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written Edward Kenworthy

Introduction

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So why am I writing this player guide ? Basically because I had a look on the Web and couldn't find any that were any good. An awful lot of very pretty looking Diablo pages and FAQs but they either lacked substance or were woefully out of date covering such things as "when will Diablo be released ?". And besides I've played a lot of Diablo and I can write and I want to do it. So here it is. Version 1.0 of my player's guide.

This guide is not a faq - it's written in a more prosaic style and to be blunt there are some things I just don't care about and so will probably never include a section to cover them (unless I get nagged enough ;)). Such subjects include "How do I play Diablo without a CD ?" "How do I play Diablo on Windows 2.1 ?" "How do I play Diablo on my Linux install ?" - I DON'T CARE ! Go whine at someone else you sandal wearing hippy ! ;-). I have a Pentium running Windows 95 and 48 MB of memory and everything is just fine. (Well nearly, but I won't bore you with my petty whinges if you don't bore me with yours :)). All I'm interested in is playing the game !

Note also that I've generally avoided including stuff that's in the manual. If you want that then RTFM !:)

Spoiler Alert

One word of caution. There are spoilers in here. Because of the style I have chosen to use for this guide they are scattered through out the text as appropriate with no other warning. If you want to enjoy all the surprises then don't read this ! I certainly enjoyed (and am still enjoying) the surprises and won't be offended if you feel the same way and therefore choose not to read the rest of this guide.

Legal Stuff

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Sorry ! :(

I'll keep this as short as I can. This guide is copyrighted by me, Edward Kenworthy, 1997. Feel free to copy this guide as many times as you like and put it on your web pages or wherever; you can even print it if you like to read in the... bath. Please just give me the credit I'm due :=).

Under no circumstances may you charge for this guide or any part of it.

If you want to contribute anything then that's great, just send it to me at: ekenworthy@cix.compulink.co.uk and you'll receive full credit. I get to keep full copyright on the guide and any contributions (and you accept that condition by posting me contributions), but hey that's no problem as the guide will always be free - it's just to avoid any misunderstandings.

Character Class

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Overview

At first glance and after playing Diablo for a short while it seems that there are only three significant differences between the three available character classes: which skill do you receive, what sex are you and what are your starting stats. It seems that from then on you can follow whichever path you wish regardless of your starting class choice. To a degree that is true but there are other less obvious differences between the different classes. Firstly depending on which class you chose you gain more or less for allocation of points to differing stats - the Wizard, for example, gains 2 mana points for each point allocated to the Magic stat - the other two classes gain only one. Also his maximum Magic is higher than that of the other two classes - the maximum Magic for a Rogue is 70, for example. The Rogue and Warrior have similar benefits with regards to Dexterity and Strength respectively.

The other difference between the classes is that each is quicker at doing what it is best at. The Rogue is faster firing her bow, the Warrior faster at swinging his axe or sword or mace and the Wizard faster at casting spells.

Character Stats

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Strength

This is the primary statistic of the warrior. It has two effects. Firstly it adds a bonus to the damage inflicted by your character - whether melee or ranged weapons. Secondly it allows you to use certain items of equipment - armour and weapons - which usually have a minimum strength requirement to use.

Magic

This is the primary statistic of the Wizard. It has a number of effects. Firstly it determines how many points of Mana you have to cast spells. Secondly it allows you to be able to cast spells (see the section on spells below) and thirdly some staves and all scrolls have a minimum Magic requirement to use. Some magic items give a bonus to Magic; these are called names like "of the Dragon" or "of Wizardry" dependent on how much of a bonus they give. Some cursed magic items give a negative

"bonus" to magic and these are called "of the Fool" or similar.

Dexterity

The primary statistic of the Rogue dexterity affects the character's armour and "to hit" percentage. Some bows also have a minimum Dexterity requirement for you to be able to use them. Some magic items give you a bonus to Dexterity, these have names like "of Precision" or "of Perfection" depending on how much of a bonus they give you.

