# HOUSE RULES – CURSE OF STRAHD
Version 1.2

## ROLLING FOR HIT POINTS

Some players love to roll dice for their hit points but are deterred by the risk of rolling 1s. This option uses two smaller dice for hit points for each class, guaranteeing that PCs will gain at least two hit points per level of advancement.

| Hit Die | HP Roll |
|---------|---------|
| D6 | 2d3 |
| D8 | 2d4 |
| D10 | d6+d4 |
| D12 | 2d6 |

## MORE STARTING HIT POINTS

With this variant, PCs start at first level with hit points equal to their CON score, with no CON bonus. Thereafter, they only gain the average hit points. This variant gives players a little more survivability at first level.

## DROPPING TO "0" HIT POINTS

If a character is dropped to 0 hit points, they gain one level of exhaustion that comes into effect immediately when you are stabilized. If you recover and are dropped to zero again, you gain another level of exhaustion.

## STAND FROM PRONE

Rising from a throw or fall is a difficult thing in the heat of battle. It takes training and skill to do so very quickly and even more so when faced with an aggressive adversary.

Standing provokes an opportunity attack from all threatening creatures unless you make a Dexterity (Acrobatics) or Strength (Athletics) skill check at DC 10 + 2 for each enemy engaged with you. This represents a character's skill at rolling with a fall and their ability to keep attackers at bay while they get back on their feet.

You must spend half your movement to stand from prone, as per the standard rules.

# BETTER CRITICAL HITS

When you score a critical hit, roll for damage normally. Then determine the maximum damage you can roll with your attack before applying any modifiers. Combine the maximum result with your rolled damage, and then add any modifiers. This is your critical hit damage.

For example, a character wielding a longsword with 16 Strength who scores a critical hit would deal 8 + 1d8 + 3 (STR mod) damage.

# FIRING INTO MELEE

Yes, you can hit your friends and unintended targets.  When firing into melee, cover bonus is added to the normal fumble threat range of 1.  If you roll within that range, you reroll against a random target granting cover.

Example: An ally is attacking a goblin, and both are engaged in melee. You fire a ranged attack at the goblin. You must add the soft cover bonus of +2 to your normal fumble range of 1. This becomes a fumble chance of 1-3.  If you roll a fumble, you will strike your ally instead of the goblin. However, if there are multiple allies or goblins surrounding a target, this could have different results, such as striking a different goblin or ally.

# DODGE & DRINK

When you use an action to drink a potion in combat, you can choose to forego all your other combined actions (bonus action, move, free action and reaction) to take the Dodge action.

The Dodge action (p.192, PH) imposes disadvantage on all attack rolls against you (by attackers that you can see at least).

Raison d'être: According to the rules, drinking a potion requires an action. This house rule makes drinking a healing potion in combat a viable option, by reducing the odds of taking damage in the round you're trying to heal up in. And while Dodge is quite a powerful benefit to give the PC, the fact that they can't use their movement to retreat to safety at the same time, or get an opportunity attack, feels about right.

# SLEEPING IN ARMOR

Sleeping in light armor has no adverse effect on the wearer but sleeping in medium or heavy armor makes it difficult to recover fully during a long rest.

When you finish a long rest during which you slept in medium or heavy armor, you regain only one quarter of your spent Hit Dice (minimum of one die). If you have any levels of exhaustion, the rest doesn't reduce your exhaustion level.

## MAGIC ITEM IDENTIFICATION

With this variant rule, magic items are slightly more rare and harder to uncover their abilities.  Identifying a magic item requires an Arcana check depending on the rarity of the item.  If you are not proficient in the Arcana skill, you suffer disadvantage on this skill check.

| Rarity | Arcana DC |
|---|---|
| Common | DC 5 |
| Uncommon | DC 10 |
| Rare | DC 15 |
| Very Rare | DC 20 |
| Legendary | DC 25 |

On a failed roll, the character must wait at least 24 hours before attempting a new Arcana check to identify the item.

