

# ARMOR

This page covers armor and shield categories, how armor affects Armor Class and other statistics, and the full catalog of armor descriptions. See [Wealth, Money & Special Materials](#) for currency and crafting materials, [Weapons](#) for weapons, and [Goods & Services](#) for adventuring gear.

## ARMOR

For most, armor is the simplest way to protect oneself in a world of rampant threats and dangers. Many characters can wear only the simplest of armors, and only some can use shields. To wear heavier armor effectively, a character can select the [Armor Proficiency](#) feats, but most classes are automatically proficient with the armors that work best for them.

Here is the format for armor entries (given as column headings on [Table: Armor and Shields](#)).

## COST

The cost in gold pieces of the armor for Small or Medium humanoid creatures. See [Table: Armor for Unusual Creatures](#) for armor prices for other creatures.

## ARMOR/SHIELD BONUS

Each type of armor grants an armor bonus to AC, while shields grant a shield bonus to AC. The armor bonus from a suit of armor doesn't stack with other effects or items that grant an armor bonus. Similarly, the shield bonus from a shield doesn't stack with other effects that grant a shield bonus.

## MAXIMUM DEX BONUS

This number is the maximum Dexterity bonus to AC that this type of armor allows. Dexterity bonuses in excess of this number are reduced to this number for the purposes of determining the wearer's AC. Heavier armors limit mobility, reducing the wearer's ability to dodge blows. This restriction doesn't affect any other Dexterity-related abilities.

Even if a character's Dexterity bonus to AC drops to 0 because of armor, this situation does not count as losing his Dexterity bonus to AC.

A character's encumbrance (the amount of gear carried, including armor) may also restrict the maximum Dexterity bonus that can be applied to his Armor Class.

## Shields

Shields do not affect a character's maximum Dexterity bonus, except for tower shields.

## ARMOR CHECK PENALTY

Any armor heavier than leather, as well as any shield, hurts a character's ability to use Dexterity- and Strength-based skills. An armor check penalty applies to all Dexterity- and Strength-based skill checks. A character's encumbrance may also incur an armor check penalty.

### **Shields**

If a character is wearing armor and using a shield, both armor check penalties apply.

### **Nonproficient with Armor Worn**

A character who wears armor and/or uses a shield with which he is not proficient takes the armor's (and/or shield's) armor check penalty on attack rolls as well as on all Dexterity- and Strength-based ability and skill checks. The penalty for nonproficiency with armor stacks with the penalty for shields.

### **Sleeping in Armor**

A character who sleeps in medium or heavy armor is automatically fatigued the next day. He takes a -2 penalty on Strength and Dexterity and can't charge or run. Sleeping in light armor does not cause fatigue.

## ARCANE SPELL FAILURE CHANCE

Armor interferes with the gestures that a spellcaster must make to cast an arcane spell that has a somatic component. Arcane spellcasters face the possibility of arcane spell failure if they're wearing armor. Bards can wear light armor and use shields without incurring any arcane spell failure chance for their bard spells.

### **Casting an Arcane Spell in Armor**

A character who casts an arcane spell while wearing armor must usually make an arcane spell failure check. The number in the Arcane Spell Failure Chance column on Table: Armor and Shields is the percentage chance that the spell fails and is ruined. If the spell lacks a somatic component, however, it can be cast with no chance of arcane spell failure.

### **Shields**

If a character is wearing armor and using a shield, add the two numbers together to get a single arcane spell failure chance.

## **SPEED**

Medium or heavy armor slows the wearer down. The number on Table: Armor and Shields is the character's speed while wearing the armor. Humans, elves, half-elves, and half-orcs have an unencumbered speed of 30 feet. They use the first column. Dwarves, gnomes, and halflings have an unencumbered speed of 20 feet. They use the second column. Remember, however, that a dwarf's land speed remains 20 feet even in medium or heavy armor or when carrying a medium or heavy load.

## **Shields**

Shields do not affect a character's speed.

## **WEIGHT**

This column gives the weight of the armor sized for a Medium wearer. Armor fitted for Small characters weighs half as much, and armor for Large characters weighs twice as much.

