

HDL/D&D

Conversion Guide

As a truly universal, adaptable system, HDL can be used in any number of settings, even those from other game worlds or systems. Even though there is not a current official HDL fantasy setting, fantasy settings such as Dungeons and Dragons can be converted to HDL with relatively little fuss. This guide outlines the basics of converting D&D to HDL.

The General Conversion Rule

The general rule for converting anything from D20 to HDL is divide by two. Any bonus, penalty, stat, skill, level, or other number in D20 is halved for HDL, to a minimum of 1. However, note that skills should be bought up to the desired ratings with SKP and EXP (see Level and Experience).

Measurement

All measurements are converted to metric. The standard five-foot increment in D20 becomes 1m. Divide all distances by 5, such as spell ranges and areas of effect.

Ability Scores and Stats

D20 ability scores have HDL equivalents, although D20 scores are twice HDL ratings.

<u>D20 Ability</u>	<u>HDL Stat(s)</u>
Strength	STR
Dexterity	REF, COO, MAN
Constitution	END, CON
Intelligence	REA, KNO
Wisdom	RES, INS
Charisma	LOO, PER
N/A	LUC

When converting stats, there are three options:

Straight Conversion – This method directly translates D20 stats to HDL, without regard for the inherent balance of HDL. Simply divide each ability score in half (round down), and assign those numbers to the relevant HDL stats. LUC is 5. You may assume “grouped” stats, such as the equivalents to Dexterity, receive the same value, or you may allow one to be raised by 1 in exchange for reducing another by 1.

For instance, Dragomir (a level 11 sorcerer with several other prestige classes) has the following ability scores: STR 14, DEX 18, CON 12, INT 14, WIS 14, CHA 20. Using direct conversion, he ends up with the following HDL stats: STR 7, REF, COO, MAN 9, END, CON 6, REA, KNO 7, RES, INS 7, LOO, PER 10, LUC 5.

This method typically produces a character with extremely high stats, but preserves the D20 concept that player characters are “above average” from the beginning, rather than developing into that status over time.

Baseline Conversion - This method is balanced with the HDL system, and also maintains the relative ability score distribution of the D20 character. First, average all ability scores. Any abilities with this score, or close to it, are converted to a 5 in HDL. Other stats receive a relative higher or lower value, based on half their difference from average.

For instance, Dragomir's ability score average is 15. So, his Strength-, Intelligence-, and Wisdom-based HDL stats, STR, REA, KNO, RES, and INS, would be 5. His Dexterity is 3 higher than his average, so the relevant HDL stats would receive half that difference: +1. Thus, his REF, COO, and MAN are 6. His Constitution is 3 below average, so his END and CON receive half that difference: -1, making them both 4. Finally, his Charisma is 5 above average, so its HDL equivalents are 2 above average, making his LOO and PER each 7. His LUC is 5.

This method maintains the same relative stat distribution, but does not necessarily produce a character with balanced stats based on a pool of 65 stat points.

Relative Conversion - This method produces the most customized character. Simply allocate 65 STP, as per the normal HDL rules, in a way that seems to align with the D20 ability scores. If the character has a high Charisma, put more points into PER and LOO, for instance.

Dragomir's relative stats, based on 65 STP, are as follows: STR 4, END 4, CON 4, REF 6, COO 6, MAN 5, LOO 7, REA 6, KNO 4, RES 3, INS 4, PER 8, LUC 4.

