Surprised characters are stunned.
- SAC is used for defense.

If there is a second round of combat, it continues normally from there. A surprise attack is a **Wisdom vs Wisdom** challenge with the ambushers on offense and ambushees on defense (think *Hiders vs Seekers*, the same as in *Hiding & Sneaking*). The catch is that normally groups are involved so it is actually the worst strength of the hiderees verses the best strength of the seekers.

Sneak Attack! If both groups are out stalking each other and trying to get to where they can launch an ambush, not much changes except a **Wisdom Competition** precedes it. The side producing the greatest strength gets to ambush the

other. Then a normal **Wisdom vs Wisdom** challenge is made for the surprise attack.

You can combine these two checks. The worst of the winning side needs to beat the best of the losing side - **Worst Wisdom vs Best Wisdom** - for the ambush to happen. Otherwise normal combat results.

DM: The hobgoblins are out there, milling around the wharf, looking for you.

Megan: We do the same, skulking about, trying to get to where we can hit them with a sneak attack.

DM: Alright, everyone give me a Wisdom check. The hobgoblins have Wisdom 11.

Megan: 10.

Grudge: 7.

Ralph: My Rogue class should be good for this giving me a +3.

DM: Alright.

Ralph: (All eyes are on him. Ralph has a score of 16 and risk rolls a -5) 11?

DM: Well, this is a competition. That's a tie so roll again.

Megan: 14.

Grudge: 12.

Ralph: 18!

DM: Alright, Ralph leads you behind a wall of crab traps to where you can hear the hobgoblins whispering to each other, wondering where you went. And since you all rolled something better than 11 you get a sneak attack.

Megan: *Now we've got them!*

Hiding Again. Once an ambush has been attempted, successful or not, that same group of characters or creatures cannot launch another until after the encounter is over and they have had the chance to hide again.

Sweep Attacks

Sweeping lets you use a single attack to hit more than one opponent. First it needs to make sense. You need to have been within reach of your opponents while moving about during the round. Next your hit strength needs to beat the

AC of each opponent. Lastly, the damage you generate should be divided evenly between those you hit.

DM: Three goblins come at you.

Megan: I'm going to try and sweep them with my sword. (Megan has Hit 14 and risk rolls a 20 & 5 giving her a whopping +10) A 24! A triple! (her sword does 1d8s and she rolls a 7) 21 points of sharp right across the neck line!

DM: (Goblins have AC 10, 4 hit points and no armor. Her sword is going to do 10 tears of damage. That will sweep two of them for 4 tears of damage and 3 tears on the last one. But! If you are going to err as a DM, it's always best to *err on the side of awesomeness*. The DM decides to give the blow an extra tear of damage.) Pop! Pop! Pop! You lop off their heads and they roll around on the ground with terribly surprised expressions frozen on their faces.

Most sweep attacks are made with melee weapons. Single-shot weapons such as a crossbow cannot make sweep attacks unless those goblins conveniently line themselves up belly to back for you. Load & fire weapons such as the bow & arrow can make multiple attacks (see Multiple Attacks) but for the same reason they cannot make sweeping attacks.

Swimming

If you have the **Swim** form of movement then swimming is not a problem. Otherwise, being dropped in the water will require an **Agility** check to suddenly discover or remember how to swim. This may be made hard by the turbulence of the water and even harder when carrying equipment. Bulk penalties do apply.

Sudden Swim

Check: Agility.

1 Or More: Swim with a speed equal to your success count.

½ Success: You struggle in the water. Make the check again at -2.

Failure: Glug. Glug. Glug. You sink to the bottom.

If you sink or go swimming below the surface you take **1 point** of wear damage for every **five rounds** you hold your breath. If knocked unconscious while down there you exhale your last breath and die.

DM: After falling off the cliff you hit the water hard and drop like a stone beneath its waves. For being so close to the shore this cove is surprisingly deep. Give me an Agility check.

Grudge: (Grudge has Agility 12 but also Bulk -3) Hmm. Do I still have my shield?

DM: You probably dropped it when you were knocked off that cliff.

Grudge: Yeah. That's what I was thinking (losing the shield drops him down to Bulk -2). So it's Agility 10 and (rolls the dice) a +1. Never thought I'd be so grateful to see a single success.

DM: Although you are aching all over you find the strength to swim back to the surface and break through it to gasp some of that sweet sweet ocean air.

Grudge: Alright, I doggy paddle my way back to shore, and collapse on the sand.

Traps

Where there is treasure there will often be traps. Most of the time these are mechanical traps such as pendulum blades, spring-fired spears or trip-wire crossbows hidden in the room.

Checking For Traps. What does it mean to declare you are "checking for traps?" It means you are protecting the group by looking for traps, but also volunteering to be hit by any trap you fail to find. Providing one is actually there.

Challenge: Wisdom vs Secret.

1 Or More: You might have detected the trap, see below.

½ Success: The trap springs on you, defend with your **FAC**.

