
THE AMAZON

The amazon, or why speed kills. Weak on paper, she is the fastest moving character in the game and excels at avoiding incoming damage. Not restricted to just bows and javelins, she can also cast the spells of her unholy pagan gods and kill enemies with blood magic or damage reflection.

Strategy

To play an amazon well, you need to exploit her speed advantage, using her area effect bow or javelin skills to deliver slow, knockback or monster flee, enabling you to stay at a safe distance. Melee or caster amazons should focus on the passives and raise their defense rating.

BASE STATS

Runs 20% faster and walks 25% faster than other classes.

Strength : 25

Dexterity : 25

Vitality : 15 (65 life)

Energy : 25 (25 mana)

+15 life, +15 mana per level (at level 120 : 1850 base life, 1810 base mana)

Gains +5 life per point into vitality

Gains +5 mana per point into energy

Preferred weapons : bows, spears, javelins, sceptres.

Weapon bonuses

Spear : +25% faster base hit recovery.





Spear : +25% faster base cast rate.







One-handed swinging weapon : +25% faster base cast rate.

BOW SKILLS

NEW ADDITIONS IN PATCH 1.55

Most players will naturally provide their amazon with a bow, and this is not a bad idea at all. She has 9 physical bow skills at her disposal for quick annihilation of her enemies.

Name	Icon	Effect
GHOST ARROW		Arrow that deals increased damage and pierces through enemies, obstacles and level walls.
CATHARSIS		Arrow that pierces enemies, and increases your life regeneration and damage reduction while shooting.
BARRAGE		Fires lots of arrows in random directions around you, hitting all nearby enemies multiple times.
RICOCHET		Arrow that does not hit enemies directly but shatters when it hits a wall, releasing many homing shards at nearby enemies.



LEGION		Summons a line of archers at the target location, which continuously shoot towards the southeast. This skill has a spell timer.
WRAITH ARROW		Arrow that unleashes X homing spirits on striking, depending on number of enemies nearby.
BUCKSHOT		Blasts a short ranged shrapnel spread in front of the character, striking all enemies in melee range and inflicting massive damage.
DEATH METAL		Explodes a corpse, shooting out a flurry of spikes that carry some of your bow damage.
DEATHCORE		Explodes a corpse, spawning a turret that shoots enemies with spikes, carrying your bow damage.
BLACK ARROWS		Passive, increases damage and attack rating of your other bow attacks, and adds a chance to inflict open wounds.

Summary : Not much to say about these, you shoot your enemies in a number of ways, the enemies die.

Most bow skills are fairly situational. Spamming out Wraith Arrow at a single target will accomplish nothing, for example. That said, you should have many spare skill points, so invest into several bow skills to cover each others' weaknesses.

JAVELIN SKILLS

Tired of Lightning Fury? There are two new throwing skills in Median 2008, making the javelin thrower one of the best boss killers in all of Sanctuary.




Name	Icon	Effect
SUNSPEAR		Hits for regular damage, then bounces to a nearby target, piercing and stunning all in its path.
ENFILADE		Throw a continuous barrage of javelins at a rate of eight per second, dealing massive damage.

Summary : Just two skills may not look like much to base a character build around, but keep in mind there are few physical immunes. Throwing amazons may lack area effect attacks, but can rip bosses apart in no time.

SPEAR SKILLS

NEW ADDITIONS IN PATCH 1.57

Spearmaidens are not so charmingly suicidal anymore. They are fast, can dish out serious damage, have high defense and are fast. Did I mention they are fast?




Name	Icon	Effect
TRIUMPHANT STRIKE		Melee attack that deals increased damage and temporarily increases your defense rating after your attack.
TERMINATE		Melee attack that inflicts an amplify damage curse upon the target, lowering physical resistance and breaking immunities.
LIGHTSWARM		Melee attack that releases several light orbs that move around, chasing down and damaging enemies.

Summary : Spearmaidens should abuse Lightswarm, a powerful area effect melee attack that hits many times, carrying crushing blow and chance to cast effects. Triumphant Strike raises defense, making it that much easier to survive in melee.

Physical immunes? Terminate pierces their resistance, making them vulnerable to your physical attacks. Combined with some elemental damage on your equipment, physical immunes should be a non-issue.

