

Dual Orb 2 (Import) Weapon FAQ

by delamarche

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Dual Orb 2 Weapons FAQ

by DamageInc (mikedebo@gmail.com)

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\* SPOILERS WITHIN, READERS BEWARE \*

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1. Motivation

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The weapon system in Dual Orb 2 differs from most contemporary RPGs in that you only receive a handful of weapons throughout the game, but each weapon can be upgraded up to 20 times. When a weapon reaches +20, it becomes a "super weapon", at which point you can use it to unleash a special technique when the wielder's health is critically low.

This FAQ is intended to briefly describe the system as a whole, and to discuss individually the weapons available throughout the game. There is also some decision-making with respect to armor that can affect the outcome of the most difficult battles, and so this is touched upon in the FAQ as well.

2. Dual Orb 2 game mechanics

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The authors of Dual Orb 2 obviously wanted players to believe that the decisions made with respect to weapon selection and upgrading would actually have a discernible affect on efficacy. Sadly, this is almost never true.

One obvious bit of strangeness is that you can't compare statistics across characters. There are many points in the game where a character like Cassius appears to have a much higher attack rating than the rest of your party, but he still hits for a fraction of the damage that the others are capable of.

These inconsistencies also crop up when selecting weapons for a single character. Aleth has 4 weapons available to him, and each new weapon he finds appears to eclipse the potential of the previous in terms of the maximum attack

power it is capable of attaining. However, the damage across these weapons when they are all at the same level doesn't vary that much, no matter what the elemental disposition of the target is.

This leads us nicely into the next irregularity, which is that some characters are completely ineffective against some enemies regardless of what weapon they are wielding. For instance, Golden Beetles are quite vulnerable to Aleth's Cross Sword, but he can still do a reasonable amount of damage to them with any of his other 3 weapons. The rest of your party is pretty much incapable of hurting these things, no matter what weapons are wielded or if Holy Weapon is cast on them.

Some characters also don't benefit much from weapon upgrades, while others benefit greatly. Cassius is a glaring example of the former: When he joins your party near the end of the game, he only does ~200 damage to pretty much every enemy, no matter whether he is wielding a +5 or a +20 Magic Flute.

Finally, one last bit of homogeneity appears in the techs that become available when you upgrade a weapon to +20. All of the techs are essentially identical. That is, they each hit a single enemy for an overwhelming amount of damage (usually 4000-9999, pretty much independent of character level). Techs with elemental associations (e.g. The Shiva Blade tech does ice damage) might fizzle and hit for only single-digit damage if the enemy is particularly resistant to it, but otherwise all techs tend to do ridiculous damage. Since characters in the rear guard are almost never hit physically, you can put wounded characters in the back and use them as pain turbines in tough fights. This strategy works especially well if you equip these characters with Guard Talismans (purchased in Gassa), which confer practical immunity to elemental magic. "Non-elemental" spells such as Nova will still hurt, but that's what Panaceas and Revive are for.

The cost of upgrading a weapon is fairly reasonable until it hits +14, at which point the increment is often fixed at 100k gold. (Some weapons require 200k to go from +19 to +20, which is always a pleasant surprise.) Thus, it makes sense to upgrade all your weapons evenly until they reach +14 so that you can choose between them, since there are some situations where switching between them can help you squeak out a bit more damage. However, after that, you should really just pick one weapon to max out for each character. If you make enough gold to max out multiple weapons for each party member, odds are pretty good that you'll have leveled up so much that the endgame will be a cakewalk regardless of what you're wielding.

3. Weapons list and strategies for each character

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In this section, I've only listed weapons that are actually upgradeable. Thus, Lagnus' Wooden Spear and Aleth's Wooden Stick aren't included, and Serra is completely ignored as her weapons are spoon-fed to her throughout the game and cannot be improved. You just equip her with each new gun that you find.

