

D&D 3RD EDITION

EQUIPMENT

ARMOR

Add to the armor types as follows:

TABLE 7-5: ARMOR

Armor	Cost	Armor Bonus	Maximum Dex Bonus	Armor Check Penalty	Arcane Spell Failure	—Speed— (30') (20')		Weight
Light armor								
Ring	20 gp	+3	+4	-2	20%	30'	20'	25#
Helmets								
Light	5 gp	—	—	Special	—	—	—	3#
Medium	10 gp	—	—	Special	—	—	—	5#
Heavy	25 gp	—	—	Special	—	—	—	10#

TABLE 7-9: SPECIAL AND SUPERIOR ITEMS

Weapon or Armor	Cost
Weapon, Quality-Forged	+300 gp**

**Plus the cost of the normal item.

Helmets: It is assumed that an appropriate helmet is worn with armor, and that armor proficiencies include the use of helmets. Failure to wear a helmet, appropriate to the armor type worn, will result in automatic success of all critical threats (Note: not applicable if no armor is worn). Use of a helmet imposes a circumstance penalty to all Listen, Search, Spot and Track checks, but does not affect armor bonus, maximum dexterity bonus, armor check penalty, arcane spell failure chance, or speed. *Light Helmets* (a leather or steel cap) incur a -1 penalty, *Medium Helmets* (standard, open-faced) a -2 penalty, and *Heavy Helmets* (Great Helms, visored, etc.) a -4 penalty. For purposes of cost only, note that some armor types include a helmet. A masterwork helmet costs five times the normal price, but the penalty to skill checks is reduced by 1. Donning or removing a Light or Medium Helmet is a move-equivalent action that provokes attacks of

opportunity, while donning or removing a Heavy Helmet is a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity.

Ring Mail: This is pliable leather armor sewn with closely set metal rings.

Armor or Shield, Masterwork: The standard cost of masterwork armors or shields is double the base price, +50 gp.

Weapon, Quality-Forged: These superior items, typically created in magical forges, add a +1 bonus to damage, due to their hardness and keen edge. Items not primarily made of steel (such as an arrow or spear) do not gain any special benefit from being quality-forged. A quality-forged weapon's bonus to damage does not stack with an enhancement bonus to damage.

Commentary

Ring Mail Armor: I don't know why, but I have always been fascinated by the concept of ring mail armor since I learned of it in D&D 1st Edition. I have often chosen it as a substitute for studded leather armor for humanoids. Unfortunately, I have been unable to find any historical information about it outside of the game (PHB1 p. 36, DMG1 pp. 27, 29, 165). The 2nd Edition PHB states that the very existence of ring mail as an historical armor type is debatable. Obviously, it was never very popular or widely used. Nevertheless, it seems to me to be a technically feasible option – in fact, possibly more so than studded leather armor (on which I have also failed to find information). In any case, I have detailed it in *game* terms. As in the 1st edition PHB, I ranked it with studded leather for protective value, as this seems to be the obvious choice (better than plain leather armor, but not as good as a suit of scale armor). Based on the DMG1 descriptions and my own imagination of what this armor would be like, I determined that it would probably be a little less user-friendly than studded leather – a bit weightier and bulkier. But to keep it in line with the other armor types in 3rd Edition, it must be considered to be light armor (else why would anyone use it rather than studded leather?). The other statistics follow logically, essentially, the same as a chain shirt (and no worse). The only other consideration is cost, and here I have departed from my guides. The PHB1 lists the cost as twice that of studded leather, but to compensate for the statistical differences, I opted to price it just under studded leather. This yields a viable game option for armor: for typical NPC's and PC's of low level, it is a significantly less expensive option than studded leather, but at a sacrifice in performance. I also consider it to be a great option for bestial humanoids who need a good, cheap, unsophisticated armor. Of course, it may be ignored without impact on the game.