BLOOD MAJIK

Fancy a little human sacrifice? The pagan priestesshood of Hefaetrus, Karcheus and Zerae can call down a rain of blood upon their enemies. If you ever wanted to build an amazon that can cast spells, here is your chance. The official name for an amazon using spells is 'Bloodwitch'.

Name	Icon	Effect
BLOODSTAR		Slow moving, single target fire attack that takes some life to cast, but inflicts huge damage and knocks back.
BLOODSTORM		Summons a floating skull at the target point that attacks up to three nearby enemies with bloodstars. The synergy increases target count.
MAGIC MISSILES		Casts multiple magical homing missiles that target random enemies, possibly hitting multiple times.

Summary : Fire and magic damage, enough to kill almost all enemies in the game. Although a spellcasting amazon is an unlikely build, they have the tools to succeed and can acquire their very own sceptres with amazon skill bonuses.

HEALING ABILITIES

You need a healing spell to stay alive, unless you prefer to hammer the potion button whenever you take damage. The amazon has two different healing spells, both useful in their own right.

Name	Icon	Effect
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DEATH COIL



Fires a bolt that inflicts damage based on life lost, and steals most of your life back. This skill has a spell timer.

PACT OF BLOOD



Grants the party a damage shield, which returns life when the wearer is struck by an enemy. This skill has a spell timer.

Summary : If you are a ranged character, you may prefer Death Coil for its quick life refill and extra damage. Melee builds may prefer Pact of Blood because they can take hits on purpose to heal up and then run back out of the mess.

ACTIVE SUPPORT SKILLS

NEW ADDITIONS IN PATCH 1.57

Random support abilities that do not fit anywhere else. If you have no idea what to do with your skill points, these are a good way to spend them.

Name	Icon	Effect
SUMMON BLOOD ELEMENTALS		Summons fiery wisps that cast an area effect heal spell on attack.
BLOODLUST		Temporarily increases the physical and elemental damage of the caster and nearby party members.

Summary : These are utility skills, and you decide whether you need them or not. The Bloodlust buff provides a noticable damage bonus, if you have the skill points to spare. It is not required, though.

A whole different skill is Summon Blood Elementals, which provides the amazon with some minion support. The wisps may not be very powerful, but help the party by casting area effect heals, depending on how much damage the elemental has received.

PASSIVE SUPPORT SKILLS

The life of an adventurer is not just about killing demons, but also about staying alive to kill more monsters another day. As with all characters in Median 2008, passive skills are critical to your success in the harsh world of Sanctuary and make the difference between a good amazon and a dead amazon.

Name	Icon	Effect
DEFENSIVE HARMONY		Passive, greatly slows attackers that attack you and grants a chance that your attacks cannot be interrupted.
BALANCE		Passive, increases your total defense rating by a flat amount based on skill level. This skill has increasing returns at higher levels.
WINGS OF WRATH		Passive, increases your amazon's movement speed by a percentage and increases stamina.

Summary : Defensive Harmony slows enemies down, Wings of Wrath speeds you up. This combo is what keeps the amazon alive in later difficulties. If they cannot catch you, they cannot damage you. If you are not using a bow, add Winged Strike to make the difference between your speed and their speed even more ridiculous.




Defensive Harmony is better than the [Slows Attacker X%](#) item modifier, because it also slows ranged attackers, and slows melee attackers that so much as swing at you, not just when they hit you.

Balance is better than it looks, because the value of each additional point doubles at level 8, 16 and 24. Add some good armor and you are almost unhittable.

AMAZON UBERSKILLS

NEW ADDITIONS IN PATCH 1.57

Each character class has 3 'uberskills', which become available when you reach level 90. You must pick one and stick with it; once you choose an uberskill, the other two become permanently disabled. Choose wisely.

Name	Icon	Effect
CURARE		Passive, adds lethal poison to your physical weapon attacks. Skills with a higher damage multiplier gain more poison damage.
PARAGON		Passive, grants a vitality bonus for each gem you have socketed into your items.
BLOOD FURY		Temporarily increases spell damage of self or a target ally, but slowly drains the recipient's life away.

Summary : Your uberskill choice is not rocket science. If you have a powerful single hit attack like Catharsis or Wraith Arrow, get Curare. If you need to tank, get Paragon. If you are a bloodwitch, get Blood Fury.

