

Chapter 9: Beating People Up

When you meet someone you want to attack or when something attacks you, you enter combat mode. If you are attacked, this mode starts automatically. You can also enter combat by pressing the Start Combat button (or the 'f' key).

Combat is split up into rounds. Each character gets one turn per round. Faster characters act first. High Dexterity and being hasted help a character to act sooner in combat.

Each turn, a character has a base of 8 action points (less if encumbered by heavy armor). Moving depletes action points depending on how far the character moves.

If you have any action points left, you can attack, cast a spell, or use an item (so you can still attack even if you have only one action point left). Attacking or casting a spell deducts 9 action points. Using an item or drinking a potion takes 5. Getting or equipping an item costs 1. The number of action points you have left is indicated on the party roster. When all of the action points are gone, the next character gets to act.

To end a character's turn early (if you don't want it to do anything else), click on it or press the space bar.

To attack a foe, click on it. You will attack with your current default attack. Your default attack can be with your base weapon or an equipped missile weapon. You can toggle between the two default attacks by using the two buttons to the far left on the button bar (or typing 'w').

Ending Combat

When you are through with combat, press the End Combat button or type 'f'. If there are no enemies visible, combat ends immediately. Otherwise, it will end after the current round. Note, however, that if still you have a foe nearby, combat will immediately begin again.

Moving In Combat

To move a character in combat, select the space you want the current active character to move to. Each space you move costs one action point.

Most enemies can hinder your movement. If you move out of a space that is next to an enemy, you will be stopped and unable to move again during that turn. A few creatures (usually those who are unable to move) won't stop your movement. Usually, when this is the case, you will be told in the description of the creature.

After you have attacked or used an ability, you can't move until your next turn.

Using Abilities and Cooldowns

While your default attacks can be very effective, you will frequently want to use your characters' abilities. These can do damage, bless your characters, curse your foes, or heal damage.

To have your active character use an ability, press the Use Ability button (or type 'a'). Select the ability you want to use. Once you have used it, you won't be able to use it again for a cooldown period of several turns.

To learn more about abilities, see Chapter 11.

Damage and Unconsciousness

When your character is hit, his or her health will go down. When it reaches zero, the character will fall unconscious. If all of your characters are unconscious, you will lose the game and return to the title screen.

When you end combat with no foes nearby, all unconscious characters will return to life. All lost health will rapidly return to wounded characters.

Damaged characters can be healed during combat with healing abilities and Potions of Healing. You can use one of the rare Resurrection Scrolls to revive unconscious characters in combat.

Wearing Armor

Some equipment (like armor), when worn, reduces the damage you take from enemy attacks. The protection is expressed as a percentage. A piece of armor protects you from that percentage of physical damage and half that percentage from magical attacks, like fire and cold. For example, if a suit of chain mail gives 20% protection, once worn, the claw attacks of a wolf will do 20% less damage and fire will do 10% less damage.

Note that these percentages are applied one at a time (instead of adding up). So if you have two pieces of armor that give 50% protection from physical attacks, you don't get 100% protection. Instead, one piece reduces damage by 50%, and then the other piece reduces the remaining damage by 50% again (for total protection of 75%).

To see how much protection you have from various attacks, look on your character's information window. The higher the percentage the better, though you will never achieve 100% resistance.

Magical Effects

Your characters can be exposed to a variety of magical effects, some beneficial, some harmful, most of them related to combat. Some effects (like blessing) are gained by casting spells or using magic items. Others, like poison, are inflicted by hostile spells.

When a character has an effect, an icon will appear to the side of that character's portrait. Move the mouse cursor over the icon to see a full description of the effect and how long it will last.

You can see all of a foe's status effects by moving the mouse cursor over it.

Chapter 10: Inventory and Items



- A - Items on Ground**
- B - Equipped Items**
- C - Quick Use Items**
- D - Your Pack**
- E - Scarabs**

To get and use items, you will need to bring up your character's inventory screen. To do this, press the bag button by a character in the party roster, press the Get Items button at the bottom of the screen, or type 'i'.

When looking at the inventory window, you can switch to a different character by selecting that character's portrait. When in Avadon, you can access the inventory for all of your characters. It is a good idea to hang on to some quality equipment for all of your characters, even ones you don't normally use.

There are five areas on the inventory window:

A - The Ground. These are items on the floor or on tables near a member of your group. Some of these items will be marked with a 'NY', which means 'Not Yours'. You can't get these items when their owner is nearby.

B - Your Character. When you are wearing a piece of armor or holding a weapon in your hand, it is said to be equipped. Items you have equipped are displayed here.

