

Hed: Dark Age of Camelot

Massively multiplayer games like DAoC can be a bit overwhelming for first-time players — first-timers who don't read PCG, that is! This strategy guide will give you all the information you need to play the game like a pro in no time flat!

- Colors play a huge role in *DAoC*. The color chart that applies to enemy strength also applies to weapons and armor. So, no matter what level you are, look for yellow weapons and armor, and continue to use them when they turn blue. Then, once they turn green, get rid of 'em and look for some more yellow gear!
- Pick a character that you'll enjoy playing. Each character type has abilities that lend themselves to group play, but some people, like fighter classes, should be able to hold their own from time to time. Of course, some characters will be weak by themselves, but these "weaker" characters can be a lot of fun when used properly in a group setting. Here's a basic, bare-bones party to illustrate the group dynamic:

Archer: These are the guys who attack from a distance with ranged weapons. Their job is to lure the enemy in close so that the melee fighters can close in for the kill.

Fighter: They wear the cool armor and sport all the great weapons. In combat situations, it's their job to run in and engage the enemy up-close so that opponents can't attack the weaker members of the party.

Healer: Physically weak characters, healers are *extremely* important to have in your group because there are no healing potions in *DAoC* — i.e., no other ways to regain health in a hurry. A healer's primary job is to sit back away from the fight so that he can cast healing spells on the Fighters up front.

Mage: The magic users. While mages tend to be physically weak, as long as the fighters (or "tanks," as they're often called) keep the enemy at bay, mages will be able to cast powerful, long-ranged magic attacks that do every bit as much damage — if not more — as the fighters up front.

[group_fight.tif: A textbook example of teamwork in action. The "tanks" are in front, while the ranged attackers and healers remain on the sidelines, where they're less likely to take damage.]

- Remember, all of these characters can be valuable to a group of adventurers if they're played properly. The "Minstrel" in Albion is an example of someone you might scoff at initially and not want to play as. Not so fast! This character can increase the speed of the entire party and can help mages and clerics by regenerating their power. He also has a "group heal" spell, and is even okay in melee combat situations as long as he's got some backup.
- Right from the very start of the game, try to concentrate on one type of attack and stick with it. For example, a Fighter can opt to inflict slashing, crushing, or thrusting damage. If you pick more than one attack, your character won't be nearly as powerful as he would be if you'd stuck with only one.

- Go out and start killing beasts right off the bat: it's fairly easy at first and you'll gain levels quickly. Get your first few levels out of the way before you go on any quests, giving you time to get a handle on the controls. Remember, only go after blue and green monsters, and stay close to your starting base.
- Since there are no penalties for dying during your first five levels of character progression, go crazy and test the extent of your abilities right at the start of the game.
- Always use your compass and the included printed map — they really help! Press Shift + C to pull up the compass.
- Start joining groups at around level 6 or 7 — after you've got a good grasp of the game and have decided you like the character you're playing.
- Use the in-game group-finder utility. You don't need to have any friends in the game for people to want to play with you if you're a character type they're interested in.
- Always play your character correctly. Don't try to use magic as a fighter — you'll die very fast and so will your teammates who are depending on you.
- Experienced players will expect you to know how to handle monster aggression. What is “monster aggression”? Put simply, the player that pisses off a monster the most is the one it's going to attack — and that focus can shift a lot during the course of a battle, so pay attention and always know your role. For example, if a monster turns away from your fighters and goes after a healer, the healer should not attack the monster and risk upsetting it more. Instead, he should be able to trust his melee fighters and archers to do their jobs and pull the enemy away. Knowing your role and managing monster aggression will make you very desirable as a group player.
- Here are some common acronyms you're likely to see people using in *DAoC*:

INC — Incoming monster. Be prepared!

ADD — If, during a battle, a new monster joins the fray, “ADD” alerts everyone in your party to the new presence.

OOM — Said by mages and clerics, “OOM” lets the group know that they are “Out Of Manna” (power). There'll be no more spells or heals until these characters recharge, so be careful!

LFG — Looking For Group. For example, “lvl 20 LFG” — i.e., “I'm a level 20 player looking for a group.”

WTS — Used in towns as a broadcast message when a player “Want(s) To Sell” something. For example, “WTS short sword.”

WTB — Used in towns as a broadcast message when a player “Want(s) To Buy” something. For example, “WTB short sword.”

WTT — Used in towns as a broadcast message when a player “Want(s) To Trade” something. For example, “WTT short sword for axe.”

- All three realms have horse routes that allow you to move from place to place very quickly. Five silver buys a ticket for a one-way trip to a specified destination.
- The world is fairly small, so things are closer than they appear. Never be afraid to go somewhere “far away” because it probably isn’t as distant as you think.
- It’s all fun and games until level 5, at which point you need to pick your career path. For example, an Elementalist can become a Wizard (physically weak but has *a lot* of magic power) or a Theurgist (creates small earth- and air-based “pets” and “servants” that attack the enemy). A Fighter can become a Paladin, Armsman, or Mercenary, each with unique characteristics. And a Rogue can become an Infiltrator (an assassin), a Minstrel, or a Scout (good with a bow and at scouting without being seen). Level 5 is make-or-break time for your character, so don’t leap into a career without any thought!
- At level 5, once you’ve picked your career path, you’re presented with a series of specialization paths to pick from. You can flub a few points and still be okay, but try to focus once you know what sort of character you want to be.
- Trade crafting is a great way to make money, and everyone can learn trade skills to a varying degree. Once you have around 50 silver, go to the major city in your realm (Camelot in Albion, Tir na Nog in Hybernia, Jordheim in Midgard), since it will have all the resources you need. Find the master of the trade you want to follow (weapon crafting, armor crafting, tailoring, and so on) and follow his instructions. You’ll get better at a skill by using it, so use it! Focus and specialize — don’t spread your skills too thin.
- Player-made weapons are almost always better than anything sold by NPCs. If you’re looking to buy something, don’t be afraid — just go into town and ask people what they’ve got!
- You lose constitution when you die in player-vs.-monster combat (assuming you haven’t been resurrected by another player), and the more you die during a level, the more constitution you lose. To get it back, you must pay an NPC healer (usually found in towns) to heal you. Don’t forget to do this! Unlike health, constitution will not replenish on its own.
- When you finally have a buff enough character and/or party to try realm-vs.-realm combat, the only penalty for death at the hands of another human player is temporary resurrection sickness, so go out there and kick some butt!
- Helpful *DAoC* websites:

<http://daoc.catacombs.com>: Offers a great character builder that will let you map out your character progression from the very start.

www.darkageofcamelot.com: The official site. It includes a little bit of everything.

<http://daoc.warcry.com>: Very good for general information and specific quest info.

www.daotradeskills.com: Excellent trade-skills and crafting information.

dancingongrave.tif: *You* and *I* know that it isn't nice to dance on someone's grave after you've killed them in a Player-vs.-Player confrontation, but *other* people don't seem to have any problem with it at all!

sshot056.tif: Once you start getting into Realm-vs.-Realm combat, expect to see large crowds of anxious adventurers ready for blood!

sshot064.tif: Here's some Realm-vs.-Realm combat in action... Ohh, bloody!