

DARK DISCIPLES FAQ V3.4

Status of Dark Disciples

Dark Disciples v3.4 (28-Mar-2006) is freeware but remains copyrighted.

What is your contact e-mail?

If you have any queries, send an e-mail to “lafebre@bigpond.com”.

Websites

The Dark Disciples website is at : ‘www.darkdisciples-rpg.com’.

All midi tracks were written by Bjorn Lynne : ‘www.lynnemusic.com/’.

Some general advice

Virtually every obstacle can be overcome a number of different ways. If you find that one approach isn’t working, try something else or come back later when your stats are improved. As a rule, most obstacles have a ‘clever’ solution (such as dropping a portcullis onto a monster) and a ‘brute force’ solution (come back later when you are powerful enough to take on the beast in melee). Don’t underestimate wands either – they can be useful for more than just hurting monsters. Also note that many quests are optional – you don’t need to complete everything to win the game.

A warning about teleport scrolls:

Teleport scrolls are very useful for getting to difficult to reach places – however it is possible to get yourself trapped with no way back if you don’t run out of scrolls. You should always keep a spare or better yet, carry a *scroll of recall* with you. If you DO get stuck, refer to section 1.6 of this document for help.

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1.0 General

- 1.1) Why is it called Dark Disciples? Who are these Disciples?

Dark Disciples started out life as a rogue-like, believe it or not. It mutated several times and eventually became the thing it is today. You will also notice that on the world map are located several dungeons - these also stem from the rogue-like incarnation of Dark Disciples. Each dungeon is supposed to have a Disciple of Darkness™ to dispatch within. None of these dungeons are actually implemented in the game as it now stands - these places may or may not be created in the future, so I left them on the map.

1.2) This game is pretty crappy...

Yeah, but its a FREE crappy game.

1.3) What are the in-game keyboard shortcuts?

C = Close door	M = Map
W = Wand	G = Glyphs & runes
H = Hide	Z = Rest
R = Remove trap	O = Options
D = Dig	A = auto-toggle the mini-map
S = Statistics	
I = Inventory	
Q = Quests	

1.4) My inventory is full – how do I get more space?

You can hire vault space in Middengrave city for a modest fee. In v3.4 of Dark Disciples, the vault size was doubled.

1.5) Can I retrieve an item I dropped earlier?

Once an item is dropped, it is gone forever. Quest items CAN be dropped, but only if you have the ‘Drop Quest Items’ option checked. WARNING: loosing certain quest items can prevent you from completing the game – only drop a quest item if you are CERTAIN you won’t need it again. *Note that quest items can only be dropped if you have the ‘Drop Quest Items’ check-box ticked (see inventory screen, ingame).*

If it transpires that you **have** thrown out an important quest item, all is not lost. The item can be restored using the cheat menu – give me an e-mail and I’ll help you out.

1.6) I’m stuck some place and I can’t get out!

If you get stuck in an area and can’t get out press CTRL and P simultaneously. ‘Praying to the Gods’ will get you teleported back to your home at the start of the game (or some

other safe place). Also, any *poison* will be flushed from your system. You can only do this five times after which the Gods will ignore your plea. In other words, only use this feature when you are truly and desperately stuck. Don't waste your 'lifelines'!

2.0 Character Creation and Development

2.1) Character Statistics

Each statistic is associated with one or more skills so the higher the statistic is, the greater the characters skill in that area. The first statistic, combat, automatically increases by one point each level. Every level, a certain amount of free extra points are obtained and these can be distributed as desired to the other 6 statistics.

COMBAT - determines your melee combat ability against your foes and is a requirement for equipping weapons. This stat increases automatically as you level up and, unlike all the other stats, *cannot manually be increased by spending stat points* (for game balance reasons).

STRENGTH - wield bigger and better weapons and armor, break down doors, force open chests, increase melee damage

STAMINA - increase overall hit points, also affects resistance to poison & disease.

AGILITY - increase armor, ability to hide in shadows and ability to climb walls.

DEXTERITY - pick locks and disarm traps.

PERCEPTION - detect traps and secret doors.

INTELLECT – increase spell points and a requirement for using of wands and scrolls.

So if you want to play a fighter type character, put lots of points into strength and stamina. If you want to play a rogue, put lots of points into agility and dexterity.

For example, a PC may encounter a locked door and wish to attempt to pick the lock. If his (or her) dexterity is greater then or equal to the lock quality, he will succeed. There is no random element, so trying a second time will not produce a different result. You should, however, try again at a later date when your dexterity has increased.

2.2) Character Classes

The character generation system for Dark Disciples is deliberately fairly simple. There are no classes, per se. The abilities of a character are largely determined by their 7 primary statistics - combat, strength, stamina, agility, dexterity, perception and intellect.

