

# ZORBUS

”You only live once or so it seems. One life for yourself or one for your dreams.”

Official homepage

[www.zorbus.net](http://www.zorbus.net)

Feedback

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# Introduction

*”This is it. No more fetch quests. No more giant rats. No more grinding. This time, you’re going for gold. This is it. You’re going to be a power.”*

Zorbus is a fantasy-themed, graphical, turn-based, role-playing roguelike game. Your goal is to delve deep into a dungeon, find a portal to a mythical place called the Zorbus where a mere mortal can ascend to demigodhood.

Being a roguelike game, Zorbus creates the dungeon randomly so that every played game is slightly different. The game uses permadeath meaning that when a character dies, it really is permanent and the player must begin a new game. You can save the game but the save file is deleted when loaded. You can only save once per dungeon level.

Thematically Zorbus draws influence from the late 70s and early 80s tabletop D&D campaigns, adventures and lore.

The goal is to create a tight, streamlined dungeon crawling experience where the dungeon feels alive, eventful and rich in content. Something more than just boring empty rooms and corridors! Diversely shaped levels with themed content (throne rooms, prisons, lots of hidden treasure caches etc.) with good connectivity between the areas.

Important part of the living dungeon are the creatures. Creatures act intelligently, might fight each other, flee when threatened and try to gather their friends to overcome a threat. Powerful factions and individuals try to stop you. You don't have to go to the fight alone but can recruit other adventurers along the way. Creatures are not silent either but comment on things with speech bubbles.

The dungeon has dynamic lighting. There are light sources as dungeon furniture and in the hands of creatures and these both can be lit and unlit. Some creatures have darkvision. Creatures react to light and sound.

The game naturally has lots of items and an inventory with equipment slots. Most creatures can use items and also pick them up from from the dungeon floors.

The rule system for the game is slightly influenced by the d20 system used in the 3rd edition of Dungeons & Dragons. Zorbus has experience levels but no character classes (race is selected). On each level up, you point buy skills and talents (mostly combat maneuvers and spells).

Zorbus does not have item identification or a hunger mechanic.

Zorbus is already a stable game but development still continues: more content, more polishing.

## Credits

Game design and programming by Joonas Hirvonen.

Graphics are from tilesets from various authors like David Gervais, Denzi, M. Itakura and others.

I've created several tiles myself mostly by modifying existing ones.

I'm also using icons from game-icons.net, not as icons per se but as symbols on the dungeon floors.

## Feedback

Bug reports, suggestions and other feedback can be mailed to [joonas.hirvonen@pp.inet.fi](mailto:joonas.hirvonen@pp.inet.fi).

When you send feedback, please mention the release number (seen in the main menu). If you report a bug or other technical issue, also mention the operating system you're using.

I'm especially in need for ideas for balancing the game difficulty, new special room content, talents, items, monster / recruit dialogue and so on.

By design, Zorbus does not have a hunger mechanic, item identification, crafting, autoexplore, an overworld map or quests.

Screenshots ([CTRL] + [F5]) or mapshots ([CTRL] + [F6]) might help when you report a bug.

## Donations

Zorbus is a closed source one-man project and at least currently freeware.

If you like the game and want to support the development, consider donating a small amount via PayPal to [joonas.hirvonen@pp.inet.fi](mailto:joonas.hirvonen@pp.inet.fi).

## Thanks

Big thanks for bug reports and suggestions:

Shard1697, Troubler

# Installation

## Windows

Unzip the archive to a wanted location. As Zorbus creates files in that folder it's best not to put it in the "Program Files"-folder but instead somewhere like "C:\Games\".

Run Zorbus.exe to start the game.

## Linux

Unzip the archive to a wanted location and run with Wine. Zorbus needs the Verdana and Georgia fonts that come with Windows but seems to work also without them. The fonts can be changed by editing the file *Data\Settings.txt*.

# Uninstallation

Simply delete the whole folder. Zorbus only creates files in its own folder and does not write anything to the Windows Registry.

# Updating the game

Zorbus doesn't use traditional "v0.1"-style version numbering but instead just an incremental release number.

The latest version is always available from the homepage.

If you enable the option *Check for updates on start* from the settings, you'll be informed when a new release is available and asked if you want to update. The check is made when the game is started.

