

CHAINMAIL

- a) For any weapon two or more classes higher than the attacker the ability to parry does not exist.
- b) For any weapon one class higher to three classes lower than the attacker the defender may parry the blow by subtracting two from the attacker's roll, but he has no counter blow.
- c) For any defender whose weapon is four to seven classes lower than the attacker, the defender has the option to give the first blow or parry the attacker's blow, by subtracting 2 from the attacker's roll. If the attacker equals the original requirement for a kill the higher weapon breaks the defender's weapon. If the parry is successful, the defender gets one counter blow.
- d) For any weapon whose class is eight or more classes lower than the attacker, the defender gets the first blow and may parry the second or strike the second. He subtracts one for the parry and a roll equal to the original kill requirement breaks the weapon. (Pikes, spears or lances of the attacker do get the first blow over lower class weapons if there is a charge. Here the length of the weapon prevents the defender, even with his lighter weapon, the ability to get the first blow.)

Melee Table: Note that each weapon listed has a number designating its class. The shorter and lighter the weapon, the lower its class. A man wielding a weapon four classes lower (1 vs. 5, 2 vs. 6, and so on) strikes two blows during every melee round. If a man has a weapon eight classes lower, he will strike three blows during every melee round.¹

GREYHAWK

Fighters with a dexterity of greater than 14 can use their unusual manual dexterity to attempt to dodge or parry opponents' attacks. For every point over 14 they are able to reduce their opponents' chances of hitting them by 1 (5%).²

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS (1979-1989)

Defensive Adjustment refers to the penalty or bonus applicable to a character's saving throws against certain forms of attack (such as fire ball, lightning bolts, etc.) due to dodging ability. It also applies to the character's parrying and/or dodging ability in missile or melee combat; in this case the penalty subtracts from the armour class of the character, making him or her easier to hit, while the bonus adds to the defensive value of the character's armour class, making him or her harder to hit.³

Parrying disallows any return attack that round, but the strength "to hit" bonus is then subtracted from the opponent's "to hit" dice roll(s), so the character is less likely to be hit.⁴

Weapons skill also enables the cavalier to parry more effectively than other sorts of fighters. Should a cavalier choose to parry rather than attack, all of the cavalier's "to hit" bonuses (from strength, specialisation, magical sword, etc.) can be used to subtract from an attacker's "to hit" die roll(s). Of course, only one attacker can be so affected. However, the cavalier can also use his or her shield to parry attacks from a second opponent, reducing that opponent's "to hit" die roll(s) by -1 plus any magical bonuses of the shield, also expressed as a negative number. Thus, a +1 magic shield could be used to parry so that "to hit" die roll(s) from an attacker were reduced by -2. By weapon and shield parrying, a cavalier can seek to thwart the attacks of two opponents. If a third is also attacking, such attacks will then be made as if the cavalier had no shield, since that instrument is being employed in defensive parrying. If the cavalier performs one or two parries, he or she cannot also attack, even though he or she may otherwise be entitled to more than 1 attack per round.⁵

¹ *Chainmail*, pp. 25-26.

² *Greyhawk*, p. 8.

³ *Player's Handbook*, p. 11.

⁴ *Player's Handbook*, p. 104

⁵ *Dragon #72*, pp. 6-7.

ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS (1989-2000)

During a one-minute combat round, each character is assumed to block many attempted attacks and see many of his own attacks blocked. In normal combat, characters parry all the time--there's no need to single out each parry. When a character deliberately chooses not to parry (a wizard casting a spell, for instance), his chance of being hit increases. Thus, choosing to parry, in and of itself, is not a separate option under the AD&D game rules. At the same time, the assumption is that characters in combat are constantly exposing themselves to some risk--trying to get a clear view of a target or looking for the opening to make an attack. There are times, however, when this is not the case. Sometimes, the only thing a character wants to do is avoid being hit. In order to make himself harder to hit, a character can parry--forfeit all actions for the round--he can't attack, move, or cast spells. This frees the character to concentrate solely on defence. At this point, all characters but warriors gain an AC bonus equal to half their level. A 6th-level wizard would have a +3 bonus to his AC (lowering his AC by 3). A warrior gets a bonus equal to half his level plus one. A 6th-level fighter would gain a +4 AC bonus. Note that the benefit is not a perfect all-around defence, and it's not effective against rear or missile attacks. It applies only to those characters attacking the defender with frontal melee attacks. This optional defence has no effect against magical attacks, so it wouldn't do anything to protect a character from the force of a lightning bolt or fireball, for example.⁶

To perform this Parry, you must announce before initiative is rolled that you're going to Parry. (If you have more than one attack per round, you must announce how many of them are going to be Parries.) Then, during the round, the first time an attacker strikes at you (even if it's before your turn to strike), you roll your Parry. Roll to attack rolls your attacker, and roll vs. his AC (including all bonuses for shield, magical items, etc.). You can use your weapon at its normal chance to attack rolls, or your shield at a +2 to your chance to attack rolls (plus any magical bonus the shield confers). If you hit, his attack is parried and does you no damage. You can Parry thrown weapons, but not missile attacks (quarrels, arrows, sling stones, *magic missiles*, etc.). You don't necessarily have to Parry the very first attack made against you ... though that is the simplest way to do things. If you prefer, you can choose which attacker you're going to Parry. If a character Holds his Parry, anticipating that some other attacker will swing at him, but that attack never materializes (for example, because that specific opponent went somewhere else), and he's still suffering attacks this round, he can use that Parry against one of these other attacks. He may not, however, apply it against an attack that has already taken place.⁷

Sometimes the best thing to do is take cover and try not to get clobbered. Any character can choose to parry as a combat action. Parrying is a no-move action that is in effect for the entire combat round. If a character parries, he cannot move, attack, or cast spells. Parrying reduces a non-warrior character's Armour Class by one-half his level. A 6thlevel wizard with an AC of 5 who parries reduces his AC to 2. Warriors who choose to parry reduce their AC by one-half their level, plus one. A 6th-level fighter gets an AC bonus of 4 by parrying.⁸

A character can declare that she is using one of her attacks to block an opponent's strike. Blocking is a hard parry with a weapon that deflects an opponent's attack. Any weapon except rope-like things such as nets, lassoes, or slings can be used to block. When a character tries to block an attack, she makes a normal attack roll against AC 4. Her opponent makes a normal attack roll against her Armour Class. The strike is blocked if the character succeeds with a lower roll than her enemy succeeded with. If the attacker failed anyway, it's a miss no matter what the blocking character rolled. If the blocking character failed but her attacker succeeded, it's a hit despite the block attempt. If the character announces her block before initiative is rolled, she can block an attack even if it beats her action phase. If she decides to wait, she can only block attacks in her action phase or later. Blocking is an excellent tactic for characters with multiple attacks to use against characters or monsters with only one attack. A rapier specialist with a main-gauche in her off hand can use her off-hand weapon or one of the rapier attacks to block while using the rest of her attacks offensively.⁹

⁶ *Dungeon Master's Guide*, p. 61 or 87 (revised).

⁷ *Complete Fighter's Handbook*, p. 70.

⁸ *Combat & Tactics*, p. ??

⁹ *Combat & Tactics*, p. ??