THE ASSASSIN

The assassin flips out and kills people. She does so with an arsenal of physical and elemental melee attacks, elemental ranged attacks and throwing skills. It is a good idea to pick a build path and stick to it.

Strategy

Most assassin builds revolve around immobilising enemies with stun skills, then delivering a rainbow of elemental damage. Physical damage is usually less important.

BASE STATS

Strength : 20

Dexterity : 20

Vitality : 25 (75 life)

Energy : 20 (20 mana)

+12 life, +18 mana per level (at level 120 : 1503 base life, 2162 base mana)

Gains +4 life per point into vitality

Gains +6 mana per point into energy

Preferred weapons : claws, daggers, polearms, throwing knives, fists.





Weapon bonuses

Fist : very fast attack speed.

Throwing knife : +25% increased base throw speed.

PHYSICAL COMBAT SKILLS





The most straightforward of the assassin's skill trees, her physical attacks can pack a punch. You can use them with a high damage weapon, or forget about weapons and use her very fast attack speed with bare fists and some elemental damage adders to pummel your enemies into the ground, kung-fu style.

Name	Icon	Effect
TIME STRIKE		Melee attack that deals regular damage, followed by a delayed additional hit for bonus damage.
CRUCIFY		Melee attack that blasts out a nova of eight homing spikes, each hitting randomly for additional damage.
SHADOW REFUGE		Melee attack that deals increased damage and temporarily boosts your movement speed and damage reduction for a short time.
HADES GATE		Teleport into a corpse, damaging and knocking back enemies near the corpse. This skill has a spell timer.

Summary : Physical melee builds are usually very simple - get Crucify and Hades Gate, leave Crucify at 1 and max out Hades Gate. Of course, you do have to pay attention to what you are doing with your other skill points.

ELEMENTAL COMBAT SKILLS

Ever wished you could just forget about the whole weapon damage thing? Now you can. The elemental melee skills always hit, dealing their damage to a wide area regardless of how bad your weapon damage is and how low your attack rating. Their one drawback is that they do not work for 2 seconds after you get hit by an enemy. Keep moving...

Name	Icon	Effect
BLACK LOTUS STRIKE		Melee attack that releases a spiralling nova of poison, inflicting deadly damage to an area.
DEATH BLOSSOM		Melee attack that releases a shockwave of fire, striking the target and all nearby enemies.
WAY OF THE SPIDER		Passive, adds poison damage to your attacks and increases all your poison damage by a percentage.
WAY OF THE PHOENIX		Passive, adds fire damage to your attacks and increases all your fire damage by a percentage.

Summary : Easy damage, regardless of your equipped weapon. You do have to equip yourself like a caster instead of a warrior, with items that add bonuses to fire and poison skill damage and skill level bonuses. And beware that 2 second rule.

The passive bonuses may look small at first, but synergise themselves and other elemental skills. If you use elemental melee attacks at all, max these skills and get either a very fast weapon with good skill level bonuses, or just use your fists.






The elemental passives are affected by the weapon damage multiplier on combat skills. To maximise Way of the Phoenix damage, use an attack that simply deals the most damage. For Way of the Spider, since multiple poison hits do not stack, you are looking for the most powerful single hit attack, namely Time Strike.

(Also note the poison damage synergy to Shadow Refuge, adding a bonus to all poison damage used while under the effects of Shadow Refuge. This is another layer of poison damage after Black Lotus Strike and Way of the Spider)

THROWING KNIFE SKILLS

NEW ADDITIONS IN PATCH 1.55

A mixture of physical and elemental (poison and magic), but the bulk of your damage will be physical, plus any bonus from Way of the Spider/Phoenix.

Name	Icon	Effect
SCORPION BLADE		Adds lethal poison damage to a thrown dagger attack, infecting a single target.
STORM CROWS		Multiple homing throwing knives that seek out random targets, or hit the same ones multiple times.
WYCHWIND		Throwing knife that shatters on impact, doing no damage, but the shards converge after a few moments and explode to create a deadly rift field.
MAELSTROM		Throwing knife that emits spike novas while in flight, shredding a wide area with metal.
SHADOW BLADE		Throwing knife that inflicts huge magic damage, killing or severely damaging the target. This skill has a spell timer.