If you install manually then it's best to remove the old folder before installing a new version.

Save files are not compatible between versions!

See the file *Zorbus.txt* for release notes.

# Saving and loading

You can save your progress from the game menu which can be opened by pressing [ESC] in the normal game view. This also quits the game.

The save file is named after the character's name so any previous save file with the same character name will be overwritten!

Note that you can only save once per dungeon level!

A game can be continued by loading the game from the main menu. When you load a game, the save file is also deleted!

Backing up save files is cheating!

# Character

## Abilities

Your basic character is measured by four abilities, two physical (*Body, Motion*) and two mental (*Mind, Spirit*). An ability modifier is calculated from each ability. These are modifiers to your *Health, Stamina* and skills.

## Body

*Body* describes your physical strength and fitness.

It determines how many extra *Health*-points you get at each level up, how much extra damage you do with melee and thrown weapons and how much you can carry. Items like heavy armor may have *Body*-requirements.

*Body* is used for combat damage but the skills *Melee* and *Ranged* are modified with *Motion*. Most warriors need both to survive.

## Motion

*Motion* describes your speed, dexterity, agility, reflexes and balance.

The higher your *Motion*-ability is, the faster you act: things take less time to do.

Key-ability in following skills: *Disable, Dodge, Melee, Ranged, Stealth*

## Mind

*Mind* describes your intelligence, reasoning, learning, memory and observing.

With high *Mind*-ability you learn quickly: you gain more skill points and learn talents more often when you reach a new experience level. *Mind* is used to check if you succeed to use magical devices such as wands and scrolls. It is also used to detect the number of charges in wands.

Key-ability in following skills: *Magic, Search*

## Spirit

*Spirit* describes your willpower, might, self-control and charisma.

Determines how many extra *Stamina*-points you get at level ups. Using talents consume *Stamina*.

You can have max *Spirit*-modifier + 1 recruits at a time (minimum is 1 even if *Spirit*-modifier is negative).

High *Spirit* value helps to control animated and summoned creatures.

*Spirit*-modifier adjusts item prices in stores (+-10% per modifier, max +-30%).

## Health

When *Health* goes to zero, your character dies. More *Health* is gained through level ups. For each level of a character, the character's *Body*-modifier is added. If a character's *Body*-modifier changes permanently or temporarily, *Health*-points are recalculated.

Health is regained automatically but not when fighting or using talents unless you have some means of *Health*-regeneration.

## Stamina

Using talents consume *Stamina*. More *Stamina* is gained through level ups. For each level of a character, the character's *Spirit*-modifier is added. If a character's *Spirit*-modifier changes permanently or temporarily, *Stamina*-points are recalculated.

Stamina is regained automatically but not when fighting or using talents unless you have some means of *Stamina*-regeneration.

## Resistances

Creatures have several resistance values against different kinds of damage.

Blunt-, pierce- and slash-resistances protect against physical attacks. Wearing armor boosts these resistances.

Elemental resistances protect against acid, cold, fire and lightning. These can be boosted mostly by wearing special equipment.

When a creature is damaged, the resistance value is subtracted from the damage amount.

Some creatures might be very resistant or even immune to certain damage types.

## Experience

You get experience from fully exploring the dungeon level, defeating monsters, finding secret doors, finding and disabling traps. After gaining enough experience points, you gain an experience level.

From defeating creatures you'll get experience depending of how much damage you did to the creature compared to its full health. If you defeat it fully by yourself, you'll get the full amount of experience and if someone else finishes a creature you have previously damaged, you'll get part of the experience even if the creature is not currently seen on the screen.

You'll get 20% of the experience points if your companion (recruit, animated, summoned) kills a creature.

## Skills

When you reach a new experience level you get skill points that you can divide as you wish or save for the next level up.

Raising a skill by one rank costs skill points equal of the new rank. E.g. it costs 4 points to raise your *Melee*-skill from 3 to 4. When a skill is used, the skill's key-ability is added to the skill's base rank.

Maximum rank of a skill is your current level + the key-ability modifier. Modifiers from your character's race might however initially set a skill above the maximum rank.

All skills are automatically used according to the situation.

Descriptions of skills can be seen when creating or leveling a character.

## Talents

Talents are your special features.

