

Death Master

**The death master originally appeared in Dragon #76 in Leomund's Tiny Hut and was designed by Lenard Lakofka.*

Death masters are spellcasters with an affinity for death and the undead. Their research and dealings with such creatures have led them down a path of deeper understanding of the unlife and of the power it holds. As they journey into the realm of unlife, many come to hate the living and life itself. Many death masters raise armies of undead creatures which they unleash upon unsuspecting people around them.

Death master NPCs are often found "haunting" graveyards, barrows, and other funerary type places where bodies, bones, and other such things are commonly found.

Hit Die: d4

Requirements

To qualify to become a death master, a character must meet the following criteria.

Alignment: Any evil.

Skills: Knowledge (arcana or religion) 8 ranks, Knowledge (necrology) 5 ranks.

Spellcasting: The ability to cast 3rd-level spells. Four of the character's spells (of any level or levels) must be from the school of necromancy.

Class Skills

The death master's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (alchemy) (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Hide (Dex), Knowledge (anatomy) (Int), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (necrology) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

The Death Master

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	---- Spells Per Day ----
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Identify undead, grave potion, necrologist	+1 level of existing class
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	Sealed mind, undead passivism	+1 level of existing class
3rd	+1	+3	+1	+3	Darkvision 60 ft., rebuke/command undead	+1 level of existing class
4th	+2	+4	+1	+4	Speak with undead	+1 level of existing class
5th	+2	+4	+1	+4	Gift of Orcus	+1 level of existing class
6th	+3	+5	+2	+5	Sealed heart	+1 level of existing class
7th	+3	+5	+2	+5	<i>Speak with dead</i>	+1 level of existing class
8th	+4	+6	+2	+6	Sealed life	+1 level of existing class
9th	+4	+6	+3	+6		+1 level of existing class

10th +5 +7 +3 +7 Spurn death +1 level of existing class

Class Features

All the following are class features of the death master prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The death master is proficient with all simple weapons, and the scythe, and scimitar. She gains no additional proficiency with any armor or shields.

Identify Undead (Su): At 1st level, a death master can identify any undead within her line of sight by making a successful Knowledge (necrology) check against a DC of 10 + the undead creature's HD. If the check succeeds, the death master has correctly identified the creature. If the check fails, she cannot try the check again on that specific creature until she gains at least one more rank in Knowledge (necrology).

Grave Potion (Su): At 1st level, a death master can automatically identify any potion that relates to undead creatures (such as a *potion of command undead*) by merely tasting it. Additionally, if a death master consumes any such potion relating to undead, its effects (duration and any numeric effects) are increased by +50%.

Necrologist (Ex): A death master adds +2 to the DC for all saving throws against spells from the necromancy school. This bonus stacks with the bonuses gained from Spell Focus and Greater Spell Focus.

Sealed Mind (Ex): The death master gains a +2 resistance bonus to saving throws against sleep effects and spells with the charm descriptor. This bonus increases by +1 for every two death master class levels the character has (+3 at 4th level, +4 at 6th level, +5 at 8th level, +6 at 10th level).

Undead Passivism (Su): The death master exudes an invisible aura of negative energy only detectable by undead creatures. Undead attempting to attack a death master must succeed on a Will save (DC 10 + death master class levels + death master's Cha modifier). If the save fails, that undead cannot attack the death master for one day. If the save succeeds, the undead can freely attack the death master from this point forward. If the death master attacks an undead creature that failed its save, the effects of this aura are immediately broken and that creature is free to attack the death master.

Darkvision (Ex): A death master gains darkvision with a range of 60 feet if she didn't already have it. If the death master already possesses darkvision, its range is increased by +50%.

Rebuke/Command Undead (Su): A death master gains the ability to rebuke or command undead as a cleric whose level equals her death master class levels plus her cleric levels (if any) plus her wizard levels (if she is a necromancer specialist).

Speak with Undead (Su): A death master gains the ability to converse with any undead creature that has an Intelligence score of 3 or higher, regardless of any languages the undead creature spoke in life or speaks now. This ability does not change the attitude of any undead creature toward the death master; it merely allows her to converse with them.

This ability can be used at will and is always active. It can be negated or dispelled, but the death master can restart it as a free action on her next turn.

