

# Criticals

FoldUnfold Table of Contents Description Damage List of Weapons and Critical Rates Tips General Backstab Riposte Enemies against whom critical attacks can be performed

## Description

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Criticals, also referred to as **throws**, are powerful attacks that can only be used under certain conditions.

Using Critical damage to achieve overkill can benefit players early in the game, because of the extra souls gained.

There are several ways to do critical damage: Backstab, Riposte, and a situational Plunging attack.

- **Backstab**

Walk behind a backstab-able enemy, mostly humanoids, and press the normal attack button (**R1** on PS3 / **RB** on Xbox / **H** on PC default). The enemy doesn't need to be locked-on.

- **Riposte**

See Parry. Riposte can only be done after a parry. When the enemy is staggered by the parry, stand close to the enemy's front side, then press the normal attack button to trigger riposte.

- **Plunging attack critical**

Do a plunging attack as close as possible to the target's center. The "drop zone" is quite large, you can still drop about two steps from the target's center and still trigger the critical.

When you do these moves, you and your target will enter a unique critical animation. The animation depends on the weapon used and whether you equip the Hornet Ring or not. For example, dagger users critical by stabbing the target really hard, accompanied by a gush of blood, while hammer users critical by bashing the target's head. You and your target are temporarily invincible for the duration of the animation.

There are only a few known instances where you can complete critical plunging attacks:

- The fight with Asylum Demon if you didn't already kill it when encountering him the first time.
- The fight with Taurus Demon in the Undead Burg.
- From the ledge in Undead Parish where you can drop to the Armored Tusk below.

- From the garbage dump of the Butcher in the Depths where you can drop to a Giant Rat.
- In the lower area of the Demon Ruins you can try a plunging attack from behind the Minor Taurus Demon guarding the doorway to the Demon Firesage if you're wearing the Slumbering Dragoncrest Ring.<sup>1</sup>
- From the ledge left of the Demon Firesage room in lower Demon Ruins where you can drop on the second Minor Taurus Demon below.

If you do a plunging attack to these enemies and you are directly above them, you will enter a unique animation where you plant your weapon to the enemy and you hear SFX similar to critical attack.

## Damage

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Critical Damage is generally calculated the same way most attacks are: The AR of the weapon is multiplied by what is called the "Motion Value" (sheet) of the attack (in percent, a motion value of 100 means the damage corresponds, such as with most one-handed attacks), for criticals that is then multiplied by the critical modifier of the weapon (also in percent). This AR is then calculated together with the opponent's defense (Calculator).

- Damage gained from weapon Buffs are not affected by Motion Values, as such they are a poor match with critical attacks.
- Some buffs, such as Power Within, Red Tearstone Ring or the Hornet Ring, multiply damage **after** the Damage calculation, which significantly increases damage, but doesn't influence the ratio of damages between attacks buffed by them. Due to the way the Damage formula works, such a flat Damage multiplier is always weaker than an equal modifier of AR.
- Backstabs may deal between two and 20 times as much damage as a light attack. It favors weapons with low AR such as infused weapons with split AR.
  - Due to the way Damage calculation works, attacks with fewer stages are fundamentally stronger than ones with more stages. As stronger criticals tend to have more phases though, this is rarely noticeable.
- Ripostes generally deal 10 to 30 percent more damage than backstabs.
- All weapons have unique Motion Values (MV) on their criticals. As a result, 100 critical stat in an Estoc does not equate a 100 in a Falchion with identical AR.

Following is a table of Motion Values for all the critical attacks for all the weapon classes. The (1), (2) and (3) notation clarifies the stage of the specific attack in the animation. This table does not factor in the critical modifier of the individual weapons. All these values are pulled directly from ingame parameters (sheet).

