

Death Knight

The dark knight uses necromantic magic instead of black magic, preferring the company of the undead over the living. Being one with the undead has its advantages, the dark knight is able to inflict a plague upon others as well as command the undead to obey him.

The death knight is an archetype of the dark knight class.

Alignment: Must be of an evil alignment.

Infection (Su): Once per day, a death knight can call upon the darkest magic to spawn an evil plague within himself. Creating this plague is a swift action and while the death knight is a carrier, the disease does not harm him and he shows no symptoms. The death knight can spread the plague; his Harm Touch ability inflicts the Zombie status effect (Fortitude save: DC 10 + half of the dark knight's level + his Charisma modifier to negate) on the target, as well as dealing damage. Infection lasts for a duration of 1 round per dark knight level. At 4th level, and at every three levels thereafter, the death knight can infect himself one additional time per day, to a maximum of seven times per day at 19th level.

This ability replaces grit stance.

Malignance (Su): While the death knight is under the effects of Infection, as a move action, he can attempt to exert his will over a single undead. He gives the subject a single command, which it obeys to the best of its ability at its earliest opportunity. Intelligent undead (including living creatures with the Zombie status) get a Will save (DC 10 + half of the dark knight's level + his Charisma modifier) each time he gives a command. The death knight may select from the following options.

- *Approach:* On its turn, the subject moves toward the death knight as quickly and directly as possible for 1 round. The creature may do nothing but move during its turn, and it provokes attacks of opportunity for this movement as normal.
- *Attack:* The subject attacks a creature the death knight chooses, moving if it needs to. If the subject can charge the target, it does so. Moving and charging provoke attacks of opportunity as normal.
- *Drop:* On its turn, the subject drops whatever it is holding. It can't pick up any dropped item until its next turn.
- *Fall:* On its turn, the subject falls to the ground and remains prone for 1 round. It may act normally while prone but takes any appropriate penalties.
- *Flee:* On its turn, the subject moves away from the death knight as quickly as possible for 1 round. It may do nothing but move during its turn, and it provokes attacks of opportunity for this movement as normal.
- *Halt:* The subject stands in place for 1 round. It may not take any actions but is not considered helpless.

If the subject can't carry out the death knight's command on its next turn, this ability automatically fails.

At 3rd level, intelligent undead (including living creatures with the zombie status) must make a Will save in order to attack the death knight. Mindless undead will not willingly attack the death knight, though they may be commanded to do so by another death knight or necromancer.

At 6th level, the death knight can channel a use of his Harm Touch through a single undead. This consumes two uses of his Harm Touch ability, and functions exactly as normal except that it emanates from an undead creature of his choice must make the attack roll.

At 9th level, the death knight gains the Special command.

- *Special:* The death knight must select a spell, song, limit break, or special ability that the subject possesses. The subject uses the special attack against a creature the death knight chooses. If the subject does not have the special attack, the Command fails.

At 12th level, the death knight can channel a use of an Abyssal Art through a single undead. This consumes two uses of his Abyssal Arts, and functions exactly as normal except that an undead creature of his choice must make the attack rolls involved, if any.

At 15th level, while the death knight is under the effect of Infection, he and his zombie minions spread the infection through simple contact. When they make an unarmed strike or natural attack, or when an enemy makes an unarmed strike or natural attack against them, the enemy is afflicted with the Zombie status effect unless they make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half of the dark knight's level + his Charisma modifier) to negate.

At 18th level, while the death knight is under the effect of Infection, he can command a single living creature with the Zombie status effect to Die.

- *Die:* The subject gains the Doom status. 2d4 rounds after being commanded to die, the subject dies and rises as an actual zombie under the control of the death knight. The death knight can use a full-round action to Command every actual zombie under his control to take the same action. The death knight can have a total of 20 zombies under his control at the same time, and they remain in his control until he releases them or they are destroyed.

These abilities replace defile.

Death Magic: The death knight draws his spells from the necromancer spell list rather than the dark knight spell list, but is otherwise unchanged.

This ability modifies and replaces the dark knight's spellcasting ability.

Touch of the Crypt (Ex): At 5th level, a death knight gains a +2 bonus on saving throws against mind-affecting effects, death effects, and poison. He is harmed by positive energy effects and healed by negative energy effects as though he were undead, although negative energy effects that don't heal undead (such as *enervation*) affect him normally. The death knight has a 25% chance of ignoring critical hits and the bonus damage from sneak attacks as though he were wearing armor of light fortification.

This ability replaces soul eater.

Fortitude of the Crypt (Ex): At 7th level, a death knight gains immunity to poison. He also gains darkvision 60 feet if he does not already possess it.

This ability replaces dark resilience.

Cloak of the Crypt (Ex): At 11th level, the death knight gains immunity to energy drain and harmful negative energy effects. His chance of ignoring critical hits and sneak attacks increases to 50%, as though he were wearing armor of moderate fortification.

This ability replaces aura of cowardice.

Will of the Crypt (Ex): At 13th level, a death knight's bonus on saving throws against mind-affecting effects and death effects increases to +4.

This ability replaces aura of despair.

Weapons of Sin (Su): At 15th level, a death knight's weapons are treated as evil-aligned for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction.

This ability replaces shadow wall.

Crypt Lord (Ex): At 17th level, a death knight's chance of ignoring critical hits and sneak attacks increases to 75%, as though he were wearing armor of heavy fortification. He gains immunity to death effects, paralysis, sleep effects, and stunning. He no longer sleeps. The death knight also gains immunity to effects that cause fatigue, and effects that would cause him to become exhausted instead cause him to become fatigued.

This ability replaces aura of quietus.

Soul of the Crypt (Su): At 19th level, a death knight gains DR 5/bludgeoning and good.

This ability replaces aura of rage.

Undying Champion (Ex): At 20th level, a death knight joins the ranks of the undead. His DR increases to 10/bludgeoning and good. His type changes to undead, and he acquires all undead traits. Although immune to disease, he can still carry and spread diseases with his infection ability. The death knight no longer has a Constitution score. He uses his Charisma score for calculating hit points, Fortitude saves, and any special abilities that rely on Constitution.

This ability replaces dark champion.