

Death Knight

Medium-Size Undead

Hit Dice: 9d12+27 (81 hp)

Initiative: +5 (+1 Dex +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 25 (+1 Dex, +11 (+3 Plate Mail) +3 (+2 Shield))

Attacks: +16/+11 (+3 Bastard sword) (+3 Longbow)

Damage: bastard sword 1d10+10; 2-handed sword (2d6+10) Longbow 1d8

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Cause fear, Darkness, Wall of Ice(As 20th Level Wizard), Fireball (As 20th Level Wizard)

Special Qualities: Undead, cold and electricity resistance 20, Detect magic (at will), Detect Invisibility(At Will), Dispel Magic(twice per day), Cannot be turned or dispelled

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +8

Abilities: Str 24, Dex 17, Con -, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 12

Skills: Balance +9, Diplomacy +9, Intimidate +13, Listen +14, Ride +10, Search +8, Spot +14

Feats: Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack.

Challenge Rating: 10

Organization: Solitary

Treasure: Double Standard

Alignment: Usually Chaotic Evil (any Evil)

ADV Range: By character class



Illustration By Daniel Biswick

dbeswick@online.no

The Death Knight – and there are only 12 of these creatures known to exist within any given campaign world – is a powerful form of undead created by an evil god, or demonlord from a fallen human or demi-human Barbarian, Fighter, Paladin, or Black Guard. Only the best warriors with the blackest hearts are picked by the powers to champion evil from the grave in the form of a Death Knight. The exact method of their choosing varies per the individual. Some petition the dark powers to attain this “honor,” while others’ crimes were so vile that they were sentenced to this eternal existence. Throughout the ages, the most powerful death knights were once good paladins who changed allegiances and willingly gave themselves over to evil near the time of their deaths.

Combat

Undead: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage. It has the power over undead equivalent to that of a 9th level cleric. It also has a magic resistance of 20, and if the resist magic roll is successful, a roll of a natural 20 indicates that the spell was reflected back at the caster.

Death Knights will either carry a +3 Bastard sword and a shield, or +3 2-handed sword. It is usually clad in a black suit of at least +3 plate mail. The DM may change these to more powerful magic items if she feels it appropriate.



The death knight can either be run straight out of the book, or it can be used as a template for an existing character. The prerequisites are that it must have once been at least 7th level of one of the following classes: barbarian, Fighter, Paladin, or a combined multi-class using the prestige class Black Guard. All ability scores must be greater than 10. Death knights tend towards chaotic evil, though they may be any evil alignment. An existing character will retain all of their skills and their feats from life, with the following exceptions: they cannot use any healing abilities, but they can use cause wounds abilities; animal empathy only works on mounts of evil alignments. In addition to the abilities they had in life, they will add the special attacks and special qualities of a Death knight at the rate listed below. Their hit points will increase by 1d12+27 (+1d12+3 per each additional level). After its initial creation is treated as multi-classed and it gains abilities either at the rate listed below, or normally as a fighter:

- Unlike most undead, Death knights cannot be turned by any cleric. They can be dispelled by *Holy Word*.
- Each Death Knight gains *resist magic* +20 (+1 per level).
- All Death knights involuntarily radiate *fear* in a 5' radius

Illustration by Todd Daniel detodd@rwtodd.com

- Death Knights are allowed to use any magic item not prohibited to fighters. Some death knights who were multi-classed in life can use Wizard or cleric items as well. It cannot use potions, oils or salves that require ingestion.

- Death Knight's weapons are either carried over from life (if they are better than +3) or are granted to them at the time of their creation.

- Death Knight's gain skills at a rate of +4 per level.

Death Knight's gain additional abilities as they gain death knight levels. Note that the following can either work as a template or a prestige class. As such, abilities that are automatically granted to the example of the death knight above take more time to acquire below.

- At first level a death knight radiates fear in a 5' radius, it can cast *detect magic*, and see *invisibility* at will.

- At 2nd level it can cast *dispel magic* twice per day.

- At 3rd level it can cast *wall of ice* at will.

- At 4th level it can cast one of the following spells, once per day: *power word stun*, *power word kill*, or *power word blind*. It can also summon an evil mount. They usually prefer Nightmares.

- At 5th level it can cast *symbol: fear* & *symbol: pain*, once per day.

- At 6th level it can cast *fireball* once per day.

- All of the death knight's spells function at twice its own level of ability, to a maximum of 20th level.