

# Raven's Brew

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nix

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## **1 Introduction**

In this book, you will find a collection of homebrew for the fifth edition of Dungeons and Dragons (2024 rules). The core of these homebrew rules is twofold: both martial and spellcasters receive fundamental changes to their playstyles.

Martials receive a rework of how defense works in combat, and from this rework many other changes have arisen. The goal of these changes is a more interactive combat that deepens both strategic considerations and character fantasy.

Additionally, these rules will feature changes to spellcasting that are intended to firstly make the rules simpler and more flexible to allow for more player choice, and secondly to make the use of spells more risky. Those changes will be introduced in vo.9.

This twofold rework of magic and defense can bring a breath of fresh air to those for whom DnD combat has grown stale and that long for a novel experience within an otherwise well known system.

### **1.1 Notable Influences**

These reworks have been partially inspired by Warhammer: Vermintide 2, Divinity: Original Sin 2 and Das schwarze Auge (The Dark Eye).

They have been playtested and reviewed by some of my friends, and some features have been their suggestion. Special thanks to Magnus, Johannes, Chad, Paul, David, Noah, Lee and Lia.

## **2 Values**

This ruleset tries to follow a distinct set of values in the choice of which rules to change, how to design these changes, and when and how to introduce new rules.

## 2.1 Interactivity

This is the core value this ruleset is interested in. Rules and features should come with options for other players to interact with them. This can come in the shape of both synergy and counterplay, and primarily pursues the goal of improved agency and engagement.

- *Synergy*: When a player tries to achieve something, there should be options for other players to assist with that or enhance the effect. Additionally, there should be ways for players to protect one another in combat, as well as actions that are deliberately cooperative.
- *Counterplay*: For incoming effects, it should be possible to avoid or mitigate them within reason, and it should be possible to undo their effects with adequate effort. Especially powerful effects may be an exception to this rule when it comes to being avoided or mitigated, but those should remain special.

## 2.2 Flavour

Another main drive expressed through these rules is one for flavour, the irresistible urge to bring something into existence that feels great. Ways to perform cool moves and through doing so bringing a character to life that feels real, coherent, and evokes awe.

This interweaving of character fantasy and in-game behaviour will be a recurring theme throughout these rules. An assassin ought to assassinate, and thus the rules have to be there to not just enable, but support and incentivize the assassin specifically to assassinate.

This also requires some rules or features to be more enticing to some characters rather than others, because when something is used equally well by all, it does not highlight particular character strengths.

### **2.3 Strategy**

I like positional combat on battlemaps, and these rules bring new incentive to strategic positioning through the introduction of Focus, Vision and a new interactive action economy that offers a real trade-off between aggression and defence through the new defensive reactions, as well as between doing something now and doing something better later through surge dice.

### **2.4 Balance**

The only state of balance these rules want to avoid at all costs is the existence of playstyles that render too many challenges trivial. There should always remain some risk, and there should always be differences between what the players in the party are good at, and every player should be better in some regard than other players.

## Part I

# Reworks

This is the core of this ruleset that gives rise to all other changes and additions.

In the spirit of interactivity, Armour Class is replaced by a new system that relies on reactive defensive, as described in the chapter on **AC-less defence**. This reactive defense is further supported by changes to the action economy that revolve around **Reactions**. **Shields** are also reworked to allow for more differentiated benefits, thus allowing for more flavourful and diverse characters. **Vision & Focus** are described in detail to encourage more strategic positioning and give attackers a way to bypass their targets reactive defense. **Combat Training** is introduced to unify a multitude of features and benefits for martial, such as Fighting Styles and Weapon Mastery. Lastly, **Aspects of Stealth** are described to rework stealth in terms of various senses that can work against it and thus manipulated in favour of it.

### 3 AC-less defence

**AC-less:** Creatures do not have an Armor Class anymore. A combination of Hit DC and Damage Reduction takes its place.

#### 3.1 Hit DC

**Missing attacks:** An attack automatically misses its target if the attack roll isn't at least as high as the Hit DC.

**Base Hit DC:** The base Hit DC of a target depends on its size, as shown in the table below. To determine the size of something that has no given size, you can use the Hit Area and height or length measures as guidelines.

Size	Hit DC	Hit Area	Height or Length
Minuscule	20	<25cm <sup>2</sup>	<8cm
Fine	18	<100cm <sup>2</sup>	<15cm
Diminutive	16	<400cm <sup>2</sup>	<30cm
Tiny	14	<0.15m <sup>2</sup>	<60cm
Small	12	<0.6m <sup>2</sup>	<120cm
Medium	10	<2.5m <sup>2</sup>	<240cm
Large	8	<10m <sup>2</sup>	<5m
Huge	6	<40m <sup>2</sup>	<10m
Gargantuan	4	>40m <sup>2</sup>	>10m

The Hit Area refers to the area of a target that is facing the attacker. For example, a piece of paper is easier to hit from the front than from the side, because the papers thinness leads to a smaller Hit Area when looking at it sideways.

For the purposes of very small targets, a new set of sizes has been introduced. These will, for example, be used for [Aimed Strikes](#).

***Even smaller sizes:*** If a target is significantly smaller than the sizes listed above, you can either find an extended table in the [tables chapter](#), or extrapolate the Hit DC from the measures in the table. Start with the measures and Hit DC for minuscule targets. Then add 2 to the Hit DC, quarter the Hit Area and halve the height or length. Repeat this until the measures fit the target you have in mind to get the appropriate Hit DC.

***Cover:*** Instead of increasing the Armor Class of the creature that is behind cover, the Hit DC for attacks that target that creature increases by 2 for half cover and by 5 for three-quarters cover.

***Cover sizes:*** Similar to how the size of a target influences its Hit DC, the size of cover influences whether it counts as half cover, three-quarters cover or total cover for the sake of attacks that could be interrupted by the cover.

Assuming that the cover matches the width-height proportions of the target it covers and has no openings, it gives total cover from attacks if it is one

size category larger than the target, three-quarters cover if it is of the same size category, and half cover if it is one or two size categories smaller.

Creatures and objects with significant openings or sufficiently slim proportions usually only give half-cover, regardless of their size. For example, a huge tree might still have a stem that is too thin to cover a medium humanoid properly, thus only giving half cover.

### 3.2 Damage Reduction

**Damage Reduction:** Creatures now have a Damage Reduction value. This value is subtracted from any damage the wearer takes through an attack that is not a critical hit.

This subtraction happens before resistances and vulnerabilities modify the damage.

Every bonus to Armor Class that is not the Dexterity bonus can be converted 1:1 into a bonus for Damage Reduction, unless otherwise noted. An armour that sets the Armor Class of the wearer to 13 + Dexterity modifier will, for example, be converted to 3 Damage Reduction, because it is an Armor Class bonus of +3 compared to the base Armor Class of 10, while the Dexterity modifier is discarded. The conversion for armours can also be seen in the [tables chapter](#).

Damage Reduction from multiple sources stacks. However, the prerequisites for each source must still be met. For example, the Damage Reduction now gained from the Barbarians Unarmoured Defence and a heavy armour will not stack, because the heavy armour still disables the Barbarians Unarmoured Defence.

### 3.3 Other changes

**Reactive Defence:** There are now options to reactively defend against incoming attacks and other effects. These include [Dodging](#), [Blocking](#), [Parrying](#) and some parts of [Spell Manipulation](#). The base mechanics of these

are explained in the [Reactions](#) section.

**Misses?** Any rule or feature that requires a missed attack to work also works if the attack does not deal damage because of Damage Reduction, Blocking, or Parrying. Those attacks count as both a hit and a miss in that regard. Note that Dodging explicitly causes dodged attacks to miss.

## 4 Reactions

**Free Reactions:** In addition to a Reaction, every creature also has a Free Reaction they can use.

The free object interaction each character has once per turn may be used as a Free Reaction instead, if there is a trigger that plausibly allows for such a reaction, at the DMs mercy. For example, you can use your Free Reaction to shut a door as soon as someone has walked through it on their turn.

When you have the Incapacitated condition, you can no longer use your Free Reaction.

**Reserving Actions:** At the end of your turn, you gain 1 additional Reaction per remaining Action. If you were unable to use these Actions because you were Incapacitated, this conversion does not happen.

**Defence Action:** You can use your Action to take the Defence Action. Doing so gives you a number of Reactions equal to your proficiency bonus. Until the start of your next turn, you can only take defensive Reactions. These include [Dodging](#), [Blocking](#), and [Parrying](#).

**Ready Action:** When using the Ready Action, you also gain 1 additional Reaction.

**Reserving Bonus Actions:** At the end of your turn, you gain 1 additional Reaction per remaining Bonus Action. If you were unable to use these Bonus Actions because you were Incapacitated, this conversion does not happen.

**Reserving Reactions:** At the start your turn, you gain 1 **Surge Die** per remaining Reaction. If you were unable to use these Reactions because you were Incapacitated, this conversion does not happen.

**Reaction Timing:** Unless otherwise noted, a Reaction can only be taken after a suitable trigger was announced, and only before its effects are applied.

**Reactive Defence:** There are now options to reactively defend against incoming attacks and other effects. These include **Dodging**, **Blocking**, **Parrying** and some parts of **Spell Manipulation**, as detailed within their respective sections.

## 5 Combat Training

Combat Training is a new system that encompasses weapon proficiency, weapon mastery, Fighting Styles, Armour Training, and some Feats that interface with weapons and armour. Proficiency and expertise with **Parrying** and **Blocking** are also part of this system, as are other features relating to **AC-less defence** generally.

