

WEAR and TEAR

Every young hero heading out into the world

soon learns that adventure always comes at a price—and that price is maintenance.

Keeping one's gear in good shape takes effort and costs money but it is vital for survival. Nothing's worse than having your sword slip from your hands mid-swing because you didn't tighten the hilt's leather binds, or reaching into a pocket only to discover the spell component fell through a hole you neglected to sew.



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Maintaining equipment is not the most glorious of tasks which is why many groups choose to ignore this part of adventuring life. This article presents a simple and fun system that abstracts maintenance while still giving it an important role in the game. It's meant for players who don't want to keep track of every piece of gear or take note of every torch they use, but still want to get a dramatic sense of an adventurer's day-to-day toils.

Levels of Maintenance

Maintenance is an abstraction measuring the level of quality of equipment. It measures a character's ability to venture into the wilderness while keeping their gear in working order.

Maintenance has three levels that affect all of your equipment, and a condition called busted that only affects one piece of equipment.

Excellent

Your gear is in top shape. All of the buckles are fastened, everything that needs to be oiled is well-oiled, and everything that needs to be dry is indeed dry.

- During combat, you have quick access to what you need, when you need it. You are assumed to always have immediate access to your potions, wands, and any other similar item you carry; you can Use an Object as a bonus action instead of as a regular action.
- Your armor has its Armor Class increased by 1 while you're wearing it.
- Any of your tools that you are proficient with grant a +1 bonus on any check you make with it.

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Regular

Your gear is serviceable. You might need to pull up the boot's laces once in a while, or tighten the binding on your spellbook every morning, but it all works and it works well.

Poor

Some of your equipment is faulty or you're missing some crucial supplies, resulting in a less-than-optimal adventuring experience.

- Before you make your first attack or cast your first spell in combat, you must spend an action to Use an Object. This could represent unsheathing your sword from its rusted and shaky scabbard, fumbling to reach the back pocket for the material components for a spell (because the front one has a hole in it), or pulling back the long sleeves that keep slipping over your hands.
- Your travel pace outside of combat is halved. You can force march as normal.

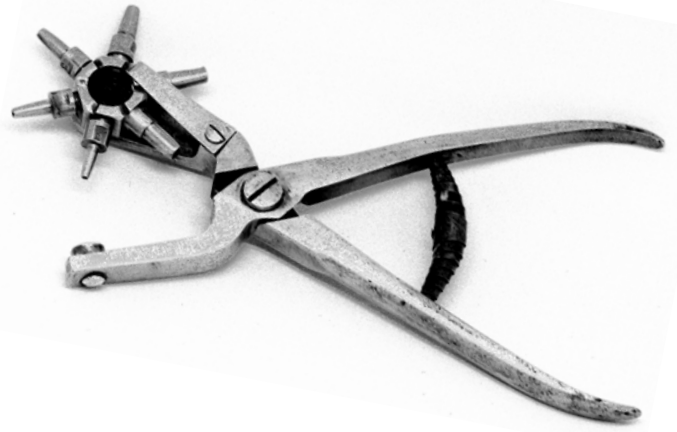
Condition: Busted

If you're supposed to lose a level of maintenance when you're already at Poor, instead one piece of equipment you carry is busted. The GM chooses from the following chart according to what's most relevant, or rolls randomly. If a busted piece of gear gets busted again, it's broken or ruined and can no longer be used until repaired or replaced.



1d6 Busted!

1. **Footwear.** The soles of your shoes are coming undone or your trouser legs are torn. Your speed is reduced by 5 feet. When you move through a difficult terrain that might injure you (scratching underbrush, cold ice, sharp stones, and the like), you take 1d4 damage of the appropriate type.
2. **Armor.** The pieces no longer fit you as they should, or parts of the armor are bent and unusable. The armor's Armor Class is reduced by one.
3. **Main Weapon.** Your most-used weapon doesn't function as well as it should—that the bowstring needs to be tied up, the sword's balance is off, or the dagger's blade is dull. After the first time in combat you miss with the weapon, all further attacks with it have disadvantage until the end of the combat. You can use an action to fix the problem, but this rapid repair only holds up until the next time you miss.
4. **Magic Item.** A permanent magic item you own only functions half of the time (if you have no magic items, roll again). Whenever you use it, roll a die and on an even result it does not work.
5. **Bag.** Whatever container you're using to carry your equipment and loot is torn or too worn to use properly. It can only carry half of its regular capacity. If it was full, you can choose to keep carrying your things on your arms, or put them on a bed roll you then drag on the ground, but this is a tiring exercise (to say nothing of the chance you might lose something important!), requiring a DC 10 Constitution saving throw every 4 hours to avoid gaining a level of exhaustion.



