

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons[®]

Player's Handbook

2nd Edition

Rules Supplement

The Complete Paladin's Handbook

Sample file

by Rick Swan





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*To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,
 To speak no slander, no, nor listen to it,
 To honor his own word as if his god's,
 To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
 To love one maiden only [...]
 And worship her by years of noble deeds....*

—credo of the Knights of the Round Table
 (Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *The Idylls of the King*)

What comes to mind when you think of the paladin? For many of us, his image is indelibly linked to that of the medieval knight, the supreme hero of the Middle Ages. Clad in shining armor, his lance gleaming in the morning sun, the knight is the quintessence of gallantry, the champion of the powerless, and the personification of courage—at least as we remember him from history.

Though *The Complete Paladin's Handbook* encompasses aspects of the historical knight, it casts a much wider net. While you'll find the horse soldiers who served the lords of the feudal age, you'll also meet riders of unicorns, killers of dragons, and nemeses of the undead; men and women who ride majestic war horses and wield magical swords; and worshippers of ancient religions and followers of arcane philosophies, some serving powerful churches and monarchies, others answering only to their own consciences.

This book focuses on the paladin's motivations, special abilities, and unique restrictions—that is, all of the elements that distinguish him from other character types and make him so challenging to play. We probe the paladin's personality, unravel his emotions, and try to understand what makes him tick; look at his role in an adventuring party and in society as a whole; and examine what his religion demands of him and what he expects from himself. Along the way, we discuss more than a dozen new character kits, show you how to design a code of behavior for your paladin, and describe new proficiencies and equipment.

For your convenience, this book compiles and summarizes all of the relevant rules from the *DUNGEON MASTER™ Guide* (abbreviated *DMG* in the text) and *Player's Handbook* (abbreviated *PH*).



It also includes a new set of character sheets in the back of the book, designed to record virtually every detail about a paladin character.

Keep in mind that all of this material is *optional*. Every idea must have the approval of the DM™ before it can be incorporated into a campaign.

All of the material in this book uses the AD&D® 2nd Edition rules. Players using the original AD&D *PH* and *DMG* should *carefully* adapt this handbook to the campaign. For reference, the appendix of this book summarizes original AD&D paladin rules.

The *Unearthed Arcana* book, a supplement to the original AD&D rules, declared the paladin to be a sub-class of the cavalier. In the AD&D 2nd Edition game, this no longer applies. The paladin remains tied to the fighter group, with the cavalier, in a streamlined form, reworked as a character kit in *The Complete Fighter's Handbook*.

Many concepts in *The Complete Paladin's Handbook* draw heavily on the proficiency rules introduced in the AD&D 2nd Edition *PH*. We strongly recommend you use proficiencies in your campaign and review the rules before proceeding.

The Roots of the Paladin

The life of the historical knight was less romantic than fictional accounts would have us believe. The word *cniht* was first used to describe the sons of French peasants who arrived in England following the Norman conquest in 1066. Crude in manner and appearance, the *cniht* soldiers attracted attention because of their expensive armor and horsemanship, a skill held in high regard. Despite these advantages, the *cniht* were still second-class citizens, a notch above peasants but decidedly inferior to the aristocracy.

With feudalism the status of the *cniht* (eventually Anglicized to *knights*) improved dramatically. The feudal era began when wealthy lords gave small pieces of land to groups of peasants in exchange for their labor, and struggling landowners signed over their property to a lord in return for protection. The relationship was secured by a bond of honor and a clear understanding of their mutual responsibilities. In time, all parties in feudal relationships became part of the nobility, and feudal offers were extended only to those of acceptable stature.

As a lord's holdings grew, so did his need for skilled warriors to defend against foreign invaders. Knights made ideal candidates. In the feudal tradition, lords secured their services by offering them property, grand estates including much farmland, many buildings, and even the

peasants who provided the labor. As the knights accrued wealth, they also gained prestige, becoming a distinct and honored social class that was usually restricted to the sons of aristocrats.

The status of the knights solidified in the 11th century when the church, prompted by self-interest and a genuine desire to promote order in an increasingly anarchic society, gave its official sanction. Knighthood was declared a sacred calling, and the ordainment of new knights became a holy ritual. With this new accreditation came new responsibilities, formally defined in the code of chivalry, a set of principles based on religious ideals. While continuing in the lower ranks of the privileged class, the knight now symbolized the highest standards of moral behavior and was admired by peasants and royalty alike.

Though the knight commanded respect, he was rarely envied. His life was dangerous and brutal, marked by incessant confrontations and the constant threat of humiliation. Rather than adventuring for honor or pleasure, most engaged in a constant struggle for income, desperately seeking any and all opportunities to earn an honest living. The rigid chivalric code, which made abstract principles of loyalty more important than life itself, resulted in a death sentence for most knights. Few lived beyond age 30. Those who survived often spent their remaining years penniless and broken, depending on the charity of a society that had all but forgotten them.

Character Creation

This chapter compiles all of the statistics, adjustments, and level progressions from the *PH* and *DMG* pertaining to the paladin. Although no two paladins are exactly alike, all of them have these fundamentals in common.

