

WOUNDS

A common complaint about D&D hit points is that there is no way to simulate a character who is suffering from debilitating wounds. A character at 1 hit point is still fully functional. At 0, they are unconscious.

These rules create a new condition in between perfectly fine and dead, without really adding any new book-keeping.

HIT POINTS

Hit points reflect everything that would turn an otherwise serious injury into a minor one that is easy to ignore. This includes, stamina, luck, reflexes and the will to live.

DROPPING TO 0 HIT POINTS

When you drop to 0 hit points, you have taken a significant injury and are at risk of receiving a fatal one if you do not immediately retreat from danger.

WOUND LEVELS

The first time you fall to 0 hit points, you become Wounded. There are six levels of wounds, and they work in a similar way to Exhaustion (*PHb*, p291). Each time you are reduced to 0 hit points, you gain one level of wounds. These wound levels represent significant injuries, like an arrow in your arm, a serious cut, or a club cracking your skull. The more wound levels you have, the more penalties you suffer. Consult the chart below for the effects of wound levels.

WOUND LEVEL EFFECTS

Levels	Effects
1	Disadvantage on physical ability checks
2	Speed halved
3	Disadvantage on attack rolls and saving throws
4	Hit point maximum halved
5	Speed reduced to 0
6	Death

The effects of being Wounded stack, just like Exhaustion does. If you have 2 wound levels, you suffer disadvantage on physical ability checks and your speed is halved. The effects of wound levels do not stack with exhaustion levels, however. A character with 2 wound levels and 2 exhaustion levels has their speed halved, not quartered.

OTHER WAYS OF BEING WOUNDED

The DM can choose to apply wound levels to a character whenever they take significant amounts of damage. For example, if a character suffers massive damage from a long fall, is in the middle of a fireball detonation, or falls into a pool of lava, the DM may choose to give that player wound levels even if they haven't reached 0 hit points.

ACTING WITH 0 HIT POINTS

You don't immediately fall unconscious upon reaching 0 hit points, but you are considered Staggered. Staggered charac-

ters can move or take an action, but not both. You cannot take bonus actions or reactions. Staggered characters cannot gain temporary hit points. Characters remain Staggered until they are restored to 1 hit point or higher.

Continuing to fight at 0 hit points is possible, but very dangerous. You can no longer count on stamina, luck, or reflexes to keep you from taking a fatal wound. A character who takes any damage while at 0 hit points immediately gains an additional wound level and must make a Constitution saving throw or fall unconscious. If the character falls unconscious, they start making Death saving throws using the regular rules.

REMOVING WOUND LEVELS

The effects of being Wounded stay until the wound levels are removed. Hit points can be restored normally while wounded; your stamina and luck can return even though the more serious wounds remain.

There are only two ways to remove wounds: long rests and magical healing.

Long rests. At the end of a long rest, a Wounded character removes 1 wound level, in addition to gaining the regular hit points from a long rest.

If you are proficient in the Medicine skill, you can spend 2 hours ministering to a wounded character during a long rest. On a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check, the wounded character removes an extra wound level when the rest is complete.

Magical Healing. While minor healing magic is fine for scrapes and bruises, healing significant wounds takes stronger magic.

Spells, potions, or other magical healing effects remove wound levels based on the number of hit points they have the potential to heal. When you use a healing effect on a wounded



creature, add up the maximum number of hit points it could restore to see if it is strong enough to remove wound levels. For every 16 hit points the effect could heal, 1 wound level can be removed. For example, a greater healing potion heals $4d4 + 4$, so the maximum number of hit points it could restore is 20. This is higher than 16, so the potion is strong enough to remove 1 wound level. Note that the wound level is removed immediately when the effect is used, regardless of how many hit points you actually restore when you roll the dice. Even if you roll poorly and the potion only restores 10 hit points, the wound level is still removed.

Spells or other healing effects that restore less than a maximum of 16 hit points are not strong enough to reduce wound levels.

Temporary hit points do not have any affect on wound levels.

NATURAL HEALING

The following rules change natural healing into a slower and more consistent process. You no longer choose to heal yourself during rests. If you rest, you automatically get healing benefits.

After a short rest, injured characters heal 1 hit point per level + your Constitution modifier (minimum 1 hit point). If another character spends 1 use of a healing kit to address your wounds, your healing doubles to 2 hit points per level + your Constitution modifier. (ex. A 3rd level Ranger with a 13 Constitution and a hit point total of 25 would heal 4 hit points during a short rest, or 7 hit points if someone uses a healing kit on him.)

You can get this healing benefit from two short rests at most before a long rest is required.

After a successful long rest, you heal $\frac{1}{2}$ your maximum hit points, rounded down, + your Constitution modifier. (Our 3rd level Ranger with 25 hit points would heal 13 hit points after a long rest) If a long rest is interrupted, you heal according to the short rest rules above, as long as you got at least an hour of rest.

As a result, a character reduced to near 0 hit points can't get back to full hit points naturally without at least one long rest and several short ones. This is grittier than the default healing rules, but injured characters can continue the adventure if they're careful. There is less overall book-keeping since players don't have to keep track of HD, and there are no decisions about how many HD to spend to bog things down.

VARIANT: ON THE VERGE OF DEATH

There may be times where the DM is reluctant to kill a character even though the rules call for it. When a character fails 3 Death Saves or reaches 6 Wound Levels, the DM may choose to place them on the verge of death instead. A character on the verge of death is in a coma, their soul caught between the land of the living and the dead. They are unconscious and cannot be revived by magical healing. Even if their injuries are healed, they remain unconscious for at least 24 hours. At this point, the player can decide if he wants the character to recover, or slip away into death.

If the character recovers, he suffers a penalty that cannot be magically removed. The character reduces two Ability scores by 1, permanently. Roll to randomly determine which scores are affected.