However there are four guilds to join in Middengrave city. There is a Mage guild, a Thieves Guild, A religion to join and a Warriors Guild. The guilds provide appropriate quests and rewards. For example, the thieves guild will help you improve your thieving abilities. For more details, see below.

2.3) Character Alignment

A characters alignment will generally not affect gameplay – it is primarily a ‘roleplaying’ aid. About ¾ into the game, a good or evil quest will become available depending on your alignment.

2.4) Status Bars and Ailment icons

When you start playing DD you will notice a status box in the top right hand corner. Here you can see the amount of food you have, the amount of gold pieces you have and your vital statistics. The red bar represents your hit points. Once it reaches zero, you are dead. The yellow bar represents your energy level – i.e. how refreshed you are. Once it reaches zero, you will become tired and worn out. This is represented by a ‘zzz’ icon underneath the main game window. When you are tired, you fight less well. Sleep, naturally, recovers lost energy. The blue bar is your mana points which are drained as you use magic items such as wands. Sleep also replenishes mana.

There are several ailments and ‘power-ups’ you can get. All are temporary. For example, you can be blessed, tired, poisoned, diseased, drained etc. Each effect is represented by an icon under the main game window. If you see an ailment icon and you are not sure what it means, click on it and a ‘key’ will be displayed.

2.5) Spell casting in Dark Disciples - How do I play a wizard?

The magic system in dark disciples is fairly simplistic. You can play a ‘wizard type’ character by spending points in intellect. This allows you to make use of better magic wands and scrolls. Using such items requires mana.

Wands must be placed into the 'paper doll' wand slot and then accessed in game, using the 'wand' button.

2.6) Can I play a priest?

If you want a religious type character, join a religion in the game world.

2.7) How do guilds work?

There are four 'guilds' you can join. These are the Warriors Guild, The Thieves Guild, the Wizards Guild and the Faith of the Blinding light. You may join any guild you like, and as many guilds as you like, so long as you can pass the entry tests. These tests require some aptitude in the area of study which the guild espouses so you may find that you are not eligible for all of them. However you can return at any time to retake a test, when you feel your abilities have sufficiently improved. When you have successfully joined a guild, you will gain extra abilities. For example, when you join the warriors guild, you will gain extra combat skill points. Each guild also allows you access to an extra quest which, if completed, will provide you with more rewards. Note that once you have completed a guild quest, the Guildmaster will imply that other quests may become available at a later date. This should be read as "when (if) more guild quests are created by myself, they will become available and may be downloaded at 'www.DarkDisciples-rpg.com'".

2.8) All the save game slots are used up - how do I create a new character?

You need to free up a saved game slot first. Select 'restore game' from the main menu and highlight an unwanted save slot, then click delete. This will free up a slot to use when you make a new character.

2.9) How do I use the 'fast save' function?

In-game, you can press 'CONTROL+F' to automatically save your game in the current save game slot you are using. This method is much faster then going through the menu.

3.0 Game mechanics

3.1) Are there any missile weapons in Dark Disciples?

No. Missile weapons were originally implemented but later removed since, due to the nature of the combat system, they seemed to detract from the playability. Some spells however act effectively as non-melee weapons. Monsters attack only in melee.

3.2) What's the point of the 'shut door' button?

Some monsters can open doors, others can't. Shutting doors on these monsters can help you avoid them.

3.3) Why implement a 'module' system for the quests given out by Lord Saradin?

At the time, it was envisaged that extra 'modules' for Dark Disciples would be released over time. This concept has been shelved however. Dark Disciples v2.1 is the complete, finished game. No extra modules are planned.

3.4) How do I examine items in my inventory?

The inventory screen works very much like that in Might & Magic 6-8 (I basically stole their idea). Right click on an item and hold the mouse button down to examine the items properties. Release the button to return to the backpack view.

3.5) How do the thief skills work?

All these skills are automatically known by your character. However if your dexterity or agility (as applicable) is not very good, you wouldn't be able to perform these actions very well. Its not essential to have good thief based skills - there are multiple ways of passing an obstacle such as a locked door – it just depends on why kind of character you want to play.

Pick locks – Every door has a lock rating. If your dexterity (the stat from which the pick lock skill is derived) is higher than or equal to the lock rating, you can pick the lock (though you will need thieves tools to do so).

Find Traps – Every trap has a value indicating how cleverly hidden it is. If your perception is equal to or higher than this value, you will see the trap – it is represented on-screen by red cross in a box.

