

D&D 5th Edition House Rules – Hawke Robinson

* If the number of players gets around 6 or more, then I implement rules to keep the game play flowing quickly, I use little egg-timers (mini-hour-glasses) ranging between 30 seconds to 90 seconds, that is the time each player, when it is their turn, has to declare and resolve their actions (of course that is more during combat and structured times, not so much during dialog/role-play situations). This works out fine because you can be preparing your actions while other players are taking their turns, and it keeps the game from bogging down with larger groups.

* I award more experience points for R-O-L-E-playing over R-O-L-L-playing. You will still get your standard XP for combat. Since 5th edition is so great at developing a rich starting background for characters, better than any previous version of D&D, I expect you to play your characters in line with that background. The better you do so, the more fun everyone will have as an automatic reward, and you get the added XP bonuses for taking actions directly appropriate to ROLE-play over ROLL-play. For example, if your background includes avoiding combat and trying to find other solutions, you will not lose out on XP for properly playing your character in the right circumstances.

* I use a hit location and critical details modification to combat (still only the same single d20 roll and damage roll, but with specific details). This just requires me to do some quick, simple, math calculations and a chart cross-reference, but does not require any additional rolls. This has minimal impact on game play speed, but greatly enhances the detail, and also increases the riskiness of combat. This includes giving (and receiving) stuns, bleeding, detailed injuries, etc.

* I do NOT allow a full HP recovery from one Long Rest. Short rest recuperates as many HP as your level. Long rest recuperates as many HP as your level plus your CON. Specific injuries (broken bones, damaged cartilage, etc.) may have to be healed separately either by magic, herbs (I provide detailed lists of healing herbs available in the world), or longer (days) rest periods, to heal up such criticals.

* Cantrips are modified to be more inline with their original intent, I bring back the 1st edition cantrips, and for those classes that have unlimited casting you get to do so, but the 5th edition cantrips that should be 1st level spells, are moved back to where (I believe) they belong. In running several groups now, the current 5th edition cantrip use, rather than balancing out spell casters, actually makes unbalanced in the other direction. My approach (I believe) is better balanced, and allows more creative use of cantrips, which is what made them so great when they were first introduced long ago.

* Inclusion of the Comeliness (COM) attribute. Appearance and charisma are two very separate factors that impact how others react. I use the AD&D 1st Edition Unearthed Arcana rules for COM included CHA factors and racial modifiers. For 3rd through 5th edition, I double the modifiers from +/- 1 to +/- to allow for those systems point inflation issues.