Vitality

The only effect I am aware of that Vitality has is to give you hit points. That's it. Some items give a bonus to Vitality and these are called names like "of Health" or "of Vigour". Some items give a penalty and these are called "of Illness", for example.

Hit Points/Life

This is a measure of how much damage you can take before you die. Vitality, level and class are the basic factors in deciding how many hit points you have. Some magic items give you an increase in hit points, these items have names like "Armour of the Lion" or "Helm of the Wolf" depending on how many hit points they give you.

Mana

This is the amount of spells that you can cast. Magic items that give a bonus to Mana are called things like "Spider's Ring".

Armour

This is a measure of how hard it is for a monster (or player) to hit you. How good your armour class is depends on your level. AC 40 is reasonable at 10th level but sucks at 20th.

A combination of the attacker's to hit and the defender's armour class decides the attacker's chance to hit. Magic items give two possibly types of bonus, either an absolute increase in your armour class eg an "Armour 10" item gives you an additional armour value of 10 if worn. Typically this represents the physical protection given by the item (eg a helm) and is not magical. Some Unique Items ("The Protector" is one I know of) have an Armour value even if they don't obviously physically provide such protection. "The Protector" for example is a staff - which does not normally have an Armour value.) Magical items normally provide a magic armour bonus expressed as a percentage (eg "+147% Armour"). This means that after your Armour value is calculated it is modified by this bonus. For example a bonus of +147% would turn a basic Armour of 100 into a final Armour of 247.

Damage

This is the amount of damage you inflict. It's a combination of your Strength damage bonus, plus the damage inflicted by your weapon (but not any additional variable damage, for example the 1-6 points of flame damage your firey sword inflicts) modified by any % damage bonus any of your items give you. Magic items that give a bonus are called things like "Brutal Maul". Items that give a negative "bonus" are called things like "Useless" :=). Some magical items give a fixed increase in damage, for example +6 to damage. These items are called things like "Sword of Maiming".

To Hit

This is your chance to hit an unarmoured monster. It's based principally on your level and Dexterity and is modified by any magical items you have.

Resistances

There are three types of resistance available. Both characters and monsters can have resistances in each of these three areas. Characters by using magical items, monsters have them intrinsically and may even be immune to one or more of them. The best that characters can manage is 75% resistance to a particular thing. (One of my characters had unique item once, a "Ring of Constriction" which gave her 75% immunity - which the description said was maximum - in all three areas. Unfortunately it drained hit points at the rate of 1 per second ! It quickly got converted into cash.)

- * Fire - Resistance to fire gives the chance to completely avoid damage from a firey source.

- * Lightning - Resistance to lightning gives the chance to completely avoid damage from an electrical source.

- * Magic - despite the name this does not seem to give a general resistance to magic. Instead it appears to be resistance to certain magical attacks, the only one of which I am currently aware is Stone Curse.

Light

By default each character radiates a certain amount of light. Certain magical items can increase or decrease the strength and hence radius of light emitted. This is particularly important for characters using magical ranged attacks: bows and spells.

Monster heroes also radiate light and this can be a useful warning that there's a monster hero nearby. Monster hero's radiated light can even be seen through walls (!) and if they're invisible. Just aim for the centre of that moving patch of light !

Items

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Weapons

Melee

Swords: Dagger, Short Sword, Long Sword, Broad Sword, Claymore, Great Sword, Bastard Sword, Two Handed Sword, Falchion.

Maces, Flails and Morning Stars

Maul

Staves: Composite, Short, Long

Axes: Small Axe, Great Axe

Ranged (Bows)

Short Bow

Long Bow

Composite Bow

Hunter's Bow

Short War Bow

Long War Bow

Short Battle Bow

Long Battle Bow

Armour

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There are a number of standard types of armour, listed below which determines their basic armour value and required strength to use. These are listed in increasing order of armour class.

Headgear

There are several different types of Headgear ranging from skull cap, through cap and helm to full helm.

