

World of Warcraft

PvE group combat guide

(Don't panic!)

(This guide is about how to act fast and safe in PvE group combat. It's tactics are especially designed for challenging fights, I'm not claiming that they're required for every wussy instance run, although I guess they're still quite good in those situations).

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1. Party time

1.1 *The ideal group*

There are people claiming that the ideal party consists of a priest, a warrior and a mage (plus 2 others). While this might be true (although I can't second that at all), it doesn't mean you can't do jack without those 3 classes. In fact, most of the time you'll have to deal with a team where you can consider yourself lucky when you have a priest and a warrior.

Basically, a character performs one (or more) of the following actions in a team, independent of his class:

- Deal damage
- Take damage (tank)
- Heal

A good party is one where these three things are balanced.

For personal taste, my ideal party consists of a tank (warrior), 2 hybrids (shaman + druid), and 2 damage dealers (rogue + hunter):

Warrior as main tank = A lot of damage to take until dying

Druid as main healer = Survivability (innervate)

Shaman = Resurrection, self-resurrection, decent damage, backup for tank or healer when things go wrong

Rogue = Huge damage output without downtime, decent crowd control

Hunter = Huge ranged damage output, can stand damage (mail armor), can tank (with an appropriate pet), best crowd control features.

This is only my personal taste, and you'll figure out on your own which party setting you like most.

Having said that, it doesn't matter if the formula gets cracked up a bit. For example, a group of 5 shamans will not be the best or fastest party, but because of their relatively high armor and damage output and the ability to heal, they can still succeed if they coordinate their work. However, a group of 5 rogues won't have too much chance to survive in an instance where not most of the mobs are humanoids (and therefore can't be sapped). Long lasting fights (Archaeas in Uldaman, stairway fight in Zul'Farrak) are suicide without a healer and a tank.

But never forget one thing: The more damage output you have in your team, the less healing and tanking ability will be there. The more healing you have in your team, the less... you know what I mean. If you keep it balanced (like 1.5 healer, 1.5 tanks, 2 damage dealers), the party IS ideal.

1.2 *Know your friends*

One thing that really helps you is knowing the abilities of your team mates. I don't know enough about all the classes to list it here, but you'll figure out what I mean over the time you play. For example, it's not wise to use a stun with a one minute cooldown on a mage to interrupt the spell he is about to cast when you have 2

shamen in your team who can purge him. You better save that stun for when the mage is going to flee.

2 We ROCK!

You might ask yourself: „Why the hell should i care about all that freaky stuff written in this document? I just want to have fun!“. Well, you're right.

I've played in teams where we had more than enough firepower, mana and armor and still wiped horribly. And I've been in teams with all people at least 2 levels below the mobs and we still succeed. The first one is frustrating. It's horrible to die against green mobs with a full featured team because the people have no idea what they're doing. The latter one is the best thing you can experience in PvE combat. Clearing out an instance although the numbers are against you, just because you work together as a team, is great.

2.1 Basic tactic

Most people think the most important thing after pulling mobs is to kill them. This is wrong.

The only thing that matters in the end is: Once the fight is over, you'll want YOUR team to still be standing.

You have two tools for ensuring this

- Make yourself last as long as possible
- Kill your enemies ASAP

This leads us to the following scheme. Whatever you do in your team, your priorities should be as follows:

- 1.) Keep the mobs away from your healer (preferably on the tank)
- 2.) Keep as many mobs as possible on the tank (or at least, as many as he can handle)
- 3.) Keep the mobs away from the casters
- 4.) Reduce the number of mobs that are currently hitting your team

2.1.1 Keep the mobs away from the healer

Why is this important?

- The main healer is, at least in the higher instances, usually wearing cloth (priest) or leather (druid). He won't stand much damage.
- Mobs will interrupt or delay the healers spellcasting by hitting him.
- When the healer is attacked, he'll begin to heal himself. Not only does this mean he doesn't heal anyone else in this time, but it also means he grabs huge amounts of aggro.
- When the healer dies, your health bar won't refill anymore.

What can I do to ensure this works out?

