

Jude's D&D 5E House Rules & Quick Reference

These are the rules that come up most frequently when I play D&D 5E. I keep this document in a binder to avoid wasting time flipping through the *Player's Handbook* or the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Some of the rules are house rules I came up with myself. Others are just summaries of frequently used rules straight out of the PHB or the DMG. The house rules are indicated by *italics*.

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1. Combat

On Your Turn

You may do each of the following (in any order). *You may also speak for 6 seconds.*

Move. Default = 30 ft (six 5-ft spaces). Can split move between actions.

- **Slow Move.** *Each ft traveled costs 1 extra ft per factor (difficult terrain, climbing, crawling, swimming, moving through tight/occupied areas).* In tight areas, get Disadvantage on attacks/saves, and attacks against you get Advantage.
- **Stand, Mount, Dismount.** Takes half of your movement. Roll DC 10 Dex save to stay mounted against interference.
- **Encumbrance.** While moving objects that can't be carried, speed = 5 ft and you have Disadvantage on all rolls.

Action. Choose one of the following.

- **Attack.** You can replace a normal attack with one of the following.
 - **Disarm.** *Attack vs. Athletics/Acrobatics. Disadvantage vs. two-handed weapons.*
 - **Grapple/Trip/Throw.** *Contested Athletics/Acrobatics to grapple a creature or knock/throw it into a prone position (move it up to 5 ft, deal 1d4 damage).*
 - **Overrun/Shove.** *Contested Athletics to move through a creature's space and/or push it to an adjacent space.*
- **Climb a Creature.** *Contested Acrobatics.* Advantage to attack the creature. It has Disadvantage to attack you.
- **Dash.** Move again. *Gain a point of exhaustion if you dash for a number of consecutive turns equal to 3 + your Con modifier.*
- **Disengage.** Avoid all opportunity attacks while moving for the turn.
- **Dodge.** Attackers in sight have Disadvantage against you.
- **Help.** Grant Advantage to an ally's action.
- **Hide.** *Stealth vs. best enemy's Passive Perception.* You are hidden only as long as your enemies cannot keep track of where you are.
- **Ready.** Delay your action to a reaction to a specified cue.
- **Search.** *Perception to scan combat area for hidden creatures (DC = 10 + creature's Stealth bonus) or search a 5-ft square area for secret doors/traps.*
- **Use an Object.** Includes potions and many magic items (like wands).

Bonus Action. Certain abilities can be used as bonus actions.

- **Offhand Attack.** No Str/Dex bonus to damage (unless specialized).
- **Tumble.** Roll contested Acrobatics to pass through an occupied space. You don't need to Tumble if the creature is 2+ sizes larger than you.

Incidental Action. Draw/sheathe a sword, open a door, grab a nearby item, pass an object to someone else, etc.

Reactions

Once per round, you may do one of the following on another creature's turn.

- **Attack of Opportunity.** Attack a creature that moves out of your reach or uses an incidental action while within reach. *Only one creature can opportunity attack for each square the target moves through.* You cannot opportunity attack if you dashed last turn.
- **Readied Action.**
- **Emergency Dismount.**

Mobs

When large homogenous groups of NPCs attack a single target, the DM may have every third NPC hit instead of making attack rolls.

Creature Size

Small PCs (such as halflings and gnomes) have a base AC of 11.

Common Advantages & Disadvantages

- **Cover.** *If you have partial cover, enemies get Disadvantage on attacks and you get Advantage on Dex saves.*
- **Point-Blank Ranged Attack.** You get Disadvantage if you try to make a ranged attack against an adjacent target.
- **Flank.** Gain Advantage on your attack if an ally is next to the target on the side opposite from you and if no other enemies are next to you or your ally.

Underwater Combat

- **Bludgeoning/Slashing Attacks.** *Disadvantage unless attacker has a swim speed.*
- **Ranged Attacks.** Disadvantage at normal range and auto miss at long range.
- **Fire.** All creatures have resistance to fire damage while underwater.

At Death's Door

- **Save vs Death.** Roll d20 each round you're unstable. 10+ is a success. 3 successes in a row and you become stable. 3 failures in a row and you die. A 1 counts as 2 failures. On a 20, you regain consciousness with 1 HP. If you're damaged while unstable, it counts as a failure.
- **Instant Death.** You die automatically if the leftover damage from a hit that brought you to 0 HP is equal to or higher than your Max HP.
- **Stabilizing a Creature.** DC 10 Medicine roll.

Initiative Cards

When combat begins, shuffle 1 red card for each PC and 1 black card for each NPC. When a red card is drawn, any PC who has not acted this turn may do so. When a black card is drawn, the DM may act with any NPC who has not yet acted. Add/remove cards as characters enter or leave combat. Once everyone has acted, shuffle the remaining cards and start a new round.

