

Combat

Adventurers encounter many dangerous monsters and nefarious villains. In those moments, combat often breaks out.

The Order of Combat

A typical combat encounter is a clash between two sides: a flurry of weapon swings, feints, parries, footwork, and spellcasting. The game organizes combat into a cycle of rounds and turns. A round represents about 6 seconds in the game world. During a round, each participant in a battle takes a turn. The order of turns is determined at the beginning of combat when everyone rolls Initiative. Once everyone has taken a turn, the fight continues to the next round if neither side is defeated.

Combat Step by Step

Combat unfolds in these steps:

1. **Establish Positions.** The Game Master determines where all the characters and monsters are located. Given the adventurers' marching order or their stated positions in the room or other location, the GM figures out where the adversaries are — how far away and in what direction.
2. **Roll Initiative.** Everyone involved in the combat encounter rolls Initiative, determining the order of combatants' turns.
3. **Take Turns.** Each participant in the battle takes a turn in Initiative order. When everyone involved in the combat has had a turn, the round ends. Repeat this step until the fighting stops.

Initiative

Initiative determines the order of turns during combat. When combat starts, every participant rolls Initiative; they make a Dexterity check that determines their place in the Initiative order. The GM rolls for monsters. For a group of identical creatures, the GM makes a single roll, so each member of the group has the same Initiative.

Surprise. If a combatant is surprised by combat starting, that combatant has Disadvantage on their Initiative roll. For example, if an ambusher starts combat while hidden from a foe who is unaware that combat is starting, that foe is surprised.

Initiative Order. A combatant's check total is called their Initiative count, or Initiative for short. The GM ranks the combatants, from highest to lowest Initiative. This is the order in which they act during each round. The Initiative order remains the same from round to round.

Ties. If a tie occurs, the GM decides the order among tied monsters, and the players decide the order among tied characters. The GM decides the order if the tie is between a monster and a player character.

Your Turn

On your turn, you can move a distance up to your Speed and take one action. You decide whether to move first or take your action first.

The main actions you can take are listed in “Actions” earlier in “Playing the Game.” A character’s features and a monster’s stat block also provide action options. “Movement and Position” later in “Playing the Game” gives the rules for movement.

Communicating. You can communicate however you are able — through brief utterances and gestures — as you take your turn. Doing so uses neither your action nor your move.

Extended communication, such as a detailed explanation of something or an attempt to persuade a foe, requires an action. The Influence action is the main way you try to influence a monster.

Interacting with Things. You can interact with one object or feature of the environment for free, during either your move or action. For example, you could open a door during your move as you stride toward a foe.

If you want to interact with a second object, you need to take the Utilize action. Some magic items and other special objects always require an action to use, as stated in their descriptions.

The GM might require you to use an action for any of these activities when it needs special care or when it presents an unusual obstacle. For instance, the GM might require you to take the Utilize action to open a stuck door or turn a crank to lower a drawbridge.

Doing Nothing on Your Turn. You can forgo moving, taking an action, or doing anything at all on your turn. If you can't decide what to do, consider taking the defensive Dodge action or the Ready action to delay acting.

Ending Combat

Combat ends when one side or the other is defeated, which can mean the creatures are killed or knocked out or have surrendered or fled. Combat can also end when both sides agree to end it.

Movement and Position

On your turn, you can move a distance equal to your Speed or less. Or you can decide not to move.

Your movement can include climbing, crawling, jumping, and swimming (each explained in “Rules Glossary”). These different modes of movement can be combined with your regular movement, or they can constitute your entire move.

However you're moving with your Speed, you deduct the distance of each part of your move from it until it is used up or until you are done moving, whichever comes first.

A character's Speed is determined during character creation. A monster's Speed is noted in the monster's stat block. See “Rules Glossary” for more about Speed as well as about special speeds, such as a Climb Speed, Fly Speed, or Swim Speed.

Playing on a Grid

If you play using a square grid and miniatures or other tokens, follow these rules.

Squares. Each square represents 5 feet.

