



DEATH KNIGHT

The sound of metal scraping against metal rings throughout the chamber as a powerful figure steps over the bodies of the dead. He sinks his massive, skull-adorned blade into the body of an orc, and a pale, ghostly smoke rises from the corpse, coils around the blade, and finally settles into a harsh symbol carved into its surface.

Blood flies as an elf moves relentlessly across the battlefield, slaying foes one after another with her twin blades, seemingly impervious to the attacks of her enemies. A massive beast rears up in front of her, a challenge even the mightiest of warriors would shrink before, but the elf only grins as she drives headlong into what must be certain doom.

Dripping water forms into icicles as they run down the shoulders of a heavily armored dwarf. The blizzard rages about him unnoticed. A silver-scaled dragon crashes into a nearby snowbank, its wings tattered by arrows and driving hail. It raises its head to stare the dwarf in the face, moments before his axe drives its way deep into its skull.

Whatever their original calling, all death knights now serve the powers of death and destruction. Death knights are ruthless and practical warriors, meting out death without mercy to any who stand in their way.

CALL OF THE GRAVE

Death knights are not born, but created. Powerful beings raise death knights from the bodies of skilled warriors and transform them through profane rituals, creating perfect killing machines to do their bidding. Although death knights retain their personality and memories of their past, they are often twisted into a mockery of their former selves as their new form and the tasks their master forces them to complete drive them to insanity.

Even after being released from their master, many death knights continue to kill and wreak havoc, becoming the very thing they strove to defeat before they died. However, some few others reject their new forms, seeking to use their powers, as detestable and profane as they may be, to defend the innocent and

destroy the wicked, knowing that they will never be accepted by those they fight to protect.

THE DEATH KNIGHT

Level	Proficiency		Spells Known	Runes	Rune Level
	Bonus	Features			
1st	+2	Rune Weapon, Rune Magic	2	1	1
2nd	+2	Fighting Style	2	2	1
3rd	+2	Death Aspect	3	2	1
4th	+2	Ability Score Improvement	3	2	1
5th	+3	Extra Attack	4	2	2
6th	+3	Horn of Winter	4	2	2
7th	+3	Aspect feature	5	2	2
8th	+3	Ability Score Improvement	5	2	2
9th	+4	---	6	2	3
10th	+4	Forceful Deflection	6	2	3
11th	+4	Aspect feature	6	3	3
12th	+4	Ability Score Improvement	6	3	3
13th	+5	---	7	3	4
14th	+5	Aspect feature	7	3	4
15th	+5	Runic Empowerment	7	3	4
16th	+5	Ability Score Improvement	7	3	4
17th	+6	---	8	4	5
18th	+6	Aspect feature	8	4	5
19th	+6	Ability Score Improvement	8	4	5
20th	+6	Master of Death	8	4	5

CLASS FEATURES

As a death knight, you gain the following class features.

HIT POINTS

Hit Dice: 1d10 per death knight level

PROFICIENCIES

Armor: All armor

Weapons: Simple weapons, martial weapons

Tools: None

Saving Throws: Constitution, Charisma

Skills: Choose two from Acrobatics, Animal Handling, Athletics, Deception, Intimidation, and Religion

EQUIPMENT

You start with the following equipment, in addition to the equipment granted by your background:

- (a) a two-handed martial melee weapon or (b) two one-handed martial melee weapons.

- (a) a dungeoneer's pack or (b) an explorer's pack
- Chain mail

RUNE WEAPON

All death knights learn the art of rune carving, allowing them to carve mystic runes into their weapons. Carving a rune into a weapon takes one hour and costs 50gp. The cost represents material components that are required in the carving.

Once a rune has been carved, you can fill it with power over the course of an hour, which you can do during a short rest. You must be touching the weapon that the rune is carved into during this time, and you can only fill one rune with power at a time. Additionally, all of your runes are filled with power when you finish a long rest.

Once a rune has been filled with power, you can then later use that rune to cast spells. In addition, any weapon with a power-filled rune carved into it counts as a magic weapon for the purposes of overcoming resistance and immunity to non-magical attacks and damage.

