

CHAOS LIMB



Chaos Limb is based on the Dungeons and Dragons Basic Set as written by Dr. J. Eric Holmes and originally published in 1977. At the time of its release the Basic Set was a compilation of the original three rulebooks and the first two supplements Blackmoor and Greyhawk. Throughout Dr. Holmes tried to preserve the language and therefore the magic of the original creation while at the same time making it easier for people to learn how to play. Where possible, I have tried to do the same.

Condensed Preface and Intro from the Holmes Basic Set by EGG:

This work is based upon DUNGEONS & DRAGONS published in 1974, three supplementary booklets published in the two year period after the initial release of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS and the compilation produced by Eric Holmes and published in 1978.

Its sole aim is to introduce the reader to fantasy role playing and to simulate the experience of playing the version of the game as it existed at that time. To this end it limits itself to basics. The rules are kept to a minimum. This is absolutely necessary because the game is completely open-ended, is subject to modification, expansion, and interpretation according to the desires of the group participating, and is in general not bounded by the conventional limitations of other types of games.

With the rules you hold in your hand and the other basic components of the game, any intelligent and imaginative person can speedily understand and play DUNGEONS & DRAGONS as it was meant to be played. It is relatively simple to set up a fantasy campaign, and better still, it will cost almost nothing. You have everything needed with this edition of the game except pencil and paper. The most extensive requirement is time.

There should be no want of players, for there is unquestionably a fascination in this fantasy game. The longevity of existing campaigns and the demand for these rules from people outside these campaigns point towards a fantastic future.

These rules are strictly fantasy. Those who lack imagination, who don't care for Burroughs' Martian adventures where John Carter is groping through black pits, who feel no thrill upon reading Howard's Conan saga, who do not enjoy the de Camp & Pratt fantasies or Fritz Leiber's Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser pitting their swords against evil sorceries will not be likely to find DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS to their taste. But those whose imaginations know no bounds will find that these rules are the answer to their prayers.

With this last bit of advice we invite you to read on and enjoy a "world" where the fantastic is fact and magic really works!

E. Gary Gygax
TSR Hobbies, Inc.
1 November 1973
Lake Geneva, Wisconsin

Condensed Intro & DM advice by Dr. Holmes:

Dungeons & Dragons is a fantastic, exciting and imaginative game of role playing. Each player creates a character or characters who may be dwarves, elves, halflings or human fighting men, magic-users, pious clerics or wily thieves. The characters are then plunged into an adventure in a series of dungeons, tunnels, secret rooms and caverns run by another player: the referee, often called the Dungeon Master. The dungeons are filled with fearsome monsters, fabulous treasure and frightful perils. As the players engage in game after game their characters grow in power and ability: the magic users learn more magic spells, the thieves increase in cunning and ability, the fighting men, halflings, elves and dwarves, fight with more deadly accuracy and are harder to kill. Soon the adventurers are daring to go deeper and deeper into the dungeons on each game, battling more terrible monsters, and, of course, recovering bigger and more fabulous treasure! The game is limited only by the inventiveness and imagination of the players.

A final word to the Dungeon Master from the authors. These rules are intended as guidelines. No two Dungeon Masters run their dungeons quite the same way, as anyone who has learned the game with one group and then transferred to another can easily attest.

You are sure to encounter situations not covered by these rules. Improvise. Agree on a probability that an event will occur and convert it into a die roll – roll the number and see what happens! The game is intended to be fun and the rules modified if the players desire.

Do not hesitate to invent, create and experiment with new ideas. Imagination is the key to a good game. Enjoy!

– J Eric Holmes



Hacked by RLVieira (<https://www.patreon.com/redram>).

INTRO

I first started working on Chaos Limb because I wanted a ruleset to use for running old modules. There were plenty of retro clones out there, but I have a copy of Holmes basic and was familiar with those rules so I decided to start there. I already knew the rules were hard for new players to understand, but I figured the ruleset was small enough that it would be easy to edit, rewrite and clarify. I rearranged the rules to make things easier to find. I moved all the rules we typically ignored during play into an "Optional Rules" section. I further streamlined where I could and tried to eliminate most of the inconsistencies. Finally, I ended up adding a few of my own home rules or stealing rules I liked from other rulesets. Before I knew it, I had my own retro-clone.