Talents have requirements that must be filled before they can be gained. When your skills are compared against talent's skill-requirements the base skill-values are always used (without ability modifiers or effects from equipment).

Most talents scale according to your abilities and skills so they usually remain usable as your character gets more powerful.

Your *Mind*-modifier determines how fast you gain talents.

Descriptions of talents can be seen when creating or leveling a character. Normally only talents whose requirements are filled are shown but by toggling the option *Info / Hide unavailable* all the talents and their requirements can be seen.



# Menus, keybindings, settings

## Menus

Menu selector can be moved with [ARROW KEYS] or [NUMPAD]. Press [ENTER] to select the highlighted item.

## Settings

The settings menu can be accessed from the main menu and game menu. Use [ARROW LEFT] and [ARROW RIGHT] or the movement keys to adjust numerical values.

*Check for updates on start* checks for updates when the game is started.

*Interface zoom* adjusts the size of the interface, mainly text size.

*Push-scroll* disables centering the view around the player character and instead the view is moved when the character is close to a screen edge.

*Offscreen creature warning* draws red warning arrows in the edges of the map to directions where hostile creatures are seen. Mainly for small screens.

*Create obituary after death* creates an obituary text file to the *Obituary*-folder after character death. An obituary and a screenshot is always created if the game is won.

## Changing the font type

By editing the file *Data\Settings.txt* you can change the fonts used in the game. You have to start the game once for this file to be created. The game needs to be restarted for the changes to take effect.

Changing the font may cause trouble with texts not fitting properly in UI-elements.

## Setting a default name for the character

By editing the file *Data\Settings.txt* you can change the default character name. You have to start the game once for this file to be created. The game needs to be restarted for the changes to take effect.

The save file is named after the character's name so any previous save file with the same character name will be overwritten!

## Keybindings

Most of the keybindings mentioned in this manual can be changed from the main menu or the game menu. You can set two different keybindings per action.

Lister (inventory etc.) keybindings can not be changed.

## Game menu

Pressing [ESC] in the game view opens the game menu where you can adjust settings and keybindings, open the manual, save the game and quit.

## Fullscreen

Press [ALT] + [ENTER] to toggle between windowed and fullscreen modes.

## Screenshots and Mapshots

By pressing [CTRL] + [F5] you can take screenshots which are saved to the *Screenshot*-folder.

[CTRL] + [F6] saves the dungeon map as a picture to the *Screenshot*-folder.

If you win the game, a screenshot is automatically created.

## Character sheet

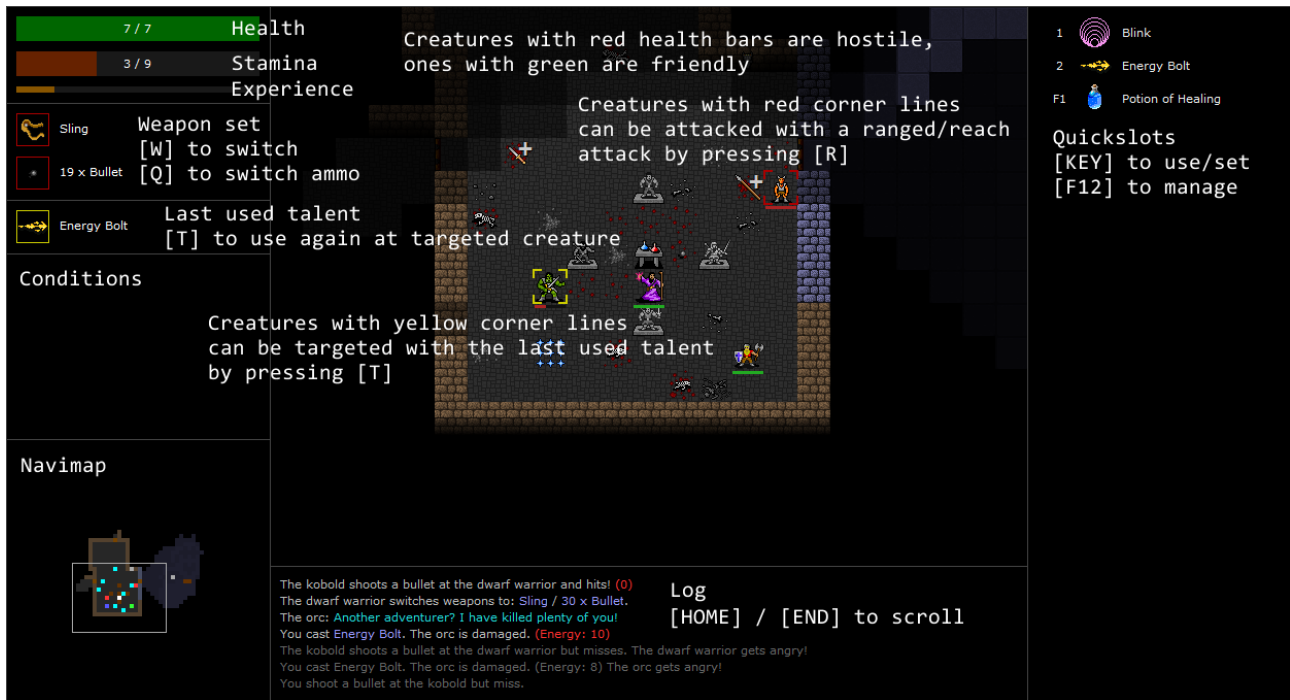
Pressing [C] opens the character sheet. The ability-, skill- and resistance-values are your current values with all modifiers from equipment and temporary effects active.