The *identify* spell is also an option, as per the PHB.

## RE-BALANCED SPELLS

There are a few really unbalanced spells contained in D&D 5th edition (spells such as *Silence*, *Heat Metal*, and *Hypnotic Pattern*. To some degree it's all part of the fun, but if a spell is considered disruptive for the game it may be modified (as gently as possible) to bring it more in line with the style of the Curse of Strahd campaign. Let's cross that bridge when we get to it. But please consult your friendly DM when you get the option to choose your new spells.

## LUCKY

This feat is not the best fit for a horror-themed campaign like *Curse of Strahd* and quite frankly it's annoying to play with. Sorry, you're out of luck.

## SLEEP DEPRIVATION

A long rest is never mandatory but going without sleep does have its consequences. Whenever you end a 24-hour period without finishing a long rest, you must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or suffer one level of exhaustion.

It becomes harder to fight off exhaustion if you stay awake for multiple days. After the first 24 hours, the DC increases by 5 for each consecutive 24-hour period without a long rest. The DC resets to 10 when you finish a long rest.

# WILD SHAPE FIX

Raison d'être: Moon Druid are very unbalanced between level 2 and 4. A level 2 Circle of the Moon druid, who might naturally have 17 hit points, could easily access 222 extra hit points during the course of an adventuring day, by Wild Shaping six times into a dire wolf with 37 hit points (and that based on a day with just two short rests).

The maximum Challenge Rating (CR) of the beast shapes between level 2 and 12 are changed according to this table:

| Level | Max CR - Circle of the Land | Max CR - Circle of the Moon | Max CR - Circle of the Moon (in the standard rules) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2$^{nd}$ | 1/4 | 1/2 | 1 |
| 4$^{th}$ | 1/2 | 1 | 1 |
| 8$^{th}$ | 1 | 2 | 2 (from 6$^{th}$ level) |
| 10$^{th}$ | 1 | 3 | 3 (from 9$^{th}$ level) |
| 12$^{th}$ | 1 | 4 | 4 |

Additional changes

1. You automatically revert to your normal form if you fall unconscious, drop to 0 hit points, or die. In this case you are prone and the Stand From Prone house rule comes into effect. You cannot change to Beast Shape again before finishing a short or long rest.
2. The total sum of the Challenge Ratings of the beasts which the druid Wild Shapes into between long rests cannot exceed the druid's level. In other words, a level 4 druid can transform into four CR 1 creatures during a day, or two CR 1 creatures and four CR 1/2 creatures, etc.

Clarification:

1. You can revert to your normal form by using a bonus action on your turn. In the same round you are free to take a normal action but cannot change to Beast Shape again on the same turn. (This is just a clarification as it corresponds with the standard rule: You cannot replace a bonus action with a normal action. See: *Sage Advice*)

## *Learning Beast Shapes*

Learning a Beast Shape requires the druid to observe the animal in question to gain insight into the nature of the beast and create a bond with its spirit. The animal must be of a type that belongs to an environmental habitat that is familiar to the druid. *Xanathar's Guide To Everything* (p. 24-26) provides tables that organize the beasts from the Monster Manual according to the beasts' most likely environments. Consider the environment your druid grew up in, then consult the appropriate table for a list of animals that your druid has probably seen by 2nd level.

Version 1.2 Changes:

## SCARY CURSES

*Remove Curse* spell (level 3) does not exist. You have to rely on more powerful spells, such as Greater Restoration, to be rid of a curse.

## DOWN TO EARTH

No flying PCs restriction. *Fly* spell (level 3) removed from the game.

## LET'S GO CRAZY

See separate document "Optional Sanity Rules."

## HEALER'S KIT DEPENDENCY

A character can't spend any Hit Dice after finishing a short rest until someone expends one use of a healer's kit to bandage and treat the character's wounds.