Some of the changes made to the original Holmes Edition by me

Changes to make it 'more' OSR:

- One aspect of Oe is that demihumans have predefined classes with the elf being the prime example, combining both fighter and magic user. I have extended that concept to dwarves and halflings making halflings multi-class fighter and thief and dwarf multi-class fighter and cleric. The choice for halfling makes sense given his Hobbit origins and Bilbo Baggins the Burglar. For the dwarf, other than the fact there weren't many unique combinations left, having some spell use for the dwarf felt like it hearkened back to the dwarves of myths and fairytales that predated Tolkien.
- Zero to Hero: OSR characters start as weak unremarkable characters and only become heroes after many challenges and obstacles have been overcome. I modified the level progression tables to make that initial ramp up steeper and level out over higher levels rather than an arithmetic progression.
- Character agency more important than abilities: In OSR games what a player says their character does has greater impact on results than what is written on the character sheet. I've removed some of the greater bonuses for intelligence and constitution above 15 and made everything +1 for 13 or greater and -1 for below 9.
- In line with agency more important than abilities I've borrowed and modified the 'Die of Fate' from World of Dungeons. Anytime you want to introduce random chance roll a six sided die. Add one if the ability governing it is 13 or greater and -1 if it's less than 9. A higher roll is better.

Changes to streamline it (make it 'more' Basic):

Saving throws have been simplified to two basic types: lethal and non-lethal.

Changes to make it more fun:

- Rolling low for some things (breaking down doors) and high for others` is not only inconsistent (a "beautiful" inconsistency is one of Oe's charms after all) but it also seems anticlimactic. I try to reorient so more high rolls are good. With the exception of thief skills.
- I have doubled the number of spell levels by splitting each level of spells into two. This should encourage more varied use of spells as well as make it easier to track which level of spells you have access to (it's equal to your level).

Creating Characters

Abilities

Each character has six abilities:

- Strength: important for fighters
- Intelligence: important for magic users
- Wisdom: important for clerics
- Constitution: health and endurance. Important for dwarves and halflings
- Dexterity: speed and accuracy. Important for thieves and halflings.
- Charisma: persuasiveness, force of personality, attractiveness.

Important for leaders.

Generating scores for abilities

To determine your character's abilities roll 3 six-sided die (abbreviated as 3d6) summing the result for each ability giving you a score between 3 and 18 for each ability.

Ability Bonuses

Ability scores 13 or greater give characters a +1 bonus on some rolls.

Lower than 9 gives them a -1. For example:

- Strength: melee combat damage
- Intelligence: spell choice for magic users
- Wisdom: spell efficacy for clerics
- Dexterity: ranged weapon combat
- Constitution: hit point bonus
- Charisma: encounter reaction

Class & Race

There are 7 class/race combinations to choose from: Fighter, Magic-User, Cleric, Thief, Elf, Dwarf, Halfling. Characters can be any gender.

Fighters – Fighters are proficient at combat and actions requiring athleticism and raw brute force. Fighters can use any weapon and wear any kind of armor. As they advance in experience they become more deadly combatants and harder to kill.

Magic-users – Magic-users are students of the arcane, seekers of knowledge and delvers into ancient sorceries better left buried. Magic-users do not wear armor and carry only a dagger or staff for protection. They can, however, cast spells and use almost all magical items.

Clerics – Clerics devote themselves to one deity and it is from this deity that they derive their power. Clerics cast their own spells but different than those used by magic users. Clerics may wear armor and carry non-edged weapons. No swords or bows and arrows are allowed. Clerics can often dispel the undead or other supernatural beings. As they advance in experience they gain the use of additional spells.

Thieves – Thieves are specialists in robbing tombs and other stealthy operations. They can strike a deadly blow from behind, and have advantages in ferreting out and eliminating dangers, remaining undetected by enemies, getting into guarded locations and getting out of sticky situations. Thieves can wear nothing stronger than leather armor and cannot carry shields. They can use any weapon. As a consequence of their profession, as they rise in level they learn a smattering of various languages, how to read treasure maps and even the ability to decipher some magical writings.