Summary : Most throwers will rely on Storm Crows for the bulk of their damage, using Maelstrom against large packs. The other knife attacks are situational and take a back seat to maxing out Storm Crows, although with the right equipment, Scorpion Blade can be a guaranteed kill and is definitely worth exploring.

Wychwind creates a field of rifts that deal massive damage, enough to kill most enemies in the game instantly. The tricky part is the two second delay before the rifts explode, and their short duration. Practice makes perfect. This is a difficult spell for your character; beware the brief period of weakness that follows it.

MINES AND BOMBS

Unleash your inner anarchist. These are elemental spells, dealing fire or lightning damage to a wide area. Place them at your feet and they either explode when stepped

on, or go off by themselves when the timer is up.



Name	Icon	Effect
RUNE OF FIRE		Places a landmine that detonates when touched, dealing fire damage in a small area.
RUNE OF ICE		Places a landmine that detonates when touched, damaging and freezing nearby enemies.
NOVA BOMB		Places a timebomb that detonates after a short time, emitting a large and powerful lightning nova.
IMMOLATION BOMB		Places a timebomb that detonates after a short time, blasting out a nova of explosive fireballs.
RUNE OF MANA		Places a landmine that deals area effect damage based on maximum mana minus current mana. This skill has a spell timer.

Summary : These are some of the most powerful skills in the game, but require a specialised elemental spell damage build to make them shine. Treat them like sorceress spells.

The three second fuse on the bombs can be a drawback at first, but you can easily counter it by stunning enemies with Blink, then dropping the bombs at their feet.

OTHER SPELLS

If the bombs and landmines do not catch your fancy, maybe these spells will.






Name	Icon	Effect
STARBURST		Launches a flurry of homing blades in all directions, striking random enemies with magic damage. Uses your attack speed.
RAIN OF BOMBS		Showers the target area with explosives, causing major damage to enemies caught in it.

Summary : Rain of Bombs is much like a regular elemental spell, but Starburst is special. It is based on your attack speed, not your cast speed. It also deals magic damage, and can shred a small crowd to pieces in no time.

PASSIVE AND SUPPORT ABILITIES

What you need to stay alive. Yes, you really do. Trust me, you are dead without them. Just look at your stats, assassins are weak. Of all the classes in the game, assassins are the most heavily reliant on their support skills.

Name	Icon	Effect
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BLINK		Teleport to the target spot, stunning all enemies around you on arrival. This skill has a spell timer.
DOOM		Curses enemies, adding a flat +x bonus to all physical damage they receive from the party.
QUEEN OF BLADES		When cast, causes your assassin to periodically fire ricocheting blades at nearby enemies, which carry weapon damage and special effects.
PREMEDITATION		Passive, reduces all your spell timers (on Shadow Blade, Rune of Mana, Hades Gate and Blink, and Seismic Field or Blade Barrier if you have them).
PERFECT BEING		Passive, grants a chance to avoid taking damage from any source, regardless of damage type.

Summary : Your hit points suck for a melee character, you have low defense and do not move as fast as some others. In short, you need the protection from Perfect Being or you will die. Max it, no questions asked. It can prevent more than 60% of all incoming damage.




As for the others, maxing both Blink and Premeditation allows you to stun monsters for longer than the spell timer, enabling you to perma-stun a small crowd. Blink is very useful for travel and escape, too.

Other benefits of Premeditation is that it makes the short timer on Hades Gate even shorter, and enables you to cast Shadow Blade faster. If you are using timered skills at all, Premeditation will be of much use to you.

Doom can add a good amount of damage to Crucify and Storm Crows if you use them, although it is not required to make those skills shine. For single target attacks, it is a waste of mana.

ASSASSIN UBERSKILLS

Each character class has 3 'uberskills', which become available when you reach level 90. You must pick one and stick with it; once you choose an uberskill, the other two become permanently disabled. Choose wisely.

Name	Icon	Effect
BLADE BARRIER		Wall of blades that shatter when an enemy runs into them, sending out shrapnel that carries weapon damage. This skill has a spell timer.
WAY OF THE GRYPHON		Passive, adds lightning damage to your attacks and increases your lightning damage by a percentage.
SEISMIC FIELD		Creates a tiny hovering black hole that damages or destroys anything that touches it. This skill has a spell timer.