Armour

Rags, robe, cape, leather armour, hard leather, studded leather, ring mail, chain mail, banded, splint mail, breast plate, plate mail, gothic plate, full plate mail.

Shields

Buckler, small shield, kite shield, large shield, tower shield.

Magical Items

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Rings and Amulets

Spell Books

Potions and Elixirs

Mana. Restores Mana. Available in full and partial versions. Can be bought from the witch.

Health. Restores health. Available in full and partial versions. Can be bought from the healer.

Rejuvenation. Restores both health and mana. Full and partial versions exist. Can be bought from both the witch and the healer. They are a lot less cost effective than separate mana and health potions (Full Health plus a Full Mana Potion costs 300 gold. A Full Rejuvenation costs 600)- but takes up half the space and takes half the time in combat to imbibe for the same effect.

Elixir of X. There are elixirs for each of the stats that permanently increase that stat by one. Note however that unlike magical items they cannot increase that stat beyond the character classes limit. In this case the Elixir is simply wasted. Can be bought from the witch at a cost of 5000 gp. However she only ever has a limited selection and they only seem to be offered once you reach about 25th level.

Experience. I have only heard of this potion appearing in the beta version. It could be bought from the peg-leg boy but had a rather serious bug. Rather than giving a single level it immediately promoted the imbiber to 50th level ! Something of a bug. Whether it exists in the release version of the game or not I don't know (although there are some 50th level characters running around battle.net who have suspiciously low hit points given their level...)

Death

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Death in Diablo is never permanent and therefore not a disaster. If you're playing single player then all you have to do is go back to your saved game. You did save the game recently didn't you ? In multiplayer you can re-start with the same character back in town. What happens is that you lose all your mana - if you had any left - and are back on one life. Obviously then a trip to the healer is the first order of the day. (Nothing more embarrassing than getting all tooled up, trekking through four levels of dungeon to recover your items only to be killed by a Horror because you forgot to get healed first ! I know - it happened to me.)

If you check your inventory you'll find that you lost everything you were

wearing - rings, armour, amulet, readied weapons, helmet, and some money (except if you were killed by your own spell - eg you walked into your own Wall of Fire or if you are on the "Down to Diablo" level). But anything that was in your back pack (other than some money) or belt is safe. Also you'll have all of the spells you've already learnt - you can't lose those "weapons" even if it was readied - which is one of the things that makes learnt spells so good.

Next job is to consider whether it's possible for you to go and recover your lost items (I'm assuming here that you were alone and not resurrected) which will have been dropped where you were killed. The worst possible place to have been killed was whilst surrounded by monsters at the only entrance to a level. Chances are that as soon as you arrive you'll be butchered again - so you may want to give it a couple of goes and then give up if you get nowhere. (DO NOT GO IN WITH ANY READIED ITEMS - you'll just lose those as well.) Try the suicide recovery technique - below.

Recovering Items

There are two tactics for trying to recover your items. If you think you can kill all the monsters using the equipment you have left (perhaps you were caught by surprise and mobbed and now you now you'll clear the way with a couple of well aimed lightning bolts) then arm up and go in a slog it out, kill all the monsters and recover you items.

The second method, I call the suicide recovery technique, involves diving in with no items readied (perhaps just a mana shield running) and aiming to grab as much of your stuff before being killed. As items are placed in your backpack when you collect them when you're killed they all come back with you to town. The exception to this is if you have no weapon readied and you pick up a weapon it is automatically readied and, of course, when you are killed gets dropped again. The answer to this is to have some cheap dagger or lump of wood with a nail in (ie something you don't care about losing) readied so any weapon picked up is safely stashed in your back pack.

As part of this tactic you may need to lure the monsters away from your items first, by running up to them and then quickly running away before doubling back. Alternatively you could treat this as a purely suicidal run to get them well out of the way and set yourself up for the next life when you can make a more leisurely collection.