This rework is motivated by three reasons. Firstly, with the Hit DC being largely unchanging with level and being quite low especially with larger creatures, there's not as large of a benefit in adding the proficiency bonus to ones attack rolls. This opens up the possibility of allowing players to decide against adding this proficiency bonus in favor of other benefits for offence or defence. One of these benefits aptly allows players to bypass parts of an enemies Damage Reduction, scaling with the proficiency bonus, so that there are now options to ease hitting enemies and to ease damaging them through armour, mirroring the separation of Armor Class into Hit DC and Damage Reduction.

Secondly, the new defensive reactions introduced in this ruleset should be something a character can specialize in. In previous versions of this ruleset, this was enabled through changes to general feats and through connections

with expertise class features. Both of those are limited in their accessibility, and especially fighters should be able to access special defensive features more than other classes, while not themselves having access to expertise. Thus, by introducing these features here, martial classes actually have prioritized access to the new martial features.

Thirdly, the 2024 rules saw the introduction of weapon mastery properties. These were introduced as weapon-specific features that can be chosen by martials to increase their battlefield prowess, which can be assumed to be intended to lessen the infamous martial caster divide. Structurally, these mastery properties do not separate themselves from benefits that are obtainable through feats, while introducing a whole new feature list a martial can choose from. Next to Fighting Style feats and general feats, this is now the third feature list for martials. Through the rearrangement of those lists into one singular list, the flexibility and potential power of martials is further accentuated. Additionally, adding new features to this list is a new straightforward way to give feature options to martials specifically without having to restrict the features to Fighting Style feats, general feats or weapon mastery properties that martial classes tend to have quite limited access to.

## 5.1 Core Changes

***No Starting Proficiency:*** You no longer start with proficiency with weapon attacks with the weapons listed in your class descriptions. Instead, you are trained with the weapons that you would otherwise have proficiency with, as described in the section on weapon training below. When you receive Combat Training, you can choose the Accuracy feature described in the section on weapon features to add your proficiency bonus to certain attack rolls again.

***Combat Training:*** When you receive Combat Training, choose one of the features listed in the following sections that you qualify for.

***Fighting Styles:*** Fighting Style feats are now Combat Training features.

Whenever you would gain a Fighting Style feat, you receive Combat Training instead.

***Weapon Masteries:*** Weapon Masteries are now Combat Training features. Whenever you would gain access to a mastery property, you receive Combat Training instead.

***Feats:*** The benefits of a selection of general feats are now Combat Training features. There's now a new general feat that allows the player to receive Combat Training twice.

## 5.2 Weapon Training

Instead of working primarily through proficiency, weapons now also utilize Training, similar to how it is established for Armour. When using a weapon that you lack training with, you have Disadvantage on any D20 Test that relies on that weapon. The following features can give you training with weapons:

***Simple Melee Weapon Training:*** You gain training with Simple Melee weapons.

***Simple Ranged Weapon Training:*** You gain training with Simple Ranged weapons.

***Martial Melee Weapon Training:*** Requires training with Simple Melee weapons. You gain training with Martial Melee weapons.

***Martial Ranged Weapon Training:*** Requires training with Simple Ranged weapons. You gain training with Martial Ranged weapons.

## 5.3 Weapon Features

***Accuracy:*** Choose a weapon property. You gain a bonus equal to your Proficiency Bonus to attack rolls with weapons with that property. You can pick this feature multiple times, but only for different weapon properties.

**Archery:** You gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls with Ranged weapons.

**Bypass Cover:** Your ranged weapon attacks ignore half cover and three-quarters cover.

**Cleave:** Once per turn, when you hit a creature with a melee attack using a weapon that has the Heavy property and deals Slashing damage, you can make a melee attack roll with the weapon against a second creature within 5 feet of the first that is also within your reach. On a hit, the second creature takes the weapons damage, but you don't add your ability modifier to that damage unless that modifier is negative.

**Dueling:** When you are holding a Melee weapon in one hand and no other weapons, you gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls with that weapon.

**Enhanced Critical - Bludgeoning:** When you score a Critical Hit that deals Bludgeoning damage to a creature, attack rolls against that creature have Advantage until the start of your next turn.

**Enhanced Critical - Slashing:** When you score a Critical Hit that deals Slashing damage to a creature, it has Disadvantage on attack rolls until the start of your next turn.

**Enhanced Critical - Piercing:** When you score a Critical Hit that deals Piercing damage to a creature, you can roll one additional damage die when determining the extra Piercing damage the target takes.

**Enhanced Dual Wielding:** When you take the Attack action on your turn and attack with a weapon that has the Light property, you can make one extra attack as a Bonus Action later on the same turn with a different weapon, which must be a Melee weapon that lacks the Two-Handed property. You don't add your ability modifier to the extra attack's damage unless that modifier is negative.

**Firing in Melee:** Being within 5 feet of an enemy doesn't impose Disadvantage on your attack rolls with Ranged weapons.

**Graze:** When you miss a creature with a melee attack using a weapon that

has the Two-Handed property and deals Slashing damage, you can deal Slashing damage to that creature equal to the ability modifier you used to make the attack roll.

***Great Weapon Fighting:*** When you roll damage for an attack you make with a Melee weapon that you are holding with two hands, you can treat any 1 or 2 on a damage die as a 3. The weapon must have the Two-Handed or Versatile property to gain this benefit.

***Guardian:*** Immediately after a creature within 5 feet of you takes the Disengage action or hits a target other than you with an attack, you can make an Opportunity Attack against that creature.

***Halt:*** When you hit a creature with an Opportunity Attack, the creature's Speed becomes 0 for the rest of the current turn.

***Hamstring:*** Once per turn when you hit a creature with an attack using a Melee weapon that deals Slashing damage or using a Ranged weapon, you can reduce the Speed of that creature by 10 feet until the start of your next turn.

***Heavy Weapon Master:*** When you hit a creature with a weapon that has the Heavy property as part of the Attack action on your turn, you deal extra damage equal to your Proficiency Bonus.

***Hew:*** Immediately after you score a Critical Hit with a Melee weapon with the Heavy property or reduce a creature to 0 Hit Points with one, you can make one attack with the same weapon as a Bonus Action.

***Ignore Loading:*** You ignore the Loading property and can load a piece of ammunition into weapons with that property even without a free hand.

***Long Shots:*** Attacking at long range doesn't impose Disadvantage on your attack rolls with Ranged weapons.

***Nick:*** When you make the extra attack of the Light property, you can make it as part of the Attack action instead of as a Bonus Action. You can make this extra attack only once per turn.

**Penetration:** Choose a damage type. Your damage with weapons that deal that type of damage ignores an amount of Damage Reduction equal to your Proficiency Bonus. You can pick this feature multiple times, but only for different damage types.

**Pole Strike:** Immediately after you take the Attack action and attack with a Quarterstaff, a Spear, or a weapon that has the Heavy and Reach properties, you can use a Bonus Action to make a melee attack with the opposite end of the weapon. The attack deals Bludgeoning damage, and the damage die for this attack is a d4.

**Push:** When you hit a target with an attack using a weapon without the Light property that deals Bludgeoning damage, you can push the target up to 10 feet straight away from you to an unoccupied space if it is no more than one size larger than you.

**Prey on the Vulnerable:** If a creature that you can see and that is within your Melee range receives the Incapacitated condition, you can take a Reaction to make a Melee weapon attack against that creature.

**Puncture:** Once per turn, when you hit a creature with an attack that deals Piercing damage, you can reroll one of the attacks damage dice, and you must use the new roll.

**Quick Draw:** You can draw or stow two weapons that lack the Two-Handed property when you would normally be able to draw or stow only one.

**Reactive Strike:** While you're holding a Quarterstaff, a Spear, or a weapon that has the Heavy and Reach properties, you can take a Reaction to make one melee attack against a creature that enters the reach you have with that weapon.

**Sap:** When you hit a creature with a melee attack using a weapon without the Heavy property that deals Bludgeoning or Piercing damage, that creature has Disadvantage on its next attack roll before the start of your next turn.

***Thrown Weapon Fighting:*** When you hit with a ranged attack using a weapon that has the Thrown property, you gain a +2 bonus to the damage roll.

***Topple:*** When you hit a creature with a melee attack using a weapon with the Versatile or Two-Handed property, you can force the creature to make a Constitution saving throw (DC 8 plus the ability modifier used to make the attack roll and your Proficiency Bonus). On a failed save, the creature has the Prone condition.

***Two Weapon Fighting:*** When you make an extra attack as a result of using a weapon that has the Light property, you add your ability modifier to the damage of that attack.

***Vex:*** When you hit a creature with a Ranged weapon or a weapon that has the Light property, you have Advantage on your next attack roll against that creature before the end of your next turn.

## 5.4 Armour Features

***Light Armour Training:*** You gain training with Light Armour.

***Medium Armour Training:*** Requires training with Light Armour. You gain training with Medium Armour.

***Medium Armour Master:*** Requires training with Medium Armour. While wearing Medium Armour, your armour-based Dodging modifier is +4 instead of +2.

***Heavy Armour Training:*** Requires training with Medium Armour. You gain training with Heavy Armour.

***Heavy Armour Master:*** Requires training with Heavy Armour. You can use your Heavy Armour to **block** attacks instead of a Shield. When doing so successfully, the damage you take is reduced by twice the Damage Reduction of the used armour piece instead. If you have proficiency with

Blocking, you also add your Proficiency Bonus to the Damage Reduction for this attack.