If you're the healer:

- Heal as late as possible. This doesn't mean wait until your target is close to death, it means wait until you have to heal. If you have healing over time spells, prefer them. They will build up aggro over time, which is better than

building a big amount of aggro by healing your target for 1500 or more health point in an instant.

- Stay away from the team. Not only will this ensure you aren't affected by stuns, silence spells or other dirty stuff, it also ensures that everyone who has an eye on you will see when a mob turns over to attack you.
- Skill for subtlety. The less amount of aggro you build up, the less likely it is for mobs to attack you.

If you're the tank:

- When you first reach your mobs, use demoralizing shout/roar. This will grab a (very small) of initial aggro, ensuring the mobs are after you as long as noone else hits them and noone heals you. If you have any reflecting magic on yourself (such as the druid's thorns, reflects a small amount of damage on the attacking mob), they will grab aggro on you by only hitting you.
- Switch targets. Try to deal the same amount of damage on every target that's on you.
- Use AoE attacks, such as cleave.
- When all of this didn't work and a mob heads after the healer:
 - o Taunt it
 - o Or stun it
 - o Or use burst damage on it.
 - o If there are too much mobs after the healer, immediatly use challenging shout (AoE taunt, 10 minutes cooldown)
- If you're a warrior: Use defensive stance.

If you're a damager dealer:

- There's not really much you can do. But you'll still want the mobs rather on you than on the healer. So if you're REALLY sure the tank can't draw the mobs off the healer, do it on your own.

2.1.2 Keep as many mobs as possible on the tank

(This is not entirely true, because a single tank can't hold infinite numbers of mobs. If the main tank can't handle any more mobs, the backup tanks has to support him.)

Why is this important?

- The tank has the most armor and hitpoints of all classes. The more damage that lands on a tank (warrior or druid in dire bear form), the less damage actually reaches the target (armor reduces damage taken). The less damage your party gets, the less damage does your healer have to heal, which results in more mana (= more time) and less aggro for the healer
- He has special abilities to block incoming damage
- He's the one only one who can profit when beaten, because every impact is converted to rage, which is required for performing special attacks.

What can I do to ensure this works out?

If you're the tank:

- See „Keep the mobs off the healer“ and keep in mind that this is still more important than keeping them away from the other people

If you're the healer:

- See „Keep the mobs off the healer“

If you're a damage dealer:

- Try to fight the one mob the tank built the most aggro on
- Don't do too much damage. Sounds stupid, but it can cause a whipe if a trigger happy mage or Warlock does AoE like mad and draws all mobs on him. The tank will have to act like crazy to get them off you, and the healer will waste a lot of mana to keep you alive, drawing a lot of aggro on him self doing it.

2.1.3 Keep the mobs away from the casters

Why is this important?

- Besides the healer, there are only 2 cloth wearing caster classes: Mages and Warlocks. Both of them can't stand big amounts of damage, and both of them work better when not interrupted by hits. Your badass burst damage generating mage is worth nothing, when he can't cast his spells because mobs interrupt him.

What can I do to ensure this works out?

If you're the tank:

- See „Keep the mobs away from the healer“ and keep in mind that this is still more important than keeping them away from the cloth wearers.

If you're one of the casters:

- See „Keep as many mobs as possible on the tank“
- Use crowd control. A good mage can go AoE and do a shitload of damage without getting hurt once, if he uses his ice and polymorph spells (I've seen it, it's wicked)

2.1.4 Reduce the number of mobs that are currently hitting your team

That's a weird formulation for telling „kill them“, right? I put this in this strange sentence for pointing out 2 things:

- a) The number of mobs that hit you is the number one factor for calculating the amount of damage your group has to take. If everyone focuses on the same mob, the number of mobs that actually hit you will decrease faster, resulting in lower DPS of your enemy.
- b) It's not only about killing, but also about crowd control. A stunned or rooted melee fighter can't hurt you, neither can a purged mage.

You'll often encounter groups of mobs with melee fighters, offensive casters and healers. Which one would you kill first? The answer is easy, and the result of a simple question: „What would hurt my party most?“. It's the healer. As long as their healer stands, every single damage point you deal is useless. So, the actual order is:

1st: Healers

2nd: Damage dealers (especially casters)

3rd: Everyone else (like fat armored tanks)

What can I do to ensure this works out?