Aleth

* Long Sword -> Steel Slicer *
Att. at +20: +160
Tech: Shockwave (little wavelet thing is shot at target)

* Flame Sword -> Hades Blade *
Att. at +20: +220
Tech: Phoenix (big honking bird hits target)

* Cross Sword -> Saint Sword *

Att. at +20: +250

Tech: Holy Beam (wussy little cross-star drawn on target)

* Dragon Killer -> Tiamat Blade *

Att. at +20: +280

Tech: Dragon Wave (dragon erupts from beneath target)

Aleth starts out with the Long Sword, and picks up the Flame Sword soon thereafter. He gets his last two weapons in quick succession near the end of the game.

All of Aleth's weapons are pretty good for general-purpose monster whacking, except for the Dragon Killer. I'd switch over to the Flame Sword when you get it, and again to the Cross Sword when you find that. The Dragon Killer is deceiving in that it appears to be more powerful than the Cross Sword, but it does much less damage in the general case (in my experience). You don't need to put any money into it at all.

I'd definitely max out the Cross Sword, as there are oodles of monsters weak against Holy stuff. The Dragon Killer is only really useful against the penultimate boss: The final boss is more vulnerable to the Cross Sword. Both of these bosses are slow and clumsy enough that you shouldn't have much trouble if you just tote the Saint Blade.

Lagnus

* Iron Spear -> Partisan *

Att. at +20: +180

Tech: Spiral (column of energy erupts below target)

* Dragoon -> Serpent Spear *

Att. at +20: +260

Tech: Dragon Roar (phoenix flies at target)

I don't know why IMax bothered giving Lagnus techs, since I think even someone marooned on a desert island with no other source of diversion but this game could still find something more entertaining to do than harvest enough money in the early game to upgrade Lagnus' weapons to +20. When I cheated my way to the upgrades and then tested the techs, I halfway expected to crash the game. But the attack animations do exist! I suspect that they had plans to reintroduce Lagnus at the end of the game and then changed their minds or something.

In any case, the Dragoon is easy enough to upgrade to the same level as the Iron Spear when you find it, and it is superior to it in all the cases that I came across, so it makes sense to switch when you get it.

Cassius

* Magic Flute -> Buster Flute *

Att. at +20: +130

Tech: Shatter (a cloud of notes envelops the target)

Not much choice to make here. Cassius is a crummy character all around, regardless of how much you upgrade his weapon. For some inconceivable reason, his flute loses 60 attack power when you upgrade it from +19 to +20. However, this turns out not to matter, because he only does around 200 damage to all targets no matter what he's holding when you pick up him for the last time. If

you have the patience, it is actually sort of worth upgrading Cassius' weapon first when you get to Kardosa Castle, because then you can cripple him and have him launch his tech from the back row for 3-4k damage each turn. It's the only way he'll be useful to you.

Saladin

* Soul Saber -> Demon Slayer *

Att. at +20: +120

Tech: Calamity (three purple slashes shred the enemy)

* Ice Knife -> Shiva Blade *

Att. at +20: +160

Tech: Crystallize (a bunch of ice crystals erupt below the target)

* Kill Wing -> Phoenix Blade *

Att. at +20: +110

Tech: Air Blade (cloud of phoenixes -- phoenixes? -- swarms target)

Saladin starts out weak but churns out some reasonable melee damage near the endgame. The first Ice Knife you find is cursed, but it's worth equipping, uncursing, and upgrading it at the next town. I have no idea what the utility of the Kill Wing is: It has a neat name, but rarely does decent damage against anything, as far as I can tell.

The Soul Saber sounded like it would be Holy elemental but it doesn't seem to do well against the same targets that the Cross Sword does, so maybe not. Thus, the Ice Knife is the best pick to upgrade for Saladin, in my opinion. There are a few enemies that are invulnerable to the Ice Knife (like those laptop-things) but in those cases, you can just whip a Stone Lance spell at them. Stone Lance is a surer bet against bosses than physical attacks in most cases.

Karina

* Rapier -> Veil Piercer *

Att. at +20: +280

Tech: Crush (wavy distortion thing hits target)

* Long Bow -> Moon Light *

Att. at +20: +120

Tech: Phoenix Flash (little slashy thing shoots at enemy)

I don't really understand the Long Bow. It is always weaker than the Rapier, and you don't even have the advantage of doing augmented damage from the back row like you do in, say, the Final Fantasy games, as character position doesn't adjust damage at all in this title. I thought maybe it might have a higher critical rate or a better affinity for Stab, or perhaps even a more deadly Tech, but none of these things appears to be true.

