

Polymorph

Not to be confused with [shape change](#).

Possible forms

The caster of a polymorph spell does not need to have encountered a creature to be able to turn a target into that creature.¹⁾

Body part restoration

Polymorphing can not restore lost limbs or other body parts. The polymorphed form will always have a proportionate amount of limbs/parts to the new form. For example, a 1-armed elf polymorphed into another elf will have 1 arm. That same 1-armed elf polymorphed into a spider will have 4 legs missing on one side.²⁾

Dying while polymorphed

See [Death](#).

Polymorphing the dead

Not allowed with *polymorph other*.³⁾

¹⁾

This is a common house rule but nowhere in the books does it say this is the case. The only related text is on DMG 45, on *phantasmal force*: “The magic-user must know of and understand the force/creature he/she is making an illusion of. Thus, if the caster has never cast a fireball or has never seen a dragon turtle, his illusion of such will be very poor.” However, *phantasmal force* is both an illusion (not an alteration), and lower level. So it is not sufficient precedent to restrict polymorph spells similarly.

²⁾

This ruling fits with the trope. It also prevents a 4th level spell from providing a higher level spell effect as a side effect. Yes, system shock is considered, but with high constitution, the risk is low.

³⁾

PHB 78. “Creature” can be assumed to mean “living creature” and not “corpse”. Furthermore, the spell description heavily suggests a living creature.

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