Race

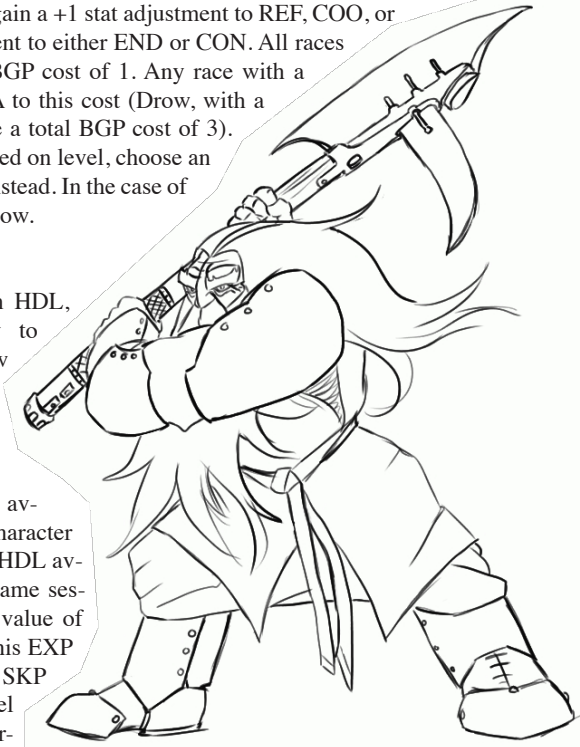
All racial features remain unchanged, except that racial ability modifiers become stat adjustments, each bonus or penalty applying to only a single stat (see Stats for ability score equivalents). For instance, an Elf in D&D gains +1 Dexterity, and -1 Constitution. In HDL, the elf would gain a +1 stat adjustment to REF, COO, or MAN, and a -1 stat adjustment to either END or CON. All races other than humans have a BGP cost of 1. Any race with a level adjustment adds its LA to this cost (Drow, with a level adjustment of +2, have a total BGP cost of 3). If a race has any abilities based on level, choose an appropriate stat as the base instead. In the case of SR, see Spell Resistance, below.

Level and Experience

Since there are no levels in HDL, D20 XP converts directly to HDL EXP. To do so, follow this formula:

$$[XP / (\text{Level} \times 300)] \times 7$$

This formula assumes the average XP award is 300 x character level per game session, and HDL average EXP award is 7 per game session, including the average value of cards exchanged for EXP. This EXP is used in conjunction with SKP to get skill ratings to a level comparable to the D&D char-



acter (i.e., half the D&D rating). Optionally, EXP and SKP can be completely disregarded during conversion, in which case skills are converted directly over. This option speeds up conversion, but, like all but the third stat conversion option, results in a character not necessarily balanced with the HDL rules.

Since HDL has no classes or levels, the numeric effects of levels convert to primary skills based on class. For instance, magic users would have certain spellcasting skills (see Spellcasting, below), while warrior classes would have a number of combat skills.

Saving Throws

Saving throws become normal HDL checks, as follows:

Reflexes: Active Dodge

Will: Resolve

Fortitude: Constitution

Saving Throw DCs

Spell save DCs are converted to the spellcaster's relevant skill check (see Spellcasting). Other save DCs, such as those of innate abilities of certain creatures, become 5 plus the creature's relevant stat (rather than the usual 10 + hit dice + ability modifier). Optionally, anything requiring a save can be made into its own skill.

Armor Class

For the most part, AC goes away when converting to HDL. Armor applies the rules given in the *HDL Basic Rules*, and creatures with "natural armor" instead have either increased TR, in the case of creatures with touch hides or magical protection, or gain the benefits of armor, if their natural protection is in the form of "plates" or shells. In the former case, the creature's natural TR increases by 1 for every 3 points of AC bonus it gains for natural armor (round up; no creature with a natural armor bonus grants less than a +1 TR bonus). In the latter case, most creatures such as crabs or turtles benefit from the effects of breast plate or plate mail; choose a TR for the armor plates that seems reasonable.

Base Attack

Base attack converts to weapon skills in weapons the character uses. To determine the target rating, divide base attack by 2. It is advised that this value be a starting point for determining skill ratings. Characters should still spend the necessary SKP or EXP for their skill ratings!

Feats

Feats are converted in one of three ways. They either cease to exist, since they either do not fit in the HDL system or are already inherent to all characters, become 1-point Backgrounds, or skills such as Special Maneuver.

