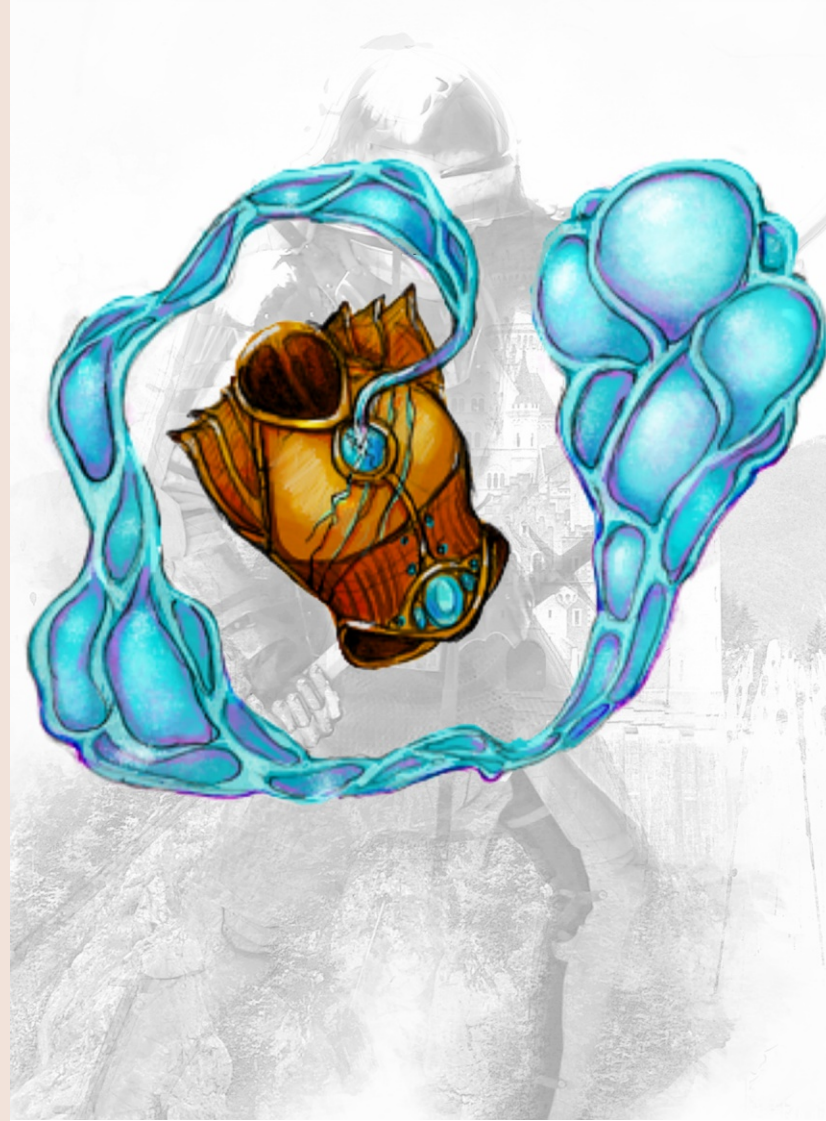# WEAPON DEGRADATION

ADVENTURERS TRUST THEIR weapons. They trust their armor. These are the things that see them survive countless delves into dungeons and lairs throughout their careers. However these things have their limits—a sword's blade can only be used so many times before it dulls. A bow's string frays with every arrow until it inevitably snaps. Leather becomes worn and falls apart, metal becoming dented and useless. In this optional degradation system for Fifth Edition, one must keep a close eye on their gear or they may well find themselves without their trusted items in a time of need.
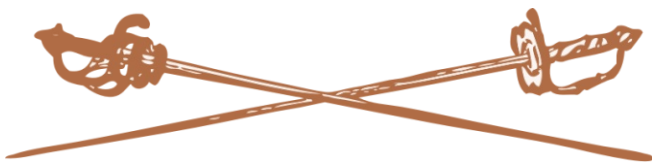
Mundane Weapons

Common weapons and armor can only last so long before the wear of combat renders them useless. It is advisable that an adventurer keeps an ample stock of replacements readily available to them in the event of such occasions.