Dwarves – are short and stocky with broad shoulders, their skin tone ranges from marble white to jet black with stone gray being most common. They are sturdy fighters and are resistant to sorcery. They can see up to 60 feet underground, and can detect slanting passages, traps, shifting walls and new construction about one-third of the time. Dwarves progress in level as both fighters and clerics and as clerics will follow either a War God or Chthonic Deity.

Elves – are graceful, slim of build, have skin and hair that ranges from birch white to golden autumn tones and more rarely shading to green. They have the advantages of both fighters and magic-users as well as certain special capabilities of their own. They can use all weapons and armor and can also cast spells like a magic-user. They can detect secret hidden doors about one-third of the time just by passing them, and two thirds of the time when actively seeking them. Elves can see in the dark. They are not paralyzed by the touch of ghouls.. Elves progress in level as both fighters and magic-users, but progress more slowly than other characters.

Halflings – are little folk with several special abilities. Out-of-doors they are difficult to see, having the ability to vanish into woods or undergrowth. They are resistant to magic. Halflings are extremely accurate with missiles and fire any missile at + 1. Halflings may advance as both fighters and thieves but can only use their thief abilities if wearing leather armor or lighter.

Adjusting abilities

You may raise your character's scores in one ability by lowering the scores of some of the other abilities. This recognizes the benefit of training in one area while neglecting others:

- Magic-users can reduce their Strength scores by 3 points or their Wisdom by 2 points to add 1 to their Intelligence per reduction.
- Fighters can reduce their Intelligence score by 2 points or Wisdom by 3 points to add 1 to their Strength for each reduction.
- Clerics can reduce their Intelligence score by 2 points or Dexterity by 3 points to add 1 to their Wisdom for every reduction.
- Thieves can raise their Dexterity score by lowering Wisdom 3 points or Strength by 2 points for each additional point of dexterity. Constitution and charisma cannot be altered, No ability can be lowered below 9.

Lucky Characters

Sometimes the universe of chance allows a character to appear who is below average in everything. Such a character should be considered extremely lucky (otherwise, how could they have made it this far?). There is enough chance in the dungeon encounters, that sometimes a character like this will survive and advance to a position of power and importance. At the DM's option such a character may be awarded a bonus of +1 to any die roll once per adventure. To qualify for this luck bonus, all six abilities should be lower than 12.

Other classes and races

At the Dungeon Master's discretion a character can be anything their player wants them to be. Characters must always start out inexperienced and relatively weak and build on their experience. Thus, an expedition might include, in addition to the four basic classes and races, a centaur, a werebear, or a Samurai.

Starting Gold and Gear

Coins owned by a character are determined by rolling 3d6 and multiplying by 10 generating 30-180 gold pieces. Characters can use this to buy equipment from the table to the right. Other items cost may be calculated by comparing to similar items listed.

Coin Exchange

- 1 gold piece equals 50 copper pieces, 10 silver pieces, or 2 electrum pieces.
- 1 platinum piece is worth 5 gold pieces.

Character Sheet

The character's name, class, ability scores and other information is recorded by the player on a sheet of paper or other record. The player is responsible for keeping a record of the character's bonuses and penalties, any damage they take, how much gold they own, what weapons and other items they carry, etc.

ArmorClass

No armor	9
Shield	8
Leather	7
Leather + Shield	6
Chain	5
Chain Mail + Shield	4
Plate	3
Plate + Shield	2

Weapon Damage

All weapons do 1d6 damage.