Remove traps – (Apart from stepping on them) – Stand next to the trap and click on the 'disarm trap' button. Then push in the direction of the trap. You require Thieves Tools to disarm a trap. A good dexterity also helps.

Hide in shadows – This skill is based on your agility. Every monster has an 'awareness' rating which reflects its ability to notice you if you are attempting to hide in shadows. If your agility is higher than or equal to the monster's awareness, it will not spot you. For example, wolves have a high awareness since they can smell you even if they can't see you. Undead also have a very high awareness since they can sense the living. A dumb-ass troll might have a really low awareness, however. The awareness of humans tends to vary markedly from individual to individual.

Note that if you are spotted by one monster, you will become visible to all monsters in the area. Also, you will *automatically* fail a hide attempt if you are already in plain sight – you must merge into the shadows where no enemy is watching.

This ability should be regarded as a semi-supernatural ability – it is possible to walk right next to an oblivious monster and it still won't notice you!

Climb – Some areas in the game can be reached by climbing (for example, climbing vines up a wall). Agility is the statistic required for climbing. Also, a rope & grapple is very handy as well (a rope greatly increases your chance of success).

Spot secret doors – Like Find Traps, this skill is based on perception. If you spot a secret door it will be shaded red. Simply push against it to open it. Note that, even if you can't see it (i.e. your perception isn't good enough), you can still discover them by 'pushing' against walls.

- A Note about these skills – the result is always completely deterministic – there is no random element involved. In other words, there is no benefit in trying to (say) pick a lock multiple times – it will either work the first time or not at all. Of course, you may want to try again at a later date when you have improved your dexterity.

3.6) Using magic – how do I cast a spell?

Characters in Dark Disciples can't cast spells from a spellbook like a normal D&D kind of wizard. Upgrading your intellect enables you to use better wands and scrolls.

3.7) How do I use wands?

To use a wand you have found, you must first equip it into your 'wand' slot on your character sheet. Note that in order to do so, you need to meet the intellect requirement. Also, wands have charges – once they run out, the wand is useless (Wands cannot be recharged).

With the wand equipped, return to the game screen and press 'w' (or click the Wand icon). Target the wand and activate it. *Furthermore, the amount of damage a wand does is determined by your intellect.* Increasing your intellect above the minimum requirement will increase the damage caused.

3.8) How do I use scrolls?

Scrolls are activated using the 'use' button on the equipment page of your character sheet.

Recall : Using this scroll teleports you home (and out of danger).

Teleport: Select a visible target square (say across a chasm) and activate to teleport yourself to that location. Teleport cannot be used to pass into 'blacked out' areas. Also note that you cannot teleport onto 'event' squares such as a door (open or closed), monster or trap. Be careful when using this scroll – you should always have a spare backup scroll since its possible to get yourself stuck someplace with no way out.

Beacon: Using a beacon scroll creates a red circle on the ground. This is the recall point. Note that the scroll has not yet disappeared from your inventory. Use the scroll a second time to teleport to the recall point (the scroll now disappears).

Knock: This scroll cannot be activated using the 'use' button on the inventory screen. Instead, using a knock scroll is presented as an option when you examine a locked door or chest.

Death spell: Instantly kills a single living creature (undead are not affected).

Heroism: Activate with the ‘use’ button on the character equipment screen. At the bottom of the ingame screen, a heroism icon will have appeared. Heroism adds a temporary bonus to your combat effectiveness.

3.9) What are the ‘acid, cold, elect & fire’ values on the character sheet?

These are your elemental resistance values. They reduce the damage you take from elemental damage attacks. E.g. A Fire giant does fire damage (and physical damage too). The fire component of the damage is reduced by your fire resistance. Your resistance stats can be upgraded by finding magical rings.

4.0 Combat Mechanics

4.1) How do combat mechanics work in Dark Disciples?

The ability to hit a monster is based on your Combat Skill (CS) stat, *relative to* the enemies. If your CS is higher then the monster’s CS, you are more likely to hit and the monster is more likely to miss. Armor does not affect your ability or the monster’s ability to score a hit.

4.2) Why does my weapon do no (or very little) damage on some monsters?

Magical weapons: Some monsters require magical weapons to be hit (a vampire might be one example). Every weapon has a ‘plus’ value associated with it. For example, a longsword +2 can hit monsters that require a ‘+2’ level of magic to be hit. If you are doing ‘0’ damage with every hit, you need to use a more magical (higher plus) weapon (or find an alternative solution!).

Elemental resistance: Monsters, like you, have elemental resistances. A fire giant, for example, is highly resistant to fire damage, so if you use a fire sword, the damage you do will be significantly reduced. For elemental weapons such as a fire sword, 50% of the damage is physical, 50% is elemental. In other words, you’ll do 50% less damage against a fire giant. Elemental resistance also reduces (or negates) damage caused by spells such as ‘fireball’.