**Defence:** You gain an additional +1 bonus to Damage Reduction on all body parts covered in armour you are trained with.

## 5.5 Shield Features

**Blocking Proficiency:** Requires training with Shields. You add your proficiency bonus to **Blocking** checks.

**Blocking Expertise:** Requires proficiency with Blocking. You add your proficiency bonus to Blocking checks one additional time.

**Free Hand Enhancement:** When wielding a shield with the Free Hand property, D20 Tests to use an object or make a weapon attack with the hand of the arm the shield is wielded on are no longer rolled with Disadvantage.

**Interpose Shield:** Requires training with Shields and you to wield a Shield. If you're subjected to an effect that allows you to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, you can take a Reaction to take no damage if you succeed on the saving throw.

**Protection:** Requires training with Shields and you to wield a Shield. When a creature you can see attacks another creature within 5 feet of you, you can take a Reaction to block that attack, potentially reducing the damage the target creature takes and giving them the cover your shield provides instead of yourself.

**Shield Bash:** Requires training with Shields and you to wield a Shield. If you hit a creature within 5 feet of you as part of the Attack action, you can immediately bash the target with your Shield, making a **shove attack**. You can use this benefit only once on each of your turns.

**Shield Training:** You gain training with **Shields**.

## 5.6 Parrying Features

***Elegant Parry:*** Requires proficiency with Parrying. When you are using at least one Finesse weapon with which you are trained to parry, make the Parry Check with advantage.

***Interception:*** When a creature you can see attacks another creature within 5 feet of you, you can take a Reaction to parry that attack, potentially reducing the damage the target creature takes. You must be holding a Simple or Martial weapon to use this Reaction.

***Parrying Proficiency:*** You add your proficiency bonus to Parrying checks you make with weapons you are trained with.

***Parrying Expertise:*** Requires proficiency with Parrying. You add your proficiency bonus to Parrying checks one additional time.

***Potent Parry:*** Requires proficiency with Parrying. You add your proficiency bonus to the Parrying Power of your Finesse weapons. If you have Expertise in Parrying, you add it twice instead.

***Vengeful Parry:*** Whenever you successfully parry an attack, you can take a Free Reaction or Reaction to make an attack against the attacker with one weapon you are wielding that was not part of your parry.

## 5.7 Other Features

***Blind Fighting:*** You have Blindsight with a range of 10 feet.

***Unarmed Fighting:*** You gain the following benefits:

- When you hit with your Unarmed Strike and deal damage, you can deal Bludgeoning damage equal to 1d6 plus your Strength modifier instead of the normal damage of an Unarmed Strike. If you aren't holding any weapons or a Shield when you make the attack roll, the d6 becomes a d8.
- At the start of each of your turns, you can deal 1d4 Bludgeoning damage to one creature Grappled by you.

## 6 Vision & Focus

***Vision:*** Many features in these rules rely on seeing something happen, and humanoids typically only see what happens in front of them, being just barely unable to discern what happens 90 degrees to their left and right.

In combat, track and attend to the direction you look. Using miniatures on battlemaps works well for this, but any small thing that discernibly points any direction will do.

***Backstab Advantage:*** Whenever you decide to attack a creature that can't see you, you gain advantage on that attack. Against humanoid creatures, for example, that is usually the case when being behind their back.

***Focus:*** You usually have something within your perception that you primarily attend to - this is what you focus on. You automatically switch focus to a creature or object when targeting them with a spell, attack, or other effect. You can only focus on one target at a time.

As long as you are focused on a target, you can rotate with the target's movement, if needed, to keep that target within your sight. This way, for example, a humanoid can save their back from another creature's attacks, leading to the attacker not receiving Backstab Advantage.

***Switch Focus:*** At the end of your turn, you can switch Focus to a creature that you can perceive. Otherwise, you can use a Free Reaction to Focus another creature that you notice moving towards you or being near you.

***Losing Focus:*** You lose Focus if you receive the Incapacitated condition or when you lose the ability to perceive the target of your Focus.

A creature that you Focus may also make you lose Focus by applying the charmed or frightened condition to you, by successfully hiding behind full cover, or by spontaneously becoming unseen by you (for example through invisibility or teleportation).

***Escape Focus:*** To escape a creature's Focus, you can take a Bonus Action,

making a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check contested by the creature's passive perception. This only works against creatures that are larger than you.

This can, for example, be used to be able to attack the back of a humanoid creature that previously focused their vision on you. This way, you can gain Backstab Advantage for your attacks against that humanoid.

***Draw Focus:*** You can force other creatures to Switch Focus by drawing their attention to yourself, another creature or something else. This may occur as a side-effect of anything you do that is sufficiently noticeable, at the mercy of the player controlling the respective creature whose Focus is to be drawn.

If a creature does take notice and the controlling player decides it would be plausible that their creature's Focus could be drawn, the creature may make a Concentration check to resist having to Switch Focus. The Difficulty Class of this check is determined by the controlling player and the drawing player in a way that should be plausible for whatever was done to attempt drawing attention.

## **6.1 Example Scenarios**

A Halfling cutthroat is looking to take out a Human guard they lead into an alley. They are currently looking at another, and the guard charges forward to strike. To escape the guard's focus, the nimble cutthroat swiftly maneuvers around the guard, using their bonus action to make a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check against 13, the guard's passive perception. They succeed and stand behind the disoriented guard's back, able to attack the guard with advantage.

A Bard attempts to draw the attention of a bloodthirsty Gnoll that prioritizes the weak. They attempt to do so by faking a scream of pain and acting hurt & vulnerable. The DM controlling the Gnoll may decide that the attempt is automatically successful and make the Gnoll Switch Focus to the Bard - they might also decide that the Gnoll might try to resist (for a reason) and roll a Concentration check contested by a Charisma (Perfor-

mance) check by the Bard, only switching the Gnolls Focus if they lose the contest - they might also decide that the attempt automatically fails (for a reason).

## 7 Shields

When wielding a shield, you benefit from cover that is appropriate for your size and the size of shield you are wielding, as described in **AC-less defence**, instead of gaining AC. Additionally, there are now two additional types of shield and dedicated shield properties and masteries.

Type	Size	Blocking Bonus	Properties	Weight	Cost
Buckler	Tiny	+6	Free Hand, Light	3 lb.	8 GP
Wooden Shield	Tiny	+4		6 lb.	10 GP
Tower Shield	Small	+2	Heavy, Clunky	12 lb.	20 GP

**Clunky:** When wielding a shield with the Clunky property, you roll Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks with disadvantage.

**Free Hand:** When wielding a shield with the Free Hand property, you can still use the hand of the arm you are wielding the shield with to grab and hold objects, for somatic components, and for sign language. D20 Tests to use an object or attack with a weapon held with this hand are rolled with Disadvantage.

**Heavy:** When wielding a shield with the Heavy property and your Strength score not being at least 13, you have Disadvantage on **Blocking** and your movement reduced by 5 ft.

**Light:** When **Blocking** with a shield with the Light property, the damage

is not negated completely, but only reduced by your Dexterity score.

## 8 Aspects of Stealth

When using stealth, there are multiple aspects that can lead to being detected. Most commonly, being seen or heard is key to being detected, but scent may also play a role at some points, especially when a creature that may detect you has a keen sense of smell, like a wolf.

***Passive Stealth (Scent):*** You have a base passive Stealth (Scent) score of 15. You can mask your scent to gain a bonus of +5 to this score, but you can also receive -5 to this score when giving off a strong scent that is uncommon for the place you are traversing.

The bonus might be given after applying herbs or some magic to yourself or by being washed. The malus might be given after taking a tour through the sewers, after a tough battle that left you wounded or after strenuous activity that left you sweaty.

When you try hiding from a creature that is close to you, both your Dexterity (Stealth) check and your passive Stealth (Scent) must be below the creature's passive perception. If the Dexterity (Stealth) check fails, you are heard or seen, as usual. If the passive Stealth (Scent) fails, the creature smells you. This may only be a hint towards your presence (DM's choice) and may not lead to you being seen immediately, but it is reason for the creature to make a Wisdom (Perception) check to try and locate you. For some creatures it may be reasonable to have them be able to locate you based on scent alone, at the DM's discretion.

### 8.1 Example Scenario

A thief tries to sneak past a guard dog. They rolled a 21 on their Dexterity (Stealth) check and have a passive Stealth (Scent) score of 15, because they took no measures to mask their scent (no bonus) and do not smell strongly (no malus).

The guard dog has a passive perception of 12, so the thief gets close to passing him with ease, without a sound, but the guard dog has a keen sense of smell, bumping up his passive Perception for scent to 17. The guard dog smells something unusual as soon as the thief gets too close, and, trying to investigate that unusual scent, the guard dog rolls a Wisdom (Perception) check, resulting in a 19. The guard dog did not see or hear the thief through that, so the thief is still unnoticed and can pass without further worries.

## Part II

# New Stuff

In this chapter, new mechanics are introduced that bring the reworks of the base game to life. First in line for these changes are **Blocking**, **Dodging**, and **Parrying** to implement the reactive defense this ruleset insists upon. **Spell Manipulation** is added in the same vein as a treat for spellcasters that are otherwise less affected in their action economy by the new reworks.