C - Quick Use Items. These are items (like potions) you frequently use or weapons you often want to equip. When an item is in a Quick Use slot, it will be visible on a button at the bottom of the main game screen. You can then press that button to use or wield the item without having to open the inventory screen.

D - Your Pack. All the items you are just carrying around are shown here.

E - Scarabs. You can equip your characters' scarabs here.

Getting, Equipping, and Dropping Items

To pick up an item from the ground, click on it. It will be moved to your pack.

To do something with an item in your possession, click on it to pick it up. You can then click on a different area of the inventory screen to put the item there. For example, to put on a piece of armor, click on it and then click on the portrait of your character.

To drop an item, click on it to pick it up, move it over the ground area, and click again to drop it. It will appear at your character's feet.

To see a description of an item, move the mouse cursor onto it. If an item can be used, it will have a button that looks like a little fireball in the lower left corner. Press that button to use the item. If the item has an ability that needs to be targeted (like a wand), the inventory screen will close and you can click on a target on the terrain area.

To split up a stack of items (like, say, eight healing potions), hold the Shift key down and click on it.

Potions, Scrolls, and Crystals

You will frequently find potions. These items have beneficial effects (like healing, or a blessing that makes you stronger in combat).

When you use a potion, it helps the character that uses it in some way.

Scrolls and enchanted crystals also have an effect, although they tend to affect either enemies or your entire group of adventurers.

Scarabs

The Hands of Avadon can equip scarabs, special magical items that can improve your statistics and give you special abilities. At level one, your characters can each equip one scarab. Every seven levels, your characters become able to equip one more scarab.

When a scarab gives your character a special ability, you can use it like any other ability by selecting it on the ability window.

You can only change the scarabs you are using when you are in Avadon.

Coins

When you kill an enemy that has money, you will pick it up automatically. You use coins to buy items in towns. Shops will also buy items from you to add to your supply of coins.

The Junk Bag

You will frequently find items that you want to take back to town to sell. To make this process easier, your party has a junk bag. You can stuff all your unwanted junk into it for easy selling when you return to town.

To open the junk bag, select "Open Junk Bag" on the inventory window. You can then put stuff into the junk bag. You can also hold down the Command key (Control key on Windows) and click on an item to move it to the junk bag.

When you are selling items in town, select "Sell All In Bag" to instantly sell all of the stuff in your junk bag.

Augmenting Items

You will encounter several enchanted anvils during your travels. For example, there is one of them in Nicodemus' workshop in Avadon. When you use an anvil, your inventory screen will come up.

You will find enchanted runestones in your travels that can be used to make your weapons and armor stronger. Blessed and emerald runestones are two examples. If you put such a gem in the forge with a weapon or piece of armor, they will be combined, making the item more powerful. This can even be done with weapons and pieces of armor that are already magical.

Note, however, that you can only use a gem to improve any given piece of equipment once, and then that gem is consumed in the process. Once you've combined a gem with an item, you can't combine gems with that item again.

Chapter 11: Abilities

While your default attacks can be very effective in combat, you will frequently want to use your characters' abilities. These can do damage, bless your characters, curse your foes, or heal damage. To have your active character use an ability, press the Use Ability button (or type 'a').

This will display the window where you select an ability. Move the mouse cursor onto an ability to see exactly what it does. Select the ability to use it.

Targeting An Ability

Some abilities will need to be targeted. If a spell targets a foe, select the foe to attack. If the spell targets an area (circular or cone shaped), move the cursor onto the terrain to see the area that will be affected. Click on a spot of the terrain to launch the spell. To target one of your characters (for healing or blessing), click that character's portrait (or type '1'-'5' to select the character in your roster).

Ability Cooldowns

When you use an ability, you will lose some of your vitality and you won't be able to use that ability for several turns. This is called the ability's cooldown time.

When you get two abilities from the same skill, those two abilities are linked. If you use one of them, both abilities will be unavailable until the cooldown time is done.

If you want to regain use of a character's abilities more quickly, you can use a Potion of Recovery.

Quickspell Buttons

If there is an ability you like to use often, you can set it as a quickspell for easy access. The four buttons to the right of the spell casting buttons (with question marks on them) are quickspell buttons. If you press one of them, a window will come up with a list of all the spells you know. Select one and the button will be set to cast that spell.

You can also cast spells in your quickspell buttons by pressing the function keys, F5, F6, F7, and F8.

Later, if you want to change a spell for a quickspell button, hold the Command key down (Control key in Windows) and press it.

Chapter 12: Credits

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Final Words On Avadon: The Black Fortress

I am releasing our first new series in a decade with what can only be described as pure terror.