Critical Fumbles

On a natural 1 with an attack roll, roll 1d6 on the table below.

- 1 **Distracted.** Your turn ends. You cannot take a reaction until your next turn.
- 2 **Opening.** One enemy may use their reaction to attack you now.
- 3 **Stumble.** Move 1 space in a random direction or fall prone (DM's choice).
- 4 **Self-Inflicted Wound.** Take half damage from your own attack.
- 5 **Friendly Fire.** The closest creature to your intended target takes half damage.
- 6 **Disarmed.** Toss your weapon (or something else you're carrying) 3 spaces in a random direction. If it enters an occupied space it deals 1d4 damage to the creature there. If it hits an obstacle, the item becomes damaged or stuck (roll Athletics DC 10 to dislodge).
 - **Ranged Attack Variation:** If wielding a bow or crossbow, the drawstring breaks.

Lingering Injuries

If you take damage while at 0 HP or if the damage is of an especially serious nature, you gain a lingering injury. Only magical healing of 6th level or higher removes a lingering injury.

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 1-5 | Permanent Scar. Nice conversation starter. |
| 6-8 | Impaired Arm. Disadvantage on any action that requires injured limb, such as attacking, climbing, grappling, or swimming. Heals after 10-day rest. |
| 9-11 | Limp. Speed -5. Disadvantage on climbing, jumping, etc. Heals after 10-day rest. |
| 12-13 | Internal Wound. DC 10 Con save to take any combat action or lose your turn (including all reactions). Heals after 10-day rest. |
| 14-15 | Festering Wound. Lose 1 Max HP per day. At 0 Max HP, you die. Heals after five DC 15 Medicine checks (roll once per day). |
| 16-17 | Disfigured. Disadvantage on Persuasion. Advantage on Intimidation. |
| 18 | Ruined/Lost Leg. Speed halved. Disadvantage on climbing, jumping, etc. |
| 19 | Ruined/Lost Arm. Lose the use of your right or left hand. Disadvantage on climbing, swimming, grappling, etc. |
| 20 | Lose an Eye. Disadvantage on Perception. If you have already lost an eye, you're blinded. |

2. Conditions & Rest

Conditions

Blinded

- Disadvantage on attacks (you must guess target's location).
- Attacks against you have Advantage.

Charmed

- Charmer has Advantage on social interactions with you.
- Can't harm the charmer.

Disadvantaged (*Frightened/Poisoned*)

- Disadvantage on attacks & ability checks.
- **Frightened.** *you can't move toward the object of your fear or use offensive actions against it.*

Dispirited

- When a PC reaches 0 HP, they become "dispirited" rather than unconscious. Once you have at least 1 HP, you're no longer dispirited.
- When you become dispirited, gain 1 level of exhaustion.
- While dispirited, you can't attack or cast spells.
- Any damage you take while dispirited results in a Lingered Injury and Con save (DC higher of 10 or damage taken). Failure = unconscious, unstable condition.

Hindered (*Grappled, Prone, Restrained*)

- Disadvantage on attacks and Dex saves.
- Melee attacks against you have Advantage.
- Ranged attacks against you have Disadvantage.
- **Grappled/Restrained.** Speed = 0. Roll contested Athletics/Acrobatics to escape.

Immobilized (*Incapacitated, Paralyzed, Petrified, Stunned, Unconscious*)

- Can't move, speak, or act.
- Attacks against you automatically hit.
- Automatically fail saving throws.
- **Petrified.** Resistance to all damage. Poison/disease effects paused.

Invisible

- Advantage on attacks.
- Attacks have Disadvantage against you (your location must be guessed).

Exhaustion

You gain 1 level of exhaustion after 1 day with no water. You gain 1 exhaustion after 2 days with no sleep. You gain 1 exhaustion after 3 days with no food. Exhaustion due to lack of water/sleep/food does not stack—you gain exhaustion at the rate of the most serious issue affecting you at the time.

1. Disadvantage on ability checks
2. Speed halved
3. Disadvantage on attacks & saves
4. HP max halved
5. Speed = 0
6. Death

Rest

Short Rest. *After 1 hour of downtime, heal 1 hit die per 2 levels (rounded up). Add Con bonus to each roll. The hit dice are not “spent.”*

- *You must have at least 1 HP at the beginning of the rest period.*
- *You can't gain the benefits of more than 1 Short Rest in a row.*
- *You can take up to 2 Short Rests before taking a Long Rest.*

Long Rest. *After 8 hours of downtime, regain full HP and 1 level of exhaustion. You must have consumed food and water at some point during the day in order to gain the benefits of a Long Rest.*

- *Each character must spend at least 6 hours of the Long Rest sleeping.*
- *If interrupted, the PCs may continue from where they left off. Increments of fewer than 2 hours do not count toward Long Rest.*
- **Note:** *PCs with 0 HP regain 1 HP after 1d4 hours. At that point, they may begin resting.*