Speed. Rather than moving foot by foot, move square by square on the grid, using your Speed in 5-foot segments. You can translate your Speed into squares by dividing it by 5. For example, a Speed of 30 feet translates into 6 squares. If you use a grid often, consider writing your Speed in squares on your character sheet.

Entering a Square. To enter a square, you must have enough movement left to pay for entering. It costs 1 square of movement to enter an unoccupied square that's adjacent to your space (orthogonally or diagonally adjacent). A square of Difficult Terrain costs 2 squares to enter. Other effects might make a square cost even more.

Corners. Diagonal movement can't cross the corner of a wall, a large tree, or another terrain feature that fills its space.

Ranges. To determine the range on a grid between two things — whether creatures or objects — count squares from a square adjacent to one of them and stop counting in the space of the other one. Count by the shortest route.

Difficult Terrain

Combatants are often slowed down by Difficult Terrain. Low furniture, rubble, undergrowth, steep stairs, snow, and shallow bogs are examples of Difficult Terrain.

Every foot of movement in Difficult Terrain costs 1 extra foot, even if multiple things in a space count as Difficult Terrain.

Breaking Up Your Move

You can break up your move, using some of its movement before and after any action, Bonus Action, or Reaction you take on the same turn. For example, if you have a Speed of 30 feet, you could go 10 feet, take an action, and then go 20 feet.

Dropping Prone

On your turn, you can give yourself the Prone condition (see “Rules Glossary”) without using an action or any of your Speed, but you can't do so if your Speed is 0.

Creature Size

A creature belongs to a size category, which determines the width of the square space the creature occupies on a map, as shown on the Creature Size and Space table. That table lists the sizes from smallest (Tiny) to largest (Gargantuan).

A creature's space is the area that it effectively controls in combat and the area it needs to fight effectively. A character's size is determined by species, and a monster's size is specified in the monster's stat block.

Creature Size and Space

Size	Space (Feet)	Space (Squares)
Tiny	2.5 by 2.5 feet	4 per square
Small	5 by 5 feet	1 square
Medium	5 by 5 feet	1 square
Large	10 by 10 feet	4 squares (2 by 2)
Huge	15 by 15 feet	9 squares (3 by 3)
Gargantuan	20 by 20 feet	16 squares (4 by 4)

Moving around Other Creatures

During your move, you can pass through the space of an ally, a creature that has the Incapacitated condition (see “Rules Glossary”), a Tiny creature, or a creature that is two sizes larger or smaller

than you.

Another creature's space is Difficult Terrain for you unless that creature is Tiny or your ally.

You can't willingly end a move in a space occupied by another creature. If you somehow end a turn in a space with another creature, you have the Prone condition (see “Rules Glossary”) unless you are Tiny or are of a larger size than the other creature.

Making an Attack

When you take the Attack action, you make an attack. Some other actions, Bonus Actions, and Reactions also let you make an attack. Whether you strike with a Melee weapon, fire a Ranged weapon, or make an attack roll as part of a spell, an attack has the following structure:

1. **Choose a Target.** Pick a target within your attack’s range: a creature, an object, or a location.
2. **Determine Modifiers.** The GM determines whether the target has Cover (see the next section) and whether you have Advantage or Disadvantage against the target. In addition, spells, special abilities, and other effects can apply penalties or bonuses to your attack roll.
3. **Resolve the Attack.** Make the attack roll, as detailed earlier in “Playing the Game.” On a hit, you roll damage unless the particular attack has rules that specify otherwise. Some attacks cause special effects in addition to or instead of damage.

Cover

Walls, trees, creatures, and other obstacles can provide cover, making a target more difficult to harm. As detailed in the Cover table, there are three degrees of cover, each of which gives a different benefit to a target.

A target can benefit from cover only when an at- tack or other effect originates on the opposite side of the cover. If a target is behind multiple sources of cover, only the most protective degree of cover applies; the degrees aren't added together. For ex- ample, if a target is behind a creature that gives Half Cover and a tree trunk that gives Three-Quarters Cover, the target has Three-Quarters Cover.

