

COMBAT BASICS

INITIATIVE

When combat starts, everyone **rolls initiative** (a Dexterity check) to see who reacts fastest. No proficiencies apply but some special features and magic items grant bonuses to the roll.

ROUNDS AND TURNS

A **round** in combat represents 6 seconds of fighting, during which each combatant takes one **turn**. Note that while *players* take turns, narratively the *characters* act simultaneously. Turn order goes from highest to lowest initiative.

On each **turn** you can:

- Take one **action** (see below);
- Take one **bonus action** (see page 2); and
- **Move** up to your speed.

You can do these in any order, unless special rules say otherwise. You can break up your movement — i.e. you can move, take an action, then move again. The total distance you move on your turn can't be more than your speed.

You can also take one **reaction** per round, usually when it's not your turn (see page 2).

ACTIONS

The following actions are available to everyone. Most characters will have traits and features that improve or modify them, and add other actions.

ATTACK

The basic combat option is to **Attack** an enemy with a weapon, making an **attack roll**. If you hit, you make a **damage roll** and deal damage (see page 2). Attacks are **melee** (close up) or **ranged** (at a distance). If you don't have a weapon you can make an **unarmed strike**, which deals 1 + your Strength modifier damage. (More if you have special training, claws, fangs, or horns.)

EXTRA ATTACKS

If you get **Extra Attacks** from your class, you can make multiple attacks as part of one Attack action. The attacks can be against the same or different targets, and you can use your movement in between them. Make separate attack and damage rolls for each of these attacks.

GRABBING AND PUSHING

Instead of one of your normal attacks which do damage, you can try to **grapple** or **shove** an opponent as long as they're not much larger than you and you have a free hand. Make a Strength (Athletics) check; they'll resist with their choice of a Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. If you win...

- **...a grapple:** your foe is *grappled* (i.e. you're grabbing them) and their speed becomes zero.
- **...a shove:** your foe is either knocked *prone* (i.e. flat on the ground) or pushed five feet away - you choose which.

CAST A SPELL

See the section on spellcasting on page 2.

DASH

You move up to your speed. This effectively lets you give up your action to move twice your speed on your turn.

DISENGAGE

When you move out of reach of an enemy, they can make an **Opportunity Attack** against you (see page 2). When you **Disengage**, you move carefully so that for the rest of your turn your movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.

DODGE

You concentrate on dodging incoming attacks. Until your next turn, attackers you can see have disadvantage on attack rolls against you, and you get advantage on Dexterity saving throws.

HELP

You can help a willing character. If they act before your next turn, they get advantage on their next ability check or attack roll. You have to specify what you're helping with when you choose to help. To help with an attack you have to be within 5 feet of the target of the attack.

HIDE

Make a Dexterity (Stealth) check; the result is the difficulty for enemies to notice you. You can't hide from someone who can see you; you must be out of sight, or *heavily obscured* (e.g. by darkness, opaque fog, very dense foliage etc.).

READY

You specify a trigger condition and how you plan to react to it: either with a specific action, or by moving up to your speed. If the trigger happens before your next turn, you can take the specified action as a **reaction** (see page 2).

USE OBJECT

You can interact with one object for free on your turn. To interact with a second object, you have to use this action. Examples include drawing or sheathing a weapon, opening a door, picking up or dropping an item, picking a lock and so on.

STABILISE

You can make a DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check to help a dying ally (see **Dying** on page 2). If you succeed, they become **stable**. If you have a **healer's kit**, you can use this action and some of the kit's supplies to stabilise them without rolling.

OTHER ACTIONS

Most other things you want to do on your turn will require you to use an action. Your character can speak on your turn for free, but since a turn is only 6 seconds, it has to be brief — up to twenty words or so should be fine.

BONUS ACTIONS

You can only take one bonus action on your turn. Many bonus actions have conditions you must meet to use them, like another action you have to take first, or required equipment.

There is only one bonus action available to all characters: the **offhand attack** (see below). Spellcasters may also have some spells that take a bonus action to cast (see below).

Other bonus actions are granted by class features or other special traits. Some features allow a character to use a regular action (Dash, Disengage, Hide etc.) as a bonus action instead.

OFFHAND ATTACK

This is an extra attack anyone can make if they're holding two melee weapons with the *light* property. You can only make an Offhand Attack after you use the Attack action on your turn.

You make the second attack like a normal Attack action, except that you don't apply your Strength or Dexterity modifier to the damage unless it's negative, and you don't get any Extra Attacks.

Offhand Attacks can be improved by the *Dual Wielder* feat, or by the *Two-Weapon Fighting* Fighting Style available to Fighters, Rangers and some kinds of Bard.

REACTIONS

Reactions are used when it's not your turn in response to a specific **trigger**. You can only take one reaction between one turn and the next.

There are only two reactions available to all characters: **opportunity attacks** and **readied actions**. Spellcasters may also have spells that use their reaction to cast (see below). Some characters have special abilities which grant other reactions, for example

OPPORTUNITY ATTACK

If a creature moves out of your reach, it has to look where its going, and you can use your reaction to exploit that moment and attack it. (Your reach is 5 feet, i.e. the eight squares adjacent to yours, unless you have a long weapon.)

Make one melee attack against the creature. This isn't a standard Attack action, so you can't use Extra Attacks, or special abilities unless they specifically apply to opportunity attacks.

You can't make an opportunity attack if:

- The creature teleports out of your reach;
- The creature is forcibly moved by something, without using up its own movement, action or reaction (you can't anticipate its move);
- The creature takes the *Disengage* action before moving, or has a special ability that prevents opportunity attacks (it's too cautious or quick).

READIED ACTION

If you used the *Ready* action, and the trigger you were waiting for happens, you can use your reaction to take the action you set up. You can always choose not to take the action if you want.

SPELLCASTING

Each spell specifies a casting time, usually "1 Action", "1 Bonus Action", or "1 Reaction" with a specified trigger. Some take longer to cast, typically 1 or 10 minutes or 1 hour; such spells cannot normally be used in combat.

MULTIPLE SPELLS

Casting spells is difficult! **You can't cast more than one spell on your turn**, with one exception: if you cast a *cantrip* (a simple spell) with a casting time of 1 Action, you can also cast any spell with a casting time of 1 Bonus Action.

INJURY AND DEATH

Hit points (hp) measure your ability to keep fighting. You can't have fewer than zero hit points, or more than your hit point maximum. When you take damage, your current number of **hit points** is reduced by the amount of damage dealt. This has no effect until you are reduced to zero hit points, when you fall *unconscious* and begin **dying** (see below).

Magic spells, healing potions and proper rest are the most reliable ways to regain hit points.

TEMPORARY HIT POINTS

A separate buffer against damage, temporary hit points (temp hp) are lost first, before regular hit points. Multiple sources of temp hp don't add together — just keep the highest amount. e.g. if you have 2 and gain 7, you now have 7, not 9.

DYING

When you are dying, you make a special **death saving throw** each turn, with no modifiers. On a 10+ you succeed; otherwise you fail.

A 1 counts as two failures, and a 20 means you regain 1 hit point. If you take damage it counts as one failure, or two for a critical hit.

If you get three failures, you die.

If you get three successes or someone aids you (see page 1), you become **stable**: reset your successes and failures and stop making death saving throws. If you regain hit points you become stable and regain consciousness, and can act on your next turn.

INSTANT DEATH

You can die instantly if you take **massive damage** - enough to reduce you to zero hit points, with damage remaining equal to or more than your hit point maximum. There are also some magical effects that can kill instantly.