Degraded Mundane Weapons

Weapons are built sturdy enough to withstand the rigors of repeated combat but even so they all ultimately become damaged and degrade. When an attack roll results in a natural 1, if the total of the attack roll is less than 10 the weapon used in the attack degrades, gaining a randomly determined weapon condition (see Table: Weapon Conditions).

Once a weapon has been degraded in combat it degrades further and may even break. On each additional natural 1 result from an attack roll made using the degraded weapon, the range for degrading further is increased by 1 until it breaks completely. For example, a degraded weapon used to attack twice more with natural 1 results now degrades on a natural roll of 1, 2, or 3.

When an attack roll with a degraded weapon results in a natural 20, the wielder gains an intuitive understanding of how the degradation is affecting it, eliminating one of its weapon conditions until it is damaged again, automatically gaining that condition (instead of being randomly determined).

Table: Weapon Conditions

Melee Weapons (Simple, Martial)	
1d6	**Weapon Condition**
1	**Coated.** A weapon that has been coated is covered in blood, lard, or other such material from being used in combat, making it slippery and less effective. Attacks made using a coated weapon have disadvantage.
2	**Dulled.** A weapon that is dulled has lost its sharpness and its worn edge is less effective. When its wielder makes a damage roll for a dulled weapon, it rolls twice and takes the lower result.
3	**Chipped.** A weapon that is chipped has had a piece of it fall off in combat. When its wielder has disadvantage on an attack roll that results in a natural 1, the chipped weapon breaks.
4	**Cracked.** A cracked weapon has spiderline cracks within it, making it nearly unusable without breaking. A cracked weapon with the automatically becomes broken on any attack roll with a result of 10 or less.
5	**Splintered.** A splintered weapon's handle has been damaged, subjecting its wielder to potential injury. Once per round when its wielder uses a splintered weapon to make an attack roll, the wielder takes damage if the result is equal to or greater than their AC. On a hit, the wielder takes piercing damage equal to 1d4 + its Strength modifier as the slivers of wood bite into their flesh.
6	**Broken.** A weapon that has broken is rendered near useless in its current function, either snapping in half, at the handle, and so on. It can only be used as an improvised weapon until it is repaired.

Table: Weapon Conditions (continued)

Ranged Weapons (Bows, Crossbows)	
1d4	**Weapon Condition**
1	**String Fray.** The bow string of this weapon has frayed, likely to snap with further use. There is a 50% chance that a string fray weapon gains the broken condition immediately after being used to make a ranged attack roll.

2	**String Snap.** The bowstring of this weapon has snapped, unable to be used as a ranged weapon until it is repaired. A string snap weapon can be used as a club.
3	**Wood Decay.** The grain of the weapon has started decay, making it vulnerable. When its wielder takes 10 or more acid, cold, fire, force, lightning, or thunder damage, the wood decay weapon becomes broken.
4	**Broken.** A weapon that has broken is rendered near useless in its current function, either snapping in half, at the handle, and so on. It can only be used as an improvised weapon until it is repaired.

Magic Weapons

Magic weapons, by their design and enchantments, are far more durable in combat than their mundane counterparts. A +1 magic weapon does not degrade from the first natural 1 its wielder rolls in a combat, a +2 magic weapon does not degrade from the first two natural 1s its wielder rolls in a combat, and a +3 magic weapon does not degrade from the first three natural 1s its wielder rolls in a combat.

Degraded Magic Weapons

A magical weapon that is damaged is far more dangerous than its mundane counterpart as the enchantments upon it may cause for unintended side effects. When a magic weapon is destroyed, it loses any enchantments and becomes mundane.