RUNE MAGIC

As a death knight, you can use rune magic, allowing you to channel the power of death into powerful, often destructive spells. See chapter 10 of the Player's Handbook for the general rules of spellcasting.

RUNES

The Death Knight table shows how many runes you can have filled with power at any given time. If you attempt to fill a rune with power beyond this limit, one of your already filled runes is expended. To cast one of your death knight spells, you must expend the power stored within a rune. The Death Knight table shows what level spell you cast when you use a rune in this way.

SPELLS KNOWN

At 1st level, you know two 1st-level spells of your choice from the death knight spell list.

The Spells Known column of the Death Knight table shows when you learn more death knight spells of your choice. A spell you choose must be of a level no higher than what's shown in the table's Rune Level column for your level.

Additionally, when you gain a level in this class, you can choose one of the death knight spells you know and replace it with another spell from the death knight spell list, which also must be of a level for which you have spell slots.

SPELLCASTING ABILITY

Charisma is your spellcasting ability for your death knight spells, since the power derives from your ability to manifest your will over the latent powers of death and destruction that fill you and the world around you. You use your Charisma whenever a spell refers to your spellcasting ability. In addition, you use your Charisma modifier when setting the saving throw DC for a death knight spell you cast and when making an attack roll with one.

Spell save DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier

Spell attack modifier = your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier

SPELLCASTING FOCUS

You can use your rune weapon as a spellcasting focus for your death knight spells.

FIGHTING STYLE

At 2nd level, you adopt a style of fighting as your specialty. Choose one of the following options. You can't take a Fighting Style option more than once, even if you later get to choose again.

DEFENSE

While you are wearing armor, you gain a +1 bonus to AC.

DUELING

When you are wielding a melee weapon in one hand and no other weapons, you gain a +2 bonus to damage rolls with that weapon.

GREAT WEAPON FIGHTING

When you roll a 1 or 2 on a damage die for an attack you make with a melee weapon that you are wielding with two hands, you can re-roll the die and must use the new roll. The weapon must have the two-handed or versatile property for you to gain this benefit.

TWO-WEAPON FIGHTING

When you engage in two-weapon fighting, you can add your ability modifier to the damage of the second attack.

DEATH ASPECT

At 3rd level, you choose an aspect of death to focus your energies towards. Choose Blood, Frost, or Unholy, all detailed at the end of the class description. The aspect you choose grants you features at 3rd level and again at 7th, 11th, 14th, and 18th level.

ABILITY SCORE IMPROVEMENT

When you reach 4th level, and again at 8th, 12th, 16th, and 19th level, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. As normal, you can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

EXTRA ATTACK

Beginning at 5th level, you can attack twice, instead of once, whenever you take the Attack action on your turn.

HORN OF WINTER

Beginning at 6th level, you can carve special runes into a horn, granting it special powers that activate when you blow on it. Creating a horn of winter takes 4 hours and costs 100gp. The cost represents the rare materials required for the construction of the horn as well as the specialized materials required for carving

runes into it.

Once you have created a horn of winter, you can then use your action to blow on it, granting temporary hit points equal to your Charisma modifier to you and all friendly creatures that can hear it. As long as they have these hit points, those creatures have advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Non-friendly creatures that hear the horn must make a Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of you until the start of your next turn. The save DC for this is the same as for your spells.

Once you have used the horn, the power in its runes are depleted and can only be restored during a long rest. You cannot have more than one horn filled with power at any given time.

FORCEFUL DEFLECTION

Beginning at 10th level, your AC is increased by 1 as long as you are wielding a weapon and not using a shield.

RUNIC EMPOWERMENT

At 15th level, you can refill two runes during a short rest, instead of one.

MASTER OF DEATH

At level 20, you gain a special attachment your rune weapon(s). When you die, your soul naturally seeks out your rune weapon (if you have more than one weapon carved with runes, it seeks out the closest) and hides inside of it, rather than moving on to the afterlife. While hidden this way, you cannot see, hear, speak, or take any actions. You are dimly aware of living creatures within 100 feet of you, but cannot discern anything about them.

