

The AdonHELL Project
Game Rules v0.5

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THE ADONTHELL GAME RULES

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Created with L^AT_EX_ε

1 character stats

1.1 Background Stats

1.1.1 Name

This is your character's name (such as Bob the Fighter, or Gandalf the Grey).

1.1.2 Race

There are four available *races*: **dwarf**, **human**, **half-elf** and **elf**, each with their own physical and mental traits. Depending on your race, people may react differently, and some items are race specific. Furthermore, each race has a unique set of special abilities from which they may choose.

1.1.3 Gender

This line describes your character's *gender*. While this may be self-explanatory for you, the game engine uses this value to determine how other characters react to you. Your gender is also important to solve certain grammatical questions in the dialogues.

1.1.4 Alignment

The character's *alignment* shows where he stands in the struggle between good and evil. It is a **value ranging from -5 to +5**. An alignment value of -5 means the character is a completely evil, shunned by most people and eyed suspiciously by the guards, while a character with an alignment value of +5 is a beloved hero, who is well regarded by most people but may find it difficult to gain information from the shady sailors in the docks district... While all characters start with a more or less neutral alignment (a value close to 0), this changes throughout the game. Whenever an evil act, such as killing an innocent, is committed a character's alignment value is lowered, while helping others raises it.

In the game alignment is used in two ways. Certain items can only be used by characters with a specific alignment value. A holy sword will only accept a noble bearer, while a heroic knight will never use lethal poisons or unholy and demonic items. The character's alignment is even more important when he tries to influence and impress other people. The smaller the difference between the character's and an NPC's alignment, the more favourable the NPC will react.

1.1.5 Level

The character's *level* is an overall indicator of how powerful that certain character is.

1.1.6 Experience Points

A character's experience is measured in *experience points*. Her level is directly dependant on experience points. See section Character Advancement.

1.2 Attributes and Properties

The character's *attributes* define his natural talents and possibilities, the capabilities of his body and mind. The four attributes are *strength*, *hardness*, *agility* and *willpower*. Each of the four races is particularly gifted in one of these attributes. While men are considered relatively strong, no one is as hard as dwarves. Half elves tend to spend their time in nature, often climbing trees, which makes them agile, while elves train in the art of magic which needs a lot of dedication and concentration and gives them an enormous willpower.

The four attributes value are measured in ranks, the maximum number being 10. The typical number of attribute ranks for a novice character is a value between 1 and 4 per attribute. With each new level the character gains, she will receive one attribute rank point that she may freely distribute among the four attributes, respectively raising one attribute by one rank (see section character advancement).

Properties are an abstract measures of how well the character performs in certain disciplines. Every property is associated with one of the four attributes, but is also largely modified by items, spells, feats, etc.. The player has no direct influence on the values, but can indirectly change them via raising attributes or modifying equipment. A character may not use advancement points to raise a property.

1.2.1 Attributes

Strength This is the raw hitting power and brute force of your character.

Hardness The more hardness a character has, the tougher he will be and the more damages he will be able to take. A character with high hardness will be less afflictible by illness and poison.

Agility A very agile character is fast, quick to react and generally has very good control over his limbs.

Willpower Measures how much mental power and control over himself the character has.

1.2.2 Properties

Melee Attack determines how likely you are to hit someone in close combat, For example with a sword.

Parry Your chance to avoid being hit in close combat.

Melee damage Represents the amount of damage you deal in close combat. Melee damage is given in an interval of two numbers, the first being the minimal, the second the maximal damage you can inflict.

Ranged Attack Determines how likely you are to hit someone in ranged combat, for example with a bow.

Dodge Your chance to avoid being hit by ranged attacks.

Ranged Damage The amount of damage your ranged attacks deal. Ranged damage is given in an interval of two numbers, the first being the minimal, the second the maximal damage you can inflict.

Armour Your armour helps you withstand physical damage. The character's armour value is subtracted from the physical damage any attack causes (see section combat: damage).

Fire Resistance Helps you to survive a dragon's fire breath or take less harm from a burning arrow. The character's fire resistance is subtracted from the fire damage any attack causes (see section combat: damage).

Poison Resistance Useful to withstand a snake bite and the likes. The character's poison resistance is subtracted from the poison damage any attack causes (see section combat: damage).

