

DEATHWISH

TACTICAL & LETHAL

5e

WANTED



WANTED



DEAD OR ALIVE
REWARD
50 GP

Player's Guide

2025 version 1.0

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Credits

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Player's Guide

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About Deathwish5e

Deathwish5e is a series of one-shot adventures for the 2024 update of D&D 5th Edition that will have you braving dangerous locales and battling fearsome foes in a tactical environment that gives no quarter. You. Will. Die. (Probably.)

Join us as you delve into ancient ruins, challenge fearsome enemies, collect valuable treasures, and accept your inevitable demise. Deathwish5e is a challenging, tactical experience with terrible monsters, hideous traps, and unforgiving dice. Even better, earn awesome loot just for playing!

Deathwish5e can be considered a form of organized play: a way of playing your favorite TTRPG at conventions and online with an array of different game masters and players that utilizes a standardized system to allow players to carry over progress and advancement between adventures.

Many of these organized play systems have you earning experience and tracking progression for individual characters, but Deathwish5e takes a different approach. Instead, you can earn Deathwish5e cards that represent magic items, special boons, and other aspects of progression, and these cards are not tied to a specific character; they can even be traded with other players! This means players are free to try new character ideas in each adventure they play, if they wish, though there's nothing stopping you from playing the same character if you prefer to do so!

Each year, Deathwish5e will bring 6 new adventures to GenCon, the four day gaming convention that takes place each summer in Indianapolis, Indiana. After the convention, those adventures will be made available for purchase online, so you can challenge your friends at home! Deathwish5e will also occasionally appear at different conventions throughout the year.

When playing in an official Deathwish5e convention game (that is, a game hosted by us where we bring professional game masters to deliver you the very best experience!), you'll enjoy physical terrain and miniatures, complimentary dice, and of course Deathwish5e cards for you to take home and keep for the next time you play!

Bring your best character and see if you can conquer our challenges. Welcome to Deathwish5e!



Table Etiquette

Deathwish5e is a group game, and as such, everyone's enjoyment matters equally, including your game master. Please keep the following things in mind when you're preparing for your game and while playing:

RESPECT EACH OTHER

- Be a decent human and be excellent to each other.
- Discrimination will not be tolerated at any Deathwish5e table, online or in person.

BE PREPARED AND PAY ATTENTION

- Have your dice ready for your most commonly-used weapons and spells.
- Plan your turns in combat while other players are taking theirs.
- Use your phone sparingly. Everyone is gathered together to play; let yourself be in the moment. Social media will be there for you when the game is done.

COLLABORATE AND LISTEN

- Your characters are heroes, and while they might have different personal goals, they should be willing and interested in working together.
- As a player, you, too, should be working with your fellow players! Listen to their ideas, share your own, and collaborate on the challenges you're going to face together.
- Let the other players make their own decisions; play your character, they can play theirs!

HAVE FUN

- It's what we're all here to do! Relax, enjoy the game, and let yourself have fun.
- Help other players do the same! By creating a welcoming and pleasant atmosphere, everybody will feel more comfortable and able to enjoy the game.



Creating a Character

Deathwish5e can be played using the provided pre-generated characters, but you also have the option to create your own character if you should like to do so!

Before you can get started, we recommend that you have a D&D Beyond account. You can register for an account [here](#). If you've already got one, or you wish to create your character using another method, you're ready to begin!

The character creation rules are as follows:

Content Sources: Official D&D 5e content beginning with the 2024 release of the *Player's Handbook* is available. Third party content, Legacy content, and Expanded Rules content are not. Some of these sources will be made available through cards earned during gameplay.

Character Level: Level is determined by each adventure and is based on the tier of play. Tier 1 characters are level 3, Tier 2 characters are level 7, Tier 3 characters are level 15, and Tier 4 characters are level 18. Character advancement cards can unlock higher levels within each tier.

Ability Scores: Ability scores are chosen through either Point Cost (27 points using the Ability Score Point Costs table in the 2024 *Player's Handbook*) or Standard Array (15, 14, 13, 12, 10, 8). If you are unfamiliar with these options, they are explained in detail [here](#).

Hit Points: Deathwish5e characters use the Fixed Hit Point Type option.