Summary : Not a hard choice, because each uberskill augments each of the three major assassin build paths.

THE BARBARIAN

Everyone knows what the barbarian stands for - strength, armor, melee attacks and enough life and defense to invade any country of your choosing. His strong throwing attacks and summoning skills are more unusual, though.

Strategy

Barbarians are tanks that can summon other tanks. Their damage output may not be incredible, but they can outheal and outlast just about anything.

BASE STATS

Strength : 30
Dexterity : 20
Vitality : 30 (80 life)
Energy : 5 (5 mana)

+21 life, +9 mana per level (at level 120 : 2579 base life, 1076 base mana)
Gains +7 life per point into vitality
Gains +3 mana per point into energy







Preferred weapons : swords, axes, spears, polearms, maces.

Weapon bonuses

Two weapons : very fast base attack speed.
Two weapons : +25% faster base cast rate.
Two weapons : +25% faster base hit recovery.

COMBAT SKILLS

The most obvious build path, but not the only one. The barbarian has a very fast attack speed with two weapons and has some very powerful melee combat skills.

Name	Icon	Effect
CAUTIOUS STRIKE		Double melee attack that deals bonus damage, and raises your defense and reduces incoming damage. Requires two weapons.
TITAN STRIKE		Melee attack that temporarily raises your strength, dexterity and slowly regenerates your life.
HAMSTRING		Melee attack that temporarily enables your follow-up melee attacks to stun their targets.
THUNDER SLAM		Melee attack that blasts out a shockwave, stunning and knocking back all nearby enemies and causing massive damage. This skill has a spell timer.
SHOWER OF ROCKS		Melee attack that causes a rain of stone blocks to pound the area, dealing damage, reducing physical resistance and breaking immunities.
CONQUEST		Melee attack that temporarily grants immunity to all damage except poison, and increases your run speed. This skill has a spell timer.

Summary : Many buffs in this tree, and you can pile them on top of each other to inflict even more hurt upon your enemies.






Most melee barbarians will want to use Shower of Rocks to deal damage, with Thunder Slam to deal with massive crowds and monsters which you would rather not keep too close to you for too long. Of course, Titan Strike is a great buff as well.

In patch 1.57, a backup element is optional, because Shower of Rocks now has an amplify damage component that removes physical immunity. Rock on!

THROWING AXE SKILLS

NEW ADDITIONS IN PATCH 1.57

Tired of Double Throw? The main difference between the throwing axe skills in Median 2008 and the one in classic LoD is that these ones actually deal damage and are capable of killing enemies. Imagine that. These skills are physical based, but can also dish out some good elemental damage with the right stances.

Name	Icon	Effect
BEAR CLAW		Throwing axe attack that deals increased damage, pierces, stuns and knocks back, but has reduced range.
STAMPEDE		Throw multiple Bear Claw axes in a wave in front of you to deal even more damage. This skill has a spell timer.
REBOUND		Throwing axe that does not hit or harm enemies directly, but shatters on walls, sending out axes at all nearby enemies, each dealing bonus damage.
HAWK TALONS		Places a landmine at your feet, which detonates when an enemy steps on it, shooting out a barrage of axes in all directions.
EAGLE DIVE		Throw an axe in an arc, causing an elemental shock nova on impact. The explosion deals no damage, but lowers resistances in an area, breaking immunities.

Summary : Throwing skills are actually viable now, provided you bring an alternate attack to deal with the few physical immune monsters in Destruction difficulty. Most throwing skills are powerful, but quirky and tend to be fairly short ranged. You do have to pay attention to survivability.





Eagle Dive reduces enemy resistances, improving your elemental damage and especially the elemental stances. You may want to focus on elemental attacks if you can muster enough elemental damage sources.

STANCES

NEW ADDITIONS IN PATCH 1.57

Stances are self-only auras that provide a boost to damage, life, resistances or any of a number of other things. Their effects are very strong, and with the passive skill Shaman's Path, they extend to your allies as well. Barbarians, the new paladins.

Name	Icon	Effect
LION STANCE		Stance, greatly increases physical damage dealt but also increases physical damage taken from attacks.