6. **Speciality Gear.** Something unique and important to your class is no longer useful as it should be. Examples include:
 - *Class Features:* See Maintaining Class Features.
 - *Component Pouch:* Several components are missing. Choose a spell that requires material components; you can no longer cast it until you restock.
 - *Spellbook:* A page is smeared by gunk and needs to be replaced. Until then, one of your spells is unavailable.
 - *Spellcasting Focus:* The silver of your holy symbol is tarnished, the sprig of holly is no longer fresh, or the crystal ball can use some waxing. When you cast spells using a focus, ritually or otherwise, it takes twice as long to cast. In combat, spells with a casting time of 1 action also require a bonus action to cast.
 - *Tool:* The tool lacks crucial supplies or some pieces of it are broken or lost. Proficient characters add only half their proficiency bonus to ability checks made with it.

Repairing Busted Gear

Repairing a busted piece of gear requires an expenditure of a unit of supply (see below), which costs an amount of gp equal to the character's level. A magical item also requires the expenditure of a spell slot. Any spellcaster can contribute this spell slot, which can be of any level.

Repairing Broken Gear

Repairing a piece of gear that is completely unusable costs the same as a new purchase.

Daily Maintenance

Equipment naturally deteriorates over time. Maintenance only matters because it *consistently* requires attention! At the end of every long rest, all characters roll a d20 against a DC of 10.

- **Success:** Your gear's level of maintenance doesn't change.
- **Natural 20:** Hey, if I pull it like this...it's much better now! Your gear's level of maintenance goes up a level, if possible.
- **Failure:** Your gear's level of maintenance drops one level.
- **Natural 1:** Your gear's level of maintenance drops two levels!

The Hardships of Travel

The GM can decide to have the party roll their daily maintenance check with disadvantage due to rigorous conditions. Alternatively, the GM may choose to only call for a daily maintenance check when the adventurers encounter these conditions.

Some examples:

- Wading through waist-high mud for several long, disgusting hours.
- Having gone through many intensive combat encounters (5 or more).
- Failing a navigation check during a journey in the wilds.
- Traveling under horrible weather conditions.
- Falling into an otyugh pit and having a fight there.
- Faeries stole some of party's supplies.

Long-Term Maintenance

The party's maintenance level naturally drops by one at the end of every week during which the adventurers travel, or at the end of an adventure if the GM prefers tracking milestones instead of time. Maintenance levels keep dropping even during downtime. A portion of a PC's lifestyle expenses is automatically used to keep their gear at a minimum level of maintenance, according to the following table. 'No limits' means that every week, if a character's maintenance level drops below Poor, a piece of equipment is busted.

A character can increase their maintenance level by one step by paying 5 times the price of their lifestyle.

Table: Long-Term Maintenance

Lifestyle	Maintenance Level
Wretched	No limits
Squalid	No limits
Poor	Poor
Modest	Regular
Comfortable	Regular
Wealthy	Excellent
Aristocratic	Excellent

Increased Costs

As adventurers level up and gain impressive and unusual pieces of equipment, the cost of upkeep also goes up. To account for this, multiply a character's lifestyle expenses by their proficiency bonus

minus 1. PCs that practice a profession as a down-time activity invest time and effort in maintaining their gear, instead multiply their lifestyle expenses by their proficiency bonus minus 2.

For example, a 10th level barbarian multiplies their lifestyle expenses by 3. A 2nd level bard who practices a profession gets to maintain their equipment for free (2 minus 2 is zero).

Note: This rule is offered to serve as a ‘money sink’. Unlike regular purchases—which turn an investment into useful things—a money sink demands constant investment in order to keep the maintain a situation and prevent degradation. This is useful for GMs that find money loses significance in their campaign; instead of just sitting there, that gold is now used to keep everyone’s equipment in good shape. At higher levels the PCs will be happy to pay as much as needed to keep their maintenance level at Excellent, because by then they’ll remember how bad things were when they were 2nd level and it was Poor!