Weapons			
Dagger	3	Flail	8
Hand Axe	3	Spear	2
Mace	5	Pole Arm	7
Sword	10	Halberd	7
Two-Handed Sword	15	Short Bow	25
Lance	4	Long Bow	40
Pike	5	Composite Bow	50
Battle Axe	7	Light Crossbow	15
Morning Star	6	Heavy Crossbow	25
Missiles			
Quiver of 20 Arrows			10
Case with 30 Quarrels			10
20 Arrows/30 Quarrels			5
Silver Tipped Arrow			5
Armor			
Shield	10	Plate Mail	50
Leather Armor	15	Helmet	10
Chain-type Mail	30		
Transport			
Barding	150	Saddle	25
Mule	20	Saddle Bags	10
Draft Horse	30	Cart	100
Light Horse	40	Wagon	200
Warhorse, Medium	100	Raft	40
Warhorse, Heavy	200	Small Boat	100
Misc			
Silver Mirror small	15	Large Sack	2
Wooden Holy Symbol	2	Leather Back Pack	5
Silver Holy Symbol	25	Water/Wine Skin	1
Holy Water/Vial	25	6 Torches	1
Wolfsbane, bunch	10	Lantern	10
Garlic, bud	5	Flask of Oil	2
50' of Rope	1	Tinder Box	3
10' Pole	1	3 Stakes & Mallet	3
12 Iron Spikes	1	Steel Mirror	5
Small Sack	1	Wine, quart	1
Iron rations (for dungeon expeditions) 1 person/1 week			15
Standard rations for 1 person/1 week			5

Adventuring Mechanics

Melee Combat

Hit Points

Hit points represent how much damage a character can take before they are taken out of play.

Roll according to Race or Class:

- Fighters and Dwarves 1d8
- Clerics, Elves and Halflings 1d6
- Magic Users and Thieves 1d4

Hit points may be modified by high or low constitution score:

- 13-18 +1
- 7-12 0
- 6 or less -1 but result can never be less than 1 hit point

Each time a character advances a level they get to add an additional die (according to class and constitution modifier) to their current total.

Hit points may be lost during an adventure if the character takes damage. If hit points fall to 0 they are dead. If still alive, damage is healed over time, 1-3 points per day of rest.

Order of Attack

Order of attack is determined by dexterity. The DM will roll the dexterity of any monster or group of monsters once combat is engaged.

Attack and Defense

Combat results are based on the attacker's ability (indicated by their "level") and the defender's abilities (indicated by their "armor class"). In a melee, the attacker strikes a blow or "takes a swing." The attacking player rolls 1d20, and if equal to or greater than the TO HIT number is scored, a hit has been made on the opponent. The attacking player then makes another die roll, with one 6-sided die, to see how many points of damage were done by the hit.

These are subtracted from the defender's "hit points." If hit points are reduced to zero or below, the combatant is dead. If they survive, they get to swing at their attacker.

Number required TO HIT equals 20 minus the defenders Armor Class. Roll a twenty-sided die and add the attacker's TO HIT bonus (if any).

Missile combat

Missile combat is modified by distance, dexterity and cover.

Distance

For missile combat the attack is modified based on distance

Short range +1

Medium range 0

Long range -1

Dexterity modifier

13-18 +1

9-12 0

3-8 -1

Cover

If a defender has partial cover (behind a wall, underbrush, etc) the attacker takes -2 to their attack. If the defender is mostly covered (firing through arrow slits, concealed in the woods) apply a -4 penalty.

Other Combat Situations

Parry

A character who chooses to parry rather than attack subtracts 2 from the attacker's roll.

Running Away

For purposes of chase and escape, base movement for an armored or heavily loaded character is 240 (feet per 10 minutes) and an unarmored character 480. Running speeds are x3.

Surrender

A character may choose to surrender rather than fight to the death.

Saving Throws

There are some attacks which can be resisted through either luck or skill if a player rolls the number given in the chart below or higher. This die roll is called a "saving throw" because if you roll the correct number or higher, you are unaffected or "saved." Failure to make the roll results in the attack having full effect, i.e. you are turned to stone, take full damage from dragon's breath, etc. Scoring the total indicated, or higher, means the weapon either has no effect (spell, death ray, poison, paralyzation, stone, polymorph) or half damage (from dragon breath, fireball, lightning, wand of cold and staves).

There are two types of saves: non lethal magic (e.g. charms, illusions, hold spells, sleep spells) and affects which may result in death (spells or effects which cause damage or instant death, like poison).