SNAKE STANCE		Stance, adds extra poison damage over time to your physical weapon attacks. The bonus is modified by skills that modify weapon damage.
BEAR STANCE		Stance, greatly increases your defense rating, but prevents the use of skills that are not melee or summoning skills.
EAGLE STANCE		Stance, regenerates a percentage of your maximum life per second when active, and increases mana regeneration.
SHAMAN'S PATH		Passive, enables your stances to reach out and affect nearby allies; also improves your Protector Spirit's Bloodlust spell (see below).

Summary : Very few barbarian skills cannot be mapped under the left mouse button, so you will want to use a stance all the time. All four stances are useful, and switching between stances quickly can make the difference in Destruction difficulty.

SUMMONING SPELLS

NEW ADDITIONS IN PATCH 1.57

The Ancients are watching you. Somewhat unusual for a barbarian, these skills provide powerful minions to fight by your side, kill enemies and/or absorb damage for you. You can field many spirits with enough levels in Greater Manifestations, but only one type at a time. Choose wisely.





Name	Icon	Effect
GUARDIAN SPIRIT		Summons a ranged guardian spirit that attacks your enemies with throwing axe skills, including Bear Claw, Stampede and Rebound.
DEFENDER SPIRIT		Summons a more defensively oriented spirit with very high life, defense and a Retaliate attack.
PROTECTOR SPIRIT		Summons an offensive spirit with a powerful melee attack and a Bloodlust spell that increases your physical and elemental damage.
SPIRIT GUIDE		Passive, your spirits emit a short ranged aura that increases damage of nearby allies.
GREATER MANIFESTATIONS		Passive, enables you to summon more spirits and increases the life and damage of individual spirits.

Summary : The spirits may seem weak at first and pop like balloons when attacked, but Greater Manifestations makes them very strong. Max this skill, even at the expense of the actual summoning skills. Four 10K life Guardian Spirits can take a lot of heat off you.

Spirits do not come with you. This is not a bug. These powerful spirits of ancient heroes are not going to follow you around like common servants.

PASSIVE AND SUPPORT ABILITIES

If you ever wanted to have a ranged melee attack, kill enemies by doing nothing or outrace a teleporting sorceress, this is where you should look.




Name	Icon	Effect
GUARD TOWER		Summons a guard tower at the target spot, which attacks your enemies with arrows based on your own damage. This skill has a spell timer.
FORTRESS		Summons a ring of guard towers around you. You can control their deployment using nearby walls. This skill has a spell timer.
BERSERK FURY		Passive, increases your base attack, hit recovery and movement speeds by a percentage.
MOUNTAIN KING		Passive, increases character attributes (strength, dexterity, energy and vitality) by a percentage.

Summary : The odd Fortress skill is one of the most powerful skills in the game, because it deals damage while you do something else, including using melee or throwing skills. If you max both it and its synergies, it can even go the distance as a primary attack. For maximum effectiveness, cast it in a corner to make all the towers pile up in one spot and kill anything within range dead.

The passives are very powerful as well. Unless you have a very good excuse (eg. pure summoner or Fortress specialist), you should invest at least some points into Berserk Fury. Mountain King helps you in many ways and deserves several points as well.

BARBARIAN UBERSKILLS

Each character class has 3 'uberskills', which become available when you reach level 90. You must pick one and stick with it; once you choose an uberskill, the other two become permanently disabled. Choose wisely.

Name	Icon	Effect
KRAKEN STANCE		Stance, adds a flat bonus to fire, cold and lightning damage to your weapon attacks.
RUNEMASTER		Passive, grants a percentage bonus to defense for each rune you have socketed into your items.
SHAMANIC TRANCE		Temporarily enables you to summon huge numbers of spirit minions. The extra minions die when the spell ends. This skill has a spell timer.

Summary : Not an obvious choice, and it depends on the role of your character. Some are easier to use than others, too.

Kraken Stance will be your physical immune killer if you don't have Snake Stance. Runemaster can give you upwards of 100K defense, making you almost unhittable.

Shamanic Trance is the least often seen uberskill in the field, but packs a punch in uberboss fights.