Mental resistance The mental barrier you can build up against attacks aimed at your mind grows with your mental resistance. The character's mental resistance is subtracted from the magical damage any attack causes (see section combat: damage).

Health Displays the characters ability to take damage as a number. The health value shows the maximum number of health points a character may have. With every damage she takes, health points will be subtracted. Health points may be restored (healed) back up to the characters health value.

Power Represents the character's ability to draw on her special powers. Depending on the race these can be totally different concepts. For elves it is the amount of pure magical energy they draw upon to cast their spells. A Half-elf's power value shows how much she is attuned to nature, and how likely nature's spirits will listen to her songs. A human's power reflects her inventiveness and technical understanding, while a dwarf's power lets her draw upon the earth's ores strength to craft great works of smithery. Special abilities (spells, songs, alchemy and runes) draw upon power. A player's power value is the maximum number of power points she may have. When using her special powers, power points will be spent. They may then later be restored (Regenerated) up to the power value.

Carrying Capacity Gives the amount a character can carry in kilograms.

The following table shows the dependancies of properties regarding the attributes. It also gives the multiplier to determine the unmodified property value from the attribute value.

table: property dependancies and calculation

attribute	multiplier	property
strength	10	melee attack
	1	melee damage
	10	carrying capacity
hardness	10	health
	1	armour
	1	poison resistance
agility	1	fire resistance
	10	ranged attack
	10	dodge
willpower	10	parry
	10	power
	1	mental resistance

1.3 Abilities

Abilities describe what weapons, armour and special talents a character may use. Every ability has a certain number of possible ranks. The maximum number of ability ranks can vary from race to race, and every race has its own set of special abilities from which only they may choose, representing the unique powers of their people.

table: possible ability ranks per race

ability	dwarves	humans	half-elves	elves
fighting feats	0-5	0-5	0-5	0-5
melee	1-3	1-3	1-3	1-3
ranged	0-2	0-3	0-3	0-3
armour	0-3	0-3	0-2	0-2
shield	0-3	0-3	0-2	0-2
weapon improvements	0-3	-	-	-
armour improvements	0-3	-	-	-
alchemy	-	0-4	-	-
mechanics	-	0-4	-	-
songs of the birds	-	-	0-3	-
songs of the beasts	-	-	0-3	-
songs of the trees	-	-	0-3	-
earth magic	-	-	-	0-3
fire magic	-	-	-	0-3
water magic	-	-	-	0-3
air magic	-	-	-	0-3

1.3.1 General Abilities

Fighting Feats Determines which special combat moves the character can use.

Melee Determines what kind of melee weapons the character can use. Depending on his rank in this ability, she may use minor melee weapons (1 rank), minor and major melee weapons (2 ranks), minor, major and greater melee weapons (3 ranks). This is the only ability every character starts with one rank.

Ranged Determines what kind of ranged weapons the character can use. Depending on his rank in this ability, she may use no ranged weapons (0 ranks), minor ranged weapons (1 rank), minor and major ranged weapons (2 ranks), minor, major and greater ranged weapons (3 ranks).

Armour Determines what kind of armour a character can use. Depending on his rank in this ability, she may use no armour (0 ranks), light armour (1 rank), light and medium armour (2 ranks), light, medium and heavy armour (3 ranks).

Shield Determines what kind of shields a character can use. Depending on his rank in this ability, she may use no shield (0 ranks), small shields (1 rank), small and medium shields (2 ranks), small, medium and large shields (3 ranks).

1.3.2 Special Abilities

Dwarves Dwarves are renowned for their smithing talents. They use ancient lore handed down from generation to generation to create arms unparalleled by any other race. Dwarves have the special abilities of *weapon improvement* and *armour improvement*. They can permanently improve sharpness and durability of their equipment, and use powerful runes to give their weapons unique force or to further enhance their superb armour. Depending on his rank in these abilities a dwarf will have access to better runes and enhancements.

Humans Human's recklessness and flexibility allows them access to inventions that other races would not even consider. Human's abilities *alchemy* and *mechanics* are a crude (nevertheless effective) copy of elven magic and dwarven craftsmanship. Depending on their rank in alchemy humans can create and use potions and chemicals to various (often unpredictable) effects, while their infamous mechanical devices range from simple slings (1 rank) to powerful powderweapons (3 and 4 ranks).