If the feat requires any sort of check or involves performing some task with training, it becomes a skill (use common sense when determining the relevant stat). If the feat is "always on" or provides a consistent bonus, it becomes a 1-point Background. All prerequisites remain the same. If the feat is not applicable in HDL, it goes away. For instance, Power Attack is an ability any character can simulate by spending Energy to increase STR when attacking, so it goes away. Any other feats with Power Attack as a prerequisite no longer require it.

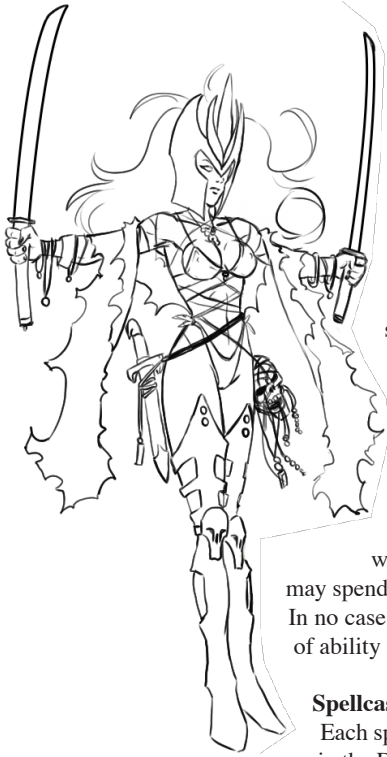
The following list outlines the conversion for some feats:

Feat	Conversion
Any Armor Proficiency	Skill: Armor Wearing (in <i>HDL Basic Rules</i>)
Any Item Creation	Skill (KNO-based)
Any Metamagic	Remove (see Spellcasting, below)
Any roll bonus	Background (gain half the bonus)
Any Weapon Proficiency	Skill: relevant weapon (see <i>HDL Basic Rules</i>)
Improved (anything)	Remove unless it only provides a roll bonus (see above)
Augment Summoning	Background (+2 STR, END, CON to summoned creatures)
Blind-fight	Skill: Blind Fighting (in <i>HDL Basic Rules</i>)
Cleave	Skill: Special Maneuver (Chop-through, <i>HDL Basic Rules</i> p33)
Combat Expertise/Reflexes	Remove
Deflect Arrows	Skill: Special Maneuver, REF-based; if hit by a ranged attack, make check vs. attack roll as a Free action; if roll fails, it expends 1 action
Diehard, Dodge	Remove
Endurance, Far Shot	Background
Great Cleave	Skill: Special Maneuver, STR-based; requires a rating of 5 in Cleave/Chop-through
Leadership	Background: Companion (1-5 points; number of followers equals character's PER x2 x BGP cost of the Background, or at Narrator's discretion)
Manyshot	Special Maneuver, MAN-based; roll before an attack, with a difficulty of 5 per arrow
Mobility, Mounted Archery	Remove
Mounted Combat	Skill: REF-based, requires a rating of 5 in Riding
Power Attack, Precise Shot	Remove
Quick Draw	Skill: Special Maneuver (Quick Draw, <i>HDL Basic Rules</i> p33)
Rapid Reload	Skill: Special Maneuver (Rapid Shot, <i>HDL Basic Rules</i> p33)
Rapid Shot, Ride-by-attack	Remove
Run, Shot on the Run	Remove
Skill Focus	Background
Snatch Arrows	Skill: Special Maneuver, REF-based; requires a rating of 5 in and functions the same as Deflect Arrows
Spell Focus	Background
Spell Mastery	Background; remains unchanged, but number of spells equals KNO
Spirited Charge, Spring Attack	Remove
Stunning Fist	Skill: RES-based, opposed by target's CON check
Toughness	Remove, replace with Tough Background in <i>HDL Basic Rules</i>
Track	Remove, replace with Tracking skill in <i>HDL Basic Rules</i>
Trample	Remove
Two-weapon Defense	Remove
Two-weapon Fighting	Remove, replace with Ambidexterity Background and Off-hand skill in <i>HDL Basic Rules</i>
Weapon Focus	Remove; replace with Skill Focus for given weapon skill
Weapon Specialization	Background
Whirlwind Attack	Skill: Special Maneuver (Whirlwind Slash, <i>HDL Basic Rules</i> p33)

Skills

The D&D skill list converts fairly easily to HDL. In fact, many D&D skills already have HDL equivalents. To determine the HDL character's target rating in a skill, divide the D&D skill ranks by 2. Note that characters still need to spend SKP or EXP to attain the desired skill ratings.