Note that elemental damage (if not already negated by resistance) will damage a monster, regardless of the ‘plus’ required to hit them (in other words, the elemental component of a weapons damage is effectively +999).

Spell immunity: Some monsters are immune to all spell damage, elemental or otherwise. Note that elemental damage derived from a weapon such as a fire sword, while magical in nature, is not regarded as a spell effect and therefore still does damage to a monster with spell immunity.

Physical immunity: Some monsters are immune to all physical damage, regardless of the magical ‘plus’ associated with the weapon being used to attack it. However elemental damage associated with a weapon (eg the fire sword) WILL still do elemental damage (since the damage is technically non-physical).

Summary: It is a good idea to carry a number of different weapons with you.

4.3) How does armor work?

Armor doesn’t make you harder to hit. It simply reduces the damage you take if you *are* hit.

4.4) How do I skip a combat round?

If you want to skip one or more combat rounds round (for example if you want to hold a position and let the monsters come to you) press the space bar.

5.0 Winning

5.1) How do I win the game?

There are 4 basic steps required to win the game (this is not a spoiler) :

- Make your way to Middengrave city and speak with Lord Saradin.
- Spend some time in the city completing quests until Lord Saradin feels you are sufficiently tough.
- Complete the three missions (“modules”) for Lord Saradin to repay your debt to him.
- Return home.

5.2) Are there any cheats for Dark Disciples?

Yes - there is a trouble-shooting utility within the game which allows you to edit most aspects of a character. If you can guess how to access it, then good for you (a warning - don't edit the event flags unless you know what they represent - bad values can cause all sorts of problems and may well crash the game).

5.3) Is there a walkthrough?

Yes. There is a hint file and a complete walkthrough available on the ‘cheats’ page of my website. Note that non-essential areas / quests are not covered (I have to keep some secrets to be discovered!)

5.4) I’m stuck in an area and I can’t get out!

If you are really stuck in an area and can’t get out, try pressing CTRL and P simultaneously. ‘Praying to the Gods’ will get you teleported back to your home at the

start of the game. Also, any poison will be flushed from your system. Be warned however – you can only do this five times after which the Gods will ignore your plea. In other words, only use this feature when you are truly and desperately stuck. Don't waste your 'lifelines'!

5.5) Do I need to read the 'brief history' or the 'Nations & Rulers' stuff?

Nope. Its mostly just there for 'flavor'. Don't bother reading it if you don't want to – its not that important.

6.0 Level Editor

6.1 Does Dark Disciples have a level editor?

Yes, however the editor was really only designed for my own personal use. While much of the functionality is fairly straightforward, there are aspects that are not very user friendly unless you know what's going on (Its certainly possible to create game crashing events). On the main game menu, press **CONTROL and U** simultaneously to enter the editor.

7.0 Technical Issues / Bugs

There are a number of known technical issues with Dark Disciples. These are as follows:

7.1) Dark Disciples runs really slow on my windows XP PRO system!

On *some* (it's not clear how common this issue is) Windows XP PRO machines the game runs *really* slowly. The exact reason for this remains unclear (something to do with directdraw acceleration), however the solution is as follows:

Step #1: Click on start, run, and enter "dxdiag", then click OK.

Step #2: Click on the "Display" tag.

Step #3: In the "DirectX features" section, disable the "DirectDraw acceleration". Click "exit".

The game should now run properly. Note that you should re-enable the DirectDraw acceleration after playing Dark Disciples, otherwise some newer commercial games may not run (I know this isn't an ideal solution but its the best I can do for the time being).

7.2) I can't re-enter Dark Disciples after Alt-TABing to my desktop!

At the present time, using ALT-TAB will put you back to your windows desktop but you will not be able to re-enter Dark Disciples and will, in fact, have to shut it down using the Windows Task Manager. This is a known issue that is being looked into...

7.3) There is a delay when loading levels with midi music!

You may experience a delay when loading new levels. This is caused by the code which plays midi music. If you find this delay annoying, use the in-game options to switch of the midi music and the delay will disappear.

7.4) I can't scroll down the pages on your website!

For some reason, the html code for the dark disciples website has an issue with Opera, where you are unable to scroll down the webpages. I'll try to get this fixed...

7.5) Can I Transfer characters between versions of Dark Disciples?

Unfortunately, due to the nature of the version updates, character save files cannot be transferred from older versions of Dark Disciples. Attempting to do so will inevitably cause game crashes. You will need to either stick with the older version or start again from scratch. Sorry.