Half-elves Rural half-elves closeness to nature often shows in their profound understanding of the workings of the natural world. Some can even communicate with the spirits of living things by the means of songs. By channeling nature's power in themselves they are even able to take on virtues of birds, beasts and trees. The *songs of the birds* improve the characters sight and movement, while *songs of the beasts* improve the characters fighting powers and strength. Lastly the *songs of the trees* convey regenerative healing powers. The higher a rank in one of these three abilities, the better a character's understanding of these spirits. With every new rank the half-elf character has a new range of more powerful songs to learn and use.

Elves Elves are the only race who can tap the magical power of the four elements. This enables them to cast spells of great power. They have the choice between the four schools of magic: *Earth magic* is devoted to creation and protection, *fire magic* is the lore of short-lived energy and destruction and alteration. *Water magic* spells practice enchantment and healing while the art of *air magic* is used for control and summoning. Every spell requires a certain rank in one (or more) of these lores of elements. The more powerful a spell, the more ranks an elf character needs to cast it.

1.3.3 Ability Implementation

The system underlying all of these abilities is the following: Unlike in many other RPGs, a character does not automatically get better when raising an

ability. Instead, a new rank opens a new range of items/feats/spells etc. she can use. Every item/feat/spell requires a certain rank in the appropriate ability. For example, a 'Heavy Axe' might require 2 ranks in *melee*, since it is rated as a major weapon. A character with 1 rank in *melee* would therefore not be able to use this weapon. This system is applied to every ability, including special abilities and feats. Therefore, a half-elf might need at least 1 rank in *songs of the birds* to use 'Song Of The Nightingale', or at least 2 ranks in *songs of the beasts* and at least 2 ranks in *songs of the trees* to use the more powerful 'Song Of The Dryad'. A human character might need at least 2 ranks in *alchemy* and 3 ranks in *mechanics* to use 'Smokepowder Gun' and so on.

While the fighting feats can be used without limitation (but only one at a time), the use of special skills requires either reagents (such as herbs for a healing potion), the permanent sacrifice of power (e.g. for the creation of runes) or the temporary loss of power points (e.g. when a spell is cast, or a song is sung).

The abstract principle is that ability points are 'free spaces' that only enable a character to use certain items. Item in this case can mean anything from an actual real item like a weapon or suit of armour to a song, potion, scroll, rune or combat move (feat). Every one of these items must be gained in the game, and is never automatically there. The way a character gains items can differ significantly from buying actual items to getting taught by a teacher. Wherever it seems fitting items can be acquired in one of these ways. Obviously some types will mostly be acquired in one way (Weapons cannot be taught) and others in another (Combat moves cannot be bought). Some types of items can be acquired in several ways (You might learn a spell from a loremaster or find a scroll or even buy one). The system underlying this will always be the same.

One more important note is that per rank abilities can have several items tied to them (for example: a selection of minor/major/greater weapons for every rank in *melee*). Also, an item can have requirements spread over several abilities. Example: The 'Phoenix Shield' requires the character to have 2 ranks in *shield* aswell as 2 ranks in *fire magic*, thus only allowing an elf with certain combat/magic abilities to use it.

1.4 Skills

Skills are used for roleplaying purposes, and since Adonthell is a roleplaying game skills are an important part of the system. They describe the character's strengths and weaknesses away from the battlefield. Just like the (primary) attributes and abilities a character's proficiency in a skill is measured in ranks. In contrast to the abilities though a character can directly benefit from a rank improvement in a skill (he does not need to find any items/feats/spells ect.). A character can have 0 to 5 ranks in any given

skill. Every rank stands for one of the following proficiencies: 0=Unskilled; 1=Novice; 2=Trained; 3=Professional; 4=Master; 5=Extraordinary.

1.4.1 Skill Descriptions

Body Control How well the character can control his body. A high body control rank can reduce the damage a character takes when falling, representing him rolling off.

Charm Use your charm to influence and impress others. The more ranks a character has in this skill, the more favourable NPCs will react.

