

# Supplement 1: Dead Simple Game Mastering 4<sup>th</sup> Edition

---

## +Introduction+

Becoming a Games Master (GM) in Dead Simple can be great fun, especially when everyone is enjoying themselves. The real key to doing this is to be relaxed about the game and its rules. Never let a rule get in the way of the story or people having fun.

As the GM you should follow three simple laws:

1. Having Fun is more important than any rule,
2. KISS (Keep It Simple Stupid), and
3. Rules are for the guidance of wise men and the obedience of fools.

As you read Dead Simple you will quickly realize that there aren't rules for every eventuality. The desire to do this is what has led many games companies to create rulebooks that are hundreds of pages long. People who have been games masters in some of the commercial role-playing games may have a bit of unlearning to do.

So when your players come up with a new way to risk their Adventurers' lives you will have to assess their chances of success on the spot.

Never say something is impossible, instead point out the obvious risks and ask how they intend to get around these. Once you have this information you can decide whether they succeed automatically, or if they need to make some sort of dice roll.

---

## +Creating Adventurers+

The key to letting players create adventurers is just that, to let them. The system is designed to make the whole thing one of choice. The players can choose their adventurer's Attributes, Race, Training, Profession and Equipment. There is enough variety in the process to give everyone a completely unique adventurer to play.

Two areas in which you can advise them though are these:

1. Encourage them to give their adventurer a name and a back story - just a few lines on where they came from and why they are adventuring. The full character of their adventurer will come out in play.
2. Party Balance. It may be fun for your players to run a party full of Barbarians and Fighters but what happens the first time they get injured or come up against a trap or foul magic? Don't push them, but ask if they had thought of that...

---

## +Using Skills & Abilities+

Unlike many systems the skills in Dead Simple are both abstract and extremely adaptable. This allows you to call on them to cover a multitude of situations.

Always let the player know which skill you will want them to roll against in a specific situation. This may guide their choice of actions.

---

## +Running the game+

Really the main skill required of a GM is the ability to let the players play. Their creativity may well amaze you. You are waiting for the 'but' aren't you?

Well there is just one... 'but' players enjoy a challenge, so never, ever make it easy. Make their Adventurers pay in blood, sweat, puns and gold for their successes.

For the players you are the scene setter. When they enter an area describe what they can immediately see, hear and smell. Keep it brief and to the facts. Then let them explore by asking questions and moving their figures about. Don't worry about movement rates etc. Just let them play it through.

The moment things get hazardous or interesting then you can drop them into the system of turns. So when the dumb Fighter stands in the trap, or the thief fails to disarm it, or the Priest opens a door to reveal six surprised Orcs it's party time!

## Movement

The main guiding principle for movement must be the application of common sense. That said this is a heroic fantasy game so you should allow, or even encourage the players to attempt many of the moves they have seen in films, such as swinging from chandeliers, running along tables, diving into deep moats, fighting along the spar of a sailing ship or between a chariot's horses.

If a player puts a move to you that seems reasonable then just let them do it. If it seems fraught with danger then tell them that and propose a suitable roll (Agility is always good). They can then decide if they will risk it. If they fail then make their failure cinematic, such as falling into a pile of manure, or an Ogre's lap, or perhaps through a roof below and into a lady's bed. Don't punish people for trying to have fun.

If you think this is mad go and watch any version of the Three Musketeers, The Princess Bride or Pirates of the Caribbean and tell us you didn't just love those dramatic fight scenes.

## Bloody Combat

Combat is chaos. The rules only sketch it out in terms of who can hit who and when, so fill in the blanks, add a little descriptive colour. When the Orc get's skewered have it scream in pain and fury, have blood spurt across the room making the floor slick with gore.

Don't worry about little details, let the adventurers be heroes, it's what the players are there for. However, remember the 'but' above.

The most important rule in the whole section on combat is the Knock Out or KO. The concept of not immediately killing people but letting them get KO'd is another cinematic rule. This offers a lot more roleplaying options than simply slaughtering them. When was the last time you saw a D&D party get captured, or surrender rather than watch a downed friend have his throat slit?

As the GM we are sure you can think of much more entertaining uses for a downed adventurer than simply killing them. Most monsters will not finish off a Adventurer if there are other Adventurers still alive to fight. After all their Master might want the Adventurer alive to:

1. use as a slave in their mines (Rescue Mission!),
2. sacrifice to their evil gods (Stop the Sacrifice Mission!),
3. ransom back to his friends (Gotta get lots of cash Mission!), or
4. eat later... (Catering Mission?).

Adventurers will have to remember to go around and finish off their KO'd enemies at the end of a fight, otherwise the monsters' friends will come and get them after the Adventurers leave, and then heal them. There again keeping one alive may be useful as a:

1. Guide, to find out what lies ahead.
2. Porter, to carry away all that treasure.
3. Trap finder...

Of course any captives will have to be guarded.

---

## +Being the Enemy+

Some monsters are dumb and some ain't. For example, Goblins may not be the brightest creatures that ever walked a Dungeon, but they are often quite cunning. You have to be when your next door neighbour might be a Vampire or a Dragon.

So play them as people too. Many may be brave but they are probably not suicidal so when things turn against them they may decide to run for it, or even surrender.

They may also have motivations the Adventurers know nothing about. Those Kobolds who just won't retreat may be defending a brood nest, not just some gold coins.

## How many monsters should you use?

It takes a while for a new GM to get the feel for how many monsters he should throw at a party of Adventurers. Many games have encounter tables and challenge ratings and all that stuff. Though most GM's have learnt this through trial and error.

For a new adventure with new Adventurers we suggest facing them with one more weak monster (like goblins, skeletons or zombies) than there are Adventurers. So if the party have five Adventurers, send six monsters at them.

If the party struggles with this suggest that they can retreat. If the party are finding it too easy send in some reinforcements. You are the GM after all and can summon up as many as it takes...

---

## +Home Base+

Every party needs somewhere to retreat to, to lick their wounds, trade their loot and plan their next assault on the enemy.

Inns make great bases. They have secure rooms, food, drink, and merchants keen to buy loot and make a buck selling equipment and supplies.

---

## +Conclusion+

So there you have it, GM'ing in a nutshell. There will be more specific advice in the other one page supplements.

Until then remember Law #1.