Supplies

The best way to keep gear from deteriorating is by investing beforehand and preparing for the journey. Characters can purchase units of “supply”, an abstract measure representing oils, whetstones, replacement gear, material components, extra munitions, and the like.

A single unit of supplies weighs 5 pounds and costs an amount of gp equal to the character’s level. Supplies can be spent to:

- Grant up to 6 characters advantage on a daily maintenance check.
- Fix a busted item. The GM can rule some items require 2 or more units of supplies. Magical items also require an expenditure of a spell slot.
- Produce a single item of adventuring gear. This piece of equipment must be reasonably available and common, like a bundle of torches, a rope, or a crowbar (it can’t be an abacus unless there’s a good reason a PC would carry such

NEW FEAT: QUARTERMASTER

You’re well-prepared before each journey and capable of taking care of your entire party’s gear.

- Increase your Wisdom score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- When you roll for daily maintenance, you can add your Wisdom modifier. Up to 5 allies can choose to use your result instead of theirs.
- Thanks to careful planning, packing, and scavenging, you always have at least 1 unit of supply. When you spend your last unit of supply, you can create a new one during your next short rest.
- When you purchase supplies, the cost is halved (rounded up).

a thing). It can never be a specific item (like a local map of the area the party are in) but at the cost of several units of supply the GM can allow special items, such as holy water or a *potion of healing*.

Maintaining Class Features

These suggestions add a maintenance element to class features that are usually freely available. The idea isn’t to limit characters but to turn a feature that is usually taken for granted into something one repeatedly *earns*, day after day, by investing time, effort, and roleplaying. The penalties incurred by lack of maintenance shouldn’t prevent PCs from having access to class features, only make them harder to use, limited, or less effective.

Barbarian. You need to apply the ointments and smear the warpaints each morning, otherwise you find it hard to spark the emotional and adrenaline surge needed for a courageous Reckless Attack. You can only start use this feature after the first time you take damage during combat, or when you rage.

Bard. Without salt water to gurggle or wax to rub on your trumpet, your Song of Rest is less effective. The extra hit points it grants are of one die type lower than usual (for example, 1d4 instead of 1d6).

Cleric. Once you allow the prayer book to get dirty, or finish all of the sacred wine, it's harder to convince your god you're a serious worshiper. You take a -2 penalty to your spell save DC and spell attack bonus.

Druid. It's important to keep yourself attuned to nature's smells, sights, and tastes, but all plants wilt and berries eventually run out. Unless you enrich your senses in a ritualistic way, it's harder to bring yourself to have a different life experience. You can only use Wild Shape for a number of hours equal to one quarter ($\frac{1}{4}$) your druid level (rounded down).

Fighter. Your gear shifts to the side with every sword swing and your armor clanks in a distracting fashion, making it much harder to dig up your will to fight on. Second Wind is only usable once every long rest.

Monk. If you run out of the incense you use each morning to keep focused, you take a -2 penalty to your Ki save DC.

Paladin. Your divine auras are only as powerful as the uncompromising presence of your deity's imagery and symbolism. If your shield no longer shows the sacred sign in the right colors, or your dress is ripped along the embroidered holy scriptures, the range of your auras are halved.

Ranger. Exploring is second nature to you but it's not easy when your feet are wet inside moist boots, or your cowl is missing allowing the wind to blow your hair into your eyes. Whenever you travel for an hour or more in a favored terrain, you only gain half of the regular benefits of the Natural Explorer class feature (the GM chooses or rolls randomly). The benefits you gain change after you complete a long rest.

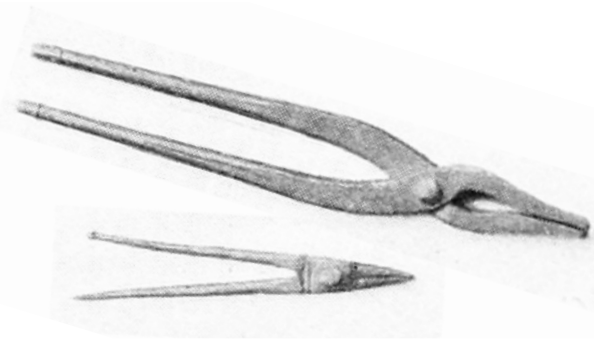
Rogue. Your clothes are rough at the joints, chaffing and dirty, so you are both unseemly and annoyed by certain movements. You take a -2 penalty to Dexterity and Charisma ability checks.