Class	Magic	Death
Normal man, goblin, kobold, etc	17	13
Fighter, thief, hobgoblin, etc	16	12
Magic User	15	13
Cleric	15	11
Dwarves and Halflings	14	10

Other Mechanics [Optional]

Light and Vision

Most dungeons are dark. Elves and dwarves can see 60 feet in the dark, as can all monsters (and this term embraces all of the evil characters of the Dungeon Master), but humans and halflings will need artificial light or be reduced to half speed or less. Magic swords and some staves shed light, but the party may have to resort to torches or lanterns. A good torch will burn for an hour, while a flask of oil in a lantern will last 4 hours. Either allow the bearer to see 30 feet. Artificial light, of course, will attract monsters who live in the dark and will also warn them that the party is approaching. Note that elves and dwarves lose their ability to see 60 feet if there is light within 30 feet of them.

Traps, Doors and Secret Doors

Many dungeons contain traps, such as trap doors in the floor. If a character passes over one a six-sided die is rolled; a roll of 1 or 2 indicates that the trap was sprung and they have fallen in, taking one or more 6-sided, dice of damage.

Doors are usually closed and often stuck or locked. They have to have the locks picked or be smashed open. A roll of 5 or 6 indicates that a door has been forced open. Of course, if the party has to hit the door several times before getting their roll of 5 or 6, there is no possibility of surprising the occupants of the room. A successful Open Locks roll by a thief will pry a stuck door open silently without alerting the inhabitants.

When the characters come to a door they may listen to detect any sound within. A die roll of 6 for humans, 5 or 6 for elves, dwarves and halflings, indicates that they have heard something, if there is anything to hear. The "Undead" — skeletons, zombies, ghouls, wights, wraiths, mummies, spectres and vampires — make no noise unless they wish to. The party gets one try at listening to any door, wall, panel, etc.

If elves pass by a secret door or passage, roll a six-sided die and a 5 or 6 means they sense something there. If the party is searching for a secret door then an elf will locate it on a roll of 3 to 6, other characters on a roll of 5 or 6. Of course, the Dungeon Master will lessen these possibilities in lower levels of the dungeon.

Doors opened will usually shut automatically unless spiked or wedged open. Doors open automatically for monsters, however, unless held or spiked shut.

Encumbrance

A backpack or large sack can hold 300 gp which weighs about 30 pounds. A character can carry a backpack full of gold plus their equipment without being heavily loaded. At twice that weight a character would be considered heavily loaded. All coins weigh the same

Surprise

Surprise may occur whenever one party is unaware of the presence of the other. A roll of a 1 or 2 on a six-sided die means the party was surprised, 5 or 6 that the monsters were surprised, 3 or 4 that neither were surprised. If the party surprises a monster they get an opportunity to cast a spell, shoot arrows, shut the door, run, or draw weapons and attack before the monster can react. A character surprised by a monster means the monster gains first reaction (which means it will usually charge to attack the party).

Reaction

Some creatures will not always be hostile. Some may offer aid and assistance.

To determine reaction roll 2d6 :

HOSTILE/FRIENDLY REACTION TABLE

Roll	Reaction
2	Attacks immediately!
3-5	Hostile reaction
6-8	Uncertain, make another offer, roll again
9-11	Accepts offer, friendly
12	Enthusiastic, volunteers help

The Dungeon Master should make adjustments if the party spokesman has high charisma (+1 for 13 Cha or higher) or offers special inducements.

Fleeing

If the party decides to flee they may be able to delay pursuit by discarding some of their possessions. Unintelligent monsters will stop to pick up food half the time (roll 4-6 on a 6-sided die) and intelligent monsters will stop for treasure half the time (roll 4-6). Burning oil will deter monsters (referee's discretion).