*Max Motion* shows the maximum *Motion* you can have with your current armor.

*Load Motion mod* is a modifier to *Motion* if you're carrying too much.

You can also open the character sheet with [C] in level up menus.

# Gameplay



## Friend or foe

Creatures with green health bars are friendly and ones with red are hostile. Some creatures get gradually more aggressive towards you and the health bar color slowly changes from green to red.

A question mark ("?") on a creature means that it can not currently see you.

A letter "Z" on a creature means that it is sleeping.

## Moving around

Use [ARROW KEYS] or [NUMPAD] to move the character around. Note that you can move in 8 directions. If you use [ARROW KEYS], you can move diagonally by pressing [SHIFT] plus the [ARROW KEY].

You can walk continuously at certain direction by pressing [CTRL] plus the movement key. The walk is interrupted by walls, furniture, items and hostile creatures.

## Map points

By pressing [M] you can set a map point.

With [A] you can autopilot to any explored area and can use these map points to quickly select a place. By default, map points are automatically set. This can be changed from the settings.

## **Bump actions**

Most interaction in Zorbus is done by bumping (moving) into things like creatures or furniture.

### **Hostile creatures**

Bumping into hostile creature makes a melee attack against it.

You can try to displace (swap places) with a hostile creature by bumping into them with [CTRL] pressed.

### **Friendly creatures**

Bumping into friendly creature swaps places with it. Friendly creatures can be interacted with by bumping into them with [CTRL] pressed. A dialog of possible actions is shown. This way you can recruit creatures, remove recruited from the party or attack friendly creatures.

If you want to attack a friendly creature this way, you need to have a melee weapon in your active weapon set. Otherwise the option to attack is not available in the dialog.

### **Closed doors and closed containers**

Bumping into closed doors or closed containers opens them. If a door or chest is locked and you don't have a proper key, a dialog of possible actions is shown.

### **Looting furniture containers**

Furniture containers (open chests, tables, weapon racks, bookcases, altars etc.) can be looted by bumping into them.

### **Closing doors**

The floor under the door must be empty of items, otherwise the door can not be closed.

You can close doors by bumping diagonally to the wall right of the door looking from where your character is standing. So if you're facing a door from the south of it then you bump to northeast but if you're facing it from the north then you bump southwest (the wall right of the door looking from where you're standing).

Alternatively you can also use [ALT] + direction.

### **Lightsources**

Torches and other lightsources can be lit and unlit by bumping into them.

### **Stairs and teleporters**

Stairs and teleporters can be used by bumping into them.

### **Traps**

If you have found a trap (marked on the map with a red "T"), bump into it to get a dialog of possible actions.

## Resting

By pressing [Z] or [NUMPAD 5] you rest for one round.

By pressing [S] or [NUMPAD 0] you rest until healed or until interrupted by hostile creatures. If you already are at full health you then rest for 100 rounds or until interrupted. The rest can be stopped by pressing any key.