To avoid losing action economy to unforeseen circumstances, **Surge Dice** are introduced here to convert remaining reactions into bonuses for the following turn.

**Contests** are reintroduced from the 2014 rulebook to lay the groundwork for more interactive gameplay.

Finally, in response to attack rolls losing importance, **Aimed Strikes** bring new flavourful options and tactical complexities to the game by allowing creatures to target specific body parts with their attacks. To work against the detrimental effects of these, **Surgery** and the **Rite of Regeneration** were added to allow a restoration of otherwise lasting injuries.

## 9 Blocking

**Blocking:** Blocking is a new skill that uses Strength or Dexterity, shield wielders choice, modified by the Blocking Modifier of the wielded Shield.

**Blocking Modifier:** A usual shield has a Blocking Modifier of +4, with other variants being described in the chapter on **Shields**. To use the Blocking Modifier of a Shield, you have to have training with Shields.

**Prerequisites:** To use the features below, you need to be trained with Shields and wield a Shield.

**Block:** You can use a Reaction to try to block an attack that you can see and that targets you.

Make a Blocking check. If the result is at least as high as the attack roll, you successfully block the attack. It deals no damage.

When trying to block a critical hit, you roll with Disadvantage.

## 10 Dodging

Dodging isn't really a thing, let's change that.

To be more elaborate, in the base game, in many cases, Armor Class includes the Dexterity Bonus of a creature. This reasonably reflects some sort of ability to dodge - what else would the Dexterity Bonus be good for when it comes to avoiding damage? This is completely lost on many tables, as AC is often perceived to be nothing more than a coherent mass of "all of this misses" or "all of this doesn't affect me". To add to that, defending against attacks is easily perceived as something passive due to the nature of AC, while dodging should imply activity on the defendant's side.

Implementing some sort of mechanic that allows for reactive dodging would be quite nice for multiple reasons. It (a) makes defending against attacks part of the action economy, giving more weight to proper defensive strategies, it (b) presents the swiftness of some characters in combat, giving more flavour to their character and differentiating it mechanically from other characters, and it (c) gives the player the ability to actively avoid especially dangerous attacks while permitting weaker ones. This, in turn, allows for more aggressive encounter design.

Also, adding an option to dodge & roll would be nice, especially because swiftly jumping away from the point of impact of an attack is something that feels like it should be possible.

**Dodging check:** A Dodging check is a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check that is modified by the armour you're wearing as follows:

- While wearing light armour or no armour, the modifier is +5.
- While wearing medium armour, the modifier is +2 (+4 instead with Medium Armour Master).
- While wearing heavy armour, the modifier is +0.

**Dodge:** You can use your Reaction to try to dodge an attack that you can see and that targets you.

Make a Dodge check. If the result is at least as high as the attack roll, you successfully dodge the attack. It misses.

When trying to dodge a critical hit, you roll with disadvantage.

**Dodge & Roll:** You can use your Reaction to try to dodge an attack that you can see and that targets you or an area effect that encompasses you. Make a Dodge check and move to an unoccupied spot within 10 feet of you.

If you're trying to dodge an attack and the result is at least as high as the attack roll, you dodge successfully and the attack misses.

If you're trying to dodge an area effect and the result is at least as high as the DC of the effect and your movement makes you leave the area of the area effect, you succeed and are not affected. If you remain inside the area effect and it required a Dexterity saving throw, you automatically succeed on the saving throw. If it required another saving throw, make the other saving throw as usual.

If the Dodge check succeeds, your movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.

If the Dodge check fails, you fall prone at your target location.

If all spots within 10 feet are occupied, you fall prone in place, even if the Dodge check succeeded.

When trying to dodge & roll in response to a critical hit, you roll with disadvantage.

## II Parrying

**Parrying:** Parrying is a new skill that uses the ability that you use your weapon with.

**Prerequisites:** To use the features below, you need to wield a melee weapon that you are trained with.

**Parry:** You can use your Reaction to parry a melee attack that you can see and that targets you. Make a Parrying check. If the result is at least as high as the attack roll, you successfully parry, reducing the attacks damage by your weapons Parrying Power.

If you are wielding more than one melee weapon, you can parry using multiple of those weapons at once. If the parry is successful, reduce the attacks damage by the sum of the Parrying Powers of all used weapons instead.

If you reduce the attacks damage to 0, your weapons lock, giving the attacker disadvantage on their attack rolls until either of you make an attack with their locked weapon or either of you moves out of the others range.

When trying to parry a critical hit, you roll with disadvantage.

When rolling a natural 20 on your Parrying Check, the Parrying Power is doubled.

**Parrying Power:** A weapons Parrying Power is equal to the maximum damage it can deal on a normal hit. This includes all temporary damage bonuses as well.

For example, a normal rapier deals damage equal to  $1d8 +$  your Strength or Dexterity modifier, so its Parrying Power is equal to  $8 +$  your Strength or Dexterity modifier. If it is also transmuted by the spell Elemental Weapon, which increases its damage by  $1d4$ , its Parrying Power is further increased by 4.

## 12 Spell Manipulation

It should be a fun option to play a caster.

To make a caster better suited for the new changes, new reactions should be added that fit the kit of any caster without making a caster too strong regarding the damage output. Therefore, we should focus on the identity of a caster: casting spells.

With this idea in mind, a caster can use their general understanding of magic in a way to alter the flow of magic around them. This can be used to enable a coven playstyle, which we rarely see, by buffing spells of each other. In addition, a caster gets new defensive tools, which are very situational, thereby leaving him in great danger of their martial enemies, looking at you, Rogue.

**Prerequisites:** To use any manipulation reaction (see below), you need to have the Spellcasting or Pact Magic feature.

Spell Manipulation requires both somatic and verbal components and has a range of 60ft.

You can only use a manipulation reaction when you can see the caster whose spell you manipulate.

**Spell Manipulation:** Spell Manipulation is a new skill that is rolled with your Spellcasting Ability. As a spellcaster, you are automatically proficient with Spell Manipulation.

Expertise can be applied to Spell Manipulation.

If you have access to multiple Spellcasting Abilities, you may roll Spell Manipulation with any of those abilities.

**Spell Manipulation Bonus:** Your Spell Manipulation Bonus is the number you add to the roll when making a Spell Manipulation check, depending on the Spell Manipulation skill as described above.

***Thwart:*** You can use a Reaction to try to thwart a spell attack that targets you or a creature you can see. Make a Spell Manipulation check. If the result is at least as high as the attack roll, the spell attack misses its target.

You can spend one of your spell slots to improve your roll by three times the spell slots level.

When trying to thwart a critical hit, you roll with disadvantage.

***Weaken:*** You can use a Reaction to try to weaken the effect of a spell that requires a saving throw. Choose one affected creature that is either you or that you can see. They add your Spell Manipulation Bonus to their saving throw.

You can spend one of your spell slots instead to turn the saving throw into an automatic success.

***Amplify:*** You can use a Reaction to amplify a spell that wasn't cast by you. Make a Spell Manipulation check against  $10 +$  twice the spell level. On a success, the spell is cast as if it were one level higher.

You can spend one of your spell slots to automatically succeed.

***Manipulative Stance:*** You can use your Action to focus on manipulating spells. You can use the Thwart Reaction (see above), Weaken Reaction (see above) and Amplify Reaction (see above) a number of times equal to your Proficiency Bonus without using a Reaction until the start of your next turn.

## 13 Aimed Strikes

During play, it became apparent that attack rolls lost a good deal of their charm. This was mainly because an uncontested attack roll was too likely to succeed, given that the Hit DC is significantly lower than Armor Class is in the base game. This also made having a good attack bonus or rolling with advantage or disadvantage less significant on attacks, especially against lar-

ger targets that have an even smaller Hit DC. In short, making an attack roll felt redundant as soon as it was uncontested.

Aimed Strikes are the response to this problem. They allow the attacker to trade their hit chance against other benefits, damage among them, increasing the risk of the attack roll. This also deepens strategic thinking, as some circumstances may still incentivize going for the easy hit. This active choice should make the reliability feel better than before, where the reliability was imposed.

***Aimed Strike:*** When attacking a target, you can choose to target a specific part of them instead of them in general. This changes the base Hit DC of the attack to the base Hit DC of the targeted part, depending on its size as noted in the chapter on **AC-less defence**. Parts can benefit from cover and usually have the same Damage Reduction as the creature or object they belong to. When an Aimed Strike hits a creature, they must make a Wound Save as described below.

The DM may decide to also tie other effects to specific parts, such as a Damage Reduction modifier, particular damage vulnerabilities, other conditions to save against and the like.

***Wound Save:*** When you are struck by an Aimed Strike you must make a Constitution saving throw against half the attacks damage or 10, whichever is higher. If you succeed, nothing happens. Otherwise, the attack leaves the targeted body part **Wounded**.

If the damage equals at least half your maximum hit points, the targeted body part is Wounded on a successful save and **Disabled** on a failed save.

***Weakspots:*** Some creatures may have regions on their body that are especially vulnerable to attacks. Targeting these regions should be more difficult, but also yield more devastating results for the target.

As a DM, you can make use of this when designing an encounter to make a fight more interesting. Maybe the Kobold tinkerer has a bomb in their pocket that just waits to be hit by fire damage to explode in their face,

or maybe the dragon loses their breath weapon with a well placed strike through their lungs.

Some weakspots may not be apparent at first glance. In this case, a Study action may give the players just the information they need.