Advancement Fighter

Level	Name	Experience	Hit Dice	To Hit Bonus	Save Bonus	Extra Combat Ability
1	Veteran	0	1d8	+1	+1	
2	Warrior	2000	2d8	+2		Ablative armor: nullify one attack per battle in exchange for 1 penalty on armor until repaired
3	Swordsman	4000	3d8	+3	+2	Crit: Max damage on Natural 20
4	Hero	8000	4d8	+4		Two handed Wield: +1 damage for weapon held in two hands
5	Swashbuckler	16000	5d8	+5	+3	Dual Wield: Advantage on damage when dual wielding
6	Myrmidon	32000	6d8	+6		Multiple attacks: 1 attack/level when fighting 0-level mooks
7	Champion	64000	7d8	+7	+4	Advantage on damage when roll 17+
8	Super Hero	120000	8d8	+8		TO HIT bonus may be divided between attack and defense
9	Lord	240000	9d8	+9	+5	

Thief

Level	Name	Experience	Hit Dice	To Hit Bonus	Save Bonus	Backstab To Hit Bonus	Backstab Damage Bonus
1	Apprentice	0	1d4	+1	+1	+2	
2	Footpad	1200	2d4	+2	+2	+4	x2
3	Robber	2400	3d4				
4	Burglar	4800	4d4	+3	+3	+5	x3
5	Cutpurse	9600	5d4				
6	Sharper	20000	6d4	+4	+4	+6	x4
7	Pilferer	40000	7d4				
8	Rogue	80000	8d4				
9	Master Thief	160000	9d4	+5	+5	+7	x5

Thief Abilities

Level	Open Lock	Remove Trap	Pick Pocket	Move Silently	Hide in Shadows	Hear Noise	Climb Walls	Back Stab Hit Bonus	Back Stab Damage	Read Lang	Read Magic
1	15%	10%	10%	20%	5%	1-2	65%	+2			
2	30%	25%	20%	35%	20%	1-2	75%	+4	x2	15%	
3	40%	35%	30%	50%	30%	1-3	80%	+4	x2	30%	3%
4	50%	45%	40%	60%	40%	1-3	85%	+5	x3	45%	6%
5	60%	55%	50%	70%	50%	1-3	85%	+5	x3	60%	9%
6	70%	65%	55%	75%	55%	1-4	90%	+6	x4	70%	12%
7	75%	70%	60%	80%	60%	1-4	90%	+6	x4	80%	14%
8	80%	75%	65%	85%	65%	1-4	90%	+6	x4	85%	16%
9	85%	80%	70%	90%	70%	1-5	95%	+7	x5	90%	17%

Elf

Advancement and Elf Spells per Level

Level	Name	Experience	Hit Dice	To Hit Bonus	Save Bonus	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
1	Tiri Tenechor	0	1d6	+1	+1	1								
2		4500	2d6	+2		1	1							
3	Nen Cune	9000	3d6	+3	+2	1	1	1						
4		18000	4d6	+4		1	1	1	1					
5	Ril Maica	36000	5d6	+5	+3	1	1	1	1	1				
6		72000	6d6	+6		1	1	1	1	1	1			
7	Nim Naith	144000	7d6	+7	+4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
8		270000	8d6	+8		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
9	El Ri	540000	9d6	+9	+5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Dwarf

Advancement and Dwarven Spells per Level

Level	Name	Experience	Hit Dice	To Hit Bonus	Save Bonus	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1	Thrall	0	1d8	+1	+1				
2	Churl	3500	2d8	+2	+2	1			
3	Bryti	7000	3d8	+3		2			
4	Priest	14000	4d8	+4	+3	2	1		
5	Thane	28000	5d8	+5		2	2		
6	Drot	57000	6d8	+6	+4	2	2	1	
7	Hersier	114000	7d8	+7		2	2	2	
8	Jarl	220000	8d8	+8		3	2	2	1
9	Ring-Giver	440000	9d8	+9	+5	3	2	2	2

Halfling

Advancement and Burglar Skills

Level	Name	Experience	Hit Dice	Backstab Hit Bonus	Backstab Damage	Save Bonus	Thief Skills
1	Apprentice	0	1d6	+2		+2	15%
2	Footpad	3200	2d6	+3	x2	+3	30%
3	Specialist	6400	3d6	+4			40%
4	Burglar	12800	4d6		x3	+4	50%
5	Cutpurse	25600	5d6	+5			60%
6	Sharper	52000	6d6	+6		+5	70%
7	Pilferer	104000	7d6		x4		75%
8	Rogue	200000	8d6	+7			80%
9	Adventurer	400000	9d6	+8	x5	+6	85%