

# Lance

Knight with a lance

A **lance** is a [pole weapon](#) or [spear](#) used by a [mounted warrior](#). The lance is longer, thicker and [heavier](#) than an [infantry](#) spear, and is not [intended](#) for [throwing](#), or for quick [thrusting](#). Lances did not have tips meant to break off or bend, unlike many throwing weapons of the spear and javelin family. They often had a vamplate, a small circular plate to prevent the hand sliding up the shaft upon impact.

The lance was longer than a spear, about 9–10 feet long.<sup>[1]</sup> When [charging](#) the lance was carried under the arm (couched) using the weight of the horse and rider to push the lance tip into its intended [target](#). It was a [medieval](#) shock and awe weapon (caused great fear) to have a number of mounted knights with lances charging towards you.<sup>[1]</sup> In many cases it caused panic and the enemy fled the battle.

They were used by [European](#) knights, but the use of lances was spread over the [Old World](#) wherever horses were available. The use of the lance was made possible by the use of the [stirrup](#) added to [saddles](#).<sup>[2]</sup> It allowed the knight to control the horse and stand in the saddle.<sup>[2]</sup> As a [backup](#) weapon, lancers (one who used a lance) of that [period](#) also carried swords, maces (a type of [club](#)) or something else suited to hand-to-hand (or close) combat, since the lance was often used only once during an event. It could not be used once the combatants were close to each other.

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## References

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- ↑ 1.0 1.1 Kelly Robert DeVries; Robert Douglas Smith, *Medieval weapons: an illustrated history of their impact* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2007), p. 130
- ↑ 2.0 2.1 Paul Hilliam, *Medieval Weapons and Warfare: Armies and Combat in Medieval Times* (New York: Rosen Publishing Group, 2004), p. 17

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