Some skills, such as Spellcraft and Use Magic Device, do not already exist in HDL. That doesn't mean they can't exist (Spellcraft is KNO-based, and Use Magic Device



is PER-based). In the case of other skills, use stats that align with their D&D equivalents.

Class Abilities

Like feats, class abilities either become Backgrounds, skills, or simply go away. In any case, they must be purchased with BGP/EXP (for Backgrounds) or SKP/EXP (for skills). Compare to the feats, above. If an ability requires a roll, such as a cleric's ability to turn undead, it becomes a skill. If it is a straight bonus or ability, such as a monk's various damage-reduction-bypassing attacks, it becomes a 1-point Background (in the case of the monk, each successive Background requires the previous version). If the ability no longer applies to the system, such as a rogue's sneak attack damage, it simply goes away. Any class ability that is a feat, such as a ranger's two-weapon fighting, or a fighter or wizard's bonus feats, also goes away. The character may spend EXP to learn "feats" just like any other character. In no case should a character automatically receive any sort of ability or bonus simply based on a skill level.

Spellcasting

Each spellcasting class becomes its own skill. As implied in the D20 rules, spellcasting requires significant training and dedication, often at the expense of other pursuits. Spellcasting skills are therefore very difficult to master, costing several times more than other skills. The skill cost for each base class is as follows:

- Bard: Regaling (PER), cost x2
- Cleric: Divinity (RES), cost x3
- Paladin: Gallantry (RES), cost x2
- Ranger: Fey (RES), cost x2
- Sorcerer: Sorcery (PER), cost x4
- Wizard: Wizardry (REA), cost x5

All spells have their level increased by 1. Thus, spell levels range from 1 to 10, rather than 0 to 9. A spellcaster cannot learn a spell of a higher level than his skill rating, and otherwise must adhere to all other rules and restrictions on his magic. For the purposes of spell acquisition, divide the character's level by 2, and convert this value to his spellcasting skill. Spell lists and spell access remain unchanged.

Spellcasting Methods

Since D&D spellcasting is very tightly tied to the system's level-based nature, there is no one "best" way to convert spellcasting. Below are two possible methods.

Spells Per Day – This method is a direct conversion from D&D. The spellcaster's spells per day are as normal based on his spellcasting skill rather than class level, and he must prepare spells as per the D&D rules. Bonus spells per day are calculated as if the relevant

skill's stat were doubled.

Spell Skill – For this method, the spellcaster need not prepare spells ahead of time. Instead, he makes a skill check in the relevant spellcasting skill, with a difficulty equal to the spell's level (the HDL level, not the D20 level) +5. Spellcasters that do not normally prepare spells, such as sorcerers and bards, instead may spend Energy to increase their effective spellcasting skill for all purposes (both the casting check, and their skill rating for the purposes of level-based spell variables). However, they must spend at least 1 Energy every time they cast a spell. If this method is used, there is theoretically no limit to the number of spells a caster can cast at a time, so it is recommended that each “active” spell impose a cumulative -1 penalty to its spellcasting skill, to represent the drain on the magician's magic for keeping the spell active.

Spellcasting Backgrounds – As a way to potentially add additional balance to magic, and prevent players from taking every single spellcasting skill, each “type” of spellcasting could also require its own Background (with a cost of 2 points for Sorcerers and Wizards, and a cost of 1 for all other types).

Metamagic Feats

If the Spells Per Day option is used, metamagic feats become 1-point Backgrounds. If the Spell Skill option is used, any spellcaster can apply the effects of any metamagic feat at any time, by increasing the difficulty. Each feat applied to a spell imposes a difficulty increase equal to twice the spell level modifier. For instance, Empower Spell requires a spell slot 2 higher than normal, so empowering a spell would increase the difficulty by 4.