Recuperating. *After 3 days of rest, you can make a DC 15 Con save to end a condition that prevents you from regaining HP or gain advantage on saves against a disease/poison currently affecting you.*

3. Resources

Adventuring Gear

- **Acid.** Range 20 ft, ranged improvised weapon, 2d6 acid damage.
- **Alchemist's Fire.** Range 20 ft, ranged improvised weapon, 1d4 fire damage / turn. Dex check (DC 10) to put out the flames.
- **Ball Bearings.** Action to use, 10-ft square, creatures moving through make Dex save (DC 10) or fall prone. Creature may move through at half speed in order to avoid the check.
- **Caltrops.** Action to use, 5-ft square, creature that moves through must make Dex save (DC 15) or stop moving this turn and take 1 piercing damage; walking speed reduced by 10 ft until creature regains at least 1 HP. Creature may move through at half speed in order to avoid check.
- **Candle.** 1 hr, bright light 5-ft radius, dim light for another 5 ft
- **Chain.** 10 HP. Can be burst with a DC 20 Str check.
- **Crowbar.** Adv on Str checks.
- **Healer's Kit.** 10 uses. Use an action to stabilize a creature that has 0 HP without a Medicine check.
- **Holy Water.** 20 ft range, ranged improvised weapon, 2d6 radiant damage.
- **Hunting Trap.** 3-ft chain, DC 13 Dex save or take 1d4 piercing damage and stop moving. DC 13 Str check to free self (failure = 1 piercing damage).
- **Lamp.** 15-ft radius bright light, dim light for additional 30 ft. 6 hrs per oil flask.
- **Lantern, Bullseye.** Bright light 60-ft cone, dim light additional 60 ft. 6 hrs per oil flask.
- **Lantern, Hooded.** Bright light 30-ft radius, dim light additional 30 ft. 6 hrs per oil flask. Spend action to reduce light to dim for 5 ft.
- **Lock.** Can be picked if proficient with thief tools (DC 15 Dex).
- **Magnifying Glass.** Advantage on appraisal/inspection of small details. Can spend 5 min to focus sunlight on tinder to create a fire.
- **Manacles.** 15 HP. DC 20 Dex/Str check to escape. Can pick with Dex 15 Dex check (if proficient with thief tools).
- **Oil.** 20-ft range, ranged improvised weapon, if target is hit with fire damage within 1 min, target takes +5 fire damage from the oil. Spend action to pour oil on ground (5-ft square). If lit, burns for 2 rounds and deals 5 fire damage to any creature in the area.
- **Poison, Basic.** Spend action to apply poison to 1 weapon or up to 3 pieces of ammo. If creature is hit within 1 min, DC 10 Con save or take 1d4 poison damage.
- **Potion of Healing.** Usually red. Spend an action to restore 2d4+2 HP.
- **Ram, Portable.** +4 Str check to break down doors. Grants advantage if a friend helps you.
- **Rope.** 2 HP. DC 17 Str check to break.
- **Tent.** Sleeps two people.
- **Tinderbox.** contains flint, fire steel, cloth soaked in oil. Takes 1 action to light a torch, etc. 1 min. to light anything less flammable. Unlimited uses.
- **Torch.** 1 hr, 20-ft radius bright light, 20 more ft dim light. Melee attack for 1 fire damage.

Weapons & Tools

- **Herbalism Kit.** Used to identify/apply herbs and to create antitoxin/healing potions.
- **Silver.** 100 gp to silver 1 weapon or 10 pieces of ammo.
- **Thrown Weapons.** Use the same ability as when wielded in melee.

Mounts & Vehicles

- **Barding.** x4 armor cost for a horse.
- **Saddle, Military.** Advantage on checks to remain mounted.

Expenses (per day)

- **Rations.** 5 sp (doesn't spoil; weighs about 2 lbs.)
- **Modest Meal.** 3 sp (spoils after 3 days; weighs about 2 lbs.)
- **Poor Lifestyle.** 2 sp
- **Modest Lifestyle.** 1 gp
- **Modest Inn.** 5 sp
- **Hireling (Skilled).** 2 gp
- **Hireling (Untrained).** 2 sp
- **Self-Sufficiency.** Anyone can do a full day of work to pay for a Poor lifestyle without gaining/losing money. Proficiency in Survival allows you to earn a Comfortable lifestyle.
- **Research.** 1 gp

Downtime Activities

- **Foraging.** *Each day, the PC with the highest proficiency may roll Survival to go hunting/gathering, while traveling at slow speed (if more than one PC is proficient, roll with Advantage). Success results in enough food to feed the party for 1 day. Success by 5+ results in enough food for 2 days. DC depends on availability of resources:*
 - **Abundant:** DC 10.
 - **Average:** DC 15.
 - **Scarce:** DC 20.
- **Crafting.** Each day you spend crafting, you get 5 gp closer to the market price of your target item and spend 25 sp. If multiple people work with you, each person can do 5 gp of work (the cost does not change). Crafting allows you to earn 1 gp per day (assuming you sell what you're crafting).
- **Practicing a Profession.** Earn 1 gp per day for freelance work, 2 gp working for an organization, and 4 gp working as a performer.
- **Training.** Spend 1 gp per day for 250 days to learn a new language or gain proficiency with a new tool, skill, or weapon.

