

UNDERWATER MECHANICS

This rule set is intended to make underwater play more interesting and immersive (without adding too many complex rules to remember) to D&D 5e since the PHB rules are not very in-depth.

This rule set is heavily geared towards specific settings with long parts where players will be immersed in deep water.

I aimed to make the depths of the sea a real alternative environment in which to move and act and not just an obstacle as it is experienced for example in video games. This is why there are both bonuses and maluses depending on the actions performed.

Underwater combat and interaction are subject to the following rules:

1. Creatures and objects that are fully submerged in water have resistance to fire damage.
2. Only characters with waterbreathing can perform spells that have the vocal (V) component.
3. Fire-based spells or abilities can't be used unless they are applied by direct contact and do not pass through water.
4. Lightning spells deal half damage (rounded down) but affect all creatures within an additional 10-foot in each direction from the target area. All affected creatures take half the total damage. The caster must succeed on a spellcasting ability check (DC 14) or take half of the total dealt damage themselves.
5. Ice spells instantly freeze their path and the affected area, potentially freezing objects and creatures. A creature hit by an ice spell rolls a d4 to determine which limb is (superficially) frozen (two limbs on a critical hit). Frozen limbs impose disadvantage on actions that require them. Two frozen limbs prevent such actions entirely. A limb can only be thawed by a **greater restoration** spell or the application of heat within 1 hour. A creature reduced to 0 hit points by cold damage must succeed on a Constitution saving throw (DC 14) or lose the body part struck by the final blow.
6. Poison spells, unless delivered through contact, deal half damage but affect a zone extended by 5 feet in all directions.
7. Sound does not travel clearly beyond 5 feet underwater. Characters must rely on magic, nonverbal signals or gestures to communicate. Spells that rely on sound, such as **thunderwave**, have their range or area of effect doubled but deal half damage.

8. Characters wielding weapons suffer no penalties underwater as long as the weapon is suitable for aquatic combat. Some heavy weapons (to be decided with the Dm) are not suitable for underwater combat and impose a -2 penalty on attack rolls and a -1 penalty on damage rolls.

SETTING SPECIFIC ADDITIONAL RULES

1. Even if characters whose races are capable swimmers (either by nature or experience) survival in hard situations depends on their physiology or the condition of their underwater suits. When a character wearing such a suit takes a critical hit, the suit becomes compromised and must be repaired. Otherwise, the character will suffocate after a number of seconds equal to $30 \times \text{CON modifier}$.