So, just go with the Rapier. The Long Bow appears to be a bust. Karina can really run wild on the enemy if you keep her Rapier upgraded.

Bargan

* Cutlas (sic) -> ? *

Att. at +20: ? Tech: ?

I had the data and the saves for Bargan's weapon cached somewhere, but it appears as if I carelessly wiped them out. It's not like it really matters, since you'd be very unlikely to max out Bargan's weapon without cheating, and you don't have any choices to make for him anyways. He's uber-powerful when you first get him, and pathetically weak the second time around. Sadly, you only use him to thwack a single placeholder enemy when you get him the first time.

4. Armor Strategies

For most of the game, armor upgrades are obvious and strictly improve your survivability. However, when you get to Gassa, you start to accumulate armors that are not trivial to distinguish between.

It is worth buying 4 Magic Chains as soon as you get to Gassa, as well as a Guard Talisman. You will also find another Guard Talisman in your travels. You pick up a Distract Robe near this point in the game too, which appears to grant physical protection close to the Magic Chain while conferring more protection against magic. However, the Guard Talisman can help you get through the toughest boss battles in the game.

Specifically, the fight against Organa is so ridiculously difficult that I'm convinced it escaped playtesting. Even if you spend a lot of time leveling up, Organa will often get an average of 1-2 turns for each of your character's turns, and sometimes she can attack three times before you have a chance to return fire. To add more injury to injury, Organa is accompanied by two big robots that can hit hard and often. If everyone is wearing vanilla armor when you fight her, you're going to be in trouble. (I managed to win this way, but I had to leverage save states heavily and it still took me 1.5 hours.) If your rear characters (especially Serra) are wearing Guard Talismans, Organa's magic attacks are essentially missed turns for her, and it is much easier to recover. So far, the best strategy I've found for this fight is to have Saladin continually cast Earth Shaker every turn to keep the robots paralyzed. Serra should blast away at Organa as often as she can because she does the most damage. Aleth heals, and Bargan either uses items or subs for Serra. When Organa finally croaks, mop up the robots and breathe a sigh of relief.

Magic Chains seem to be the best choice for front-row characters until the Holy Plate and Dragon Scale are found at the end of the game. Aleth is the only one who can equip those, but he's really the only one you should have in the front row anyways. The Dragon Scale is really useful when you find it because so many enemies at that point in the game try to roast you with fire spells, and the Scale absorbs the damage when this happens. The Guard Blazer might be a better choice for Saladin than a Guard Talisman, but I don't see why exactly. Despite its uniquely awful physical protection, the Guard Talisman is almost always the best choice for your rear characters once they're available, since there are many normal enemies that will attack first in an encounter by whipping nasty spells at you.

And that's all I have to say about that.

5. How I wrote this FAQ

Weapons in Dual Orb 2 cost upwards of a million gold to fully upgrade. The most lucrative fight I was able to find in the game gives 15000 gold per victory, and is only available when you reach Kardosa near the end. There was no way I was going to harvest all this money legitimately.

Instead, I used the memory-write sniffer in Snes9x to find the addresses of the bytes that store how much money you're carrying. This quantity is located in

the three bytes (7E746-8). The most significant byte is 7E7468, and the least significant is 7E7466. I assume that these addresses refer to physical addresses that existed on the SNES hardware, and aren't just arbitrary indices assigned by Snes9x. So, if you want to see the techs on your own, you should be able to use this information to stack your coffers enough to get the desired upgrades.

Of course, you could just try to fiddle with the bytes that represent your inventory, but I didn't have the patience to go there.

6. Credits and contact

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Thanks to "Nightcrawler" and his translator partner for their work on producing a fan translation of this game, and to Ryan Allen for his walkthrough on GameFAQs.

If you've got any corrections or additional information to add to this FAQ, please contact me at mikedebo@gmail.com.

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