Equipment: Characters do not get starting gold or equipment as they typically would. Instead, you may begin with any standard, non-magical equipment as well as one (1) magic item, the rarity of which depends on your game's tier of play (Tier 1: uncommon, Tier 2: rare, Tier 3 and 4: very rare). You cannot take so much starting equipment that you would become Encumbered. The categories of equipment are as follows:

- **Weapons** – You can take any weapons your character is proficient in wielding. You are not required to carry mundane ammunition (such as arrows) for your ranged weapons.
- **Armor** – You can take any armor your character is proficient in wearing.
- **Tools** – You can take any tools your character is proficient in using.
- **Adventuring Gear** – You can take any adventuring gear (except for potions of healing and spell scrolls) your character can carry. Spell components with a gold value are *not* considered “Adventuring Gear”; you'll find these as treasure in Card Packs!
- **Mounts and Vehicles** – You cannot select anything from this category.

Spells and Spell Components: Spells that have components with a gold value are required in order to cast those spells, and spell components can only be found as Deathwish5e treasure cards. Component Pouches, Focuses, and so on are not included in this and can be taken as “Adventuring Gear”.



D&B Settings

The screenshot shows the 'Character Preferences' section of the D&D BEYOND Character Builder. The interface includes a top navigation bar with 'D&D BEYOND' and a search bar. Below it are menu items for Collections, Game Rules, Sources, Tools, Media, Forums, Learn to Play, Subscribe, and Marketplace. The Character Builder header shows 'OddSquirrel's Character' and a navigation menu with 'HOME' selected, followed by '1. CLASS', '2. BACKGROUND', '3. SPECIES', '4. ABILITIES', '5. EQUIPMENT', and 'WHAT'S NEXT'. The main content area is titled 'Character Preferences' and contains several sections: 'Sources' with four unchecked checkboxes (Homebrew, Expanded Rules, 2014 Core Rules, Legacy); 'Partnered Content' with one unchecked checkbox (All); 'Hit Point Type' with a dropdown menu set to 'Fixed'; and 'Character Privacy' with three radio buttons (Campaign Only, Public, Private), where 'Public' is selected. Six callout boxes on the left provide instructions: 'Be on the "Home" tab' points to the HOME tab; 'Turn off all of these optional Sources' points to the four unchecked checkboxes; 'Turn off all of the Partnered Content' points to the 'All' checkbox; 'Set Hit Point Type to "Fixed"' points to the dropdown menu; and 'Set your Character Privacy to "Public"' points to the selected 'Public' radio button.

Character Preferences

Sources

The sources below add additional character options beyond the 2024 Core Rules. You will only see character options from the Core Rules and content you own and have enabled here.

- Homebrew
Character options designed by other players and uploaded to D&D BEYOND. Talk to your DM before including Homebrew content.
- Expanded Rules
Character options from supplementary sourcebooks beyond the Core Rules.
- 2014 Core Rules
Character options from the 2014 *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, *Monster Manual*, and *Basic Rules*.
- Legacy
Character options from older sources that may conflict with the Core Rules. These include sources that are out of print or created for charity.

Partnered Content

Content developed by our partner publishers. You will only see character options for content you have purchased.

- All

Hit Point Type

When leveling up, increase hit points by the fixed value for your chosen class or manually enter a rolled value

Fixed

Character Privacy

- Campaign Only
Only others within a Campaign you have joined can view your Characters.
- Public
Anyone with a shared link can view your Characters.
- Private
Only you can view your Characters.



Anatomy of a Card

Title of the card

Shortbow of Celestial Light

Card art; awesome, right?

Card type, bonuses, rarity, and attunement requirements

Magic Shortbow +1, Uncommon

Card rules text

This weapon deals radiant damage instead of piercing damage.

A creature hit with this weapon emits dim light in a 10 foot radius and cannot benefit from the Invisible condition until the end of its next turn.

Copyright information

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Artist information

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Lowest tier of play the card can be used in (Tier 1, 2, 3, or 4)

Item Cards

Earning Deathwish5e Cards: When you play an official Deathwish5e one-shot at a convention like GenCon, you'll get Deathwish5e cards from a Card Pack! Depending on how your party fares, you might also receive other cards, such as gold coins, valuable treasure, consumables like potions and scrolls, advancement cards, and more. Cards may be available outside of conventions, too, and in some cases, there are exclusive, promotional cards not available in Card Packs (such as the "Lamp of the Benevolent Genie" pictured on this page).