Table: Magic Weapon Conditions

1d4	Weapon Condition
1	**Magic Leak.** The magic weapon leaks its aura and may directly harm the user. Once per round when its wielder uses a magic leak weapon to make a melee attack, the wielder must make a Strength saving throw against a DC equal to the result of the attack roll. If used to make a ranged attack, the wielder makes a Dexterity saving throw instead. On a failure, the wielder takes an amount of damage equal to half the damage dealt by the attack.
2	**Magic Fade.** The magic weapon begins to temporarily and occasionally lose its magical properties. Once per round when its wielder uses a magic fade weapon to make a melee attack, it may lose its enchantment before dealing damage. On an attack roll with an odd result, the magic weapon becomes mundane for 1 round, losing any properties that it held. On an attack roll with an even result, a mundane magic fade weapon regains its magical properties or a magic fade weapon functions normally.
3	**Magic Refusal.** The magic weapon takes on an aura that prevents it from being wielded in combat. Once per round when its wielder uses a magic refusal weapon to make a melee attack, it may refuse to make contact against the target. On an attack roll with an even result, the magic refusal weapon deals no damage. The wielder can use a bonus action to make a Strength saving throw against a DC equal to the attack roll. On a success, the magic refusal weapon deals damage as normal.
4	**Magic Phase.** The magic weapon begins to be drawn to an alternate plane and may even phase out of its current dimension. Once per round when its wielder uses a magic phase weapon to make a melee attack, it may dematerialize in their hands. On an attack roll with an odd result, the weapon phases out of the plane it is currently in to appear in the same location in an alternate plane of the GM's choice. The wielder can use a bonus action to make a Strength saving throw against a DC equal to the attack roll. On a success, they hold onto the magic phase weapon and prevent it from dematerializing. A magic phase weapon that travels to another plane returns after 1d4 rounds, appearing the same square it disappeared from.

Repairing Weapons

While out in the field there are a few ways that an adventurer may be able to make quick repairs to damaged weapons.

Cloth. Any simple piece of cloth can be used during a short rest to sufficiently clean and wipe a coated weapon, cleaning it of any filth and removing the weapon condition.

Smith's Tools. Included in the smith's tools are a number of pieces of extra leather, cloth, metal parts, and tools to make quick weapon repairs. Smith's tools can be used during a long rest to remove any 1 weapon condition that has been applied to a weapon. Anyone proficient with smith's tools is able to repair 2 weapon conditions during a long rest.

Whetstone. A whetstone can be used during a long rest to sharpen the edge of a dulled weapon, removing the weapon condition.

When a weapon breaks in combat it cannot be repaired using cloth, smith's tools, or whetstones. The broken weapon must be taken to a blacksmith in order to be fully repaired, costing half the weapon's normal selling price.

A magic weapon that breaks is beyond the means of any ordinary blacksmith to repair and must be taken to an individual the GM deems capable of restoring (such as an enchanter), costing a negotiable price determined by the item's rarity.

Broken Critical Hits

There are times when it may be advantageous to let a weapon break if it means the difference between life or death. When you score a critical hit with a weapon attack, you may choose for your weapon to intentionally break on the hit in order to severely wound your opponent. When you do so, roll on the following tables depending on what type of damage the weapon deals. If you are using the Finesse property with a weapon, use Dexterity to calculate the DCs of your broken criticals instead of Strength.