Spells

General

Level 1

Healing

Holy Bolt
Fire Bolt
Charged Bolt
Heal Other

Level 2

Town Portal
Lightning

Level 3

Fireball

Level 4

Bone Spirit
Golem
(Teleport)
(Nova)
(Armageddon)

Monsters

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Standard Monsters

This is a list of standard monsters. I may eventually get around to listing their hit point ranges and resistances etc but I doubt it. Also note that this list is possibly not complete. That's because you never meet every monster in every game. I've only seen Guardians, for example, in one game that I've played. Please feel free to email me any additions.

- * Zombies, Rotting Corpses, Ghoul, Black Death
- * Skeletons, Skeleton Captain, Corpse Axe, Corpse Bow, Burning Dead, Burning Dead Captain, Horror, Horror Captain
- * Scavenger, Plague Eater, Bone Crusher, Shadow Beast.
- * Acid Spitter, Poison Spitter
- * Fiend, Gloom, Blink, Familiar
- * Overlord, Mud Man
- * Winged Demon, Gargoyle
- * Juggernaut, Frost Charger, Obsidian Lord
- * Storm Rider
- * Cave Viper, Gold Viper, Crimson Drake, Azure Drake
- * Lava Lord
- * Unseen, Stalker, Hidden
- * Goat men: Flesh Clan, Fire Clan, Stone Clan, Night Clan
- * Succubus, Snow Witch, Hell Spawn. Soul Burner
- * Doom Guard, Blood Knight, Black Knight
- * Advocate, Magistrate, Counsellor
- * Guardian

Monster Heroes

- * The Butcher - Overlord.
- * Skeleton King
- * Duke of Sludge - Mud Man.
- * Foulwing - Gloom.
- * Spine Sucker - Bone breaker.
- * Sir Gore - Blood Knight
- * Soulpus - Zombie
- * Rotfeast the Hungry - Zombie
- * Madeye the Dead - Burning Dead
- * Blackash the Burning - Burning Dead
- * Goretongue - Blackdeath
- * Skullfire - Corpse Bow
- * Moonbender - Blink
- * Archbishop Lazarus - Counsellor
- * The Dark Lord - guess who ;-)

Levels

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There are 16 levels with regular shortcuts straight back to town level - which makes things easier. These short cuts occur at the beginning of each new section. In multiplayer they are open straight away but you have to be a minimum level to use them (dependent on the difficulty level). In single player games they open when you find them in the labrynth.

The first four levels are called the Dungeon and entered via the cathedral. The next levels (5-8 inclusive) are called the Catacombs which are entered from a small temple to the east of the town (slightly north and east of where the town portals appear). Levels 9-12 are called the Caves - the entrance to which is amongst the rocks on the way to the peg-legged boy. The next levels (13-15) are called Hell and the direct entrance is a glowing crack in the earth north west of the town, just to the south west of the bridge you take on the way to the peg-leg boy. The final level of Hell is called "Down to Diablo" rather than level 16 and is got to through the pentagram on level 15 near the stairs up to level 14.

One thing to be aware of. In the final level - "Down to Diablo" - and that is that if you die - unlike all the other levels - you do not lose any items. However because the game ends when (if) you kill Diablo you lose any and all items that you left "safely" in the village. I lost THREE unique items in this way. I was NOT pleased !

Normal

This is the standard difficulty level.

Nightmare

This is the second difficulty level. To start here you need to be at least 20th level. All the monsters are significantly enhanced - but so are the treasures and experience points. You'll gain more experience clearing the first two levels of the Dungeon at Nightmare level than you would clearing levels 5 to 8 ! But then even the Rotting Corpses average over 100 hit points !! And don't ask about the Butcher...

Hell

This is the third difficulty level. To start here you need to be at least 30th level. I haven't made it yet so I don't know the differences but I assume it's the same as Nightmare level - only harder. I hate to think how hard The Butcher is...