## Searching

The dungeon is filled with secret doors and traps. The *Search*-skill is used to detect these.

There is no dedicated search-command, rather a creature is searching around him in 8 directions when he moves or rests.

If there are no hostile creatures seen, a creature's *Search*-skill operates at full level so there is no need to repeatedly try to detect something.

However, if there are hostiles nearby, searching is done with negative modifiers.

Most of the best treasure is either in the hands of powerful creatures or hidden in secret caches so it's worth searching for secret doors by walking next to walls.

Secret doors and traps get more difficult to detect as you get deeper into the dungeon. Putting some skill-points to *Search*-skill is recommended.

## Yelling

You can yell and make noise with [Y] to attract creatures.

## **Target mode**

Press [TAB] for target mode. With it you can browse map elements and creatures. Pressing [TAB] again in target mode cycles between creatures.

## **Ranged / reach / throw attacks**

Press [F] to make a ranged, reach or throw attack depending on the current weapon. Pressing [F] again cycles between targets. Press [ENTER] to proceed.

## **Using talents**

Pressing [X] opens the talent list. Select the wanted talent with [ENTER]. You might need to select a target. In most cases it is easier to use quickslots for fast talent use.

## **Targeted creatures**

Creatures with red corner lines can be attacked with a ranged or reach attack by pressing [R]. If the lines are aqua, the attack will be a throw attack.

Creatures with yellow corner lines can be targeted with the last used talent by pressing [T].

## **Switching ammunition**

You can quick switch ammunition for the current ranged weapon with [Q]. This is a free action (doesn't take time).

## Switching between weapon sets

By pressing [W] you can switch between the two weapon sets. The weapon sets are set in the equipment / inventory screen.

## Getting items from the ground

Pick up items from the ground with [G]. If there's more than one item, the inventory screen is popped up.

## Items on ground

If you are standing on a floor tile which has items then the right sidepanel lists them. You can switch between the items view and the quickslots view with [BACKSPACE].

## Automatic item pick up

The character automatically picks up gold, keys, potions, wands, scrolls and ammunition for the currently equipped ranged weapon if there are no hostile beings seen and the character is not encumbered. Same rules apply when looting containers.

## Using quickslots

Quickslots are shown in the right sidepanel.

Press the key shown on the left of the assigned item to use it. If a quickslot is not listed you can press the key to assign something to that slot.

If the quickslotted talent or device requires a target, you can keep pressing the same key to cycle between creatures in target mode.

Items (devices), equipment and talents can be assigned to quickslots. You can for example assign a lantern to a quickslots so that you can easily lit or unlit it. The lantern must first be equipped and then assigned to a quickslot.

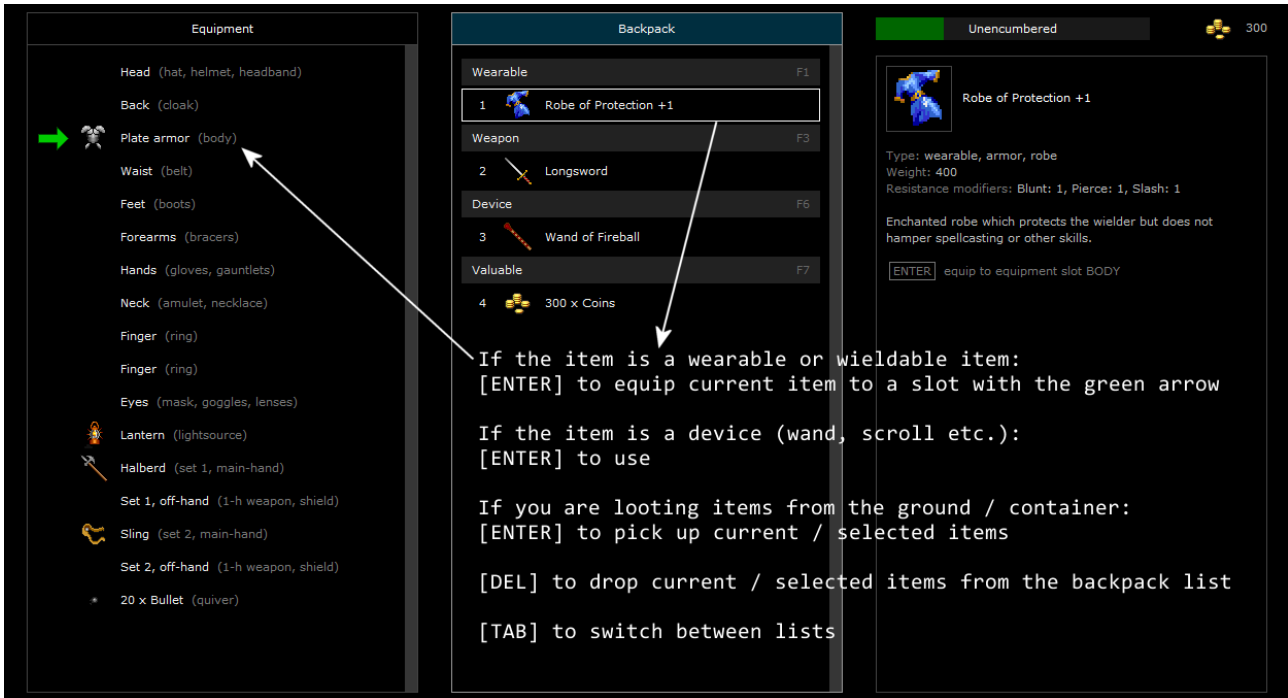
Press [F12] in the main game view to open the quickslot manager. Pressing [ENTER] on the items or talents on the right list sets them to empty quickslots on the list on the left. You can also press [ENTER] on a quickslot to empty it or assign something to it. [CTRL] + [C] clears all quickslots.