Gift of Orcus (Su): Any time after a character gains her 5th level in this prestige class and her total character level equals 13th or higher, she draws the attention of the Lord of the Undead. Once per day hereafter, she gains the ability to create an effect identical to a *slay living* spell.

Sealed Heart (Su): A death master gains immunity to all paralysis and *hold* spells and spell-like abilities and to any undead creature's special attack that mimics or replicates such an ability (such as the touch of a ghoul or ghastr). The death master still suffers normal damage from the attack (if it deals damage). For example, while the death master is immune to the paralyzing touch of a ghoul, she still takes claw damage if the ghoul hits. Other creatures (non-undead) can still affect the death master normally.

Speak with Dead (Sp): Once per day, a death master can *speak with dead* as the spell of the same name. The caster level equals the death master's class levels plus any cleric class levels and/or necromancer class levels.

Sealed Life (Su): A death master is immune to the energy draining touch and ability draining or ability damaging touch of undead creatures. The death master still suffers normal damage from the attack (if it deals damage). For example, while the death master is immune to the energy draining touch of a vampire, she still takes claw damage when the vampire hits.

Spurn Death (Ex): At 10th level, the death master gains immunity to all death-type spells, supernatural abilities, and effects (those with the death descriptor) such as *finger of death*, *slay living*, *power word kill*, and death effects.

Additionally, the death master ceases aging and gains immunity to any spells and effects that alter aging (either adding or removing years). Any bonuses or penalties to ability scores from aging accrued thus far remain unchanged, but the death master never grows a day older. The death master will never die of old age, but can still be killed normally.

Spells per Day/Spells Known: When a new death master level is gained, the character gains new spells per day (and spells known, if applicable) as if she had also gained a level in a spellcasting class she belonged to before she added the prestige class. She does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained. This essentially means that she adds the level of death master to the level of some other spellcasting class the character has, then determines spells per day, spells known, and caster level accordingly.

New Magic Items

Death Armor: This whitish-gray salve is usually found in small glass or metal jars. The top is usually sealed closed with melted wax. An application of *death armor* takes 1 full round to apply. Thereafter, for the next 5 minutes, an opponent that attacks you unarmed or with a natural weapon takes 2d6 points of damage each time one of its attacks hits. You still take normal damage from the attack.

Faint necromancy; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *inflict moderate wounds*, creator must be evil, *protection from good*; Price 900 gp.

Gauntlets of the Ghoul: This pair of gauntlets appears to be nothing more than a rotting pair of leather gloves. If a good-aligned creature puts them on it must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude

save each round or be paralyzed for as long as the gauntlets are worn. Only a *dispel magic* or greater, or a *remove curse*, *wish*, or *miracle* can remove the gauntlets.

If the gauntlets are donned by an evil-aligned creature, it grants the creature the ability to paralyze any opponent touched (requires a successful melee touch attack) for 1d6+2 rounds. An affected opponent can attempt a DC 15 Fortitude save to negate the paralysis. An evil-aligned creature can freely remove or don these gauntlets at its leisure. These gauntlets can be used for up to 3 minutes each day, divided into periods of minutes or rounds as the user sees fit.

These gauntlets do not function when donned by a neutral-aligned creature.

Faint necromancy; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, Heighten Spell, *ghoul touch*; Price 20,000 gp.

Spectral Wand: This sleek black wand only operates in the hands of a character with at least one level in the death master prestige class. Once per round, a death master can fire a black ray of negative energy from the rod to a range of 100 feet. A creature struck must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or take 2d8 points of damage. Even on a successful save, the creature still takes damage (half). The damage incurred from the ray can only be healed by a *restoration*, *greater restoration*, *limited wish*, *wish*, or *miracle*. A spectral wand has up to 50 charges when found. Each use of the wand burns one charge.

Faint necromancy; CL 5th; Craft Wand, *inflict moderate wounds*; Price 7,500 gp.

Withering Scythe: This weapon is an *unholy* +2 *scythe*. Any creature struck by this weapon must succeed on a DC 19 Fortitude save or lose 1 hit point per round thereafter. A *remove curse* cast by a spellcaster of 9th-level or higher or any *cure*-type spell of 5th level or higher ends the continuous hit point loss.

Moderate necromancy; CL 10th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *unholy blight*, creator must be evil, *harm*; Price 50,000 gp; Cost 25,000 + 2,000 XP.