When a creature touches your sword, you can cast the Dominate Person, Beast, or Monster (as appropriate) spell targeting them. The spell has a duration of 8 hours when cast this way. If the target breaks free of your spell, you can't cast it on them again within the next 24 hours.

If the creature fails to break free from your domination before the spell's duration ends, they must make a final Charisma saving throw against your Rune power save DC. If they fail, their soul is forcibly removed from their body, and yours leaves your sword to take its place. You use the new body's base Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution scores, and any racial statistics, but retain your Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores and all of your class levels, including any ability score increases or feats you gained.

DEATH ASPECTS

Although all death knights pull upon the power of death to fuel their abilities, different death knights choose to focus on different aspects of death in order to enhance their powers.

BLOOD

The aspect of Blood focuses on the physical act of dying, and uses the power of blood to fortify the death knight's body against death and debilitate wounded enemies. Blood knights often seem (and sometimes are) wild and violent as they revel in death and the spilling of blood.

VAMPIRIC BLOOD

Beginning when you choose this archetype at 3rd level, whenever you hit a living creature with a melee weapon attack, you may use a bonus action to spend one of your hit dice to regain health. You can benefit from this feature only once per round.

WILL OF THE NECROPOLIS

Starting at 7th level, you gain resistance to poison damage and advantage on death saving throws.

SCENT OF BLOOD

Starting at 11th level, whenever a creature within 20 feet of you is reduced to 0 hit points, you gain advantage on your next weapon attack.

BLOOD TAP

At 14th level, you can use your action to channel your own life force into death energy, refilling one of your runes by spending one of your Hit Dice.

ABOMINATION'S MIGHT

At 18th level, your Strength score increases by 2. Your maximum for this score is now 22.

FROST

The aspect of frost focuses on the emotional aspect of dying, and the sense of loss and emptiness that it causes, and uses this power to hone the death knight's mental and physical abilities to perfection. Frost knights often seem (and sometimes are) emotionless and uncaring, with little regard for the sanctity of life.

CHILBLAINS

Starting when you choose this aspect at level 3, whenever you deal cold damage to a creature, that creature's speed is reduced by 10 until the start of your next turn.

NERVES OF COLD STEEL

Starting at 7th level, you gain resistance to cold damage and are unaffected by cold weather.

ICY TALONS

Starting at 11th level, your weapon attacks deal an additional 1d4 cold damage when they hit.

KILLING MACHINE

Starting at 14th level, whenever you score a critical hit with a weapon attack against a living creature, one of your runes becomes filled with power.

IMPROVED ICY TALONS

Starting at 18th level, the bonus damage from Icy Talons increases to 1d8.

UNHOLY

The aspect of unholy focuses on the physical remains of death, the flesh and bones left to rot after the

spirit has left, and uses them to further their quest for power. Unholy knights often seem (and sometimes are) sacrilegious and irreverent, treating the bodies of their friends and enemies alike with little respect.

UNDEAD MINION

Beginning when you choose this archetype at 3rd level, you gain the ability to create a loyal undead minion to serve you. You can raise a minion by spending 10 minutes performing a ritual over the corpse of any small or medium creature. Choose an undead type no larger than medium and that has a challenge rating of 1/4 or lower (examples include a zombie or skeleton). Add your proficiency bonus to the minion's AC, attack rolls, and damage rolls, as well as to any saving throws and skills it is proficient in. Its hit point maximum equals its normal maximum or four times your death knight level, whichever is higher.

The minion obeys your commands as best as it can. It takes its turn on your initiative, though it doesn't take an action unless you command it to. On your turn, you can mentally command the minion to move (no action required by you). You can use your bonus action to mentally command it to take the Attack, Dash, Disengage, Dodge, or Help action.

You can only have one minion at a time. If you try to create a second minion when you already have one, the old one turns back into a corpse.

LICHBORNE

At 7th level, you gain resistance to necrotic damage, and gain advantage on saving throws to avoid being frightened or charmed.

MASTER OF GHOULS

Starting at 11th level, when you create a minion for the Undead Minion feature, you can choose any undead type no larger than medium with a challenge rating of 1 or lower.