By default, devices and talents are automatically assigned to free quickslots. This can be changed from the settings.

If you are standing on a floor tile which has items then the right sidepanel lists them. You can switch between the items view and the quickslots view with [BACKSPACE].

You can automatically rearrange the quickslots if you open the quickslot manager, press [CTRL] + [C] to clear the quickslots and then exit the manager [ESC]. *Auto set quickslots* setting must be on.

# Inventory



## Inventory

Equipment / inventory can be opened by pressing [ENTER] or [I].

### Equipping an item quickly from the backpack

Press [ENTER] to open backpack, move to a wanted item. You should see a green arrow pointing to the equipment slot where the item would fit. Press [ENTER] to equip. [ESC] closes the inventory.

### Sorting the items by time acquired

[F10] to sort the items by time acquired. Newest items are displayed first.

### Switching ammunition is a free action

Switching equipment takes time but switching ammunition does not. In most cases it is easier to switch ammunition with [Q] in the main game view.

### Encumbrance

Encumbrance is shown in the right upper corner of the inventory screen. If you carry too much you get a penalty to *Motion* (also shown in the character sheet as *Load Motion mod*).



## All inventory commands

The item selector is moved with the movement keys. [PAGE UP] / [PAGE DOWN] moves the selector to top / bottom of the lister.

[ESC] closes the inventory. You can also close with [ENTER] if the selector is at the top position (not visible).

[TAB] to switch between the lists. You can also switch between lists with [ARROW LEFT] and [ARROW RIGHT] or the movement keys if the selector is at the top position (not visible).

[SPACE] to select / unselect the current item.

[0] - [9], [A] – [Z] to select / unselect items in the backpack or when looting.

[0] – [9], [A] – [G] in the equipment list jumps to a wanted slot (if there is an item equipped) / unequips it (if selector is already on the slot and there is an item equipped) / equips an item (if the slot is empty). When equipping to a slot, the right side lister shows proper items for that slot. Select wanted item with [ENTER].

[CTRL] + [A] to select all. [CTRL] + [C] to clear selection.

[ARROW LEFT] and [ARROW RIGHT] to adjust the amount of the current item.

[ENTER] on a wearable or wieldable item equips it to a slot with the green arrow.

[ENTER] on a device (potion, wand, book, trapkit etc.) uses it.

[ENTER] when looting items from the ground or from a container picks up current or selected items.

[ENTER] when in shop buys / sells selects the current item if not selected. If already selected, tries to sell / buy it and all other selected items.

[DEL] in the backpack drops items to ground. In the equipment list in unequips the item.

[F1] – [F9] to filter item groups.

[F10] to sort the items by time acquired. Newest items are displayed first.