**Covering Body Parts:** Similar to how a creature can receive cover, body parts can also become harder to hit when covered, as described in the chapter about [AC-less defence](#).

For example, when a tiny shield is held accordingly, it can give total cover to a diminutive body part, three-quarters cover to a tiny body part, and half-cover to a small or medium body part.

**Body part sizes for Medium Humanoids:** The table below shows the rough sizes of the body parts of a Medium Humanoid. This table is not definitive, as the size of a body part can vary from person to person and effectively also depends on the angle it is viewed at. A buff humans arms may be easier to hit than those of a lanky one, and a torso viewed from the side is effectively smaller than one viewed from the front.

Body Part	Size	Hit DC
Head	Diminutive	16
Eye	Minus 1	22
Neck	Diminutive	16
Arm	Tiny	14
Hand	Diminutive	16
Torso	Small	12
Crotch	Fine	18
Leg	Tiny	14
Foot	Diminutive	16

**Reliable Hits (optional):** When an Aimed Strike misses the increased Hit DC of a body part, but the attack roll was still at least as high as the base Hit DC of the target, it still hits the target, but without any of the benefits of hitting a particular body part.

### 13.1 Example Scenario

The champion knows that a blinded cyclops is a harmless cyclops. Therefore, she decides to aim her shot at his eye. This increases the Hit DC for the attack from 6 to 18, given that the eye is a Fine target. The DM decides on the fly that the eye is vulnerable to piercing damage. She rolls her attack as usual and hits, dealing 38 piercing damage, so the cyclops must make a DC19 Wound Save. He fails this save, so his eye is now wounded, giving him disadvantage on everything that relies on his sight. This is not enough for the champion though, so she fires a second arrow towards his eye, dealing 46 piercing damage. The cyclops fails his DC23 Wound Save and his eye is now disabled, leaving him with the blinded condition.

## 14 Surgery

When a creature has a disabled or malfunctioning body part, surgery is the go-to non-magical way to treat it.

***Surgery Tools:*** Surgery Tools are a type of Artisan's Tools that are used in Surgery. Cost: 30 GP. Ability: Wisdom. Weight: 4 lb. Utilize: Treat disabled body part, as described here.

***Performing a Surgery:*** A Surgery is performed on a singular target creature and led by one character, the surgeon, that rolls all the required rolls, and takes an hour. To successfully perform a Surgery, the surgeon must succeed on a DC 20 Surgery check that utilizes Surgery Tools three times.

Other creatures can assist on these rolls, including the target, as long as they do not have the Incapacitated condition.

After three Surgery checks succeeded, the treated body part is no longer disabled. Instead, it is wounded until the target takes a long rest. Afterwards, the body part is healthy again.

***Rolling a 20 on the Surgery check:*** A natural 20 on the Surgery check makes the surgery succeed without the need for further Surgery checks.

***Failing a Surgery check:*** A failed Surgery check does not make the Surgery fail. Instead, when a Surgery check fails, the target needs to succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw to not take 1d4+1 piercing damage that can not be mitigated.

***Rolling a 1 on the Surgery check:*** On a natural 1, the target must instead roll a DC 20 Constitution saving throw, taking 4d4+4 piercing damage on a failed save, half as much on a successful one. The damage can not be mitigated.

***Anaesthesia:*** The Surgery Tools include anaesthetics that can make the target creature unresponsive, giving them the Unconscious condition. The following effects also apply:

- The surgeon rolls an additional 1d4 on each Surgery check and adds the number rolled to the result.
- The target makes the Constitution saving throw to avoid being damaged by failed Surgery checks with advantage.
- The target can't be their own surgeon or assist on the surgery.
- The target wakes up 1d4 hours after the surgery is completed.

## 15 Rite of Regeneration

When a creature has a disabled or malfunctioning body part, the Rite of Regeneration is the go-to magical way to treat it.

***Prerequisites:*** To be able to perform a Rite of Regeneration, a spellcaster has to be able to cast the Cure Wounds spell.

***Performing a Rite of Regeneration:*** A Rite of Regeneration is performed on a singular target creature and led by one character, the conductor, that rolls all the required rolls, and takes 10 minutes. To successfully perform a Rite of Regeneration, the conductor must succeed on three DC 30 Regeneration checks, as described below. The conductor needs to be able to perform somatic and verbal components (similar to those for a spell) during the duration of the Rite.

After three Regeneration checks succeeded, the treated body part is no longer disabled. Instead, it is wounded until the target takes a long rest. Afterwards, the body part is healthy again.

***Rolling a Regeneration check:*** To roll a Regeneration check, the conductor rolls a D20-Test, adds their spellcasting modifier and proficiency bonus and casts Cure Wounds. The healing rolled this way is also added to the result.

Other creatures can assist on this check, including the target, as long as they do not have the Incapacitated condition. One creature that is also able to cast Cure Wounds may use the Help Action to give advantage on the Regeneration check or cast Cure Wounds instead of the conductor.

***Rolling a 20 on the Regeneration check:*** A natural 20 on the Regeneration check makes the Rite of Regeneration succeed without the need for further Regeneration checks.

***Failing a Regeneration check:*** A failed Regeneration check does not interrupt the Rite of Regeneration. Instead, when a Regeneration check fails, the target needs to succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw to not receive one level of Exhaustion.

***Rolling a 1 on the Regeneration check:*** On a natural 1, the target instead receives two levels of Exhaustion on a failed save and one level on a successful one.

## 16 Surge Dice

A Surge Die is 1d6 that can be used for various effects that are described below. You can use one or more Surge Dice as part of an Action, Bonus Action, Free Action, Reaction, or Free Reaction. You can use more than one surge die at once for the same effect. All unspent Surge Dice expire at the start of your next turn and at the end of combat.

When a Surge Die is used as a part of a contest, both parties may expend

further Surge Dice at will to aid them in the contest, even after the other added one to their roll.

**Obtaining Surge Dice:** You can obtain Surge Dice through reserving Reactions as described in the [Reaction](#) rules. Some classes may also give features that relate to Surge Dice.

**Power:** Add the roll to an attack roll, ability check, or the damage you deal to one creature. If the Surge Die is added to the damage of a critical hit, it is not doubled.

**Force:** Subtract the roll from one saving throw you require one creature to make. This can be part of an effect that requires multiple creatures to roll a saving throw, but it only applies to the one creature you choose.

**Swiftness:** You gain 10ft. of movement speed that you can immediately use.

**Speed:** Add the roll to your Initiative, potentially changing your position in the Initiative Order. If you are first in the Initiative Order, move to the last spot beforehand, with the same Initiative as the previously last entry.

You can only skip past a maximum of one entry per Surge Die spent. When the maximum is reached, your Initiative cannot exceed the Initiative of the entry that is now ahead of you in the Initiative Order.

If you are doing this during your turn, this does not lend creatures that acted before you another turn after you in case you skip past them, and it similarly does not trigger effects tied to Initiative again. If you are doing this outside of your turn and skip past the creature whose turn it currently is, you take your turn directly after them.

**Tenacity:** You gain temporary hit points equal to the roll until the start of your next turn.

## 17 Contests

The 2024 rules saw the removal of contested rolls and moved towards the use of saving throws instead. That is the exact opposite direction that these rules want to go. To establish more interactivity, contests are thus reintroduced here. The actions that use those are described in the chapter on [Adjustments](#), for example with the Grapple and Shove attacks described in [Combat](#).

Sometimes one characters or monsters efforts are directly opposed to another. This can occur when both of them are trying to do the same thing and only one can succeed, such as attempting to snatch up a magic ring that has fallen on the floor. This situation also applies when one of them is trying to prevent the other one from accomplishing a goal, for example, when a monster tries to force open a door that an adventurer is holding closed. In situations like these, the outcome is determined by a special form of ability check, called a contest.

**Contest:** Both participants in a contest make ability checks appropriate to their efforts. They apply all appropriate bonuses and penalties, but instead of comparing the total to a DC, they compare the totals of their two checks. The participant with the higher check total wins the contest. That character or monster either succeeds at the action or prevents the other one from succeeding.

If the contest results in a tie, the situation remains the same as it was before the contest. Thus, one contestant might win the contest by default. If two characters tie in a contest to snatch a ring off the floor, neither character grabs it. In a contest between a monster trying to open a door and an adventurer trying to keep the door closed, a tie means that the door remains shut.

## Part III

# Adjustments

In this chapter, several particular rules changes are described. In some cases, only parts of existing rules are changed, in others, entire features are replaced with other ones. In some cases, these rules offer an optional variant to an existing feature, which is then accordingly marked as a variant.

Deceptively, there are also some rare cases where new features are introduced here. These are accordingly marked as new.

There are adjustments to **class features**, **feats**, and **spells**, mainly to bring them in line with the changes to AC, grappling and shoving is reverted to their 2014 version in the section on **combat**, and there are descriptions of the new Wounded and Disabled **conditions** that were mentioned **earlier**. **Armour** is described according to the changes to AC, and distinct armour pieces are introduced to fill in defense against **Aimed Strikes**. Last but not least, there is a section offering a short guide on how **monsters** are affected by the reworks offered here.

## 18 Armour

As explained in **AC-less defence**, the Armor Class of an armour will be converted to Damage Reduction. An armour that previously gave an Armor Class of 12, for example, will give +2 Damage Reduction instead of increasing the Armor Class of the wearer from the base Armor Class of 10 by +2.