REAPING

At 14th level, you can use your action to reap the soul of a fallen creature, filling one of your runes with power. The creature must be at 0 HP and unconscious, or dead for no more than one minute. Performing the reaping kills the creature instantly if it was not already dead. Once you have reaped a soul this way, you must finish a short rest before you can perform a reaping again.

VIRULENCE

Starting at 18th level, whenever a creature makes a saving throw against one of your rune powers, it does so at disadvantage.

DEATH KNIGHT SPELL LIST

1ST LEVEL

Armor of Agathys

Bane

Command

Death Coil

Death Grip
Detect Evil and Good
Detect Magic
False Life
Frost Strike
Rune Strike

2ND LEVEL

Obliterate
Path of Frost
Phantom Steed
Blood Boil
Icebound Fortitude
Chains of Ice
Bone Shield
Enthrall
Ray of Enfeeblement
Sleet Storm

3RD LEVEL

Blood Parasite
Dispel Magic
Fear
Feign Death
Heart Strike
Mind Freeze
Sleet Storm
Strangulate
Unholy Frenzy
Vampiric Touch

4TH LEVEL

Banishment
Blight
Confusion
Dominate Beast
Fire Shield
Freedom of Movement
Ice Storm
Phantasmal Killer
Stoneskin

5TH LEVEL

Dancing Rune Weapon
Remorseless Winter
Dark Transformation
Insect Plague
Dominate Person
Cone of Cold
Contagion
Antilife Shell

DEATH KNIGHT SPELLS

RUNE STRIKE

1st-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 reaction, which you take when a creature deals damage to you

Range: Self

Components: V

Duration: Instantaneous

Make a melee weapon attack against the creature that dealt damage to you. Add your charisma modifier to the damage roll of that attack.

FROST STRIKE

1st-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: Self

Components: S

Duration: 1 round

You fill your weapon with the chill of death. The next time you hit a creature with a melee weapon attack before this spell ends, that attack deals an extra 1d8 cold damage and the target's speed is halved until the end of its next turn.

DEATH COIL

1st-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 40 feet

Components: V, S, M (a bit of rotted flesh)

Duration: Instantaneous

A blast of unholy energy streaks toward a creature in range. Make a ranged spell attack against the target. On a hit, it takes 3d8 necrotic damage.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the damage

increases by 1d8 for each slot level above 1st.

DEATH GRIP

1st-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: 40 feet

Components: S

Duration: Instantaneous

You seize the essence of a creature in range and pull it towards you. The target must make a Strength saving throw. If it fails, it is pulled up to 40 feet directly towards you.

OBLITERATE

2nd-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: Self

Components: V, S

Duration: 1 round

You fill your weapon with power in preparation for a mighty blow. The next time you hit a creature with a melee weapon attack before this spell ends, that attack deals an additional 2d6 cold and 2d6 necrotic damage.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d6 cold and 1d6 necrotic for each slot level above 2nd.

PATH OF FROST

2nd-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 10 feet

Components: V, S, M (an ice crystal)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

Hard ice spreads from your feet, freezing the surface of any water within range, creating a stable surface to walk on. This area follows you as you move, allowing you and anyone else in the area of effect to walk normally. After you move, any ice outside of the area of effect lasts for 1 minute before quickly melting away.

BLOOD BOIL

2nd-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: 20 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

You cause the blood of nearby enemies to boil. Any number of creatures of your choice within 20 feet must make a Constitution saving throw. Each target takes 3d6 fire damage, or half on a successful save.

Undead, elementals, constructs, and other creatures without blood are immune to this power.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 2nd.

ICEBOUND FORTITUDE

2nd-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: Self

Components: V

Duration: 1 round

You gain resistance to all damage until the end of your next turn.

CHAINS OF ICE

2nd-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 40 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You create chains of ice to spring up around a creature and attempt to lash it to the ground. The target makes a Dexterity saving throw. If it fails, it is restrained for a number of minutes equal to your Charisma modifier. If the creature was flying, it falls to the ground and is restrained there instead, taking falling damage as appropriate. The target can use its action to make a Strength check against your Rune Power save DC to break free.