Weapon Class	Backstab (1)	Backstab (2)	Hornet Backstab (1)	Hornet Backstab (2)	Riposte (1)	Riposte (2)	Hornet Riposte (1)	Hornet Riposte (2)	Hornet Riposte (3)
Greatswords	200	-	200	-	230	-	60	220	-
Straight Swords	200	-	200	-	250	-	60	240	-
Katanas	200	-	200	-	250	-	60	240	-
Spears	200	-	200	-	250	-	60	240	-
Halberds	200	-	200	-	250	-	60	240	-
Curved Swords	180	-	180	-	220	-	60	211	-
Hammers	60	191	60	191	60	240	60	60	233
Axes	60	191	60	191	60	240	60	60	233
Fist Weapons	60	191	200	-	60	240	60	60	233
Ultra Greatswords	60	172	60	172	60	191	60	60	185
Great Hammers	60	172	60	172	60	191	60	60	185
Greataxes	60	172	60	172	60	191	60	60	185
Daggers	250	-	250	-	300	-	60	290	-
Thrusting Swords	270	-	270	-	340	-	60	330	-

## List of Weapons and Critical Rates

Only Daggers and Thrusting swords have different Critical Ratings and, as explained in the above section, identical Critical Rates do not imply comparable Damage even at identical AR. The modifiers are the motion values of the weapon class multiplied with the weapon specific Critical Rate.

Type	Name	Critical Rate	Backstab Modifier	Riposte Modifier	Hornet Riposte (1) Modifier	Hornet Riposte (2) Modifier
Dagger	Bandit's Knife	147	367.5	441	88.2	426.3
Dagger	Dagger	131	327.5	393	78.6	379.9

Dagger	Dark Silver Tracer <sup>2</sup>	160	400	480	96	464
Dagger	Ghost Blade	127	317.5	381	76.2	368.3
Dagger	Parrying Dagger	131	327.5	393	78.6	379.9
Dagger	Priscilla's Dagger	100	250	300	60	290
Thrusting Sword	Estoc	100	270	340	60	330
Thrusting Sword	Mail Breaker	120	324	408	72	396
Thrusting Sword	Rapier	110	270	374	60	363
Thrusting Sword	Ricard's Rapier	100	270	340	60	330
Thrusting Sword	Velka's Rapier	100	270	340	60	330

# Tips

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## General

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- The only means to raise critical damage is equipping the Hornet Ring. Equipping it boosts both critical damage by 30%.
- You can do a critical attack while holding the weapon with both hands, increasing its damage. The additional damage is not much (in most cases, less than 50 points of damage), but may help finish off some enemies.
- Keep in mind that a high critical rating on a weapon doesn't always mean that it's the best weapon for your critical attack. Weapon base damage, weapon stat scaling, and your build affects critical damage greatly. For example, a Mail Breaker will never outdamage a Ricard's Rapier even though the Mail Breaker has higher critical stat. And if you have STR build, you may want to use ultra greatswords or other weapons.
- You can still trigger criticals even if you do not meet the stat requirements for the currently equipped weapon. Although the damage will be greatly reduced, depending on your backstab/riposte animation, it can still be used for pushing enemies off ledge.
- There are several places in the game map where you cannot do backstab or riposte (even if you can Parry the attack). These places are usually moving platforms.(Video)

- Anor Londo's rotating bridge
- Anor Londo's elevators in boss room
- The Duke's Archives' stairs to the garden
- The Duke's Archives' rotating stairs
- The Duke's Archives' elevators
- New Londo Ruins elevators
- Sen's Fortress' elevators, both the cage's and Mimic room's
- Blighttown's waterwheel elevator
- The exception is The Catacombs's turning bridges, you can still do backstab and ripostes there

## Backstab

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- Some enemies are positioned in the map with their backs facing you. These enemies are designed so that you can easily dispatch them by backstab. Walking slowly, using Hush, or equipping Slumbering Dragoncrest Ring helps you sneak up on these enemies.

Backstabs are one of the primary forms of attack in PvP. To understand backstabs in PvP, an understanding of latency is crucial (video).

- Among both uninformed and uncompetitive players, the idea that Backstabs are a problem is widespread, largely due to a lack of clarity from the game's side and the major punishment that not being proficient at it leads to.
- Within competitive play, the game can very much be interpreted as an even mix of backstabs and all other attacks, though they both build on each other and every other option players have. The almost unanimously agreed upon strongest weapon for PvP, the Chaos Blade only very rarely uses Backstabs, however other, very backstab focused weapons such as the Murakumo and Estoc are also generally agreed upon as top-tier. Easier pivots and stronger pivots due to the lack of Ghost Strikes (video) skewer PvP in the Remaster further to a greater backstab focus.
- In general, a lot of very casual fights between more experienced players are intentionally almost entirely based on Backstabs, as this is often seen as the most rewarding and in itself deep aspect of the game's PvP.