THE DRUID

This brave new character class only vaguely resembles the classic LoD druid. He can use bow skills and elemental spells to kill enemies directly, or charm them and pit them against each other in a fight to the death. Although specialisation is certainly possible, most druids would prefer to be versatile and dip into both the damage and the charming trees.

Strategy

Druids are about damage and subversion. Their archery and elemental skills are among the most powerful in the world of Sanctuary, and they can take the heat off themselves by charming enemies or throwing minions at them.

BASE STATS

Strength : 25

Dexterity : 15

Vitality : 25 (75 life)

Energy : 20 (20 mana)

+18 life, +12 mana per level (at level 120 : 2217 base life, 1448 base mana)

Gains +6 life per point into vitality

Gains +4 mana per point into energy






Preferred weapons : bows, staves

Weapon bonuses

Staff : +25% faster base cast rate.

BOW SKILLS









Hunting season is open. An archer druid, aka Ranger, may be a fairly unusual druid build, but his bow skills are at least equal to the amazon's and Mark of the Wild may even give him an edge.

Name	Icon	Effect
BLINDSIDE		Shoots an arrow at a random nearby enemy, dealing increased damage and stunning for a very long time.
CASCADE		Shoots an arrow that splits into many arrows aimed at all nearby enemies within a radius.
SPORE SHOT		Shoots an arrow that splits in two on striking, which split in two on striking, which...
NOVA SHOT		Shoots a ring of arrows, striking all visible enemies. The closer the enemies are, the more damage they take.
ELFIN ARROWS		Passive, increases your bow damage and damage vs. demons, and enables your hits to cause double damage.

Summary : The most common combo is high level Cascade for sniping and Nova Shot for close range combat, with Blindside for boss fights. Add Mark of the Wild on top of that and you will become the most feared hunter in all of Sanctuary.

ELEMENTAL SPELLS

Pwn your enemies in a variety of ways with elemental fire, cold and poison spells.

Name	Icon	Effect
ELEMENTAL		Casts a running fire spirit that targets a random nearby enemy, exploding through all enemies in its path.
FIRE FOUNTAIN		Showers the area around the caster with a carpet of explosive fire spikes which detonate when stepped on.
HUNTING BANSHEE		Ice spirit that follows random nearby enemies until it explodes with an ice nova.
WINTER AVATAR		Avatar of nature's dark side that floats above an area, blasting a wide area with frost novas. This skill has a spell timer.
POISON FLASH		Short ranged radius blast that hits all enemies next to you, causing major poison damage.
PLAGUE AVATAR		Avatar of nature that floats above an area, emitting clouds of poison around it. This skill has a spell timer.
CORRUPTION FIELD		Corrupts the ground around the caster, infecting all visible enemies with slow, withering poison damage over a long time.
SUMMON ACID FIENDS		Summons many acid creatures with a devastating Poison Flash attack and an aura that increases your poison damage.

Summary : Basic elemental spells. There are no real crowd control skills, and the most powerful direct damage spell, Fire Fountain is only effective against moving targets.

All poison spells are useful in their own way. Plague Avatar deals lots of damage quickly, but only if the enemy lingers in the poison cloud. Corruption Field inflicts slow but steady damage that is guaranteed to kill any enemy after a (very) long wait. Even if you finish them off sooner, it is still free damage. Poison Flash is halfway between the two.

The Acid Fiends have the most powerful poison damage attack in the game and deal respectable physical damage to poison immunes, making summoner builds viable - provided you pour all of your skill points into the synergies.

CHARM SPELLS AND PET COMMANDS

NEW ADDITIONS IN PATCH 1.57

Now for something completely different. These skills enable you to convert monsters to fight for you, strengthen (or weaken) them with various skills, and watch them kill each other.

The catch is that the pet commands, aura-like abilities which affect only converted minions, stick with the converted monsters forever. Even when you switch to a different command. Even when the monster unconverts. This is not necessarily bad, in fact it can lead to whole new strategies. Just be careful not to do yourself in, okay?

Btw. Aura enchanted monsters cannot receive pet commands. Their kung fu is stronger than your kung fu.