Sorcerer. Hey, swallowing sulfur or inhaling burnt herbs is just what you do—weird blood leads to weird desires. After you complete a short

or long rest and have not consumed magical reagents, when you use Flexible Casting to create spell slots it costs 1 additional sorcery point, and when you convert a spell slot to sorcery points you gain 1 fewer sorcery point (minimum 0).

Warlock. The patron demands burnt offerings on a special plate, which must be kept clean. Otherwise, you are punished by having your Slot Level reduced by one (to a minimum of 1st level).

Wizard. Reading the stars with a cracked lens in your telescope is a sure way to miss much of the arcane secrets of the heavens. When you use Arcane Recovery, you can't recover more than a single spell slot.



The following are from [A Touch of Class](#) and [A Touch More Class](#).

Alchemist. A clean laboratory is a happy laboratory, and a dirty laboratory leads to bad science. When you have not spent at least 30 minutes cleaning your alchemist's supplies at the end of a long rest, the damage dice of your bombs is reduced by one step (from d10 to d8).

Cardcaster. The tarot must be respected or its power is diminished in scope, the vagaries of fate obscured. Once you allow your tarot deck to get dirty or stained, your hand size is reduced by 1.

Diabolist. Controlling fell powers without the proper obeisances is not only dangerous but less effective as well. When you do not complete a 30 minute ritual using ceremonial relics at the end of a long rest, the damage dice of your Necromantic Touch is reduced by one step (from d8 to d6).

Feywalker. Like a druid, your connection to nature must be kept strong. Whenever you finish a long rest without at least 10 minutes of exposure to the natural world, the distance of your Feystep is reduced by 20 feet.

Morph. To maintain your supernatural pliability you require a varied diet. When you go more than a day without eating a meal different from the meals that you have consumed in the past 3 days, you can only use Shapeshift for a number of hours equal to one half your morph level (rounded down).

Noble. Some of your zeal and presence is diminished when you are denied the comforts afforded to your station. When you complete a long rest and do not have at least 10 minutes to prepare your appearance, your Rallying Word only heals 1d6 + your noble level.

Occultist. Without the proper mystical bindings you lose some focus over the fell energies constrained by your will. When you do not complete a 30 minute ritual using ceremonial relics at the end of a long rest, you take a -2 penalty to attack rolls using Dark Strike.

Bloodweaver. As you utilize blood to work magic, so too must you consume it or your control wanes. When you go more than a day without consuming the blood of another creature, your known disciplines are reduced by 1.

Fatebender. Like the saying goes, you can't win if you don't play the game. When you have not participated in a game of chance within the last day, your maximum fate points are reduced by 1.

Gemini. To fully utilize your duality you must constantly expose yourself to new experiences. After completing a long rest, if in the last day you have not listened to a new song, heard or read an unfamiliar story, or encountered a creature you have not already seen, the range of your doublestones are reduced by half.

Geomancer. If you are forced to try and rest in a place where the flow of energies is disruptive, you cannot fully restore your own. At the end of a long rest in a cramped or otherwise

compromised location, the temporary hit points granted by your Stone's Blessing feature are reduced by 1.

Gunfighter. It is absolutely essential to keep firearms clean of grit, oiled, and in good working order. When you do not spend at least 30 minutes cleaning your firearms at the end of a long rest, you have disadvantage on your first ranged attack roll using them.

Lodestar. A focused mind is necessary to properly control your lodestones. When you do not spend at least 30 minutes meditating during a short or long rest, you take a -2 penalty to your Lodestone save DC.

Monster Tamer. You already need to feed your pet, but if you do not succeed on a Wisdom (Animal Handling) check (DC equal to 5 + its CR) when you do so, it takes a -1 penalty to attack rolls.

Savant. Cluttered thoughts and a clouded mind make it difficult for you to bring your intellect to bear, demanding your attention and focus. After completing a long rest, if in the last day you have not listened to a new song, heard or read an unfamiliar story, or encountered a creature you have not already seen, you take a -2 penalty to your Trick save DC.

Tinkerer. A clean laboratory is a happy laboratory, and a dirty laboratory leads to bad science. When you have not spent at least 30 minutes cleaning your artisan's tools at the end of a long rest, you take a -2 penalty to your spell save DC. 🛠️