Engaging a backstab against a real person attempting to avoid that is extremely difficult, the most basic tactics for this include:

- Using Poise or toggle escapes to walk through an opponent's attack to their back. This can be seen as a type of trade.
- Rolling through an opponent's attack behind their back on fast roll, then turning the character to their back and engaging a backstab.
- Especially on builds using good shields, just blocking and engaging a backstab during their recovery.
- Stunning an opponent, either with an attack or a kick, then moving to their back and catching their timing (while factoring in standstill (video)).

- A more general form of punishing attacks with poise backstabs is: Reading any committing move, such as a roll or even just movement on higher latencies, and moving to their expected position.
- Generally good, efficient locked on and unlocked movement to reach an opponent's back within the shortest amount of time. This is less of a technique or tactic, more of a fundamental, but becomes the only aggressive option against more passive players.
- After you backstab an enemy, the enemy will get floored. Until the enemy is standing right up, the enemy will be in an invincible state. But, you can walk up to the enemy as they get up, wait behind them, and **chain backstab** them as soon as their invincibility state wears off.
- Chain Backstab represent one half of the wakeup game in PvP. There exist strategies and techniques both to perform (video) and counter (video) them.
  - At lower latencies, chain-backstabs often require very precise reads and execution to counter one specific wakeup technique. Due to the difficulty in this, many players, when facing others of similar skill, will instead often prefer to attack them, specifically attempting to catch wakeup rolls.
  - At higher latencies, a number of wakeup techniques do not work anymore, mixing up standstill (video) is the primary option here - this helps in making chain backstabs, and backstabs in general, more prevalent on higher latencies.

## Riposte

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- Specific information on parrying can be found on Parry article.
- Scythe has the highest Riposte Damage, when used on a Quality build, and is also the highest Damaging weapon for dexterity builds. For strength builds, Demon Greataxe has the highest Damage, however it is only barely ahead of the lighter and less stat intensive Great Club. For builds without investment in Dexterity or Strength, the Chaos Gargoyle Halberd with 10 Humanity is the strongest option.

## Enemies against whom critical attacks can be performed

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Enemy	Backstab	Riposte	Plunge attack
Giant Undead Rat	-	-	Y
Infested Ghoul	Y	Y	-
Demon Firesage	-	-	Y <sup>3</sup>
Asylum Demon	-	-	Y
Taurus Demon	-	-	Y <sup>4</sup>

Mushroom Child	Y	-	-
Darkwraith	Y	Y	-
Painting Guardian	Y	Y	-
Silver Knight	Y	Y	-
Hollow	Y	Y	-
Undead Merchant (Male)	Y	Y	-
Undead Assassin	Y	Y	-
Blowdart Sniper	Y	Y <sup>5</sup>	-
Armored Hollow	Y	Y	-
Undead Soldier	Y	Y	-
Balder Knight	Y	Y	-
Andre of Astora	Y	Y	-
Necromancer	Y	-	-
Butcher	Y	Y	-
Serpent Soldier	Y	Y	-
Serpent Mage	Y	Y	-
Black Knight	Y	Y	-
Undead Crystal Soldier	Y	Y	-
Infested Barbarian	Y	Y	-
Infested Barbarian (boulder)	Y	-	-
Engorged Zombie	Y	Y	-
Skeleton	Y	Y	-
Vamos	Y	Y	-
Pisaca	Y	-	-
Armored Tusk	Y	-	Y
Armored Tusk (Duke's Archives)	-	-	Y
Marvellous Chester	Y	-	-
Scarecrow	Y	Y	-
Bloathead	Y	Y	-
Bloathead Sorcerer	Y	Y	-
Gwyn	-	Y	-

Note that, in the case of ripostes, enemies listed above have *at least one attack* that can be parried, but that does not mean that *all* attacks can be parried. See the parry page for more information.

Footnotes 1. May trigger a bug in the game that causes your character to instantly drop from the ceiling and die. Use with caution. 2. Additional Content only. 3. Only possible through the use of an out-of-bounds glitch, but possible nonetheless 4. Both the boss and the minor versions in Demon Ruins 5. Technically yes, but the attack that would be parryable isn't actually used (as far as I am aware)

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