Spells

All level-based variables of spells become based on the relevant spellcasting skill. Damage is an HDL equal to the skill rating, and area-effect spells strike as many areas on targets as their spell level. The level-based damage cap on a spell is halved. For instance, Fireball

(level 3 D&D, level 4 HDL) has a damage cap of 10d6 (it caps at level 10). Thus, its maximum damage is HDL 5, at spellcasting skill rating 5. Damaging spells have a TR equal to their level (Fireball is TR 4).

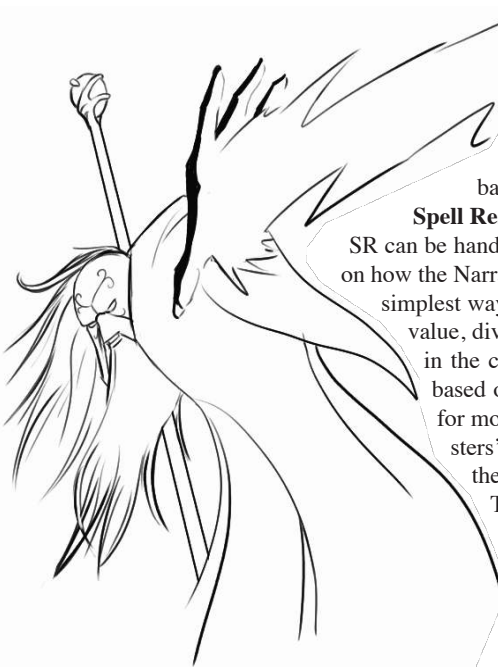
Spell Resistance

SR can be handled in one of several ways, depending on how the Narrator chooses to use it in the game. The simplest way to handle it is to simply use the D20 value, divided by 2. If the SR is level-based, as in the case of Drow, then it becomes a skill, based on LUC. This option can also be used for monsters, if desired (technically all monsters' SR is based on its hit dice, although the rules do not always indicate such).

The second option is to make SR a base stat check (generally LUC).

Hit Dice

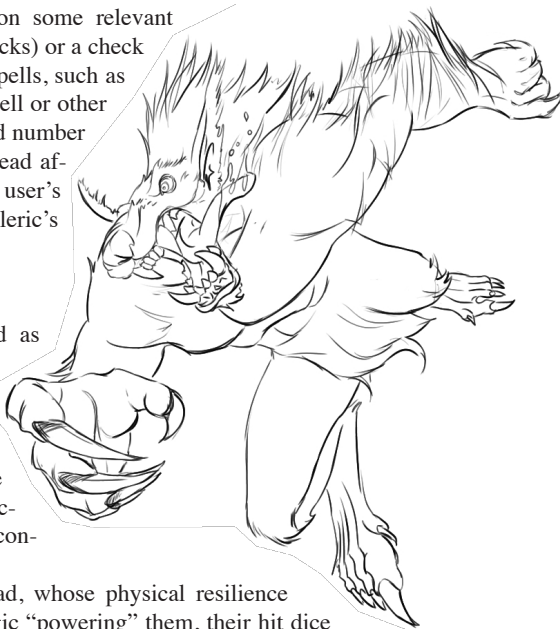
Hit dice do not exist in HDL. Anything that depends on hit dice or level



is instead determined based on some relevant skill (such as monster base attacks) or a check (in the case of hit-dice-based spells, such as the Power Word spells). If a spell or other ability is able to affect a limited number of hit dice or hit points, it instead affects as many creatures as the user's relevant skill rating (such as a cleric's Turn Undead skill).

Health Capacity

Health capacity is determined as normal for all creatures, based on CON and END. However, some creatures may not possess a Constitution score, such as constructs and undead. In the case of constructs, health capacity is equal to the TR of the construct's material.