If you're the tank:

- Nothing. And it's even important you don't care about this: It's not your job to kill the mobs, it's your job to make them hit YOU. Don't even think about concentrating on one mob. If people ask you why the hell you're always switching targets, explain them

If you're the healer:

- Nothing (except crowd control if possible)

If you're a damage dealer:

- Use crowd control whenever possible AND announce it („I'm going to sap the caster to the right“, „I'm going to sheep the first melee mob“)
- Try to not break crowd controlling spells by attacking controlled mobs (should work out on his own after some time if you aren't totally crazy)
- Focus on one target. Main tool to achieve this is to declare one damage dealer as main assistant (MA). The MA picks one of the mobs that are after the tank and attacks him. Every other damage dealer assists the MA, what means he/she attacks the same target. There are tools (like the /assist command, where „/assist freddy“ means you will attack the same target „freddy“ does) and it's quite hard to make all damage dealers act on the same target. The easiest way is to just concentrate on the mob with the lowest health, but that's not really the optimal way.

3 Additional stuff

3.1 Pulling

There are several ways to pull:

- CC pulls: people try to synchronise their CC abilities (sap, polymorph, root, sleep, ...) and open the fight with them
- Ranged attack pulls (the puller uses a ranged attack to pull the mobs)
- Leeroy pulls (the puller just runs into the mobs or charges/intercepts the enemy)
- And many more

I'm not going to explain the advantages of all those technics, but I have some general hints:

- Let the tank pull. It's important for him to built up some initial aggro. The only time I wouldn't want the tank to pull is when using CC (which generally is better, but you don't always have CC able classes in your team)
- It's called PULLING. This means, pull the mobs BACK a little bit. When they're about to die, most of them will run. The further away from the next bunch of mobs they are, the more time you'll have to take them down before they warn more of their friends)

Pulling ranged fighters:

Pulling casters and other ranged fighters is not really easy. They won't come to you when you attack them. I know of three ways to pull ranged fighters:

- WHEN the mobs are casters AND you have shaman, he can „purge“ them (earthshock spell, right?), making them unable to use their spells. They'll switch to melee attack and come to you.
- When you have something between you and the ranged fighter (like a rock, a wall, whatever), hide behind it. Attack the target, and then hide behind that obstacle. The enemy will cast his 1st spell/attack on you (because there has to be a line of sight between the caster and it's target at the time he starts to cast it), but after this he can't as long as there is no line of sight. So he'll come over to get you. And PLEASE for the people who didn't pull the target: don't attack it, because it will turn to you if you do and the whole plan of the puller is messed.
- WHEN the mob is an archer (gunman, whatever): Intercept/charge/feral charge him (or walk over to him and whack him). He'll switch to his melee weapon. Now step back (only a little bit per time, so you don't get out of his ranged dead zone). He'll follow you instead of staying where he is and switching back to ranged attack.

3.2 Fear

Ok, you've read a lot about crowd controlling in this guide and you think that fear – meaning every spell that makes your enemies run – is a perfect tool for crowd controlling.

This is ... not 100% correctly. When you have to decide whether to use a fear ability or not, think about this:

1. Fear makes you wipe most of the time, so don't use it
2. Fear can save your ass in some cases, so use it
3. If you're not 100% sure you're in a 2.) situation, pick 1.)

Why? A fear spell makes all your enemies run for a few seconds. That's cool. But they will return. And if you didn't clear the whole area around you, they'll bring their friends. So when you're hurt enough to consider using one of those fear spells (like fear or intimidating shout), only do it when you're 100% sure that there's no mob in a BIG circle around you who can be alarmed.

3.3 Don't panic

There's no need to panic. When things go wrong in an instance and you wipe, you're fucked. Flat out. There is no need to run, the mobs won't turn around after some instance. So don't even think about chickening out. Just do your job until you die. I've seen several situations where we wiped because someone freaked out and thought „OMG we're gonna die!“ and acted like a total fool (this even happens to folks that really did great jobs so far). That's not necessary. Stay cool. If you'll wipe, you wipe. No big deal. If you stay cool and just do your best (and protect the resser!), your chances will still be better not to wipe.