

Variant: Active Defense

Instead of a static armor class, a character rolls a defense against each attack. A character's defense is divided into the following categories, each of which represents a different method of deflection or evasion. Since defense actions are not counted against a character's actions taken, he may block or parry up to his maximum number of times per round even if he cannot take more than one attack (if, for example, he has moved more than 5 feet). A character can attempt to dodge any attack, but he loses his dexterity bonus to dodge in any situation that he would lose his dexterity bonus to AC.

1. Block

A character wielding a shield may block incoming melee and ranged attacks of which he is aware. A character may block once per round for each attack in his base attack sequence. The bonus for this defense is the character's attack bonus plus the shield bonus, modified by any circumstantial modifiers. Successive block actions use the same -5 progression as attacks. Circumstantial modifiers are listed in Table 1: Blocking Circumstance Modifiers. These can be summarized by the following rules of thumb; when only performing one type of action, there is a +4 modifier; when performing two, there is no modifier; when performing all three, there is a -2 modifier. Only characters proficient with shields may use this defense.

Table 1: Blocking Circumstance Modifiers

| <u>Circumstances</u> | <u>Attack</u> | <u>Parry</u> | <u>Block</u> |
|------------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| All out attack | +4 | --- | --- |
| Parrying only | --- | +4 | --- |
| Blocking only | --- | --- | +4 |
| Attacking and parrying | 0 | 0 | --- |
| Attacking and blocking | 0 | --- | 0 |
| All actions | -2 | -2 | -2 |

2. Parry

A character wielding a melee weapon can parry melee attacks he is aware of. Ranged attacks cannot normally be parried. The parry bonus is the same as the attack bonus of the weapon, including any penalties for charge, power attack, two-weapon fighting, etc. The number of parries that can be made with a weapon is equal to the maximum number of attacks in the character's base attack sequence. Each parry is taken at the appropriate attack bonus with the normal -5 progression for successive parries. A character wielding two weapons gets the same number of parry actions with the off-hand weapon as he has attacks in his base attack sequence rather than the number of off-hand attacks he can make. The bonus for this defense is the character's attack bonus plus the weapon bonus plus the character's dexterity modifier, modified by any circumstantial modifiers. Two-weapon fighting penalties apply to attacks and parries as normal, except that off-hand penalties do not apply to parry actions. The circumstantial modifiers to parrying are listed in Table 2: Two-Weapon Fighting Modifiers. This replaces Table 8-2 on page 125

of the PHB and integrates the information from Table 1: Blocking Circumstance Modifiers.

Table 2: Two-Weapon Fighting Modifiers

| Circumstances | | Primary attack | Offhand attack | Primary parry | Offhand parry |
|--|------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| Normal Penalties | Parrying only | --- | --- | -2 | -2 |
| | Primary attack + parry | -4 | --- | -4 | -4 |
| | All actions | -6 | -10 | -6 | -6 |
| Off-hand weapon is light | Parrying only | --- | --- | 0 | 0 |
| | Primary attack + parry | -2 | --- | -2 | -2 |
| | All actions | -4 | -8 | -4 | -4 |
| Two-weapon fighting | Parrying only | --- | --- | 0 | 0 |
| | Primary attack + parry | -2 | --- | -2 | -2 |
| | All actions | -4 | -8 | -4 | -4 |
| Off-hand weapon is light, Two-weapon fighting | Parrying only | --- | --- | +2 | +2 |
| | Primary attack + parry | 0 | --- | 0 | 0 |
| | All actions | -2 | -6 | -2 | -2 |
| Ambidexterity | All actions | -6 | -6 | -6 | -6 |
| Two-weapon fighting | All actions | -4 | -4 | -4 | -4 |
| Off-hand weapon is light, Two-weapon fighting, Ambidexterity | All actions | -2 | -2 | -2 | -2 |

3. Dodge

Any character can dodge an attack, though in circumstances where AC would be denied a dexterity bonus, the same is true of dodge. Any attack can be dodged, even one which defeated a block or parry attempt. The dodge bonus is equal to the character's defense modifier. There is a cumulative -2 penalty to each successive dodge attempt.

4. Armor

Armor provides a protection bonus that acts as damage reduction.