Shrines

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The majority of shrines have a positive effect, whether it's to give you two potions of full rejuvenation or add a couple of levels to all your spells. However there are one or two that have a bad effect. I've never experienced one so can't be sure but apparently there are.

Strategies and Tactics

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Diablo, despite some people's claims, is not a strategy game. There are no grand strategies you can plan and execute (please, before arguing, go and look up the definition of the word strategy). Tactics and possibly "Grand Tactics" yes, strategy no.

Okay, onto the tactics.

RUN !

The number one tactic which you should learn and are never, ever, too tough to ignore is RUN AWAY !!! There are two reasons for doing this. One is to escape a tough monster - typically this will require running out of sight, but for some monsters - like King Leoric - it may require leaving the level as they are a bit more persistent and seem to have an almost radar like sense of where you are (and they can open doors !!! The first time King Leoric did this to me I almost jumped out of my seat. Shortly after I was smeared all over the walls of the room I had been cowering in.)

The second reason to run away is to string out the monsters. Numbers count, for several reasons. Firstly each monster has a chance to hit you. Two monsters attacking have double the chance of hitting and causing damage than one monster. Four monsters four times the chance, etc. So obviously you'll get killed more quickly and have less time to kill them.

Secondly each time you're hit it makes you stagger and spoils any spell or blow you were preparing. Get hit often enough - more likely with multiple attackers - and you'll never get a chance to hit back. Uh oh ! Thirdly there are more targets for you to spread your attacks over which leads onto the next combat tip:

Concentrate Your Attacks

Simple maths says that it's better for me to completely kill one monster than wound three. The simple reason is that three wounded monsters fight just as well as three healthy monsters and do just as much damage. Two healthy monsters plus one dead one however do only two third's of the damage. Concentrate your attacks on one monster until it is dead. Generally you should concentrate on the weakest first to get them out of the way quickly. This is particularly true with the monster heroes, who typically have a large group of consorts. Avoid the big monster and aim to kill off all his hangers-on before turning on him.

Dealing with Ranged Attacks (Bow Fire and acid/poison spit)

There are four main ways of dealing with ranged attacks and which you choose depends on your character and the circumstances.

* Shoot it out. If you think you're hard enough (and obviously have a good ranged attack) then you can choose to simply dive in and shoot it out. A variation on this is to duck back a bit (to reduce the number of enemy firers) and then shoot. Picking them off one by one and slowly advancing (possibly guessing the firer's off-screen location by where their missiles are coming from.) This only really works with skeleton archers (and their variants). Goatmen and poison spitters, for example, will just follow you. In which case, use option two. Duck around a corner and wait for them to follow you and pick them off one by one as they come around. This also works if you have no ranged attack as it brings them into melee range (otherwise monsters that have a range attack runaway if you come too close). Ranged weapons include both spells (lightning bolt being one of the best) and bows.

* Simply dive in and try and corner the archers and butcher them where they stand. Be careful though as quite often by moving closer you'll come into range of more archers. And of course the archers runaway from you as you come closer.

* Run for it. The first variant is to duck around a corner and wait for them to follow you before picking them off one by one (corners are preferable to doorways in this case). The second variant is to decide it's all too much for you at the moment and you need to "re-group" then simply keep running...

* Finally use spells. Golem - which monsters seem to ignore (!) - and Firewall are good spells.

Handling Large Groups of Monsters

There are a number of ways you can handle large groups of monsters.

* Firstly you can sod subtlety and simply wade in for a gore-fest. This only really works if you armour is good enough that they are unlikely to hit you otherwise you're in trouble (see the section on Running Away for reasons why).

* Secondly you could use mass destruction spells like multiple Lightning bolts or Novas to even up the numbers.

* Thirdly you can run away in order to string out the monsters and then pick them off one by one - either hand to hand or with bow or spell fire.

* Firewall is also a good way to thin out numbers.

See also:

* The section on Death for item recovery tactics.

Etiquette and Scams to Beware Of

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Player Killing

In a word - Don't.