Using Deathwish5e Cards: Deathwish5e item cards add a variety of fun and unique bonuses to your character, from magic armor and weapons, to ability score bonuses, increasing your character's level, and even expanding which Content Sources are available to you.

All item cards must be revealed at the beginning of the adventure, after you've received any new Deathwish5e cards from your GM, and they can't be swapped out once the adventure begins. If you'd like to use a new card you've just received, this is your chance to do so!

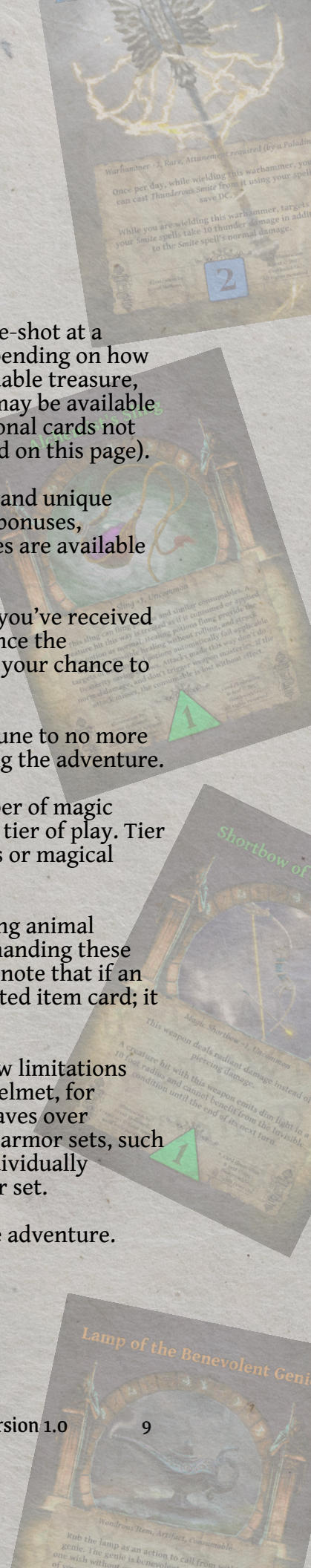
Attunement: Some magic items require Attunement. Characters can attune to no more than three such items at one time and Attunement cannot be changed during the adventure.

Magic Item Limits: A character can bring to the adventure a total number of magic items (including both Attunement and non-Attunement items) based on the tier of play. Tier 1: 6, Tier 2: 10, Tier 3: 20, and Tier 4: unlimited. Consumables such as potions or magical ammunition are not included in this limit.

Animal Limits: The number of animals you can bring along (not including animal companions, familiars, and summons) is limited to two. Be aware that commanding these animals might require an *Animal Handling* check, so prepare accordingly. Do note that if an animal is killed during the adventure, you do not have to turn in the associated item card; it is simply unavailable to you until your next adventure.

Other Equipment Limitations: Wearing and wielding equipment has few limitations except for what applies logically; you cannot wear more than one cloak or helmet, for example. You could, however, wear a shirt underneath your armor, and greaves over leggings. Rings are limited, however, to one per hand. Note that while some armor sets, such as plate, come with helmets and gauntlets and so on, those pieces can be individually replaced by other appropriate items without losing the benefits of the armor set.

Adventure Limitations: Some additional limitations may depend on the adventure.



Difficulty Options

Before the game begins, players have the option of playing on Hardcore difficulty. This decision must be unanimous, otherwise the game will proceed on Normal difficulty.

The “Normal Rules” are the default rule set, meant to provide a challenging experience that encourages the use of tactics and teamwork.

The “Hardcore Changes” are designed to challenge experienced players who come prepared with Deathwish5e cards to make their character more powerful. These are either modifications to the “Normal Rules”, or additions to them.

As Deathwish5e grows, even higher difficulty rule sets may be made available, offering greater and greater challenges for the bravest of adventurers.

