

PHB, Supplement

Compiled 2002 by Derin

These Rules were extracted from A Return to the Temple of Elemental Evil Web Enhancement by Monte Cook, and the section "Effects of Water" Design: Skip Williams. These are official rules from Wizards of the Coast.



THE EFFECTS OF WATER

Land-based creatures can have considerable difficulty when trying to fight in the water. Water affects a creature's attacks rolls, damage, Armor Class, and Movement. In some cases, a creature's opponents may get a bonus to attack the creature.

Basic Rules

- Creatures without a swim speed (or a *freedom of movement* spell, or similar effect) suffer a -2 penalty on attacks and damage underwater¹.
- Further, any slashing weapon, blunt weapon, claw or tail attack also deals half damage (subtract 2, then divide the remainder by 2, rounding down), with a minimum of 1 point of damage dealt. The *freedom of movement* spell negates this penalty.

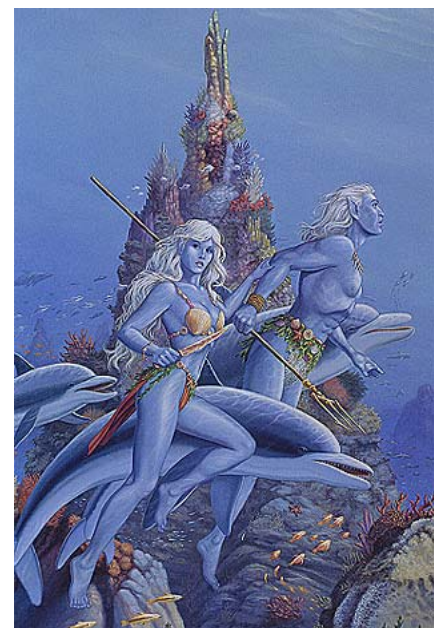
The effects are summarized below:

Combat Adjustments for Water

Condition ¹	Slash or Bludgeon Att./Dmg.	Claw or Att./Dmg.	Move Tail	Off Balance?
Freedom of movement effect	Normal	Normal	Normal	No
Swim speed	-2/Half	Normal	Normal	No
Successful Swim check	-2/Half ³	-2/Half	Quarter or half ²	No
Firm Footing ⁴	-2/Half	-2/Half	Half	No
None of the above	-2/Half	-2/Half	Normal	Yes ⁵

Footnotes

- 1) Water modifiers apply when wading in water at least waist deep, swimming, or walking along the bottom.
- 2) The speeds listed are standard for the Swim skill (you can move one quarter your speed as a move-equivalent action or one half your speed as a full-round action. To avoid the off-balance penalty (see note 5), you must succeed at a Swim check (DC 5+ the DC for the water). The effects of a successful check last until your next turn. Making the Swim check is a move-equivalent action.
- 3) Creatures without free action effects or swim speeds make grapple checks underwater at a -2 penalty, but they inflict damage normally when grappling.
- 4) Creatures have firm footing when walking along the bottom, braced against a wall, or the like. You can walk along the bottom only if you carry enough to weigh you down. The amount of weight required depends on your size, as follows: Fine 1 lb; Diminutive 2 lb; Tiny 4 lb.; Small 8 lb.; Medium-16 lb.; Large 32 lb.; Huge 64 lb.; Gargantuan 128 lb.; Colossal 256 lb. The items you carry to weigh yourself down must be non-bulky and non-buoyant.
- 5) Off-balance creatures lose Dexterity bonuses to Armor Class and give opponents a +2 attack bonus against them.



Circumstances

Fire: Non-magical 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 successful Spellcraft check (DC 15 + spell level). If successful, the spell creates a bubble of steam instead of its usual fiery effect. Supernatural fire effects are ineffective underwater unless their descriptions state otherwise.

The surface of a body of water blocks line of effect for any fire spell. If the caster has made a Spellcraft check to make the fire spell useful underwater, the surface also blocks the spell's line of effect. For example, a *fireball* cast underwater cannot be targeted at creatures above the surface, nor can an underwater fireball spread above the surface.

Attacks from Land: Characters swimming, floating, or treading water on the surface, or wading in water at least chest deep, have one-quarter cover against melee or ranged attacks from landbound opponents. Landbound opponents who have *freedom of movement* effects ignore this cover when making melee attacks. A completely submerged creature has one-half cover against landbound opponents unless those opponents have a *freedom of movement* effect. Magical effects remain unchanged, except for fire effects and effects that require attack rolls; these are treated like any other effects.

Ranged Attacks Underwater: Thrown weapons are ineffective underwater, even when launched from land. Other ranged weapons, part from crossbows, suffer a –2 attack penalty for each 5 feet of water they pass through, in addition to the normal penalties for range.

Underwater Visibility: Submerged or swimming creatures may also gain concealment from the water, depending on how clear it is. Even perfectly clear water obscures vision, including darkvision, beyond 200 feet. All creatures have one-quarter concealment at 50 feet (10% miss chance), one-half concealment at 100 feet (20% miss chance), three-quarters concealment at 150 feet (30% miss chance), and nine-tenths concealment at 200 feet (40% miss chance). Beyond 200 feet, creatures have total concealment (50% miss chance), and opponents cannot use sight to locate the creature. Murkier water allows less sighting distance, and creatures become completely concealed more quickly. The maximum sighting distance in murky water is 100 feet. At half the listed distance, creatures have one-half concealment; at the listed distance creatures have nine-tenths concealment; and they have total concealment beyond the listed distance. For example, if murky water allows vision to 40 feet, creatures have one-half concealment at 20 feet, nine-tenths concealment at 40 feet, and total concealment beyond 40 feet. Water can be so murky that it allows vision to 5 feet or 0 feet. Aquatic creatures can see twice as far through the water as other creatures (but twice 0 feet is still 0 feet). Invisible creatures displace water and leave a visible bubble; though such creatures still have half concealment (20% miss chance).

Holding Your Breath: Any character can hold his breath for a number of rounds equal to twice his Constitution score. After this period of time, the character must make a Constitution check (DC 10) every round in order to continue holding his breath. Each round, the DC increases by 1. When the character finally fails his Constitution check, he begins to drown. In the first round, he falls unconscious (0 hp). In the following round, he drops to –1 hit points and is dying. In the third round, he drowns.

Vigorous activity, such as fighting (but not swimming), strains the character, reducing the time a character can hold his breath to a number of rounds equal to his Constitution score.