Climb This represents how well a character can climb.

Diplomacy A character with enough ranks in diplomacy can convince others of his opinion during a discussion. More ranks in diplomacy can open more dialogue choices.

Disarm traps Some treasure chests or areas are trapped, use this skill to render these traps useless.

Drinking The more ranks a character has in drinking the better she can consume alcohol. Use this skill to win drinking contests, a very popular sport amongst young dwarves.

Entertain Earn money with juggling, instruments or by telling tales. It is also possible to contest against other entertainers.

Haggle This skill allows a character to pay less in shops. The more ranks a character has in haggle, the lower the prices she has to pay.

Herb Lore Allows the character to find and use healing herbs or poisonous berries.

Identify Items The more ranks a character has in identify items the more likely it is that she can determine the properties of magic items.

Luck This skill represents how lucky a character is and whether she gets out of tricky situations unharmed or not.

Open Locks Use this skill to open locked doors and treasure chests.

Pick Pockets This skill represents how well a character can steal from others without them noticing. It is also used to determine how dexterous a character is with his hands.

Spot A character who has ranks in spot may notice traps or enemies hidden in ambush.

1.4.2 Skill Implementation

Whenever it is necessary to see whether a character succeeds in using one of his skills, a skill check is made. There are two types of skill checks and depending on the situation a *fixed skill check* or a *variable skill check* is used.

A fixed skill check is made whenever the outcome of a skill check is plot dependant, or an important one time decision is made. An example: The character wants to enter the guild of arts. In this situation a certain rank in entertain is required, so a character with 3 or more ranks is admitted, while one with fewer ranks always fails the skill check. A character may also need a certain rank in a skill to use an item. This is also a fixed skill check.

A variable skill check is made whenever a character tries to accomplish a task, such as earning a free meal by dancing in the inn. Again, this requires a skill check, but the result can differ from time to time. The character might excel in his task or just have a bad day and utterly fail. To represent this a random value is generated as follows: Per skill level a character adds up a random value from 1 to 6. So with rank x in a certain skill x random values from 1 to 6 are individually generated and then added up. The result is then compared with a score which is specified before the test is taken. This score can vary from situation to situation and it represents the difficulty of the test. If the generated random value beats the score (is greater or equal to), the test was succesful. If it is lower than the score the test has failed. In the above example this means that a character with 3 ranks in entertain has a value of $3(1to6)$, and she has to beat a score of 10 to impress his audience and get his free meal (or 15, or 20, depending on the audience). If the character fails a *variable skill check* she has to wait a certain time until she may try again. The amount of time a character needs to wait depends on the skill and/or the situation.

2 Character Advancement

A character begins the game unexperienced with no experience points at level 0. As the character progresses through the game, e.g. kills monsters, solves riddles, and uses his skills she gains experience points. When enough points are accumulated, a new level is gained. To calculate a character's level the following formula is used:

$$\text{experience points needed to reach level } n = 100 \sum_{i=0}^n n - i$$

table: experience per level

experience points	level
0	0
100	1
300	2
600	3
1000	4
1500	5
2100	6
2800	7
3600	8
4500	9
5500	10

With every new level the character has the possibility to raise her stats. Whenever a new level is gained she receives 5 *advancement points*. These can be used to raise attributes, abilities and skills. The cost to raise each one of these by one rank is given in the following table:

table: stat raising costs

stat	cost for 1 rank
attribute	3 advancement points
ability	3 advancement points
skill	1 advancement point

There is always an upper limit on how high a stat can be raised. Properties may not be raised. Advancement points do not have to be used up, and the *advancement pool* will accumulate points over the levels and may be drawn upon freely anytime.

3 Character Creation

If the player decides not to choose one of the preselected characters, she has the option to generate her own. The procedure for character generation is as follows:

- Name, race and gender are chosen.
- Alignment is set to the following:

race	alignment
dwarves	0
humans	-1
half-elves	0
elves	1

- All attributes are set to the following values:

Attribute	dwarves	humans	half-elves	elves
strength	2	3	1	1
hardness	3	2	2	2
agility	1	2	3	2
willpower	2	1	2	3

- All abilities have rank 0, with the exception of melee, which has rank 1.
- All skills have rank 0, except the following, which have rank 1:

race	skills
dwarves	drinking haggle
humans	-
half-elves	climb spot
elves	charm identify items

- The character now receives a special pool of 12 advancement points, and may freely raise attributes, abilities and skills. See section Character Advancement on how to raise stats.
- The character starts the game with level 0.