In the case of undead, whose physical resilience depends on the amount of magic “powering” them, their hit dice or level becomes their CON for the purpose of determining health capacity. For instance, a skeleton that normally is 2 hit dice has a lethal health capacity of 1. Constructs, undead, and any other non-living creature do not suffer non-lethal damage. Attacks with a TR equal to their defense TR inflict no damage at all.

Damage Reduction

DR remains unchanged. However, note that since damage is significantly reduced in HDL, the effect of DR can be noticeably more pronounced. In some cases, logic may dictate a different approach. Since the TR of objects is simulated in D20 by “hardness,” some forms of DR may simply go away, to be replaced by a base TR.

Negative Levels

Negative levels function mostly the same as in D&D. At first, each imposes a -1 penalty to just about everything an afflicted character does. After a day, if the CON check to eliminate the negative level fails, the character loses 20 EXP for each negative level he retains. As with D&D, reducing skills and other factors can be a big pain. There are three options that can be used to convert negative levels:

Skill Reduction - Skills and other EXP-purchased variables are reduced, as per the amount of EXP lost. This can be somewhat complicated to do, even in HDL.

Negative EXP Pool – The character's EXP goes negative, and must be bought off with EXP earned from that point on. For instance, a character loses 40 EXP due to 2 negative levels. He thus loses the 12 EXP he had available, and has an EXP total of -28. Until he earns another 28 EXP, he is unable to spend any EXP. This latter fact in itself can be a major hindrance.

Energy Loss – This option is most applicable to the HDL system. Instead of losing “levels,” the energy drain effect literally does just that: drains Energy. Every negative level drains the character of 1 Energy. This effect is immediate, and becomes permanent after 24 hours if the CON check fails. Energy can be increased, as normal, by increasing either

END or RES, or taking the Energy Boost skill.

Making Magic Items

Divide base cost by 1,000 to determine EXP cost (minimum 1, round up). Crafting an item also requires a skill check in the relevant crafting skill, with a difficulty equal to 5 plus the EXP cost. Unlike D&D, the time needed to create an item is not a fixed amount, although it affects the difficulty of the check. Every day spent, after the first, decreases the difficulty of crafting the item by 1.

For instance, crafting a +3 sword (which, incidentally, would have a base TR of 6; see below), which has a base cost of 18,000 GP, would cost 18 EXP, and require a Craft Magic Weapons check with a difficulty of 23 (made at the end of the first day). If the creator of the sword spent a week working on it, the difficulty would drop by 7. So, on the eighth day, the difficulty would be 16. If the check fails, the creator loses half the days spent already (so, in this example, if the check failed after 8 days, the sword's creator "moves back" 4 days).

This method of item creation enables characters to produce magic items with potentially greater speed than in a D20-based game, but adheres to the skill-based mechanics of HDL, and also allows item creators to have some time to spend EXP on skills.

Magic Weapons and Armor – The magical bonus becomes a TR bonus (to both offense and defense TR, in the case of weapons). Thus, a +1 sword has a base TR of 4 rather than 3. They provide no further bonus to attacks or defense unless enchanted with a specific spell to do so.

XP Costs – Anything that costs XP, divide the cost by 1,000 or more (to a minimum cost of 1). For instance, the Wish spell is impossible to cast with an EXP cost of 5,000. The cost in this case should match the effect; duplicating a spell would cost as much EXP as the spell's level, for instance, plus 5 (1/1000th of the D&D spells's XP cost). To use it to create a magic item, double the magic item's EXP cost.

Other Rules

For most other rules, follow the guidelines in the *HDL Basic Rules*. In some cases, judgment may be required; prestige classes, additional feats, and other options can introduce abilities that may defy immediate conversion. Try to follow the basic guideline that anything requiring a roll, or based on practice or "development" would become a skill, and anything that is an innate, "always on" ability becomes a Background.

Magic in HDL

While converting D&D to HDL provides a limited spellcasting system, a magic system developed from the ground up for HDL will be available in the upcoming *HDL Options Guide*. These new rules will include various forms of spellcasting, magical Backgrounds, and a sizeable spell list. Stay tuned to the Tremorworks Website for updates on this forthcoming book, and others!



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