Armours that allowed the wearer to add their whole or parts of their Dexterity modifier to their Armor Class do not give additional Damage Reduction based on that Dexterity modifier. Instead, **Dodging** is improved when wearing no Armour or Light Armour, and improved a bit when wearing Medium Armour, as listed below.

Name	Type	Damage Reduction	Dodging Modifier
Padded Armour	Light	1	+5
Leather Armour	Light	1	+5
Studded Leather Armour	Light	2	+5
Hide Armour	Medium	2	+2
Chain Shirt	Medium	3	+2
Scale Mail	Medium	4	+2
Breastplate	Medium	4	+2
Half Plate Armour	Medium	5	+2
Ring Mail	Heavy	4	0
Chain Mail	Heavy	6	0
Splint Armour	Heavy	7	0
Plate Armour	Heavy	8	0

## 18.1 Armour Pieces

The Damage Reduction of an armour will usually only work against attacks that aren't Aimed Strikes. This depends primarily on whether the armour covers the body part the Aimed Strike targets or not. As a default, wearing an armour means that at least the torso is covered by that armour, and every armour set will include coverage for all other body parts. You may choose whether you wear these other particular armour pieces or not.

***Extending Damage Reduction:*** An armour piece extends the Damage Reduction of the armour set they belong to to the body part they cover. For example, with a Half Plate Armour giving a Damage Reduction of 5, the armour pieces of the same set would also give a Damage Reduction of 5.

***Light Armour Pieces:*** These pieces require Light Armour Training to protect their body parts and count as Light Armour.

***Medium Armour Pieces:*** These pieces require Medium Armour Training to protect their body parts and count as Medium Armour.

**Heavy Armour Pieces:** These pieces require Heavy Armour Training to protect their body parts and count as Heavy Armour. The following drawbacks also apply for particular pieces:

- **Helmet:** Needs a lowered visor to also protect the face. When such a visor is lowered, it gives disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks relying on sight.
- **Gloves:** Gives disadvantage on Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) checks.

**Combining Armour Types:** It is possible to wear armour pieces of multiple different armour sets at once, with each armour piece giving the Damage Reduction value of its armour set. For example, you can wear a Plate Armour on your torso for 8 Damage Reduction there and Leather Gloves for 1 Damage Reduction on the hands at the same time. Conversely, you can have 1 Damage Reduction on your torso when wearing Leather Armour, and 8 Damage Reduction on your lower arm when wearing Plate Bracers.

**Purchasing Specific Armour Pieces:** Instead of receiving armour pieces together with its armour set, it is possible to buy them separately. Depending on how much material and complexity is involved in the making of the armour piece, the cost should be between 5% and 25% of the costs for the full armour set. It is left up to the DM to decide the exact price when the demand arises, and the sum of the parts may be more expensive than the full set depending on the merchant.

When purchasing an armour set to cover only the torso, without additional armour pieces, the costs should be roughly half of the full cost.

**Wearing Armour Pieces without Training:** When wearing an armour piece of an armour category you don't have the corresponding armour training for, you have Disadvantage on any D20 Test that relies on the body part covered by that armour piece.

## 19 Combat

**Unarmed Strikes:** The Grapple and Shove options of the Unarmed Strike are changed to use **contests** again, as described below.

**Grapple:** Using at least one free hand, you try to seize the target by making a grapple check, a Strength (Athletics) check contested by the target's Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check (their choice). If you succeed, you subject the target to the grappled condition. The condition specifies the things that end it, and you can release the target whenever you like (no action required). The target of your grapple must be no more than one size larger than you, and it must be within your reach.

**Escaping a Grapple:** A grappled creature can use its action to escape. To do so, it must succeed on a Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check contested by your Strength (Athletics) check.

**Moving a Grappled Creature:** When you move, you can drag or carry the grappled creature with you, but your speed is halved, unless the creature is two or more sizes smaller than you.

**Shove:** You make a Strength (Athletics) check contested by the target's Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check (their choice). If you win the contest, you either knock the target prone or push it 5 feet away from you. The target of your shove must be no more than one size larger than you, and it must be within your reach.

## 20 Conditions

**Wounded:** A Wounded body part is more difficult to use. D20 Tests that rely on that body part are rolled with Disadvantage. If a body part is Wounded and receives another wound, it becomes Disabled instead.

A wound can be treated through healing of any kind. One instance of healing removes one wound, while being restored to full hit points removes all wounds. A wound can also be treated through a DC10 Wisdom

(Medicine) check, or through one use of a Healers Kit.

**Disabled:** A disabled body part is rendered unusable. D20 Tests that rely on that body part automatically fail. Depending on the body part, other conditions or consequences may be associated with that body part being disabled, at the DMs discretion.

A disability can only be treated through highly potent healing magic such as the Regenerate spell or a **Rite of Regeneration**, or through complicated medicinal procedures only specialists can provide, such as **Surgery**.

## 21 Feats

With the introduction of **Combat Training**, many feats had their content moved there. Their features can now be accessed through the Combat Adept feat and through class features, as described in the chapter on **Combat Training**. The affected feats are: Crossbow Expert, Crusher, Defensive Duelist, Dual Wielder, Great Weapon Master, Heavily Armored, Heavy Armor Master, Lightly Armored, Martial Weapon Training, Medium Armor Master, Moderately Armored, Piercer, Polearm Master, Sharpshooter, Shield Master, Slasher, Weapon Master, and all Fighting Style feats.

Outside of that, other changes to feats can be found here, with the full description of the new changed feat being shown here.

### 21.1 Origin Feats

**Savage Attacker:** Whenever you roll damage for an attack, add a d6 to the dice pool and ignore the lowest die result.

### 21.2 General Feats

**Combat Adept:** You gain the following benefits:

- **Ability Score Increase:** Increase your Strength or Dexterity score by 1, to a maximum of 20.

- *Training*: You gain two **Combat Training** features of your choice.
- *Repeatable*: You can take this feat more than once.

### 21.3 Fighting Style Feats

These feats are all now part of **Combat Training** and can be accessed through the Combat Adept feat and through class features, as described in the chapter on **Combat Training**.

## 22 Spells

These spell changes are meant to bring spells in line with the new mechanics, such as **AC-less defence** and **wounds**.

**Barkskin**: Level 2 Transmutation (Druid, Ranger). Casting Time: Bonus Action. Range: Touch. Component: V, S, M (a handful of bark). Duration: 1 hour.

You touch a willing creature. Until the spell ends, the targets skin assumes a bark-like appearance, and the target has a Damage Reduction of 4 if its Damage Reduction was lower before. Then, its Damage Reduction is increased by 3, for a minimum Damage Reduction of 7.

*Using a Higher-Level Spell Slot*: The Damage Reduction is increased by an additional 1 for each spell slot level above 2.

**Blur**: Level 2 Illusion (Sorcerer, Wizard). Casting Time: Action. Range: Self. Components: V. Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute.

Your body becomes blurred. For the duration, any creature has Disadvantage on attack rolls against you and your Hit DC increases by 5 for those attacks.

An attacker is unaffected by this spell if they have the Blinded condition, Blindsight, or Truesight.

**Cure Wounds**: Level 1 Abjuration (Bard, Cleric, Druid, Paladin, Ranger).

Casting Time: Action. Range: Touch. Components: V, S. Duration: Instantaneous.

A creature you touch regains a number of Hit Points equal to 2d8 plus your spellcasting ability modifier and has all their **wounds** removed.

*Using a Higher-Level Spell Slot:* The healing increases by 2d8 for each spell slot level above 1.

**Inflict Wounds:** Level 1 Necromancy (Cleric). Casting Time: Action. Range: Touch. Components: V, S. Duration: Instantaneous.

A creature you touch makes a Constitution saving throw, taking 2d10 Necrotic damage on a failed save or half as much damage on a successful one.

On a failed save, you may choose to convert any number of the damage dice into **wounds**. For every converted die, pick a body part that is not already **Wounded**. The body part is now **Wounded**.

*Using a Higher-Level Spell Slot:* The damage increases by 1d10 for each spell slot level above 1.

**Mage Armour:** Level 1 Abjuration (Sorcerer, Wizard). Casting Time: Action. Range: Touch. Components: V, S, M (a piece of cured leather). Duration: 8 hours.

You touch a willing creature who isn't wearing armor. Until the spell ends, the target's Damage Reduction is increased by 3. The spell ends early if the target dons armor.

**Shield:** Level 1 Abjuration (Sorcerer, Wizard). Casting Time: Reaction, which you take when you are hit by an attack roll or targeted by the Magic Missile spell. Range: Self. Components: V, S. Duration: Instantaneous.

An imperceptible barrier of magical force protects you. You take no damage from the triggering attack or Magic Missile.

**Shield of Faith:** Level 1 Abjuration (Cleric, Paladin). Casting Time: Bonus Action. Range: 60 feet. Components: V, S, M (a prayer scroll). Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes.

A shimmering field surrounds a creature of your choice within range, diverting incoming attacks for the duration, granting the creature a +2 bonus to their Hit DC.

## 23 Classes

### 23.1 Bard

**College of Dance - Dazzling Footwork - Unarmoured Defence:** When you aren't wearing armour or wielding a shield, you can roll Charisma (Performance) instead of Dexterity (Acrobatics) when **Dodging**, and you add both your Charisma modifier and your Dexterity modifier to the roll.

