

First off, general gameplay tips:

This game plays much slower than BB/DS3/ER, with a greater focus on long-term strategy than short-term tactics. Positioning and resource management will be more important than quick reaction speeds.

Agility: you may not have even noticed the stat, but it controls your iframes on rolls and backsteps, as well as increasing item use speed (like Lifegems and Estus Flasks!). I'd generally refer to Wikidot for exact iframe length, but try to get at least 92 Agility relatively early, and aim to have 96 or 99 by the end of the game (these are all points at which your duration of invincibility on rolls goes up). You raise Agility by levelling Adaptability or Attunement; Attunement gives less returns than Adaptability.

Every single class can pick up and use a bow or crossbow. You may not even have the requirements to wield it, but it still does damage and can lure solitary enemies away from groups, thus letting you easily kill large numbers of enemies one at a time.

Stay under 70% equipment load. Your equipment load percentage determines your stamina regeneration and roll distance. The lighter you are, the faster stamina regenerates and the farther you'll roll.

In DS2, hidden walls are revealed by using your 'interact' button while standing in front of them (a prompt will not appear).

Killing any NPC is generally not a good idea on a first playthrough.

Standard enemies will disappear after you kill them 12 times. Their lives are reset if you burn a bonfire ascetic, and they will spawn normally if you're in a certain covenant. Many new players fall into the trap of joining the Company of Champions (it's the covenant in Majula, up the path to the cliff), it's basically hard mode. The game warns you it will set you up on a 'arduous path,' by which it means that while you're in the covenant enemies will not despawn, you won't be able to summon players or NPCs, they deal 50% more damage and they will take 20% less.

You lose 5% of your max health per death up until 50%, this effect can be reversed by using a human effigy (easily farmable) or by helping someone defeat a boss. There is also a ring that reduces the hollowing hp penalty by 50%, it is found in one of the first areas you'll explore, in a chest near a boss.

Range is one of the most important things when fighting against melee opponents; unless they have some form of poise, every attack you do will stagger them, and when they can't attack you and you can attack them, you win. In the same vein as this, if you have a shield which blocks a good portion of their damage (or even 100% block), you can circle them while blocking to backstab. Some enemies have backstab punishes, but most of those attacks are either slow or don't do good stamina damage. Remember, if you are using a shield, do not constantly have it up; drop it down so you can actually start regaining stamina, and put it up right before an attack hits you. Rolls are still better most of the time; always try to reaction roll, meaning you don't panic and roll before you see the attack, you roll as you see the attack coming at you. This is also a PvP tip, and one that people struggle with even after dozens or hundreds of hours. Learn it.

Always try to spend your souls before you venture out to dangerous or unknown areas; souls spent on levels or gear cannot be lost, and you can actually have a pseudo-storage for souls by buying a ton of miscellaneous items; just buy some before going out, and when you need some souls, sell them.

Durability is weak in DS2, so be prepared to carry at least a few Repair Powders; resting at a bonfire repairs weapons if their durability has not reached zero. If it has, you'll have to spend souls at a blacksmith to repair them.

Twohanding something doubles your strength, but ONLY for the purposes of weapon requirements; the scaling will not change, only the motion value (damage) of the attacks themselves. Twohanding also increases the poise damage of your attacks; a lot of enemies cheat and have either infinite poise or permanent hyper armor (a poise multiplier) on, so this advice is of limited application, but keep in mind that you might be able to stagger enemies more easily if you twohand.

Do NOT be afraid to buy lifegems; once you unlock a very early merchant, she sells unlimited lifegems. Unlimited healing, stacks of 99 at a time; this is not a waste if you find yourself continually taking damage.

Alluring Skulls and Yearn can both be helpful tools depending on the type of enemy you face; generally they redirect enemy attention from you to the point of impact or cast location. This doesn't work on all enemies, but it's still very strong.

Also found in Majula are the binoculars; these handy optical devices are perfect for freeaiming spells if you happen to be a caster. All you need is to have

them in one hand and a casting tool in the other, and you can look down them before and as you cast for near perfect aim.

Poise, generally known as the stat that lets you not get staggered by attacks, is not worth caring about for PvE- enemies do far too much poise damage, and your goal should not be getting hit in the first place.

Powerstancing is a mechanic wherein you use two weapons simultaneously by holding down the stance change button (Y for Xbox controllers, Triangle for PS controllers, and so on); this needs 1.5 times the stat requirements of the highest stat on both weapons (rounded down). Check <http://darksouls2.wikidot.com/dual-wielding> for what weapon combinations can be powerstanced. Powerstancing is generally weaker than two-handing.

DLC areas in Dark Souls II feature enemies with significantly increased elemental defense versus spell damage and ammunition (arrows and bolts). Note that this does not apply to spell weapon buffs.

If you're confused by certain stats in the game, and don't mind the chance of spoilers, you can check [wikidot's page on them](#) for a brief rundown on what they do.