ARMOR DESCRIPTIONS

Table: Armor and Shields

| ARMOR                                                                                                                                                                             | COST     | ARMOR/SHIELD BONUS | MAXIMUM DEX BONUS | ARMOR CHECK PENALTY | ARCANE SPELL FAILURE CHANCE | SPEED   | WEIGHT1 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|---------|---------|
| 30 ft.                                                                                                                                                                            | 20 ft.   |                    |                   |                     |                             |         |         |
| Light armor                                                                                                                                                                       |          |                    |                   |                     |                             |         |         |
| Padded                                                                                                                                                                            | 5 gp     | +1                 | +8                | 0                   | 5%                          | 30 ft.  | 20 ft.  |
| Leather                                                                                                                                                                           | 10 gp    | +2                 | +6                | 0                   | 10%                         | 30 ft.  | 20 ft.  |
| Studded leather                                                                                                                                                                   | 25 gp    | +3                 | +5                | -1                  | 15%                         | 30 ft.  | 20 ft.  |
| Chain shirt                                                                                                                                                                       | 100 gp   | +4                 | +4                | -2                  | 20%                         | 30 ft.  | 20 ft.  |
| Medium armor                                                                                                                                                                      |          |                    |                   |                     |                             |         |         |
| Hide                                                                                                                                                                              | 15 gp    | +4                 | +4                | -3                  | 20%                         | 20 ft.  | 15 ft.  |
| Scale mail                                                                                                                                                                        | 50 gp    | +5                 | +3                | -4                  | 25%                         | 20 ft.  | 15 ft.  |
| Chainmail                                                                                                                                                                         | 150 gp   | +6                 | +2                | -5                  | 30%                         | 20 ft.  | 15 ft.  |
| Breastplate                                                                                                                                                                       | 200 gp   | +6                 | +3                | -4                  | 25%                         | 20 ft.  | 15 ft.  |
| Heavy armor                                                                                                                                                                       |          |                    |                   |                     |                             |         |         |
| Splint mail                                                                                                                                                                       | 200 gp   | +7                 | +0                | -7                  | 40%                         | 20 ft.2 | 15 ft.2 |
| Banded mail                                                                                                                                                                       | 250 gp   | +7                 | +1                | -6                  | 35%                         | 20 ft.2 | 15 ft.2 |
| Half-plate                                                                                                                                                                        | 600 gp   | +8                 | +0                | -7                  | 40%                         | 20 ft.2 | 15 ft.2 |
| Full plate                                                                                                                                                                        | 1,500 gp | +9                 | +1                | -6                  | 35%                         | 20 ft.2 | 15 ft.2 |
| Shields                                                                                                                                                                           |          |                    |                   |                     |                             |         |         |
| Buckler                                                                                                                                                                           | 5 gp     | +1                 | -                 | -1                  | 5%                          | -       | -       |
| Shield, light wooden                                                                                                                                                              | 3 gp     | +1                 | -                 | -1                  | 5%                          | -       | -       |
| Shield, light steel                                                                                                                                                               | 9 gp     | +1                 | -                 | -1                  | 5%                          | -       | -       |
| Shield, heavy wooden                                                                                                                                                              | 7 gp     | +2                 | -                 | -2                  | 15%                         | -       | -       |
| Shield, heavy steel                                                                                                                                                               | 20 gp    | +2                 | -                 | -2                  | 15%                         | -       | -       |
| Shield, tower                                                                                                                                                                     | 30 gp    | +43                | +2                | -10                 | 50%                         | -       | -       |
| Extras                                                                                                                                                                            |          |                    |                   |                     |                             |         |         |
| Armor spikes                                                                                                                                                                      | +50 gp   | -                  | -                 | -                   | -                           | -       | -       |
| Gauntlet, locked                                                                                                                                                                  | 8 gp     | -                  | -                 | special             | n/a4                        | -       | -       |
| Shield spikes                                                                                                                                                                     | +10 gp   | -                  | -                 | -                   | -                           | -       | -       |
| 1 Weight figures are for armor sized to fit Medium characters. Armor fitted for Small characters weighs half as much, and armor fitted for Large characters weighs twice as much. |          |                    |                   |                     |                             |         |         |
| 2 When running in heavy armor, you move only triple your speed, not quadruple.                                                                                                    |          |                    |                   |                     |                             |         |         |

### **Armor Spikes**

You can have spikes added to your armor, which allow you to deal extra piercing damage (see “spiked armor” on Table: Weapons) on a successful grapple attack. The spikes count as a martial weapon. If you are not proficient with them, you take a -4 penalty on grapple checks when you try to use them. You can also make a regular melee attack (or off-hand attack) with the spikes, and they count as a light weapon in this case. (You can’t also make an attack with armor spikes if you have already made an attack with another off-hand weapon, and vice versa.) An enhancement bonus to a suit of armor does not improve the spikes’ effectiveness, but the spikes can be made into magic weapons in their own right.

### **Banded Mail**

Banded mail is made up of overlapping strips of metal, fastened to a leather backing. The suit includes gauntlets.

### **Breastplate**

Covering only the torso, a breastplate is made up of a single piece of sculpted metal.

### **Buckler**

This small metal shield is worn strapped to your forearm. You can use a bow or crossbow without penalty while carrying it. You can also use your shield arm to wield a weapon (whether you are using an off-hand weapon or using your off hand to help wield a two-handed weapon), but you take a -1 penalty on attack rolls while doing so. This penalty stacks with those that may apply for fighting with your off hand and for fighting with two weapons. In any case, if you use a weapon in your off hand, you lose the buckler’s AC bonus until your next turn. You can cast a spell with somatic components using your shield arm, but you lose the buckler’s AC bonus until your next turn. You can’t make a shield bash with a buckler.