Helmets: I consider the omission of helmets from armor in 3rd Edition to be inexcusable. Not even a price is mentioned. My research indicates that the use of helmets is an integral part of armor – in fact, warriors throughout the ages have worn a helmet if nothing else! Again, I approached the subject with the game system in mind – i.e., to incorporate helmets as easily as possible. The rules I have suggested are geared toward that end and fairly self-explanatory. The wide range of historical helmet types seems best handled by simply classing them with the given armor types (and proficiencies). Armor proficiencies include helmets as part of the armor (although the use of a helmet *per se* does not require any proficiency). Borrowing from the 1st Edition DMG (p. 28), to encourage their use, there must be some penalty associated with failure to wear a (proper) helmet, and vulnerability to damage is the obvious way. Borrowing from ICE's MERP game system, this vulnerability is in the form of critical hits, in this case, automatically successful ones. This approach adds no statistics or dice rolls to the combat system – a player need only record his use of an appropriate helmet – yet it should provide a sufficient (but not unreasonable) incentive to encourage wide use, and it seems to be very believable. Again borrowing from MERP, it also seems obvious that the use of helmets would have a negative impact on a character's perceptive skills, and the penalties were chosen as seemed logical in the game context: the minimum possible penalty (–1) for a simple cap (which can be eliminated with a masterwork cap), only one

step worse for a standard, open-faced helmet, and significant (–4 or 20%) for a full and/or visored helm. No other armor-related bonuses or penalties are necessary, or advisable – the existing statistics are best left as is. The costs and weights I have listed are somewhat arbitrary, but based on the 1st Edition PHB and DMG (p. 239), and designed to mesh with the given pricing structure. Finally, I included combat action equivalencies for the sake of completeness, but I recommend that these action times not be added to the given times to don/remove a full suit of armor.

A couple of open ends may remain to be answered. There is no benefit, with the above system, for an unarmored character to wear a helmet, nor for an armored character to wear a heavier type of helmet. I suppose that some way could be found to include this feature, but I can't think of any easy way (perhaps a certain percentage of critical hits is avoided – cf. DMG p. 181, *Fortification*). Also, the use of a normal helmet (of the correct class) with masterwork armor could raise questions; similarly, the use of a non-magical helmet with magical armor; this is probably best addressed by either a) ignoring any effects, b) ensuring that all masterwork and magical armors come complete with a helmet, or c) treating such a situation the same as failure to wear an appropriate head armor. I suggest that a normal helmet with masterwork armor be considered adequate, while a normal helmet with magical armor be considered the same as no helmet, and a masterwork helmet with magical armor is sufficient to ignore any effects.

Armor or Shield, Masterwork: The price structure given for standard armors is well balanced, and the price surcharge for masterwork armors seems to be designed for simplicity and affordability. But a flat surcharge of +150 gp seems overly simple. Moreover, this simple surcharge becomes much less significant for the more expensive armors. Note also that several types of armor are simply illogical to make or buy as masterworks: padded and leather offer no game benefits; no one in their right mind should buy masterwork scale mail for 200 gp when a normal chain shirt at 100 gp is far better; similarly with masterwork chainmail vs. breastplate, and masterwork splint vs. banded. The price difference becomes insignificant for magical armors. For example, referring to the DMG (p. 180), who would buy – or even make – a suit of +1 chainmail valued at 1300 gp, when a much superior +1 breastplate is 1350 gp? Anyone who could afford these prices would probably pay the extra 50 gp for the breastplate. After experimenting and comparing a number of formulas, I suggest a flat surcharge of 50 gp, plus double the base cost, maximum +500 gp. This formula is not too complicated. A lighter, cheaper armor is still a cost-effective option compared to a heavier, more expensive type.

Weapon, Quality–Forged: This category is fairly self-explanatory. Just like masterwork weapons with non-magical attack bonuses, these items have non-magical damage bonuses. I see no reason why the two qualities, “masterwork” and “quality–forged,” cannot be combined in a single item, but the cost and rarity of such items should be on a par with magical items – I recommend doubling both cost surcharges. Such items would give no benefit against creatures with damage reduction, but they *would* function in areas where magic is suppressed....