Table: Broken Piercing Critical

1d6	Result
1	**Foot.** The blade of the weapon separates at the hilt or handle and embeds itself into the ground as well as your foe. The target must make a Dexterity saving throw against a DC equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength modifier or is restrained. Removing the weapon requires a Strength saving throw against the same DC.
2	**Leg.** The weapon's blade separates from the hilt breaks off in the flesh of your enemy. The target must make a Dexterity saving throw against a DC equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength modifier or be reduced to half Speed until the damage from the critical hit is healed.
3	**Hand.** Parts of the weapon's blade chip off and slivers catch into the flesh of your enemy's hand. The target drops one item of your choice that it is carrying. The item lands at its feet.
4	**Arm.** The blade of the weapon separates from the hilt and embeds in your enemy's arm. The target must make a Constitution saving throw against a DC equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength modifier or take an extra 1d4 piercing damage and start bleeding. At the end of each of its turns, the bleeding creature makes a new Constitution saving throw or takes 1d4 piercing damage. The creature stops bleeding after two successful saves or when the damage from the critical hit is healed.
5	**Torso.** Your weapon's blade breaks off as you plunge it into your opponent's chest. The target must make a Constitution saving throw against a DC equal to the attack roll or take an extra 1d4 piercing damage and start bleeding. At the end of each of its turns, the bleeding creature makes a new Constitution saving throw or takes 1d4 piercing damage. The creature stops bleeding after three successful saves or when the damage from the critical hit is healed.
6	**Head.** With a thrust you slam your blade into your opponent's skull, snapping off the hilt when you jerk the weapon back out. Roll two additional weapon damage dice. In addition, the

target must make a Constitution saving throw against a DC equal to the attack roll or be stunned until the end of your next turn.

Table: Broken Bludgeoning Critical

1d6	Result
1	**Foot.** The weapon's head flies from the handle as the impact cripples your target. The target must make a Dexterity saving throw against a DC equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength modifier or be reduced to half Speed until the damage from the critical hit is healed.
2	**Leg.** The head of the weapon separates the handle from the blow. The target must make a Strength saving throw against a DC equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength modifier or be pushed back 5 feet and knocked prone from the force of the hit.
3	**Hand.** The weapon's haft shatters as the blow knocks away an item the creature is holding. The target drops one item of your choice that it is carrying. The item lands at its feet.
4	**Arm.** The weapon fractures throughout as the force of your blow shakes through it. The target must make a Constitution saving throw against a DC equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength modifier or that arm becomes unusable until the damage from the critical hit is healed. At the end of each of its turns, the target makes a new Constitution saving throw to use its arm.
5	**Torso.** The weapon cracks in half as you forcibly knock the creature down. Roll one additional weapon damage die. In addition, the target must make a Dexterity saving throw against a DC equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength modifier or it is knocked prone.
6	**Head.** The force of your strike shatters the weapon into dozens of pieces. Roll two additional weapon damage dice. In addition, the target must make a Constitution saving throw against a DC equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength modifier or fall unconscious for 1d4 rounds.

Table: Broken Slashing Critical

1d6	Result
1	**Foot.** The blade of the weapon breaks off from the hilt and into the foot of your enemy. The target falls prone. In addition, roll a d20. On a 20, the target's foot is severed and its Speed is reduced by half.
2	**Leg.** The weapon's blade separates from the handle, slicing into a foe's leg and sticking. The target is knocked prone. In order to stand up, the target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against a DC equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength modifier or its movement is wasted.
3	**Hand.** Chunks of the weapon's blade break off and slice into your opponent's hand. The target drops one item of your choice that it is carrying. The item lands at its feet. In addition, roll a d20. On a 20, the target's hand is too badly injured for it to wield or carry anything with it until the damage from the critical hit is healed.
4	**Arm.** The blade of the weapon separates from the hilt and embeds into your enemy's arm making it slick with blood. The target has disadvantage on ability checks and attack rolls using that arm until the damage from the critical hit is healed.
5	**Torso.** Your weapon snaps in half to impale your target. Roll one additional weapon damage die. In addition, the target must make a Constitution saving throw against a DC equal to 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Strength modifier. On a failure, the target starts bleeding. At the end of each of its turns, the bleeding creature makes a new Constitution saving throw or takes 1d4 slashing damage. The creature stops bleeding after three successful saves or when the damage from the critical hit is healed.
6	**Head.** The blade of the weapon separates from the hilt and and is buried into your opponent's neck. Roll two additional weapon damage twice. in addition, the target must make a Constitution saving throw against a DC equal to the attack roll or be stunned for 1 minute.