Special Materials

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This article provides guidelines for armour and weapons of alternative materials sometimes used in place of steel.

Weaker Materials

In some campaign settings, steel is precious and rarely used, either due to scarcity of iron ore or due to a culture's lack of metalworking knowledge.

Unaffected items: The following items do not have significant steel components or can be constructed of weaker materials without penalty: leather armour, shields, bows and arrows, clubs, crossbows and bolts, slings and stones, staves.

Bone (or Horn, Ivory, Chitin, Wood)

Armour: –1 AC penalty.

Weapons: –1 penalty to damage rolls (minimum 1 damage on a successful attack). On a natural 1 attack roll, the weapon breaks. See *Broken Weapons*.

Bronze

Armour: –1 AC penalty.

Weapons: On a natural 1 attack roll, the weapon bends. See *Bent Weapons*.

Stone (or Obsidian)

Armour: Stone is not suitable for constructing armour.

Weapons: On a natural 1 attack roll, the weapon breaks. See *Broken Weapons*.

Bent Weapons

Penalties: –1 penalty to attack and damage rolls (minimum 1 damage on a successful attack).

Repairs: The weapon can be repaired by a specialist at one-third its original cost.

Breakage: On a natural 1 attack roll, the weapon breaks. See *Broken Weapons*.

Broken Weapons

Penalties: –1 penalty to attack rolls, inflicts half damage (rounded up).

Repairs: The weapon can be repaired by a specialist at half its original cost.

Destruction: On a natural 1 attack roll, the weapon is destroyed (unrepairable).

Cost

The cost of weapons and armour made of different materials depends on the most common or dominant material in the setting. For example, in a Bronze Age setting, bronze weapons have the standard cost, steel weapons are more expensive (likely imported from another culture), and bone or stone weapons are cheaper.

Cost of Weapons and Armour by Material				
Dominant Material	Cost Multiplier			
	Bone	Stone	Bronze	Steel
Bone	–	× 2	× 10	× 20
Stone	½	–	× 5	× 10
Bronze	½	½	–	× 5
Steel	½	½	¾	–

Enhanced Materials

Items of these special metals are rare, expensive, and usually made to order (this takes time). Allowing the purchase of such items in a campaign can be a good money sink to relieve PCs of excess cash.

Unaffected items: The following items do not have significant steel components and cannot be constructed of enhanced materials: leather armour, bows, clubs, crossbows, slings and stones, staves.

Adamantine

Adamantine is a rare and incredibly hard metal of jet black hue that is mined deep underground. Underworld cultures such as duergars and svirfneblins trade adamantine with surface-dwellers.

Cost: 100 times the item's normal price.

Armour: +1 AC bonus.

Weapons: +1 bonus to attack rolls (not magical and cannot harm monsters that are immune to mundane damage).

Mithral

Mined by dwarves in the deeps of their mountain fortresses, mithral is a silvery metal of great beauty, beloved by elves. Its strength is similar to that of steel, but it is much lighter.

Cost: 50 times the item's normal price.

Armour: Half normal weight and treated as light armour for encumbrance.

Weapons: Half normal weight.

Silver

Cost: 10 times the item's normal price.

Armour: Silver is not suitable for constructing armour.

Weapons: Silver weapons harm certain monsters that are immune to mundane damage (e.g. lycanthropes, wights).

Weapons Cost (gp) by Material			
Weapon	**Ad.**	**Mith.**	**Silver**
Arrow	50	25	5
Battle axe	700	350	70
Crossbow bolt	66	33	6 $^6/_{10}$
Dagger	300	150	30
Hand axe	400	200	40
Javelin	100	50	10
Lance	500	250	50
Mace	500	250	50
Pole arm	700	350	70
Short sword	700	350	70
Spear	300	150	30
Sword	1,000	500	100
Two-handed sword	1,500	750	150
War hammer	500	250	50

Armour Cost (gp) by Material		
Armour	**Adam.**	**Mithral**
Chain mail	4,000	2,000
Plate mail	6,000	3,000
Shield	1,000	500