### **Chain Shirt**

Covering the torso, this shirt is made up of thousands of interlocking metal rings.

### **Chainmail**

Unlike a chain shirt, chainmail covers the legs and arms of the wearer. The suit includes gauntlets.

### **Full Plate**

This metal suit includes gauntlets, heavy leather boots, a visored helmet, and a thick layer of padding that is worn underneath the armor. Each suit of full plate must be individually fitted to its owner by a master armorsmith, although a captured suit can be resized to fit a new owner at a cost of 200 to 800 (2d4 × 100) gold pieces.

### **Gauntlet, Locked**

This armored gauntlet has small chains and braces that allow the wearer to attach a weapon to the gauntlet so that it cannot be dropped easily. It provides a +10 bonus to your Combat Maneuver Defense to keep from being disarmed in combat. Removing a weapon from a locked gauntlet or attaching a weapon to a locked gauntlet is a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity.

The price given is for a single locked gauntlet. The weight given applies only if you’re wearing a breastplate, light armor, or no armor. Otherwise, the locked gauntlet replaces a gauntlet you already have as part of the armor.

While the gauntlet is locked, you can't use the hand wearing it for casting spells or employing skills. (You can still cast spells with somatic components, provided that your other hand is free.)

Like a normal gauntlet, a locked gauntlet lets you deal lethal damage rather than nonlethal damage with an unarmed strike.

### **Half-Plate**

Combining elements of full plate and chainmail, half-plate includes gauntlets and a helm.

### **Hide**

Hide armor is made up of the tanned and preserved skin of any thick-skinned beast.

### **Leather**

Leather armor is made up of pieces of hard boiled leather carefully sewn together.

### **Padded**

Little more than heavy, quilted cloth, this armor provides only the most basic protection.

### **Scale Mail**

Scale mail is made up of dozens of small overlapping metal plates. The suit includes gauntlets.

### **Shield, Heavy; Wooden**

You strap a shield to your forearm and grip it with your hand. A heavy shield is so heavy that you can't use your shield hand for anything else.

### **Wooden**

Wooden shields offer the same basic protection as steel ones, though they respond differently to spells and effects.

### **Shield Bash Attacks**

You can bash an opponent with a heavy shield. See "shield, heavy" on Table: Weapons for the damage dealt by a shield bash. Used this way, a heavy shield is a martial bludgeoning weapon. For the purpose of penalties on attack rolls, treat a heavy shield as a one-handed weapon. If you use your shield as a weapon, you lose its AC bonus until your next turn. An enhancement bonus on a shield does not improve the effectiveness of a shield bash made with it, but the shield can be made into a magic weapon in its own right.

### **Shield, Heavy; Steel**

You strap a shield to your forearm and grip it with your hand. A heavy shield is so heavy that you can't use your shield hand for anything else.

### **Steel**

Steel shields offer the same basic protection as wooden ones, though they respond differently to spells and effects.

### **Shield Bash Attacks**

You can bash an opponent with a heavy shield. See “shield, heavy” on Table: Weapons for the damage dealt by a shield bash. Used this way, a heavy shield is a martial bludgeoning weapon. For the purpose of penalties on attack rolls, treat a heavy shield as a one-handed weapon. If you use your shield as a weapon, you lose its AC bonus until your next turn. An enhancement bonus on a shield does not improve the effectiveness of a shield bash made with it, but the shield can be made into a magic weapon in its own right.

### **Shield, Light; Wooden**

You strap a shield to your forearm and grip it with your hand. A light shield’s weight lets you carry other items in that hand, although you cannot use weapons with it.

### **Wooden**

Wooden shields offer the same basic protection as steel ones, though they respond differently to some spells and effects.

### **Shield Bash Attacks**

You can bash an opponent with a light shield. See “shield, light” on Table: Weapons for the damage dealt by a shield bash. Used this way, a light shield is a martial bludgeoning weapon. For the purpose of penalties on attack rolls, treat a light shield as a light weapon. If you use your shield as a weapon, you lose its AC bonus until your next turn. An enhancement bonus on a shield does not improve the effectiveness of a shield bash made with it, but the shield can be made into a magic weapon in its own right.

### **Shield, Light; Steel**

You strap a shield to your forearm and grip it with your hand. A light shield’s weight lets you carry other items in that hand, although you cannot use weapons with it.

### **Steel**

Steel shields offer the same basic protection as wooden ones, though they respond differently to some spells and effects.