**College of Valor - Combat Inspiration - Defence:** When the creature is hit by an attack roll, that creature can use the Bardic Inspiration die instead of a Reaction to attempt to **block**, **parry** or **dodge** the attack. When doing so, the creature rolls the Bardic Inspiration die and adds the number rolled to the corresponding check, potentially causing the attack to miss.

### 23.2 Fighter

**Tactical Master:** When you attack with a weapon you are trained with, you can use one additional **Combat Training** feature on the attack that the weapon does not fulfill the requirements of.

**Battle Master - Know Your Enemy:** Additionally, you find out whether there are particular weak spots that are worth targeting and what to expect when making an **Aimed Strike** against that weak spot.

**Battle Master - Parry:** When **Parrying**, you can expend one Superiority Die, rolling the die and adding the number rolled the Superiority Die to

the Parry check. If the parry succeeds, you increase the Parrying Power by the maximum roll of your Superiority Die.

***Battle Master - Evasive Footwork:*** As a Bonus Action, you can expend one Superiority Die and take the Disengage action. You also roll the die and add the number rolled to your Hit DC until the start of your next turn.

***Battle Master - Riposte:*** When you successfully **block**, **dodge**, or **parry** a melee attack, you can expend one Superiority Die to make a melee weapon attack against the attacking creature. If you hit, you add the Superiority Die to the attack's damage roll.

### 23.3 Monk

***Martial Arts - Dexterous Attacks:*** Instead of using the Dexterity modifier to determine the save DC when using the Grapple or Shove option of your Unarmed Strike, you can make a Dexterity (Athletics) check instead of a Strength (Athletics) check when attempting to Grapple or Shove, using the **Contest** rules.

***Unarmoured Defence:*** Instead of being converted to **Damage Reduction**, your Wisdom modifier is added to your **Dodging** checks.

***Patient Defence:*** May instead be used to enter the **Evasive Stance**.

***Deflect Missiles:*** May be used without using a Reaction as one use of the **Evasive Stance**.

***Level 5: Serenity (new):*** When spending one or more Focus Points, you can instead spend the same amount of **Surge Dice**. You can also replace a part of the Focus Point cost with the same amount of **Surge Dice**.

For example, when spending 3 Focus Points, you may instead spend either 3 Surge Dice, 2 Surge Dice + 1 Focus Point, or 1 Surge Die + 2 Focus Points.

## 23.4 Paladin

***Oath of Glory - Glorious Defence:*** Instead of increasing the targets AC, your Charisma modifier (minimum of 1) is subtracted from the attack roll, potentially causing the attack to miss.

## 23.5 Ranger

***Beast Master:*** Instead of their AC value, the Beast Masters beast will have a Damage Reduction equal to 3 + the Rangers Wisdom modifier.

***Gloomstalker - Shadowy Dodge:*** When trying to **dodge** an attack, you roll with advantage. Afterwards, you can teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space you can see, regardless of whether the **dodge** was successful or not.

***Hunter - Multiattack Defence:*** When you use any Reaction to counter a creatures attack, you may counter all following attacks made by the same creature against you this turn without using another Reaction. Eligible Reactions include **Blocking**, **Dodging**, and **Parrying**.

## 23.6 Rogue

***Uncanny Dodge:*** When your **Dodging** checks fail, you only take half damage instead of full damage. If you fail a Dodge & Roll or all spots within 10 feet of you are occupied when making a Dodge & Roll, you do not fall prone.

***Level 5: Prepared Strike (new):*** When using Surge Dice to increase the damage of a Sneak Attack, the Surge Dice are d12 instead of d6.

## 23.7 Sorcerer

***Draconic Sorcery - Draconic Resilience:*** Instead of adding your Charisma modifier to your AC when you are not wearing armour, your Charisma modifier is added to your Damage Reduction.

***Wild Magic Sorcery - Wild Magic Surge - 49-52:*** Instead of increasing your AC by 2, the floating shield gives half cover. If you already benefit from half cover, you benefit from three quarters cover instead.

## 24 Monsters

***Attack Rolls:*** All monsters are trained with the weapons they wield and with their Unarmed Strikes. However, only monsters that rely on their precision or are particularly experienced add their proficiency bonus to their attacks.

***Damage Rolls:*** Monsters that are particularly aggressive or mighty may add their proficiency bonus to their damage rolls.

***Surge Dice:*** Monsters also get and can utilize Surge Dice.

***Reactions:*** Monsters have access to all of the new Reactions that they fulfil the prerequisites for. However, some monsters may not be very concerned about being hit and either wait for an Opportunity attack or use the conversion into a Surge Die to strengthen their attacks.

***Bonus Actions:*** Monsters that don't have any use for a Bonus Action will not convert it into an additional Reaction.

***Parries:*** If the statblock of a creature features a parry reaction, it is replaced by the Parry Reaction described in these rules. Assume that the creature uses either its strongest wielded melee weapon or all its wielded melee weapons to parry, if possible.

## Part IV

# Tables

Here, you'll find all the tables spread throughout the book once more.

### 25 Extended Size Table

Size	Hit DC	Hit Area	Height or Length
Minus 5	30	$<2.5\text{mm}^2$	$<2.5\text{mm}$
Minus 4	28	$<10\text{mm}^2$	$<5\text{mm}$
Minus 3	26	$<40\text{mm}^2$	$<1\text{cm}$
Minus 2	24	$<1.5\text{cm}^2$	$<2\text{cm}$
Minus 1	22	$<6\text{cm}^2$	$<4\text{cm}$
Minuscule	20	$<25\text{cm}^2$	$<8\text{cm}$
Fine	18	$<100\text{cm}^2$	$<15\text{cm}$
Diminutive	16	$<400\text{cm}^2$	$<30\text{cm}$
Tiny	14	$<0.15\text{m}^2$	$<60\text{cm}$
Small	12	$<0.6\text{m}^2$	$<1.2\text{m}$
Medium	10	$<2.5\text{m}^2$	$<2.5\text{m}$
Large	8	$<10\text{m}^2$	$<5\text{m}$
Huge	6	$<40\text{m}^2$	$<10\text{m}$
Gargantuan	4	$<150\text{m}^2$	$<20\text{m}$
Colossal	2	$<600\text{m}^2$	$<40\text{m}$
Unmissable	0	$>600\text{m}^2$	$>40\text{m}$

Related to [AC-less defence](#).

## 26 Body Part Sizes for a Medium Humanoid

Body Part	Size	Hit DC
Head	Diminutive	16
Eye	Minus 1	22
Neck	Diminutive	16
Arm	Tiny	14
Hand	Diminutive	16
Torso	Small	12
Crotch	Fine	18
Leg	Tiny	14
Foot	Diminutive	16

As used with [Aimed Strikes](#).

## 27 Armour Table

Name	Type	Damage Reduction	Dodging Modifier
Padded Armour	Light	1	+5
Leather Armour	Light	1	+5
Studded Leather Armour	Light	2	+5
Hide Armour	Medium	2	+2
Chain Shirt	Medium	3	+2
Scale Mail	Medium	4	+2
Breastplate	Medium	4	+2
Half Plate Armour	Medium	5	+2
Ring Mail	Heavy	4	0
Chain Mail	Heavy	6	0
Splint Armour	Heavy	7	0
Plate Armour	Heavy	8	0

Related to [AC-less defence](#).

## 28 Shield Table

Type	Size	Blocking Bonus	Properties	Weight	Cost
Buckler	Tiny	+6	Free Hand, Light	3 lb.	8 GP
Wooden Shield	Tiny	+4		6 lb.	10 GP
Tower Shield	Small	+2	Heavy, Clunky	12 lb.	20 GP

As used in the section on [Shields](#).

## Part V

# Appendix

Here, you'll find miscellaneous stuff that was created in relation to the main body in some way. Some of the stuff may be more useful than others. This is not meant to be a place worth visiting in case you are looking for new content.

The appendix features a history of the changes made with the previous versions, starting with the [latest update](#) and going backwards in time.

## 29 Changes for vo.8

[Introduction](#) was rewritten.

### [AC-less defence](#)

- renamed Missing Threshold to Hit DC.
- explicated that Damage Reduction applies before resistance and vulnerabilities.
- added a passage explicating the relation between sizes and cover.

### [Aimed Strikes](#)

- added a paragraph describing how Aimed Strikes interact with cover.
- added [Surgery](#) and the [Rite of Regeneration](#) to get rid of body part disabilities.
- moved Wounded and Disabled to a new chapter on [Conditions](#).
- added a table offering example body part sizes for a Medium Humanoid.

### [Armour](#)

- added two new shields and rephrased how they work in terms of size. Moved them to the [Shields](#) chapter.

- explicated that Damage Reduction from armour usually only works against attacks that aren't Aimed Strikes, unless the armour includes coverage of the targeted body part.
- added some rudimentary rules for armour pieces to cover other body parts.

## Classes

- added some Bard subclass changes. The College of Dance Bard can now **dodge** with Performance, and the College of Valor Bard can allow the use of a Bardic Inspiration die instead of a Reaction to react to an attack.
- revisited Battle Master changes.
- rephrased the Monks Dexterous Attacks to use Grapple and Shove contests again.
- the Oath of Glory Paladins Glorious Defence now decreases the attack roll instead of giving AC.
- explicated how the Beast Masters beast AC is converted into Damage Reduction.
- the Gloomstalker Rangers Shadowy Dodge now utilizes **Dodging**.
- removed the paragraph about the Hunters Uncanny Dodge, as the Hunter no longer has that feature.
- the Hunters Multiattack Defence is now cheaper.
- the Rogue no longer gains advantage on **Dodging** checks.
- explicated how the Draconic Sorcerers AC is converted into Damage Reduction.