4. Miscellaneous Rules

Rounding

Always Round Down!

AC/DC

- **5 (Very Easy)**. Hit an inanimate object. Break a glass bottle.
- **10 (Easy)**. Hurt an unarmored person. Break a chair.
- **15 (Moderate)**. Hurt someone in half plate armor. Break a normal door.
- **20 (Hard)**. Hurt a dragon (AC 19). Break a treasure chest.
- **25 (Very Hard)**. Hurt the Tarrasque. Break a barred door.
- **30 (Nearly Impossible)**. Hurt God. Charge through a stone wall.

Increasing the Odds

- **Multiple Ability Checks (“Taking the 20”)**. If failure on a check has no adverse consequences other than lost time, a character may spend 10x the normal time to take an automatic success.
- **Working Together**. If two or more people productively work together on a task, the character with the best chance of success rolls with Advantage.
- **Group Checks**. If the party is trying to make their way through a situation together where the skilled members can help out but the unskilled members will be a detriment, everyone in the party rolls. If at least half of the members succeed, the whole party succeeds. Otherwise, they fail.

Vision & Light

- **Lightly Obscured**. Disadvantage on Perception. (Dim light, light fog/foilage).
- **Heavily Obscured**. No one can see anything. (Darkness, heavy fog/foilage).
- **Darkvision**. Treat darkness as dim light (lightly obscured) and dim light as bright light (no penalty).

Spellcasters

- **Spell Save DC**. 8 + Prof bonus + Ability mod.
- **Spell Attack Modifier**. Prof bonus + Ability mod.
- **Concentration**. If damaged, Con save (DC higher of 10 or half dmg) to keep concentrating.
- **Rituals**. Add 10 min to casting time. Do not expend a spell slot.
- **Areas of Effect**. “20-ft square” means a square with 20 ft on all sides. “15 ft cone” is 15 ft long and 15 ft wide at the base.
- **Scrolls**. User must have access to spells of the scroll’s class, unless the scroll has no class (i.e., *scroll of protection*). Instead of casting a scroll, a wizard may copy the spell into their spellbook (cost = 2 hours and 50 gp per spell level).

Athletics & Acrobatics

- **Athletics/Acrobatics.** Choose which one you want to roll.
- **Larger creatures** have Advantage on any Contested Athletics contest (*Athletics vs. Acrobatics doesn't count*). If the creature is 2+ sizes larger, it automatically succeeds.
- **Jump.** Roll Athletics/Acrobatics. Feet covered while jumping counts toward movement per round. Roll with Disadvantage if creature can't get a running start. **DC 10:** 10 ft long, 2 ft high. **DC 15:** 15 ft long, 5 ft high. **DC 20:** 20 ft long, 6 ft high. **DC 25:** 25 ft long, 8 ft high.
- **Falling Damage.** 1d6 per 10 ft (max = 20d6). A creature falls 500 ft in the first turn and 1000 ft each turn after (multiply by 2 if in diving posture).

Observation & Knowledge

- **Perception.** Detecting traps, secret doors, and hidden enemies.
 - **Passive Search.** You automatically detect hidden creatures within sight/hearing range whose Stealth rolls are equal to or lower than your Passive Perception, as well as secret doors/traps within 5 ft that have DC equal to or lower than your Passive Perception.
 - **Quick Search.** Spend 6 seconds to scan the visible area for hidden creatures or search a 5-ft area for secret doors/traps. Roll Perception.
 - **Slow Search.** Spend 1 minute per 5-ft square to "take the 20" on Perception. You can divide the time between multiple people, but then you must use the lowest Perception score in the group.
 - **Stealth.** If you are traveling at a slow speed, it is assumed you are sneaking, but you don't need to roll until there is a chance you might be detected.
- **Investigation.** Conducting library research, forensics, locating a person in a city, etc.
- **Insight.** Detecting a lie, predicting moves, etc. Insight is usually Passive. You generally only roll for Insight if you are actively trying to lure a creature into giving away its intentions.
- **Knowledge.** Arcana, History, Nature, and Religion are Passive when they are being used to recall information. You only roll for these skills when performing rituals, conducting research, gathering resources, etc.