4 Combat

While combat is not everything in an RPG it does play an important role. Therefore the combat system is an important part of the RPGs rules. In Adonthell combat takes place on the map and is handled in real time.

Whenever one character wants to harm an enemy she attacks. In order to harm someone two things must be done. First the defender must be hit (some spells and traps hit automatically). When the hit is successful, damage is calculated.

4.1 To Hit

4.1.1 Melee

To hit someone in close combat you add 50 to the attackers melee attack value and subtract the defenders parry value. The engine then generates a random number between 0 and 100. If the random number is equal to or lower than the calculated value a hit is landed.

4.1.2 Ranged

To hit someone in ranged combat you add 50 to the attackers ranged attack value and subtract the defenders dodge value. The engine then generates a random number between 0 and 100. If the random number is equal to or lower than the calculated value a hit is landed.

4.2 Damage and Wounds

4.2.1 Damage Type

Once a character is hit, the next step is to determine how much damage she takes. There are four types of damage: *physical*, *fire*, *poison* and *magical*, corresponding to the four resistances: armour, fire resistance, poison resistance and mental resistance. A source of damage (e.g. a spell or weapon) has always at least one of the four damage types assigned, but can have more than one. Normal weapons will always have damage type physical, whereas poisoned weapons will have damage type physical and poison, and so on. Damage is resolved separately for each of these damage types.

table: Damage type and corresponding resistance

damage type	resistance
physical damage	armour
fire	fire
poison	poison
magical	mental

4.2.2 Damage Range

A damage source will also have a *damage range* for each damage type it deals. This is an interval of two numbers, the first being the lower boundary, the second the upper. It determines how much damage can be minimally and maximally dealt. The notation for a damage source is as follows:

damage source name (damage type (damage range), ...)

Examples: longsword(physical 2-10), poisoned dagger(physical 1-4, poison 2-6), fireball(fire 5-20).

In close combat the damage range is given by the attackers property *melee damage*, which is exactly such an interval. The ranged combat equivalent is the property *ranged damage* (see section character stats: attributes and properties).

4.2.3 Damage Calculation

Damage is calculated in the following way: First a random number within the damage source's damage range is generated. This is the attackers *damage*

dealt. From this number the defendants appropriate resistance is subtracted (see above table). The result is the netto *damage taken*.

4.2.4 Wounds

For every point of damage taken the character receives a *wound*. In the default scenario, the character loses as many health points as she has received wounds. This counts for physical wounds, poison wounds, fire wounds and magical wounds. However, this will not always be the case.

Every source of damage will have an attribute *wound resolution*. If this is set to *normal*, wounds are subtracted from the characters health as described above: number of health points lost = number of wounds.

However, if wound resolution is not set to normal, the default procedure is not applied and instead the procedure described in the wound resolution attribute is used. This will often occur with damage type magical. With spells, magic items, etc. that are not meant to inflict actual damage on the character the procedure of damage calculation determines whether a spell has affected a character. The wound resolution of such damage sources will read something similar to “for every x (damage type) wounds taken the character will be affected in the following way: ...”. This is not restricted to magical damage, though, and every damage type may have a way of resolving wounds different to the default.

Example: Your character (parry 25, armour 3, poison resistance 6) is attacked by a poisonous snake (attack 15). First the snake has to hit the character. The random number generated by the engine would have to be 40 or lower (15 attack + 50 - 25 parry) in order for the snake to hit. Supposed the snake’s attack succeeds, the snake now deals damage. The snake’s bite is fairly harmless, but the poison is very strong (physical 1-6, poison 2-12). Assuming the random numbers determined are 4 and 9, the character takes 1 physical wound (4 physical damage - 3 armour) as well as 3 poison wounds (9 poison damage - 6 poison resistance). The snake’s weapon resolution reads “for every poison wound the character will be unconscious for one round”: Your character loses one health point and is unconscious for 3 rounds.