I've been writing games professionally for fifteen years now. I've been writing games for around thirty. I've been playing RPGs addictively, computer and tabletop for about the same amount of time.

Everything I've learned, every clever idea I've had, everything I've wanted to do, it's all in Avadon. It hasn't turned out to be my exact vision, but it's as close as can reasonably be expected. I'm very proud of this game. When I play it, I have fun. I really like the setting and the game system, and I really want the game to be a trilogy.

But this game has an awful, awful lot of me in it. It's very much an expression both of what I like in games and how I see the world. It's impossible to say this without sounding pretentious, but this game really is a personal expression. And that's why it's so frightening to release it. Nobody wants to release something so personal, something they worked so hard on, to deafening silence.

But here it is, done at last. I really hope you enjoy it. And, if not, it'll take a lot more than that to get me to give up.

- Jeff Vogel
Seattle
January, 2011.

Appendix A – Avadon Combat Rules

Fans frequently ask us for more gritty details about how the game system works. We've written up some of this stuff, to give a better idea of how Avadon figures out who hits whom and for how much. It's all gritty gamery details, so don't feel obligated to read and understand it.

Character Statistics

Each character (players and monsters alike) has four statistics:

Strength - Makes your melee attacks hit more often and do more damage. Helps you to wear heavier equipment without becoming encumbered.

Dexterity - Causes enemy physical, fire, and magic attacks to miss more often and to do less damage. Makes your missile attacks hit more often and do more damage. Helps you to act sooner in combat.

Intelligence - Makes your magical attacks hit more often and do more damage. Also causes enemy mental attacks to miss more often.

Endurance - Increases your health. Each level gives you five more points of health and extra vitality. Also causes enemy cold, poison and acid attacks to miss more often and to do less damage.

Non-player characters have these statistics too. On Normal difficulty, each is roughly equal to half the character's level.

These statistics are then used to derive two other statistics, which are then used in combat:

Health - A base amount (usually 15-30) + 5 times Endurance + 5 times level.

Vitality - Equal to 10 plus roughly 1.5 times your level plus your Endurance.

Attacking - Determining If An Attack Hits

There are several attack types in Avadon: melee, missile, mental, fire magic, cold magic, lightning magic, curse magic, poison, and acid. Whenever a character tries to harm another, with a melee or missile attack or an offensive spell, Avadon handles it the same way.

Each attack type has an attacking skill (which helps you to hit with it) and a defending skill (which helps to defend against it):

Melee, Missile: Attack skill = Strength for melee, Dexterity for missiles, Defense skill = Dexterity.

Lightning/Energy Magic: Attack skill = Intelligence, Defense skill = Dexterity.

Fire Magic: Attack skill = Intelligence, Defense skill = Dexterity.

Curse Magic: Attack skill = Intelligence, Defense skill = Intelligence.

Poison: Attack skill = Dexterity, Defense skill = Endurance.

Acid: Attack skill = Dexterity, Defense skill = Endurance.

Cold Magic: Attack skill = Intelligence, Defense skill = Endurance.

Mental: Attack skill = Intelligence, Defense skill = Intelligence.

When someone attacks a target (by swinging a sword or casting a charm spell), the game generates a random number from 1 to 20 (called your attack roll), adds your attack bonuses for that attack, and subtracts the penalties for that attack. If the result is 6 or higher, the attack hits. Damage is done or a curse or charm spell is inflicted.

Attack Bonuses

The bonuses for an attack are:

Attack Skill - The value of your attack skill (Strength, Dexterity, etc) for that attack type.

Level - Half the attacker's level.

Your Weapon's Level - If swinging a sword, firing a bow, or using an ability that comes directly from an equipped weapon (such as Sharpshooter Spray) that weapon's level is added to your attack roll.

Relevant Skills - If the character has a skill for this specific attack or spell, there is a bonus from that skill equal to the number of levels trained. For example, when a Shaman casts Spirit Charge, the Spirit Claw skill is added to the attack bonus. If the skill is above six, each point above six adds a bonus three points to the attack bonus.

Attack Penalties

Your penalties for an attack are:

Target's Defense Skill - The value of the defender's defense skill for that defense type.

Level - Half the defender's level.

Training In a Spell

To be able to cast Icy Lance, a Sorceress must train in the Firebolt skill. Levels of a skill give a bonus when casting that spell (which increase both the attack bonus and the spell effect bonus).

Each level of training in a skill increases the attack bonus by 1 and the spell effect bonus by 2. In addition, training the skill to level 7 or 8 increases the spell effect bonus by an additional two per level.

