

Shadowdark House Rules

COMBAT

Initiative. At the start of combat all players make a **DC 12 DEX check**.

- ▶ PCs that are successful go before the adversaries (in DEX order).
- ▶ PCs that are unsuccessful go after the adversaries (in DEX order).
- ▶ Powerful adversaries may increase the DC of the DEX check.

Sundered Shields. A PC may avoid the effects of a critical hit by destroying a shield they are currently wielding.

Dual Wielding. Fighters can carry two one-handed weapons. When rolling damage, both weapon dice are rolled and the highest value is used.

Critical Hits. A roll of a natural 20 in combat means that the attacker gets double-damage against its victim.

- ▶ Double-damage = Full Weapon Damage + (Normal Damage Roll + Modifiers)

FUMBLES

A roll of a natural 1 on a D20 is a Fumble.

Melee Attack Fumbles. Causes a permanent -1 damage mod to the melee weapon or temporarily damages a ranged weapon being used (broken bow string for example). Damage is cumulative and weapons will need to be repaired or replaced.

Ranged Attack Fumbles. May also strike a different target in range, including allies.

Stat Check Fumbles. Causes a Crawling Die roll.

CRAWLING CLOCK

When the characters enter a dungeon or other dangerous location a crawling clock starts. The clock begins at 20 and is reduced at the end of each round by rolling the Crawling Die that starts as a D6.

Crawling Die. Rolled at the end of each round to reduce the Crawling Clock by the amount rolled. Maximum die values “explode” and trigger another roll.

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Random Encounters. A random encounter will occur when the Crawling Clock is reduced to 0.

Darkness Descends. If the party's light source goes out without another one lit, the Crawling Die type is increased (e.g. D6 to D8).

EXHAUSTION

Exhaustion is long-term physical and mental fatigue.

Gaining Exhaustion. Things that can cause Exhaustion:

- ▶ Being reduced to 0 HP
- ▶ Running out of Rations
- ▶ Interrupted Rest with failed CON check
- ▶ GM's discretion

Effects of Exhaustion. For each level of Exhaustion, characters reduce their maximum gear slots by one. If all gear slots are full, an item of the player's choice is removed.

- ▶ 10 Exhaustion levels = PC Death.

Removing Exhaustion. A character removes all Exhaustion by spending

at least a week of Downtime.

RESTING

Full (8+ hours). If in the wilderness, each character must spend 1 Ration and 1 Torch each. After Resting, characters recover all spells, stat damage, and lost hit points.

Downtime (1+ weeks). Recover all HP and spells, recover stat damage, clear exhaustion and other status effects.



DEATH & DYING

Wounded. When a character drops to 0 HP, they suffer a level of exhaustion due to their wound.

Death Timer. Dying rounds are equal to 1 plus the character's CON mod. (minimum of 1). Any damage taken reduces the Death Timer.

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LUCK TOKENS

Sometimes the GM awards a luck token to a player for exceptional roleplaying, heroism, or just plain coolness. Big sacrifices, moving speeches, or incredibly daring maneuvers might be worthy of luck tokens, whether or not the characters' actions were successful.

Starting Luck. Every level one character begins the session with a single luck token.

No Limit. There is no limit to the number of luck tokens that a PC might have.

Abilities & Spells. PCs may only gain one luck token from a given source at any time. They may be granted another luck token from that source once they use the existing one.

Locked Fumbles. Luck tokens *cannot* be used to reroll a natural 1 on a D20 roll.

Fumble Reduction. A PC *can* use a Luck Token to negate the effects of a fumble.

Transfer. A PC may give one Luck

Token to another PC.

GM Disadvantage. A Luck Token can be used by PCs to force the GM to make any roll with Disadvantage. Must be declared before the roll is made.



LIGHTING A TORCH

- ▶ Lighting a Torch when you can see requires no check.
- ▶ Lighting a Torch in the dark requires a **12** Intelligence or Dexterity check at **Disadvantage** (since you can't see).
- ▶ Adjudicate as usual, but if in doubt use **DC 12**.

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SAVING THROW CONVERSIONS

- ▶ **STR** for **Hold** or **Paralysis**.
- ▶ **DEX** for things that are "dodgeable" like **Breath, Rays, Wands, Rods, Staffs**.
- ▶ **CON** for things that kill or alter your body like **Poison, Death, Petrification, Doom, Polymorph, Disease**.
- ▶ **INT** for things that require thought.
- ▶ **WIS** for things that test your mind like **Spells** or **Illusions**.
- ▶ **CHA** for things that test strength of personality or will.
- ▶ does not function, but can be tried again.

GEAR SLOTS

Gear Slots work as written with the following differences.

Worn.

Small. Small items can fit three in one slot.

- ▶ A ball of twine, a jar of glue or larger pieces of jewelry that aren't worn would also fit in this category.

Petty. Petty items can fit ten in one slot.

- ▶ A spool of thread, a whistle or small pieces of jewelry like rings that aren't worn would also fit in this category.

MAGIC

Detect Magic is a Core Spell.

Wizards automatically know the Detect Magic spell and it doesn't count towards their known spells.



Healing Magic Limitation. Most healing magic will only work fully once per day per character. After that, any additional healing will require a successful DC 15 CON check or incur 1d2 CON damage and a level of Exhaustion. CON damage will last until a full Rest. See Exhaustion rule.

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HORROR RULES

Horror Check. Faced with a powerful and malign evil from the Outer Dark or an Eldritch Horror's impossible geometry and nonsensical biology, this check determines if a character's mind can endure the strain, creating consequences that reinforce a tone of fear and consequences beyond simple physical harm.

- ▶ Each character must test their resolve with a **Wisdom Check** against the horror's DC
- ▶ Those whose nerve has already been broken by a prior failure suffer **Disadvantage**
- ▶ An ally can use their Action to try and break through the fear with a **Charisma Check**, matching the DC of the original horror



* With many thanks to Frank Mitchell - <https://frank-mitchell.com/rpg/shadowdark/house-rule/horror/>

Horror Check Chart

Result	Reaction
Critical Success	Advantage on next Horror Check
\geq DC	Act Normally
\geq DC - 2	Roll 1d6 - 2
\geq DC - 4	Roll 1d6 + 0
\geq DC - 6	Roll 1d6 + 2
\geq DC - 8 or less	Roll 1d6 + 4
Critical Failure	Roll 2d6 with Disadvantage



Horror Effect Chart

Total	Effect
1-2	Scream: Let out a single piercing cry that everyone and everything can hear and lose next action
3-4	Tremble: Shake uncontrollably; all DEX tasks are at Disadvantage for the next 1d6 combat actions or the next crawling turn
5-6	Freeze: Do nothing for 2d6 combat actions or the next crawling turn
7-8	Flee: Run as fast as possible from the HORROR
9-10	Fight: Attack the HORROR or a nearby target in a frenzy
11-12	Faint: Lose consciousness and drop where you're standing