Paladin Requirements

It takes an exceptional character to become a paladin, as reflected in the class qualifications listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Class Qualifications

Ability Requirements

Strength	12
Constitution	9
Wisdom	13
Charisma	17

Prime Requisites

Strength
Charisma

Races Allowed

Human

Alignments Allowed

Lawful good

A player who tries to generate a paladin by using Method I, described in Chapter 1 of the *PH*, may be rolling dice all day. Although the odds improve slightly when using Methods II-IV, only Methods V and VI give a reasonable, albeit slim, chance of producing the necessary numbers.

Although the strict ability requirements may frustrate a player wanting to create a paladin character, they're necessary to regulate play balance. Paladins are among the game's most formidable characters. If they were as easy to roll up as, say, warriors or mages, the surplus of powerful characters would make it difficult, perhaps impossible, for the DM to come up with encounters challenging enough for all members of a party. A DM may also have other reasons for limiting the paladin popula-

tion—for instance, the campaign world may discourage the development of paladins—or may restrict the number of paladins simply to enhance their mystique.

But if your DM is open to paladin player-characters, you might consider using Table 2 instead of dice rolls to generate the required ability scores. Roll 1d12 and use the indicated statistics.

Table 2: Pregenerated Ability Scores

D12	Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
1	12	8	16	10	15	17
2	17	10	10	9	14	17
3	12	9	12	10	16	18
4	15	13	15	11	14	17
5	14	16	9	15	18	17
6	12	11	11	9	13	18
7	18*	12	12	12	14	17
8	13	11	14	10	17	18
9	16	10	11	11	16	17
10	13	14	13	9	13	17
11	15	12	17	14	15	18
12	14	15	10	13	13	17

* Roll percentile dice for exceptional Strength.

Level Advancement

Paladins advance in level and hit points at the same rate as fighters. For each level up to 9, they gain 1d10 hit points. They receive 3 extra hit points at level 10 and beyond. Table 3 summarizes the paladin's level advancements, along with the corresponding THAC0 scores.

Keep two adjustments in mind:

- Paladins whose Strength and Charisma scores equal or exceed 16 earn a 10% bonus to all earned experienced points. A paladin must have a 16 or more in *both* of these abilities to qualify for the bonus.

- Unusually high Constitution scores award hit point adjustments. A paladin with a Constitution of 17 receives a +3 bonus per hit die, and a score of 18 grants a +4 bonus.



Table 3: Experience Levels

Level	XP Needed	Hit Dice (d10)	THAC0
1	0	1	20
2	2,250	2	19
3	4,500	3	18
4	9,000	4	17
5	18,000	5	16
6	36,000	6	15
7	75,000	7	14
8	150,000	8	13
9	300,000	9	12
10	600,000	9+3	11
11	900,000	9+6	10
12	1,200,000	9+9	9
13	1,500,000	9+12	8
14	1,800,000	9+15	7
15	2,100,000	9+18	6
16	2,400,000	9+21	5
17	2,700,000	9+24	4
18	3,000,000	9+27	3
19	3,300,000	9+30	2
20	3,600,000	9+33	1

Advancing in level, a paladin gets new proficiency slots, as shown on Table 4. Remember that a paladin suffers a -2 penalty when using a weapon without the required proficiency.

Table 4: Total Proficiency Slots

Level	Weapon	Nonweapon
1-2	4	3
3-5	5	4
6-8	6	5
9-11	7	6
12-14	8	7
15-17	9	8
18-20	10	9

Table 5 summarizes the saving throws applicable to each level. Unlike other characters, paladins receive a +2 bonus to all saving throws. For convenience, the paladin's modified throws are given in parentheses; for example, a 1st-level paladin must roll a 12 or better to avoid the effects of paralyzation.

Table 5: Saving Throws

Level	PPDM	RSW	PP	Breath	Spell
1-2	14 (12)	16 (14)	15 (13)	17 (15)	17 (15)
3-4	13 (11)	15 (13)	14 (12)	16 (14)	16 (14)
5-6	11 (9)	13 (11)	12 (10)	13 (11)	14 (12)
7-8	10 (8)	12 (10)	11 (9)	12 (10)	13 (11)
9-10	8 (6)	10 (8)	9 (7)	9 (7)	11 (9)
11-12	7 (5)	9 (7)	8 (6)	8 (6)	10 (8)
13-14	5 (3)	7 (5)	6 (4)	5 (3)	8 (6)
15-16	4 (2)	6 (4)	5 (3)	4 (2)	7 (5)
17+	3 (1)	5 (3)	4 (2)	4 (2)	6 (4)

Abbreviations

- PPDM = Paralyzation, Poison, or Death Magic
- RSW = Rod, Staff, or Wand
- PP = Petrification or Polymorph
- Breath = Breath Weapon

Armor and Weapons

As members of the warrior group, paladins can wear any type of armor. Regardless of the armor worn, paladins suffer no penalties to any of their special abilities.

Paladins can also wield any of the weapons listed in Chapter 6 of the *PH*. As they increase in level, they can make more than one attack per round, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Paladin Attacks Per Round

Level	Attacks/Round
1-6	1/round
7-12	3/2 rounds
13+	2/round

A paladin may fight with two weapons at the same time, holding one in each hand, providing the second weapon is smaller and lighter than the main weapon, and that he avoids using a shield. With these qualifications, the paladin may make an additional attack each round with the second weapon. However, fighting with two weapons simultaneously gives a penalty on both attack rolls. The base penalty is -2 for the main weapon and -4 for the