Cover Table

Degree	Benefit to Target	Offered By ...
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Half	+2 bonus to AC and Dexterity saving throws	Another creature or an object that covers at least half of the target
Three- Quarters	+5 bonus to AC and Dexterity saving throws	An object that covers at least three-quarters of the target
Total	Can't be targeted directly	An object that covers the whole target

Unseen Attackers and Targets

When you make an attack roll against a target you can't see, you have Disadvantage on the roll. This is true whether you're guessing the target's location or targeting a creature you can hear but not see. If the target isn't in the location you targeted, you miss.

When a creature can't see you, you have Advantage on attack rolls against it.

If you are hidden when you make an attack roll, you give away your location when the attack hits or misses.

Ranged Attacks

When you make a ranged attack, you fire a bow, hurl an axe, or otherwise send projectiles to strike a foe at a distance. Many spells also involve making a ranged attack.

Range

You can make ranged attacks only against targets within a specified range. If a ranged attack, such as one made with a spell, has a single range, you can't attack a target beyond this range.

Some ranged attacks, such as those made with a Longbow, have two ranges. The smaller number is the normal range, and the larger number is the long range. Your attack roll has Disadvantage when your target is beyond normal range, and you can't attack a target beyond long range.

Ranged Attacks in Close Combat

Aiming a ranged attack is more difficult when a foe is next to you. When you make a ranged attack roll with a weapon, a spell, or some other means, you have Disadvantage on the roll if you are within 5 feet of an enemy who can see you and doesn't have the Incapacitated condition (see “Rules Glossary”).

Melee Attacks

A melee attack allows you to attack a target within your reach. A melee attack typically uses a hand-held weapon or an Unarmed Strike. Many monsters make melee attacks with claws, teeth, or other body parts. A few spells also involve melee attacks.

Reach

A creature has a 5-foot reach and can thus attack targets within 5 feet when making a melee attack. Certain creatures have melee attacks with a reach greater than 5 feet, as noted in their descriptions.

Opportunity Attacks

Combatants watch for enemies to drop their guard. If you move heedlessly past your foes, you put yourself in danger by provoking an Opportunity Attack.

Avoiding Opportunity Attacks. You can avoid provoking an Opportunity Attack by taking the Disengage action. You also don't provoke an Opportunity Attack when you Teleport or when you are moved without using your movement, action, Bonus Action, or Reaction. For example, you don't provoke an Opportunity Attack if an explosion hurls you out of a foe's reach or if you fall past an enemy.

Making an Opportunity Attack. You can make an Opportunity Attack when a creature that you can see leaves your reach. To make the attack, take a Reaction to make one melee attack with a weapon or an Unarmed Strike against that creature. The attack occurs right before it leaves your reach.

Mounted Combat

A willing creature that is at least one size larger than a rider and that has an appropriate anatomy can serve as a mount, using the following rules.

Mounting and Dismounting

During your move, you can mount a creature that is within 5 feet of you or dismount. Doing so costs an amount of movement equal to half your Speed (round down). For example, if your Speed is 30 feet, you spend 15 feet of movement to mount a horse.

Controlling a Mount

You can control a mount only if it has been trained to accept a rider. Domesticated horses, mules, and similar creatures have such training.

The Initiative of a controlled mount changes to match yours when you mount it. It moves on your turn as you direct it, and it has only three action options during that turn: Dash, Disengage, and Dodge. A controlled mount can move and act even on the turn that you mount it.

In contrast, an independent mount—one that lets you ride but ignores your control — retains its place in the Initiative order and moves and acts as it likes.

Falling Off

If an effect is about to move your mount against its will while you're on it, you must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall off, landing with the Prone condition (see “Rules Glossary”) in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the mount.

While mounted, you must make the same save if you're knocked Prone or the mount is.

Underwater Combat

A fight underwater follows these rules. Impeded Weapons When making a melee attack roll with a weapon underwater, a creature that lacks a Swim Speed has Disadvantage on the attack roll unless the weapon deals Piercing damage.

A ranged attack roll with a weapon underwater automatically misses a target beyond the weapon's normal range, and the attack roll has Disadvantage against a target within normal range.

Fire Resistance

Anything underwater has Resistance to Fire damage (explained in “Damage and Healing”).

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