Whilst in Diablo it is possible to deliberately kill another player (but not in town where no combat or spell casting, other than healing, is allowed. Why casting healing is allowed when there is a healer to do it for free is beyond me.) It is frowned upon in the Diablo community - and quite rightly so. Not because we're all a bunch of wimps who couldn't handle a deathmatch game of Quake but for two reasons. Firstly because most of us feel it is against the spirit of the game - we're supposed to be crusading against this great evil - Diablo - not butchering each other for mere monetary gain. And secondly because there are no real safeguards against a 20th level character turning up in a multiplayer game and butchering all the 10th level characters he can find. (I have a 28th level Rogue and I have no doubt she could butcher and entire party of 10th level characters - level makes a *big* difference. Great fun - not.) So don't be a PKilling pillock. If that's your game why not go back to pulling the wings off butterflies and leaves us to enjoy our game ?

Top Tip: If your 10th level character is being attacked by a 20th level PKiller then the easiest way out (and best way to deny the bastard any reward) is to hit Escape and chose "Quit Diablo" or "New Game". Then

restart, go back to the same game and, whilst safely in Town, loudly broadcast the fact that a certain player just tried to murder you. Or perhaps bring your 25th level character with his vicious 2-Handed Sword of Might into the game track down the rotten sod and return the compliment.

A word of caution. It is possible to kill another player even if you are "player friendly" by the incautious (deliberate or accidental) use of missile weapons or spells. Often you'll find those dumb warriors just insist on wandering in the way of your hail of arrows. Always apologise - even if they were stupid and it was their fault. It avoids any mistakes over attempted PKilling. The caveat is never, ever fire into a melee where you don't have a clean shot. It just pisses people off.

Scams

One of the down sides to not being able to attack another player in town (this might seem strange given my above demagoguery) is that it is easy to rip players off (or to be ripped off). There is **no** secure way to trade items - this is something that Blizzard really should fix - and unlike in the real world because violence is not allowed in town (and there's no police force - not with the king dead anyway ;)) there's no way to **force** the thief to hand back your goods.

Scams to be aware of.

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Number one and most blatant is "Let me just have a look at that Kingly Plate of the Zodiac just to see if I can use it." And then he does a runner leaving the game. One way to deal with this is to trade from opposite sides of the river. That way you can see what each of you has dropped but neither of you can get away with both.

Note there is a bug in Diablo which means that items just "disappear" in multiplayer games. I've confirmed this in a direct connection game where on occasion items would be visible on one computer but not the other ! And then disappeared.

Most players however are honest, the word is never to trade anything you'd be terribly upset to lose... The Witch and the Blacksmith may offer ridiculously low buying prices - but at least you know they'll honour what they say.

Another unpleasant scam to be wary of seems to be perpetrated by low level characters on higher level ones. Basically they beg to come along on foray with you - and then if you get killed steal all your items and run !! RYAN you theieving bastard - when I find you you are DEAD !

What Next ?

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From the ending it appears that a sequel is on its way. And why not ? The Diablo engine seems capable of doing so much more... So here are some ideas for Blizzard :=)

- * Make the principle baddies a lot more... different. Diabol and Lazarus, for example, were simply improved versions of the other monsters - more hits and more damage sure but basically the same.

- * Vampires with level drain. Now there's a monster to worry about, *especially* at high level. Kill the vampire to recover lost levels.

- * Some out of dungeon stuff. Fighting in the village and raids on it by baddies.

- * Secure trading between players.

- * No deliberate PKilling possible, *or* have the villagers ignore PKillers - afterall they're after heroes not more evil types so why should they help them (heal, trade, identify items) ?

- * New character classes: Cleric, Paladin etc. With *useful* skills. For the cleric Heal/Heal Other - but only to a maximum of 50% of total life etc.

- * Call unique items "Artefacts" or "Relics".

- * Allow some monsters, Ghosts or spectres or something, to walk through walls. Now that would be frihtening the first time it happened !