You can filter items by a text filter by holding down [SHIFT] and writing the wanted search word.

[F11] to toggle the compare-mode which makes it easier to compare an equipped item and a backpack item.

[F12] to switch between equipment & backpack / backpack & loot listers.

# Miscellaneous

## Recruiting creatures

Friendly creatures can be recruited to the party by first talking to them (bump against them with [CTRL] pressed) and then selecting *recruit* from the menu if recruiting is possible. Recruited characters can be removed from the party by first talking to them and then selecting *remove from the party* from the menu.

You can have max *Spirit*-modifier + 1 recruits at a time (minimum is 1 even if *Spirit*-modifier is negative).

You'll get 20% of the experience points if your companion (recruit, animated, summoned) kills a creature.

When you level up, all recruited / recruitable creatures are also automatically leveled up and might also get new talents.

## Weapon damage types

Weapons can usually deal either blunt-, pierce- or slash-damage. Only the best damage type against the current target is used if a weapon can deal several types of damage.

## Weapon properties

*Great* is a property on some big *two-handed* weapons. A creature can make reach attacks (see below) with such weapon if it has the *Great Reach* talent or some item that grants the talent.

*Reach* means that you can make a reach attack against a creature standing 1 step away. For example, shafted weapons (polearms and spears) have this property.

*Returning* means that the weapon magically returns to the wielder's hand after thrown.

*Two-handed* means that you need two hands to use a weapon and can not wield a shield or second weapon in that weapon set. A weapon wielded two-handed in melee gets 1.5 x *Body*-modifier added to the damage.

*Vampiric* means that on a successful damaging hit the weapon's wielder is healed depending on the damage amount. Constructs (golems etc.) or undead can not be drained by this.

*Versatile* means that a weapon can be used both one- and two-handed. Like with two-handed weapons, a *versatile* weapon wielded two-handed in melee gets 1.5 x *Body*-modifier added to the damage.

## Critical hits

Very successful attacks in combat are called critical hits. Some items and talents boost your critical hit chance. You can protect against critical hits by wearing heavier armor and a helmet. Some creatures are immune to critical hits.

## Automatic thrown weapon / ammunition equip

When you throw a weapon, a similar item from the backpack is equipped to the same equipment slot.

When you shoot your last ammunition from your quiver equipment slot, a similar type of ammunition from the backpack is equipped to the quiver slot.

## Max Motion

Some armors might restrict your movement. This is listed as *Max Motion* and a negative *Movement* modifier in the item's description.

## Disabling and setting traps

If you have found a trap (a red "T" on the map), you can try to disable it by bumping into it. If a *Disable*-skill check is successful then the trap is disabled. If you fail badly then the trap might be sprung.

You might gain a trapkit after successfully disabling a trap. Trapkits can also be found.

Trapkits can be used to set traps on the dungeon floor or doors. Use the trapkit like any other device. *Disable*-skill check is made to see if you're successful.

Traps can not be set if hostile creatures are seen.

You can try to attract creatures towards the trap with the yell-command [Y].

# Gameplay tips

## **Don't get cocky, kid!**

Death is always lurking around the corner.

The first dungeon level is meant to be easy. After that you will be facing stronger creatures with better equipment, ranged attacks and special talents.

Don't get overconfident! Just because you cleared a dungeon level so easily doesn't mean that you're the king of the next level. If you start to play sloppily, you'll end up dead.

## **Combat tips**

Don't get surrounded! Hostile creatures get bonuses if they surround you. When facing multiple enemies, try to combat them in narrow areas, not in wide open spaces.

Always have means to escape!

Use reach attacks. Polearms and spears are great weapons. If you learn the *Great Reach* talent, you can make reach attacks with weapons with the *great*-property.

Try to finish fleeing creatures with ranged attacks / talents before they warn their friends about you.

## **Use devices**

It's fine to hoard potions and wands but also remember to use them when needed and better to do that a bit too early than a bit too late.

## **Rest in peace... and darkness**

Unlit any nearby lightsources (including your own lantern) before resting. Most creatures in the dungeon have darkvision but they can't see very far with it. Quickslot your equipped lantern so that it is easy to unlit and lit.

## **Recruits**

Recruit creatures! They will be of great help especially if they can cast spells.