

Critical Damage

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Description

Critical damage is, like its name suggests, a damage much stronger than normal attack damage, often outright killing the target.

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

Note that critical damage doesn't refer to counter attacks (an attack you deal during an enemy's attacking animation). Do not confuse **counter damage** (dealt by counter attacks) and **critical damage** (dealt by ripostes and backstabs and described on this page).

Backstabs and ripostes are not counter attacks and they are not boosted by effects that boost counter damage like Old Leo Ring.

- **Backstab**

Walk behind a backstab-able enemy 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. This cannot be done on certain enemies (usually ones much larger than the player) or with two weapons in a power stance.

NOTE: Keep in mind that you **HAVE** to be wielding the weapon you want to backstab with in your **RIGHT** hand. You cannot backstab with a weapon in the left hand.

- **Riposte**

See Parry. Riposte can only be done after a parry (although the special attack performed after guard break move is basically also a riposte). When the enemy has completed the animation of falling to the ground, stand close to the enemy's front side, then press the normal attack button to trigger riposte. You can also trigger a standing riposte if you can attack before the falling enemy touches the ground: in this case you will see a different animation and will deal slightly more damage.

- **Guard Break**

Guard Break can only be done by either using the Guard Break move on a blocking opponent, or by draining your opponent's stamina while they block. When the enemy is Guard Broken, they will be stunned and they will become stunned in a similar manner to the Dark Souls 1 Parry animation. While the enemy is in this animation, head to their front side, and use a normal attack to trigger the Guard Break 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. For example, dagger users Backstab critical by punching then stabbing the target really hard, accompanied by a gush of blood, while shortsword users critical with a three hit combo followed by a downward slash. Excluding the critical, your target is temporarily invincible for the duration of the animation. You are still vulnerable from taking damage while performing both the Backstab and Riposte animations, but the damage you take will be greatly reduced.

Damage

The formula for the damage caused by a critical attack is currently unknown. That being said, here's what we know:

- Critical damage depends on the weapon, the weapon's total attack rating, and the type of critical attack.
- Critical damage appears to ignore (or greatly reduce) the target's defense.
- A typical weapon can do either 2 or 3 times its attack rating in critical damage.
- Most daggers do more than 4 times their attack rating in critical damage. The Umbral Dagger has the highest critical modifier in the game, at least for backstabs.
- Critical damage is not affected by the weapon's counter damage modifier, by the weapon's sweet spot, or by whether the weapon is held in one hand or two hands.
- Ripostes appear to do more damage than backstabs.** (Need testing, King's Greatsword deals more damage with backstab (insta-kill) than riposte (~80% of life). Tested on sanctum soldiers ng +7)
- The damage modifier for ripostes, backstabs and guard breaks seems to vary independently from weapon to weapon or attack type. (Need testing, my mace did more damage than my mail breaker with backstabs, but my mail breaker did more than the mace with ripostes, finer weapons such as daggers, spears and rapiers better suited for riposting?)

Tips

General

- You can do a critical attack while holding the weapon with both hands. Contrary to earlier claims, this does not appear to increase its critical damage.

- 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. Generally weapons with the highest attack rating, such as great hammers, greataxes, and ultra greatswords, will do the most critical damage even though daggers tend to have the highest critical modifiers.
- Critical damage ignores a weapon's counter damage modifier. So weapons with high counter damage, such as katanas and thrusting swords, benefit the least from a critical attack versus a regular counter attack.

Backstab

- 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, or equipping Slumbering Dragoncrest Ring helps you sneak up on these enemies.
- In PvP environment, you rarely have the chance to sneak up on the opponent. In this situation, you can do the technique that's commonly known as **pivot backstab**:
 1. Lock on to enemy so that you are facing them.
 2. When you see an opening (spell cast or strong attack windup), release the lock and immediately roll past the enemy so that you are behind them. High poise helps.
 3. Without rotating the camera, face the opponent's back by using the movement control only.
 4. Quickly press the attack button to trigger the backstab.
- 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. You can also use this in PvP, but it will be harder because a skilled player can roll as soon as the invincibility wears off and connection lag may throw off your timing. (Testing required - in pve enemies start taking damage earlier on after receiving backstab, riposte or guard-break)
- A very rare occurrence. If you should happen to miss a backstab attempt, but the animation hits a different attacking enemy, that enemy will then be Parried.

Riposte

- There are basically three types of riposte:
 1. *Ground riposte*: after you parry an enemy and they fall to the ground you need to stand in front of them and attack. You will stab them through.
 2. *Standing riposte*: after parrying an enemy you have to attack them while they're falling to the ground but not yet lying down. The timing is difficult and you may end up just attacking normally (and if you break the enemy's poise at this moment you will interrupt the staggered ready-for-riposte animation and will bring the enemy back to normal)

stance). Arguably deals more damage than ground riposte (although testing with Chaos Rapier showed negligible difference). (Test again; some weapons deal more damage on standing and guard-break ripostes than on ground ripostes, and vice versa. Strike-type weapons like the Mace, Iron King Hammer and Smelter Hammer seem to do best damage with Backstabs and Standing/Guard-Break Ripostes, while Slash-type weapons like the Longsword, Pursuer's Ultra Greatsword and Fume Ultra Greatsword deal best damage with Backstabs and Ground Ripostes. In fact, the Pursuer's UGS deals less Guard-Break Riposte damage than Backstab damage, and it's best to circle around for a Backstab if a Guard Break is performed if using said weapon.

3. *Guard break riposte*: similar to standing riposte but activated after using guard break move (pushing away the enemy's shield; see below). Also has strict timing and requires standing as close as possible to the enemy.
- After you parry an enemy, you may still have time to change your weapon for a stronger critical. Two-handing the weapon doesn't change the riposte animation and doesn't affect the riposte damage.
 - You can use special parrying gear to help you train your parrying skill. These items have either slightly longer or faster parrying window. These items are: Buckler, Target Shield, Parrying Dagger, Monastery Scimitar. Different weapons have different parrying window and starting parry animation.
 - Riposte damage increases by 50% on New Game Plus.

Guard Break

- Guard Break Ripostes can be made at any point through their animation, however, attacking too early, or chaining attacks after they go into the Guard Broken animation means that they will take one normal attack instead of the critical attack.
- During a guard break, you will have time to change weapon.
- Using weapons with a higher poise break will cause a guard break quicker than a weapon with higher damage. (Needs Confirmation)

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