Attacking - Determining Damage

If a physical attack (sword or arrow) hits, damage is inflicted on the target. Every attack has a base damage level, say 4 or 6.

The raw damage for the attack is the sum of random numbers from 1 to the base damage level. The attack bonus for the attack is the number of random numbers that are summed. (Example: The base damage for Spirit Charge is 1-3. If a Spirit Charge cast by your shaman has an attack bonus of 20, the damage for the attack is the sum of twenty random numbers from 1-3. The end result is in the 20-60 range.)

The raw damage is then reduced by the target's resistance, which comes from armor and skills. If the resistance to fire attacks is 35%, then all fire damage is reduced by 35%. The remaining damage is then applied to the character.

Determining a Spell Effect

When a non-attack spell or ability is used, the game determines the spell effect bonus for the spell, which is used to determine how much of an effect the spell has. If the spell heals, the spell effect bonus is a multiplier for the base healing. If the spell gives a blessing (or curse), the spell effect bonus can increase its duration.

For example, if a Healing Chant spell has a base healing of 1-8 (a random number from 1 to 8) and the caster's spell effect bonus is 12, the spell heals the sum of 12 random numbers from 1 to 8.

The spell effect bonus for a spell is the sum of:

Level - Half the caster's level.

Primary Skill - If the spell is an attack, get the skill from the attack type. For all other spells, the value of the caster's Intelligence skill.

Relevant Skills - If the character has a skill for this specific spell, there is a bonus of one per level of this spell plus 3 more for each level about 6. For example, if a shadowwalker uses the Stunning Powder ability, the relevant skill is Flash Powder. If he has trained six levels in Flash Powder, the bonus is 6. If trained 7 levels, the bonus is 10.

Inflicting Statuses

If the attack inflicts a hostile status (like curse or charm), Avadon simply determines if the attack hits. If it does, the status is inflicted on the target for a fixed number of turns. Armor does not reduce the amount of the status inflicted.

If a character is afflicted with a status he or she already suffers from for m turns and then is struck with that status for n turns, there is no effect unless $n > m$. In this case, the character now has that status for n turns.

Some statuses directly cancel each other out. If Jill is already slowed for 3 turns and then is hasted for 5 turns, the end result is that Jill is hasted for 2 turns.

Determining Resistances From Equipment

Certain skills and items give a fixed percentage resistance to different attack types. For example, a warrior might wear a breastplate that reduces melee damage by 50% and a shield that reduces melee damage by 20%.

When damage is reduced, each item that provides resistance to that damage type is applied one at a time. If the warrior in the example about is hit for 100 points raw melee damage, the armor reduces the amount to 50 and the shield then reduces the amount 20% to 40. Thus, those two items together provide Total Melee Resistance of 60%. (Not 70%)

Monsters and other non-player characters don't get their defenses from armor. Instead, each creature has innate protection:

Poison/Acid Attacks – 1% protection per level.

Physical Attacks – 5% protection per level.

All Other Attacks - 3% protection per level.

Note that these resistances stack like regular armor. If you strike a level 30 character with, say, 300 points of physical damage, that amount is reduced by 5% thirty times (not 150% once).

Health and Vitality

A character's health determines how much punishment he or she can take before becoming dead or unconscious. A character's maximum health is the sum of:

The base health for that character. Usually 40 for player characters and 1 for everyone else.

Five times the character's level.

Five times the character's endurance.

A character's vitality determines how many tiring abilities he or she can use before needing to rest. A character's starting vitality is equal to 10 plus 1.5 times endurance plus level.

Final Note on the System

Like all game systems, this one has flaws and exploitable points. Most notably, if a PC stacks tons and tons of points into dexterity, that character becomes very difficult to hit. Too much so.

The best fix for this system is to, when a character gains a level, have two base statistics go up. The statistics that go up at any given level change, but they are assigned in a way that each statistic is generally half the character's level.

I am up in the air about whether to do this for Avadon 2, as the loss of freedom will annoy players. I suspect that the advantages of a non-broken game system will be worth it.

Other Flaws

Vitality doesn't make much of a difference. Actually, I don't think that this is a flaw. I want the player to be aware that his or her characters are getting tired, without having to actually deal with the irritating development of one's characters getting tired. However, if I had to do it all over again, I would place fewer Potions of Vitality.

The skill points are a little tight. In Avadon 2, I will give the player a few more to spend.

Other than that, I think the system actually works extremely well. Battles are tight, fast-paced, and with a pretty darn decent amount of strategy. The movement elements, like knockback abilities and foes halting movement, are absolutely key.