

Swimming and drowning

- Make swim a check once per round in water.
- Success = swim at up to ½ speed as full-round action or ¼ speed as move action
- Fail by 4 or less, no progress
- Fail by 5 or more, go underwater
- If underwater (because of failed check or intentional), must hold breath
 - Hold breath for # rounds = 2x Con, but only if taking move or free actions
 - If take standard or full-round, duration decreases by 1 round
 - When time is up, make DC 10 Con check each round to hold breath, with DC increasing by 1 each round
 - Failure = begin to drown
- Each hour of swimming, DC20 swim check or d6 non-lethal from fatigue
- Creature with Swim speed does not need to make check to move; can take 10 on swim check; +8 on swim check
- Drown - first round, falls unconscious (0 hp); following round, drops to -1 hp and is dying; 3rd round, drowns.
- Unconscious characters must make Con checks when submerged (or becoming unconscious when submerged). Once failed, immediately drops to -1 hp. Drowns on following round.
- Paralyzed swimmer can't move and may drown.

Underwater combat -- applies when character is swimming, walking in chest-deep water, or walking along body of water

Condition	Attack/Damage		Movement	Off Balance? ¹
	Slashing or Bludgeoning	Piercing		
Freedom of movement	normal/normal	normal/normal	normal	No
Has a swim speed	-2/half	normal	normal	No
Successful Swim check	-2/half ²	normal	quarter or half ³	No
Firm footing ⁴	-2/half ²	normal	half	No
None of the above	-2/half ²	-2/half	normal	Yes

¹ Creatures flailing about in the water (usually because they failed their [Swim](#)checks) have a hard time fighting effectively. An off-balance creature loses its [Dexterity](#) bonus to [Armor Class](#), and opponents gain a +2 bonus on attacks against it.

² A creature without [freedom of movement](#) effects or a swim speed makes [grapple](#)checks

underwater at a -2 penalty, but deals damage normally when [grappling](#).

³ A successful [Swim](#) check lets a creature move one-quarter its speed as a [move action](#) or one-half its speed as a [full-round action](#).

⁴ Creatures have firm footing when walking along the bottom, braced against a ship's hull, or the like. A creature can only walk along the bottom if it wears or carries enough gear to weigh itself down: at least 16 pounds for Medium creatures, twice that for each size category larger than Medium, and half that for each size category smaller than Medium.

Ranged Attacks Underwater: Thrown weapons are ineffective underwater, even when launched from land. Attacks with other ranged weapons take a -2 penalty on [attack rolls](#) for every 5 feet of water they pass through, in addition to the normal penalties for range.

Attacks from Land: Characters swimming, floating, or treading water on the surface, or wading in water at least chest deep, have improved [cover](#) (+8 bonus to AC, +4 bonus on [Reflex](#) saves) from opponents on land. Land-bound opponents who have [freedom of movement](#) effects ignore this [cover](#) when making melee attacks against targets in the water. A completely submerged creature has total [cover](#) against opponents on land unless those opponents have [freedom of movement](#) effects. Magical effects are unaffected except for those that require [attack rolls](#) (which are treated like any other effects) and fire effects.

Fire: Nonmagical fire (including alchemist's fire) does not burn underwater. Spells or [spell-like](#) effects with the fire descriptor are ineffective underwater unless the caster makes a [caster level](#) check (DC 20 + spell level). If the check succeeds, the spell creates a bubble of steam instead of its usual fiery effect, but otherwise the spell works as described. A [supernatural](#) fire effect is ineffective underwater unless its description states otherwise. The surface of a body of water blocks line of effect for any fire spell. If the caster has made the [caster level](#) check to make the fire spell usable underwater, the surface still blocks the spell's line of effect.

Spellcasting Underwater: Casting spells while submerged can be difficult for those who cannot breathe underwater. A creature that cannot breathe water must make a [concentration](#) check (DC 15 + spell level) to cast a spell underwater (this is in addition to the [caster level](#) check to successfully cast a fire spell underwater). Creatures that can breathe water are unaffected and can cast spells normally. Some spells might function differently underwater, subject to GM discretion.