



DEATH KNIGHT

To those who serve the lords of death and undeath, service beyond death is simply a condition of employment. And yet, not all undeaths are created equal; greater and more costly rituals may be performed to grant a servant greater degrees of power and autonomy.

The mightiest, if they prove worthy, are occasionally granted resurrection as a true champion of undeath, arising under their own burning will, endowed with the strength of ages and the glory of invincibility.

DEATH KNIGHT LORE

Arcana DC 20: A death knight's soul is forged into the weapon it wields, and wresting the weapon from its grasp can substantially weaken one, though they can only be destroyed through extraordinarily powerful magic, or by casting them into lava.

History DC 10: Death knights are mighty undead warriors, best owed undeath by the gods and masters they served in life. As their patrons occasionally discover, however, undeath can lend a different perspective on service and fealty.

History DC 15: Death knights have often been known to return to life, even after the complete destruction of their bodies, likely by the same dread gods that endowed them with undeath in the first place.

Religion DC 15: The weapon of a death knight traps the souls of those it slays, and must be destroyed before their spirits can pass on or be resurrected.

DEATH KNIGHT TACTICS

Death knights prioritize creatures affected by their Fearsome Gaze, repeatedly targeting the same creature until it succeeds on the save, then switching to another in range. They prefer to attack other martial characters, especially those that make a direct challenge to them, focusing on spellcasters only if one manages to land a debilitating spell. They save their Hellfire Orb for when they can catch three or more foes in its area.

Soul Weapons. The soul weapon of a slain death knight binds to the first to pick it up, granting it the following benefits for as long as it carries it:

- The wielder has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.
- The wielder's Strength increases by 2, to a maximum of 22.
- The wielder's attacks score a critical on a 19-20 against Frightened creatures.

The weapon may be destroyed by casting it into lava, or with a Dispel Magic, or similar magic, cast at 9th level.



DEATH KNIGHT

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 20 (Plate Armor, Shield)

Hit Points 180 (19d8 + 95)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	11 (+0)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws STR +12, CON +11, WIS +9

Skills Athletics +18, Perception +9

Damage Immunities Necrotic, Poison

Condition Immunities Exhaustion, Frightened, Poisoned

Senses Darkvision 120 ft. (penetrates magical darkness), Passive Perception 19

Languages Abyssal, Common

Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

Soul Bound in Steel. The death knight's soul resides in its weapon. While it wields its weapon, it has resistance to all damage but force and radiant. If it is disarmed, its movement speed is halved and it can't take reactions.

If its weapon is intact, a destroyed Death Knight gains a new body in 1d10 days, regaining all its hit points and becoming active again. The new body appears within 5 feet of the weapon.

Fear Eater. The death knight scores a critical hit on a roll of 17-20 on attacks made against a creature that is Frightened.

Magic Resistance. The death knight has advantage on saving throws against spells and magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. The death knight uses its Fearsome Gaze and makes two melee attacks, one of which it may replace with a Slaying Smite.

Soulblade. Melee Weapon Attack: +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 15 (2d8 + 6) slashing damage plus 13 (3d8) necrotic damage. A creature killed by this damage has its soul absorbed into the blade, and cannot be revived while the blade is intact.

Fearsome Gaze. One creature the death knight can see within 60 feet must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or be Frightened until the end of the death knight's next turn.

Slaying Smite (Recharge 5-6, 5th Level Spell, Concentration). The death knight wreaths its blade in deathly energies. The time the death knight hits with an attack, the attack deals an additional 36 (8d8) necrotic damage. If the attack reduces a creature below 20 hit points, the creature must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or die.

Hellfire Orb (1/Day, 7th Level Spell). The death knight hurls a magical ball of fire that explodes at a point it can see within 120 feet of it. Each creature in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on that point must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or take 21 (6d6) fire damage and 21 (6d6) necrotic damage and be knocked prone, or take half as much damage on a success.

Reactions

Counterattack. The death knight adds 6 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. If this causes the attack to miss, the death knight may make a melee attack as part of this reaction.

Overpower. As a reaction to missing a creature with a melee attack, the death knight rerolls its attack. If this causes the attack to hit, the target must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone and be unable to stand on its following turn.

Legendary Actions

The death knight can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below.

No Escape. One creature the death knight can see must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw or be dragged up to 20 feet toward it. A flying creature that fails this save by 5 or more falls prone.

Still Arcana. Each creature the death knight can see that is concentrating on a spell affecting it must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or lose concentration. The death knight may take this action even while incapacitated.

Gauntlet Strike. One creature within 5 feet must succeed on a DC 20 Strength saving throw or be pushed 10 feet away and knocked prone.

Battle Rush (Costs 2 Actions). The death knight moves up to half its speed. If it takes any damage during this movement, it regains its reaction.

ART CREDITS

- Josu Vess, Lich Knight by Tyler Jacobson
- Death Knight Wielding Mace by Steve Argyle

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If you've got any monsters you'd like to see statted up by me, leave me a comment over in the permanent thread in [r/bettermonsters](#) and I'll put something together for you.

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