## Blocking

- moved acquisition of blocking proficiency and expertise to **Combat Training**.
- updated wording to require shield training instead of shield proficiency, as the latter no longer exists as such.

## Combat

- updated the Grapple and Shove attacks to appropriately relate to Un-

armed Strikes.

## Combat Training

- is new.
- reworks how proficiency and training with weapons, shields and armour works.
- moved Fighting Styles here.
- moved combat-oriented Feats here.
- moved weapon mastery properties here.

## Monsters

- added some more guidance on how monsters are affected by the changes in these rules.

## Parrying

- moved acquisition of parrying proficiency and expertise to [Combat Training](#).
- updated wording to require weapon training instead of proficiency.

## Reactions

- merged Evasive Stance, Defensive Stance, Protective Stance, and Parrying Stance into one singular Defence Action.
- moved Prey on the Vulnerable to [Combat Training](#).
- removed Trip, as it is already possible through an Opportunity Attack with an Unarmed Strike.

## Spells

- added Shield of Faith changes.
- made Cure Wounds and Inflict Wounds work with wounds.
- Blur now no longer affects attackers that are blinded.

## 30 Changes for vo.7

### 30.1 New

*Aimed Strikes*: Introduced to make attack rolls more meaningful.

*Contests*: Added a chapter about them, as they were removed from the 2024 rules.

*Rogue*: now gains a new Surge Die feature on level 5: Prepared Strike.

*Spells*: Added adjustments to Blur.

*Feats*: Added adjustments to Weapon Master.

### 30.2 Removed

*from Surge Dice*: Dying Struggle, Elation and Kill Rush.

### 30.3 Adjusted

*General*:

- Committed to 2024 rules. All changes are now in reference to 2024 rules.
- Put the context and rationale for the rules at the start of each section again.
- Moved Reflections to the Introduction.
- Added a chapter for tables.
- Added an appendix with past changelogs.

*AC-less defence*:

- Added an example for Armor Class to Damage Reduction conversion.
- Damage Reduction now applies to attacks instead, including spell attacks. This is meant to be a buff to Damage Reduction and meant to make it more intuitive when it applies and when it doesn't. This also restores the classic connection between attacks and armour.

- Removed Dodging from the list of reactions that can reduce attack damage to 0 and thus make the attack count as a miss, because Dodging explicitly states that a dodged attack misses.
- Added a new set of smaller sizes and changed multiple base Missing Thresholds.
- Added a table as a reference for the sizes.

### *Reactions:*

- Free Reactions no longer reference Free Actions, as those are not part of the 2024 rules. They now refer to the free object interaction instead.
- Using the Ready action now gives an additional Reaction.
- Limited Prey on the Vulnerable to melee weapon attacks and tied it exclusively to the Incapacitated condition.

### *Vision & Focus:*

- Focus can now be switched once at the end of your turn for free, instead of as a Free Action, because those no longer exist as of the 2024 rules.
- Losing Focus now depends on the Incapacitated condition or loss of perception.

### *Spell Manipulation:*

- Limited range to 60ft.

### *Parrying:*

- Named the value by which a parried attacks damage is reduced Parrying Power and added a separate paragraph about it.
- Explicated that temporary damage increases also increase Parrying Power.
- Critical Parries now have increased Parrying Power.

### *Armour:*

- Now features a table with armour stats.

### *Feats:*

- Now offers the entire feat description.
- Moved Fighting Styles to this chapter.
- Rephrased and buffed Defensive Duellist.
- Made the changed Dual Wielder a variant instead of a replacement.
- Heavy Armour Master now uses the Proficiency Bonus, similar to the 2024 rules.
- Shield Master now forces an Athletics contest instead of a saving throw.

### *Classes:*

- Moved all class changes into their own chapter.
- Moved the monk Surge Die feature to level 5.

### *Spells:*

- Now offers the entire spell description.

## **31 Changes for vo.6**

### General

- extracted **Adjustments** to their own chapter, featuring changes for Equipment, Class Features, Feats, Fighting Styles, Spells, and Monsters.
  - Shields no longer give damage reduction.
  - Buffed the Hunter's Multiattack Defence.
  - Changed Dual Wielder, Savage Attacker and Shield Master.
  - Added spell changes for Shield, Mage Armour, and Barkskin.
- Renamed the Backstab Advantage & Focus chapter to **Vision & Focus**. Added two paragraphs about Vision and rephrased a few things.

### Reactions

- Added a paragraph on general reaction timing and cleaned up other descriptions throughout the rules accordingly.

### AC-less defence

- Removed the Constitution Modifier from the base Damage Reduction.

- Defensive Reactions are now rolled with disadvantage against critical hits.
- Size now impacts Missing Threshold.

### Dodging

- Dodging Bonus is reduced when wearing medium armour or heavy armour.
- Added passage that allows the use of the Evasive Stance as a Bonus Action for some characters.
- Made much of the wording more concise.
- Dodge & Roll can now also be used against area effects.

### Blocking

- Blocking is now a skill that depends on shields.
- Moved the flat Blocking Bonus to shields themselves.

### Parrying

- a bit cleaner now and also skill-ish.
- Now features a weapon lock mechanic.

**Monk** changes are new.

### Spell Manipulation

- Spell Manipulation is now a skill and thus no longer starts with a flat bonus.
- Extracted reaction timing and line of sight to the caster to be prerequisites for all manipulation options. This is the same as before, but the options are now more quickly read.
- Thwart can now be buffed by spending a spell slot.
- Amplify can now fail, unless a spell slot is spent.
- Weaken can now turn the saving throw into a success when a spell slot is spent.

### Surge Dice

- Added an option to improve Initiative.
- Restricted Power to Attack Rolls and Damage.
- Renamed Speed to Swiftess. You can now use the gained movement immediately.

## 32 Changes for v0.5

### General

- slightly better wording
- a few more links
- a bit more elaboration

### Reactions

- Tripping up (new)
  - You can now make a shove attack as a Reaction to trip up a moving creature

### AC-less defence

- Clarified intentions
- adjusted the Battle Masters' Evasive Footwork and Riposte
- adjusted the Hunters' Multiattack Defence
- adjusted the Dual Wielder Feat

### Dodging - Dodging Bonus

- Now only takes Acrobatics (to buff DEX a bit)
- adjusted the Rogues' and Hunters' Uncanny Dodge

### Parrying

- made multi-weapon-parrying possible
- adjusted the Defensive Duelist Feat

### 33 Changes for vo.4

#### Spell Manipulation (new)

- possibility to do stuff with and against spells
- Thwart
  - make a spell attack miss
- Weaken
  - improve the saving throw for a creature affected by a spell
- Amplify
  - improve the spell of an ally

### 34 Changes for vo.3

#### General

- reordered the chapters to make more sense

#### Reactions - Reserving Actions

- now only gives one Reaction per Action

#### Dodging

- added elaboration on the idea
- Dodging Bonus (new)
  - Value to add to a dodging ability check
  - = 5 + either Athletics or Acrobatics
- Dodge & Roll
  - increased distance to 10 feet

#### Parrying (new)

- you can now use a reaction to parry, nice
- Parrying Bonus
  - value to add to a parrying ability check
  - = 5 + attack bonus of the parry weapon

- Parry  
allows you to parry a melee attack, potentially reducing it's damage to 0
- Parrying Stance
  - allows you to parry more
- Battle Master - Parry
  - reworked to fit
- Monster Parries
  - adjusted existing parries accordingly

### Surge Dice

- usage needn't be announced at the start of an action anymore
- removed Regeneration
- Tenacity reintroduced
  - now only gives temporary HP until the start of your next turn
- Speed
  - no longer scales with the roll
  - gives 10ft. of movement speed per die spent on this option
- Skill (new)
  - add the roll to any one roll you make
  - replaces multiple other previous options
- Last Stand -> Dying Struggle
  - now only triggers once when dropping below 25 maxHP
- Elation
  - now triggers after applying the effects of the attack

## 35 Changes for vo.2

### Reactions - Free Reactions (new)

- every turn, in addition to a Reaction, you also have one Free Reaction that can be used for some stuff.

### Vision & Focus

- More precise wording

- Switch Focus now takes a Free Reaction instead of a Reaction
- Switch Focus can also be used as a Free Action
- Draw Focus (new)
  - You can draw the focus of a creature somewhere else through various means.
- Losing Focus (new)
  - You now lose focus under certain circumstances.

### AC-less defence

- Damage Reduction
  - now only reduces non-spell damage
  - cleaned up wording
- Shields
  - cleaned up wording

### Blocking

- Blocking Bonus (new)
  - value to add to a blocking ability check
  - = 8 + either Strength mod or Dexmod + Proficiency (if proficient with shields)
- Defensive Stance & Protective Stance
  - limited the uses to the proficiency bonus

### Dodging - Evasive Stance

- limited the uses to the proficiency bonus

### Variable attack actions

- tried to add it, but the PHB was faster

## 36 Changes for vo.1

### Vision & Focus - Escape Focus

- only against larger creatures

- only Acrobatics, not Stealth

#### AC-less defence - Damage Reduction

- only reduces non-magical damage

#### Surge Dice

- specified that their use has to be announced at the start of the action they are used with to clean up intent
- removed Tenacity (temp HP)