

## VITALITY

This rule replaces Death Saves with Vitality, which represent the actual physical damage a character can sustain before dying. **Otherwise, the rules on hit points are unchanged.**

Once Hit Points are gone, all damage goes to Vitality, and once these are gone, the character is dead. Unlike hit points, Vitality is fixed at 1st level.

### WHAT HIT POINTS REPRESENT

Hit Points don't, and never have, represented the actual damage the body can sustain. A dagger to the heart will kill a 10th level character just as well as an elderly librarian, and one hit from a giant's club will end any character. Over time, however, the 10th level character has learned a bevy of tricks to deflect killing blows, to avoid death, along with sheer luck, and that's what hit points represent. He has not learned how to get stabbed with a short sword 11 times and survive.

In default rules, a 0 hit point character can never die from having their throat cut (maximum 2 death saves), which makes little sense. What we are doing is substituting a more thrilling mechanic for when a character actually takes real damage that cannot be mitigated, deflected, absorbed, or by sheer luck avoided. We are also giving players more control over the narrative when they are on death's door.

**Starting Vitality.** You have Vitality equal to your 1st level hit points. This number never changes unless your Constitution modifier changes.

**Death.** If you ever have 0 vitality points or 3 death points, you are dead.

**Reaching 0 hit points.** The player chooses to either (1) gain 1 death point and the condition *staggered*, or (2) gain the condition *unconscious*. If an enemy opts to knock you unconscious, you cannot choose to become staggered. All future damage goes against your Vitality.

### STAGGERED

You have 0 hit points. You gain 1 Death Point. You no longer have movement. All d20 rolls you make are with disadvantage, and all foes have advantage against your class abilities, such as spells, but not items such as wands. You lose this condition if you gain any hit points.

### DEATH POINTS

If you ever have 2 Death Points, you gain a lingering injury per DMG 272. If you ever have 3 Death Points, you die. Death Points can only be removed at the rate of 1 per long rest.

### TAKING A 3RD DEATH POINT

If a player chooses to take a 3rd death point, resulting in death, that player may, subject to DM approval, declare a final heroic action that can give advantage or disadvantage to the next roll an ally or foe makes.

### IN PLAY

Although you have no movement when staggered, you can use the Dash action to move. You cannot Dodge (requires movement speed) or Disengage (modifies your movement). In a heated battle, death points can quickly accumulate, and these rules eliminate the "whack a mole" combat. Note: like normal, excess damage when reaching 0 hit points is ignored unless it would outright kill the character.

### UNCONSCIOUS

Take 1 Vitality damage and make a DC 10 death saving throw to stabilize. On failure immediately take 1 more point of vitality damage and 1 damage at the start of your turns until stabilized. If you roll a natural 1, the extra vitality damage is 1d4 instead of 1.

*Spare the Dying* and the Medicine skill (DC10) stop further vitality damage.

### REGAINING HIT POINTS

No changes.

### REGAINING VITALITY

At the end of a long rest, regain your Constitution modifier in Vitality (minimum 1).

### MAGICAL HEALING

Magical healing can restore Vitality only when hit points are full.

Once at full hit points, every 10 points of magical healing, calculated as if the healing effect were cast at maximum effect, restores 1 Vitality Point.

A healing potion heals 2d4+2 hit points (maximum 10). One dose would heal 1 Vitality. A 1st level *healing word* spell would have no effect (1d4+4, maximum 8). As usual, round down healing to the nearest 10.

### SPECIAL

*Regeneration* no matter its number is counted as a full 10. Hence, a *Ring of Regeneration*, which restores 1d6, is counted as 10 so that every minute would heal 1 Vitality to a character already at full hit points.

### HEALING A STAGGERED CHARACTER

Because hit points are not at maximum, any healing to a staggered character does not restore Vitality. Rather, Hit Points would be restored, removing the staggered condition.