Failure: The trap springs on you, defend with **SAC**.

Secret Strength. Secret is the strength at which the trap has been hidden (secret doors work the same way). Because it is a secret and there may be no traps in the area, the DM will not tell you what you need to beat until after you have done so. Even if you score four successes but cannot beat the secret strength of the trap you will miss it.

With a little or fail, not only did you fail to detect the trap but if one is there it springs on you. This is handled

just like a creature attack. A Hit vs AC roll is made and damage done.

When No One Checks For Traps. When you enter a room where there is a trap and no one bothers to check for it? Everyone in the party should make a **Luck** check and whoever produces the lowest strength has just been hit by it, defending with their **SAC**.

Pit Traps. Pit traps open a trap door under a character and drops them for damage (see *Falling*). With a $\frac{1}{2}$ success a trap checking character should be given the chance to make a **Hard Agility** check. When successful the character managed to grab onto something just as the pit opened beneath them and now are dangling over its edge.

If no one checks for traps, luck checks should be made with the pit opening below the roller of the lowest strength. If two or more characters tie for lowest strength they all will be sucked into it.

Disabling a Trap. Once a trap is found it can be disabled by setting it off - which is the proper use of a ten-foot pole! More complex traps may require a disable check. This is an **Intellect** check verses the complexity of the trap. Because a character needs to get close to the trap to disable it, losing this challenge will trigger the trap.

Describe What You Are Doing. On the whole, when it comes to traps, one of the last things you want to do is trust your luck to the dice. If you talk the matter over with your DM and truly interact with the place where the trap may be the DM might just let you detect and disable the trap without rolling for it. Barge into a room, declare you are checking for traps, blindly roll the dice and eventually you will hit something but it won't be pleasant.

Wilderness Survival

Wilderness Survival is not magic. It is an understanding of how to get along in inhospitable surroundings, how to find food and water, build a workable shelter, start a fire, know that moss grows on the north sides of trees, etc.

While some advice is worldwide, most of it is regional. Elves are going to know all about surviving in a forest or perhaps the fields that lie adjacent to it, but they will not know much about surviving the hot sands of a desert or on the frozen tundra. Others who call those lands their home will.

Zero-Level Characters

All characters had a life before they became adventurers, a time when they were still learning the ropes. Gamewise, these characters start the game with **no XP** and a level of **zero**. You have a class but just barely. Instead of a class bonus you take a **-2** to every special thing the class does, such as a Cleric's ability to turn unbelievers or a Wizard's ability to cast magic spells. Zero level characters start the game with **2d6 Iron** for spending cash.

You may try adventuring as a zero-level character but this is a very challenging proposition with a notoriously high mortality rate. Talk it over with your DM.

Miniatures

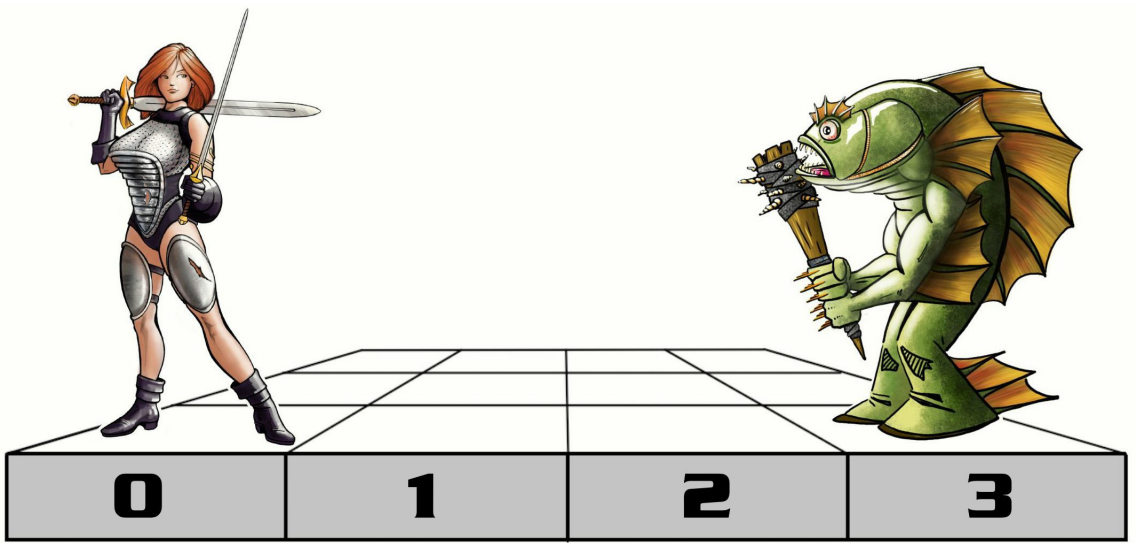
You do not need miniatures to play Dragonhead. They are entirely optional yet can also be quite helpful, even if you only use them to keep track of who is fighting who. For serious miniatures combat, here are a couple of things you might want to have on hand.

