

Turning Undead / Reference for Players

Preface: The following information is taken verbatim from Player's Handbook I, pages 33 (Chapter 3: Classes) and 159 (Chapter 8: Combat). The information is reproduced here (with minor editing and formatting to facilitate the Table of Contents, reference and layout) as an aid to Clerics (and other classes) who have the 'Turn Undead' class feature. Editing/Formatting by Robert L. Vaessen (no Copyright permissions obtained/claimed).

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FROM PH PG 33:

Turn or Rebuke Undead (Su) - Class Feature:

Any cleric, regardless of alignment, has the power to affect undead creatures (such as skeletons, zombies, ghosts, and vampires) by channeling the power of his faith through his holy (or unholy) symbol (see Turn or Rebuke Undead, page 159).

A good cleric (or a neutral cleric who worships a good deity) can turn or destroy undead creatures. An evil cleric (or a neutral cleric who worships an evil deity) instead rebukes or commands such creatures., forcing them to cower in awe of his power. If your character is a neutral cleric of a neutral deity, you must choose whether his turning ability functions as that of a good cleric or an evil cleric. Once you make this choice, it cannot be reversed. This decision also determines whether the cleric can cast spontaneous *cure* or *inflict* spells (see above).

Exceptions: All lawful neutral clerics of Wee Jas (goddess of death and magic) rebuke or command undead. All clerics of St. Cuthbert (god of retribution) and all nonevil clerics of Obad-Hai (god of nature) turn or destroy undead.

A cleric may attempt to turn undead a number of times per day equal to 3 + his Charisma modifier. A cleric with 5 or more ranks in Knowledge (religion) gets a +2 bonus on turning checks against undead.

FROM PH PG 159:

TURN OR REBUKE UNDEAD - Combat Details:

Good clerics and paladins and some neutral clerics can channel positive energy, which can halt, drive off (rout), or destroy undead. Evil clerics and some neutral clerics can channel negative energy, which can halt, awe (rebuke), control (command), or bolster undead. Regardless of the effect, the general term for the activity is “turning.” When attempting to exercise their divine control over these creatures, characters make turning checks.

Turning Checks

Turning undead is a supernatural ability that a character can perform as a standard action. It does not provoke attacks of opportunity. You must present your holy symbol to turn undead. Turning is considered an attack.

Times per Day:

You may attempt to turn undead a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier. You can increase this number by taking the Extra Turning feat (page 94).

Range:

You turn the closest turnable undead first, and you can't turn undead that are more than 60 feet away or that have total cover relative to you. You don't need line of sight to a target, but you do need line of effect (see page 176).

Turning Check:

The first thing you do is roll a turning check to see how powerful an undead creature you can turn. This is a Charisma check (1d20 + your Charisma modifier). Table 8–9: Turning Undead gives you the Hit Dice of the most powerful undead you can affect, relative to your level. On a given turning attempt, you can turn no undead creature whose Hit Dice exceed the result on this table.

Turning Damage:

If your roll on Table 8–9: Turning Undead is high enough to let you turn at least some of the undead within 60 feet, roll 2d6 + your cleric level + your Charisma modifier for turning damage. That’s how many total Hit Dice of undead you can turn.

If your Charisma score is average or low, it’s possible (but unusual) to roll fewer Hit Dice of undead turned than indicated on Table: 8–9 Turning Undead. For instance, 1 1st-level cleric with an average Charisma score could get a turning check result of 19 (cleric’s level +3, or 4 HD), which is enough to turn a wight, but then roll only 3 on his turning damage roll—not enough to turn that wight after all.

You may skip over already turned undead that are still within range, so that you do not waste your turning capacity on them.

Effect and Duration of Turning:

Turned undead flee from you by the best and fastest means available to them. They flee for 10 rounds (1 minute). If they cannot flee, they cower (giving any attack rolls against them a +2 bonus). If you approach within 10 feet of them, however, they overcome being turned and act normally. (You can stand within 10 feet without breaking the turning effect—you just can’t approach them.) You can attack them with ranged attacks (from at least 10 feet away), and others can attack them in any fashion, without breaking the turning effect.

Destroying Undead:

If you have twice as many levels (or more) as the undead have Hit Dice, you destroy any that you would normally turn.

Turning Check Result	Most Powerful Undead Affected (Maximum Hit Dice)
0 or lower	Cleric's level – 4
1–3	Cleric's level – 3
4–6	Cleric's level – 2
7–9	Cleric's level – 1
10–12	Cleric's level
13–15	Cleric's level + 1
16–18	Cleric's level + 2
19–21	Cleric's level + 3
22 or higher	Cleric's level + 4

How Turning Works (example):

Jozan, the cleric, and his friends confront seven human zombies led by a wight. Calling on the power of Pelor, Jozan raises his sun disk and attempts to drive the undead away.

First, he makes a turning check (1d20 + Cha modifier) to see what the most powerful undead creature is that he can turn in this action. His result is 9, so he can only turn undead that have fewer Hit Dice than he has levels. Jozan is 3rd level, so on this attempt, he can turn creatures with 2 Hit Dice (such as human zombies) or 1 Hit Die (such as human skeletons) but nothing with more than 2 Hit Dice (such as the wight, which has 4 HD). He does not have twice as many levels as either the zombies or wight, so he will not destroy any of them.

Next, he rolls his turning damage (2d6 + Jozan's level + Cha modifier) to see how many total Hit Dice of creatures he can turn. His result is 11, enough to turn the five closest zombies (accounting for 10 HD out of the maximum of 11). The remaining two zombies and the wight are unaffected.

On Jozan's next turn, he attempts to turn undead again. This time, his turning check result is 21—enough to turn undead creatures of up to 6 HD (his level + 3). His turning damage roll is only 7, though, so he can only turn 7 HD worth of creatures. He turns the two nearest undead (the remaining 2 HD zombies), but the remaining 3 HD worth of turning isn't enough to turn the 4-HD wight.