BONE SHIELD

2nd-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: Self

Components: V, S, M (a few shards of bone)

Duration: 10 minutes

You create six bones that spin and float around you. As long as at least one bone remains, you have resistance against slashing, bludgeoning, and piercing damage. Whenever an attack that deals one of those types of damage hits you, one bone is destroyed.

STRANGULATE

3rd-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 20 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

An invisible hand of death grabs a creature's throat and begins strangling them. The target makes a Constitution saving throw. If it fails, the target is restrained and can't speak or breathe.

On each subsequent turn, you may use your action to continue the spell. If you do, the creature takes 1d8 necrotic damage and makes a Constitution saving throw. On a successful save, or if you don't use your action to continue the spell, the effect ends.

HEART STRIKE

3rd-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: Self

Components: S

Duration: 1 round

You infuse your weapon with death energy, causing it to seek out vital points and weaknesses in your foes. The next time you hit a creature with a melee weapon attack before this spell ends, that attack becomes a critical hit, and ignores any resistance or damage reduction (but not immunity) that the target has.

BLOOD PARASITE

3rd-level conjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 20 feet

Components: V, S, M (a dessicated parasite, such as a leech)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You infect a creature within range with blood parasites that slowly eat away at it from the inside. At the beginning of each of the infected creature's turns, it makes a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, it takes 3d8 necrotic damage and you gain hit points equal to half the damage dealt. On a successful save, the effect ends.

MIND FREEZE

3rd-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 reaction, which you take when you see a creature within 20 feet of you casting a spell

Range: 20 feet

Components: V

Duration: Instantaneous

You freeze the mind of a creature in the process of casting a spell. Make a spell attack against the target. If you hit, you deal 4d8 cold damage, and the target must make a Constitution saving throw to continue casting the spell, as if they took damage while concentrating on a spell. If they fail, the spell fails and has no effect.

UNHOLY FRENZY

3rd-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 40 feet

Components: V, S, M (a small skull or voodoo doll)

Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

Choose a creature you can see within range. You infuse its mind and body with death energy, sending it into a killing frenzy. The target must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target goes into a frenzy for the duration of the spell.

While in a frenzy, the creature must use its movement to move towards any creature it can see that it can reach this turn if possible, and then use its action to attack that creature. It cannot cast spells or maintain concentration on any spell except this one while in a frenzy, and it cannot choose not to kill a creature that it reduces to 0 hit points.

For the duration of the spell, whether or not the target failed its saving throw, its body is infused with unholy power. The creature's melee weapon attacks deal extra damage equal to your Charisma modifier, and whenever it uses the Attack action, it makes one more attack than usual. At the start of each of its turns, it takes 2d6 necrotic damage. This damage can't be reduced or prevented in any way.

DANCING RUNE WEAPON

5th-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: S, M (a small bone replica of a weapon worth at least 200 gp)

Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You create a floating, spectral weapon identical to one that you are wielding that floats alongside you and mimics your actions. Whenever you make a weapon attack, the floating weapon makes an identical attack against either the same target or another within range. Roll separately for each attack.

DARK TRANSFORMATION

5th-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, S, M (a small piece of ebony or ivory carved into a skull worth at least 200 gp)

Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

You infuse an undead creature within range with power, transforming it into an unstoppable monstrosity for the duration of the spell. Its size category increases by one, its strength increases to 20, its current and maximum hit points are doubled, and its attacks deal an extra 4d6 necrotic damage.

REMORSELESS WINTER

5th-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self (40-foot radius)

Components: V, M (a glass sphere filled with water and flecks of silver worth at least 200gp)

Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes

Until the spell ends, icy winds swirl in a 20-foot-tall cylinder with a 40-foot radius centered on you. The area is heavily obscured, and exposed flames in the area are doused.

The wind constantly batters creatures within it to the ground, making it into difficult terrain and deafening

any creatures within the area. When a creature enters the spell's area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it must make a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, it takes 2d10 cold damage, falls prone and is restrained until the start of your next turn. On a successful save, it takes half damage and no other effects.