- **Miniatures.** Paper, Plastic or Metal. One for each character and creature involved.
- **A Vinyl Battle Mat.** These come covered in 1-inch squares or hexes and are designed to be drawn on using Dry Erasable Markers.
- **Dry Erasable Markers.** For drawing walls and other shapes on the battle mat. Do not use permanent markers. *Sharpies are forever!*
- **A Roll of Paper Towels.** For cleaning off the mat after a battle.
- **A Small Measuring Tape.** For making quick distance measurements.
- **A Mini-Mag Light.** For lighting up areas.

The Step. The base measurement used by the game is the Step. This is a square roughly 3 to 3.3 feet per side. Three feet is the distance a typical adult human can cover with a single step which makes it relatable. The fuzzy 0.3 margin lets us assume that nine steps can fit inside a ten foot square on a larger map.

Turning. A character traveling normally can turn up to **90 degrees** per step without problem. Turning more than that will cost you an **extra step** of movement. Running characters can turn up to 45 degrees per step. Sprinting characters can do this but only on every other step.

Measuring Distance. To measure the distance between two characters, start counting with the step adjacent to the one you are in and stop with the step adjacent to the one your opponent occupies. In the example below, our sword maiden is standing 2 steps away from the troglodyte.



This is where having a pocket tape measure comes in handy. Instead of counting squares you can easily measure any distance at any angle as long as you remember that 1 inch equals 1 step.

Melee Reach. A melee attack can either reach its opponent or it cannot. Most can only hit a creature standing in an adjacent step. If the attack has the **Reach** aspect, such as a spear, then it can reach over that adjacent step to hit an opponent. If the Reach has a number attached to it, such as the Halberd's Reach 2 or the Lance's Reach 3, the number is the number of steps that can stand between a character and its target. If our sword maiden were wielding a halberd with Reach 2 she would be able to strike the trogg from where she is standing.

Ranged Attacks. When miniatures are not in use, ranged attacks are imagined as best as we can. A long range weapon can strike farther than a short range one. When using minis these terms translate to a number of **Ranges**, a measure of distance equaling 12 steps, aka 1 foot on a tape measure.

- Close = 1'
- Short = 2'
- Medium = 4'
- Long = 8'
- Xtra = 16'
- Super = 32'

Quite simply, if something is within range then it can be hit otherwise it cannot. A crossbow is a Medium range weapon so it can target anything standing within 4 ranges, which is 48 steps or roughly 145 to 160 feet. To hit a target straddling the outer edge of the weapon's range, the

defender should make a **Luck** check. With one success or more the creature is out of range.

Area Attacks. To find what has been hit by an area attack, find the point of detonation, measure on the battle mat the size of its radius (always count horizontally or vertically, never diagonally) and hold the flashlight above the battle mat and move it up or down until the edge of the beam hits the outer edge of the blast. Any mini caught in the light will be hit.

For cone shaped blasts, lay the flashlight on its side behind the point of detonation and shine it forward. Mini-mag lights are good for this because they are bright, portable and come with a head that can be focused into a tighter or wider beam.

The Cardinal Rules

Once you understand the basics of how the game works, nearly all the rules are optional. This is your game, if you don't like something then change it! There are only three rules that cannot be changed or over-ruled in any way. These we call the **Cardinal Rules**.

Keep It Realistic. Reality is a big and beautiful thing. To capture it in all of its glorious detail with every single oddity and conundrum and contradiction perfectly set in place would require the creation of a gaming system as vast as the universe itself. As it is we have a small fast-moving system that runs on pencils, paper, dice and no small amount of imagination. A lot has been overlooked.

When you come across an absence in the rules, an oversight or something that just doesn't make any sense? *Go with your gut.* Talk it over with the DM. *Follow your imagination!* Your mind wants the fantasy to be real. Give it what it wants.

The DM is Always Right. Even when dead wrong. Deciding what is realistic about spaceships, magic and elementals is no small task, so no matter how off-center, irrational or glaringly bad a DM's decision may be the Dragonhead Master is always right. The DM's decisions are more important than the rule books. In every debate the DM has final say.

We do this not because we believe your DM to be infallible (far from it) but because games only suffer when people waste time arguing about how a game should be played or what one thing or another *actually* means. The DM always has a good valid reason for doing whatever the DM has done and is under no obligation to explain it to you. Just take it on faith that it will all make sense in time.

Of course, any DM who abuses this privilege had better be prepared to find themselves a new gaming group some time soon.

Always Play to Win. There are no winners or losers in role-playing games. This sage-old advice is utter nonsense. These games can be won and they can be lost but not in the way that you might think.

You will know you are losing when people begin to get bored. When conversations stray from the adventure at hand. When people start to play with their smart phones rather than their characters.

You will know you are winning when the air crackles with laughter and excitement. When eyes widen and people find themselves wishing the adventure would never end. *That is winning.* Winning is the responsibility of everyone at the table.

We all win or we all lose.

Always play to win!

Version 0.6

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