Chain Mail

by Alexander von Lübeck

Chain mail (sometimes called maille) is a type of armor consisting of small metal rings linked together in a pattern to form a mesh. The earliest example of mail dates to the first century B.C. and was found in Romania.

For learning purposes, we are using specially-made plastic rings that are color coded and can be opened and closed with fingers. Real chain mail uses small metal rings.

To make European 4-in-1 chain mail, pick up one white ring and open it. Add four closed black rings to the white ring. Close the white ring. It's important that the rings of the same color be lying in the same direction. Note that the white ring lays one way and all the black rings lay the other way. This is a 4-in-1 cluster.

Repeat the process until you have five 4-in-1 clusters.

Arrange the five clusters into a column, again making sure that all of the rings are aligned in the same direction.

To link the clusters, pick up one white ring and open it. Join the white ring between the two bottom black rings (C and D) from the first cluster and the two top black rings (E and F) of the second cluster. If you've done it correctly, the new white ring should be aligned the same as the existing white rings.

Continue adding white rings between your clusters until they are all connected.

You can also increase the width of your chain mail. Make another column as you did before, set it next to your first column, and connect the black rings together with new white rings.

Once you understand the pattern, you can try with real metal rings! Chain mail rings can be ordered online at http://www.TheRingLord.com.