### **Shield Bash Attacks**

You can bash an opponent with a light shield. See “shield, light” on Table: Weapons for the damage dealt by a shield bash. Used this way, a light shield is a martial bludgeoning weapon. For the purpose of penalties on attack rolls, treat a light shield as a light weapon. If you use your shield as a weapon, you lose its AC bonus until your next turn. An enhancement bonus on a shield does not improve the effectiveness of a shield bash made with it, but the shield can be made into a magic weapon in its own right.

### **Shield, Tower**

This massive wooden shield is nearly as tall as you are. In most situations, it provides the indicated shield bonus to your AC. As a standard action, however, you can use a tower shield to grant you total cover until the beginning of your next turn. When using a tower shield in this way, you must choose one edge of your space. That edge is treated as a solid wall for attacks targeting you only. You gain total cover for attacks that pass through this edge and no cover for attacks that do not pass through this edge (see Combat). The shield does not, however, provide cover against targeted spells; a spellcaster can cast a spell on you by targeting the shield you are holding. You cannot bash with a tower shield, nor can you use your shield hand for anything else.

When employing a tower shield in combat, you take a -2 penalty on attack rolls because of the shield's encumbrance.

### **Shield Spikes**

These spikes turn a shield into a martial piercing weapon and increase the damage dealt by a shield bash as if the shield were designed for a creature one size category larger than you (see "spiked shields" on Table: Weapons). You can't put spikes on a buckler or a tower shield. Otherwise, attacking with a spiked shield is like making a shield bash attack.

An enhancement bonus on a spiked shield does not improve the effectiveness of a shield bash made with it, but a spiked shield can be made into a magic weapon in its own right.

### **Splint Mail**

Splint mail is made up of metal strips, like banded mail. The suit includes gauntlets.

### **Studded Leather**

Similar to leather armor, this suit is reinforced with small metal studs.

## **MASTERWORK ARMOR**

Just as with weapons, you can purchase or craft masterwork versions of armor or shields. Such a well-made item functions like the normal version, except that its armor check penalty is lessened by 1.

A masterwork suit of armor or shield costs an extra 150 gp over and above the normal cost for that type of armor or shield.

The masterwork quality of a suit of armor or shield never provides a bonus on attack or damage rolls, even if the armor or shield is used as a weapon.

All magic armors and shields are automatically considered to be of masterwork quality.

You can't add the masterwork quality to armor or a shield after it is created; it must be crafted as a masterwork item.

## **ARMOR FOR UNUSUAL CREATURES**

Armor and shields for unusually big creatures, unusually little creatures, and nonhumanoid creatures (such as horses) have different costs and weights from those given on Table: Armor and Shields. Refer to the appropriate line on Table: Armor for Unusual Creatures and apply the multipliers to cost and weight for the armor type in question.

Table: Armor for Unusual Creatures

| SIZE             | HUMANOID | NONHUMANOID |
|------------------|----------|-------------|
| Cost             | Weight   | Cost        |
| Tiny or smaller* | ×1/2     | ×1/10       |
| Small            | ×1       | ×1/2        |
| Medium           | ×1       | ×1          |
| Large            | ×2       | ×2          |
| Huge             | ×4       | ×5          |
| Gargantuan       | ×8       | ×8          |
| Colossal         | ×16      | ×12         |

\*Divide armor bonus by 2.

GETTING INTO AND OUT OF ARMOR

The time required to don armor depends on its type; see Table: Donning Armor.

Don

This column tells how long it takes a character to put the armor on. (One minute is 10 rounds.) Readyng (strapping on) a shield is only a move action.

Don Hastily

This column tells how long it takes to put the armor on in a hurry. The armor check penalty and armor bonus for hastily donned armor are each 1 point worse than normal.

Remove

This column tells how long it takes to get the armor off. Removing a shield from the arm and dropping it is only a move action.

Table: Donning Armor

| ARMOR TYPE                                                                                                                                                                                               | DON                    | DON HASTILY            | REMOVE                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Shield (any)                                                                                                                                                                                             | 1 move action          | n/a                    | 1 move action              |
| Padded, leather, hide, studded leather, or chain shirt                                                                                                                                                   | 1 minute               | 5 rounds               | 1 minute <sup>1</sup>      |
| Breastplate, scale mail, chainmail, banded mail, or splint mail                                                                                                                                          | 4 minutes <sup>1</sup> | 1 minute               | 1 minute <sup>1</sup>      |
| Half-plate or full plate                                                                                                                                                                                 | 4 minutes <sup>2</sup> | 4 minutes <sup>1</sup> | 1d4+1 minutes <sup>1</sup> |
| 1 If the character has some help, cut this time in half. A single character doing nothing else can help one or two adjacent characters. Two characters can't help each other don armor at the same time. |                        |                        |                            |
| 2 The wearer must have help to don this armor. Without help, it can be donned only hastily.                                                                                                              |                        |                        |                            |