NORMAL RULES

If the group succeeds at their quest, each player receives a share of treasure, even if your character doesn't survive.

Critical Hits deal max die damage plus the roll instead of doubling the dice.

Flanking provides a +2 bonus to attack rolls.

Falling to zero hit points also incurs one level of Exhaustion.

HARDCORE CHANGES

If the group succeeds at their quest, each player receives a share of treasure plus bonus loot, but *only* if your character survives.

Falling to zero hit points also incurs two levels of Exhaustion.

Enemies have improved stat blocks, which means more Hit Points, more damage, and more special abilities.



Methods of Play

PLAY DEATHWISH5E AT CONVENTIONS

Playing Deathwish5e at conventions is the best way to play. Official sessions are played using the rules in this document, feature physical terrain and miniatures, include a Deathwish5e Card Pack for every player, and is the first place you can experience the newest adventures before they're released to the public!

PLAY DEATHWISH5E AT HOME

You can play Deathwish5e at home with your friends! When you do, you can use the official rules provided in this document (see "Formal Play" below), or any other rules that you prefer (see "Casual Play" below)! You or your GM can purchase an official Deathwish5e Adventure Kit (coming soon) which includes an adventure module, 5 Deathwish5e Card Packs, plus something special for your GM! Alternatively, you can play for fun using only the cards you already own. There's no wrong way to play Deathwish5e at home!

PLAY DEATHWISH5E ONLINE

Officially-approved Deathwish5e GMs through [StartPlaying.Games](https://startplaying.games) are coming soon. These games may come with cards just like at a convention, or they may not; each GM will be different. But either way, you'll be able to use any Deathwish5e cards you've already obtained. Check with your GM for their preferred way of verifying your cards.

FORMAL PLAY

Formal Play simply means the game is being played using the official Deathwish5e rule set found in this document, including character creation guidance, house rules, and so on.

EPIC PLAY

Epic Play refers to an adventure shared by multiple groups of players, all pursuing different goals in the name of one big shared quest. It's the most exciting way to play!

CASUAL PLAY

Casual Play simply means the game may be played using different character creation guidance, different house rules, or other modifications, but your Deathwish5e cards are legal for play no matter what else is changed. After all, that's what makes Deathwish5e what it is!



House Rules

Delaying: During combat, you can choose to hold your entire turn, rather than just an action. You do so at the beginning of your turn, after any start of turn effects have taken place, at which point you select a new, lower number in the initiative order. This becomes your initiative for the rest of the encounter, and your turn immediately ends. Any start of turn effects that took place before you delayed in this round do not take place again when you take your delayed turn.

Emanations: Damage from Emanation spells entering a creature's space can only be dealt during the caster's turn.

Prone: Standing up from Prone triggers Opportunity Attacks.

9th Level Spells: 9th level spells cannot be learned except by Deathwish5e cards that grant access to them.

SPELLS ERRATA

The following spells have been modified to better suit Deathwish5e gameplay.

Wish: *Wish* can only be used to duplicate a spell of level 8 or lower. Its other effects are not available, but may be found through cards and other means.

CLASS CHANGES: RANGER

The following Ranger spell has been modified to enhance Ranger's viability and effectiveness.

Hunter's Mark: When cast by a Ranger, this spell does not require Concentration.

Mark Efficiency: At 13th level, instead of gaining the *Relentless Hunter* feature, Rangers gain *Mark Efficiency*, a feature that allows them to move their *Mark* from a slain creature to a new target as a Free Action instead of a Bonus Action.



Downtime

DOWNTIME OPTIONS (UNDER DEVELOPMENT)

Currently, there are no downtime activities for Deathwish5e. However, this will change in future, where you will be able to pursue a number activities, such as:

- Bastion constructions
- Spell scroll scribing
- Magic item crafting
- and more!





Partnerships



StartPlaying

StartPlaying is the largest online platform for players to find tabletop roleplaying games and professional GMs for any game system and any virtual tabletop!

Our professional Dungeon Masters and Game Masters are running games all over the world.

Find a game that works for you and your schedule.

Visit <https://startplaying.games> for more information.

Get \$10 in SPG credit with our referral link:

<https://www.deathwish5e.com/spg>



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