Name	Icon	Effect
CHARM		Converts a small area of monsters to fight for you. This skill has a spell timer.
SUMMON KILL RATS		Summons several hostile Kill Rats that will attack you, but serve as Charm fodder. This skill has a spell timer.
KILLER INSTINCT		Pet command, increases the physical damage your converted monsters do by a percentage.
BRAMBLES		Pet command, enables your converted monsters to reflect damage at enemies that hit them.
THRILL OF THE HUNT		Pet command, enables your converted monsters to inflict crushing blows with their physical attacks.
TRANQUIL SPIRIT		Pet command, causes your converted monsters to slow anything that hits them in melee.
SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST		Pet command, reduces the physical resistance of your converted monsters by a percentage.
EXTINCTION		Pet command, reduces the poison resistance of your converted monsters by a percentage.
FRIENDSHIP		Passive, boosts the radius of your pet commands, enabling them to affect converted monsters farther away.

Summary : A very special collection of spells with their own strategies. Not only can you Charm monsters and improve them with various buffs (or weaken them with debuffs), but when they unconvert, they keep their bonuses (or penalties).

The basic tactic involves Charming one or two monsters and throwing Brambles on them, causing anything that hits them to die in a few hits. Repeat with half of the survivors, or kill them off with other spells. If you are willing to take more risks, add Killer Instinct to the mix.




You may want to add Survival of the Fittest to reduce physical resistances below zero, enabling your pet commands to do more damage.

If you do not want to use charm spells as a primary attack, just Charm a group of monsters and drop Survival of the Fittest and Extinction on them. Let the charm wear off. The monsters will now be half dead, take double damage from physical attacks and greatly increased damage from poison spells. You can now kill them by looking at them angrily.

Boss minions are usually immune to mind control skills. Before 1.57, this meant trouble. Nowadays you can cast Summon Kill Rats and create your own enemies to charm.

PASSIVE AND DEFENSIVE ABILITIES

Many character classes lean heavily upon their passives, which often mean the difference between success and failure in Destruction. The druid is not one of them. You can survive just fine without these abilities, but they are nevertheless a great help in battle.




Name	Icon	Effect
MARK OF THE WILD		Provides self or target ally with a bonus to damage and elemental damage for a short time.
PAGAN RITES		Consumes all nearby corpses in flames, healing you by a percentage for each sacrifice. This skill has a spell timer.
CIRCLE OF LIFE		Passive, returns a small amount of life to you when you kill any enemy with spell or weapon.

Summary : Mark of the Wild is very useful for archers and casters alike, and can be cast on your minions in a pinch. Pagan Rites is a useful healing spell on a very short timer, and Circle of Life is just a nice bonus.

DRUID UBERSKILLS

NEW ADDITIONS IN PATCH 1.55

Each character class has 3 'uberskills', which become available when you reach level 90. You must pick one and stick with it; once you choose an uberskill, the other two become permanently disabled. Choose wisely.

Name	Icon	Effect
LEADER OF THE PACK		Passive, your currently selected pet command grants a percentage of its minion bonus to you personally.
FAERIE FIRE		When active, grants a small chance to avoid incoming damage and leaves a trail of rainbow sparks in your wake, causing weapon-based damage.
TREMOR		A powerful earthquake that shakes the ground and reduces the current life of all visible enemies by a percentage.

Summary : Leader of the Pack may need some explanation. Normally, when you use a pet command, it only affects your converted minions, and affects them permanently. Leader of the Pack adds a small 'aura' effect to it, giving you a fraction of the bonus just for running the pet command. However, the bonus vanishes when you select a different skill.

Leader of the Pack is commonly seen with Killer Instinct to increase your damage, but will require lots of skill bonuses and some micromanagement during battle. Faerie Fire is passive damage and powerful for bow druids as well. Tremor is a cheap solution to quickly and easily reduce the life of opponents with lots of life, including uberquest bosses.

THE NECROMANCER

The necromancer, master of death and summoning. In game terms, a character with many powerful summoning and corpse skills, but very few direct damage skills. Love it or leave it.

Strategy

This class is all about summoning gigantic amounts of minions and flooding the enemy into submission. Alternatively, you can focus on totems or crossbow attacks and use minions as expendable tanks. One way or the other, minions will take the lion's share of your skill points.

BASE STATS

Strength : 15

Dexterity : 25

Vitality : 20 (70 life)

Energy : 25 (25 mana)

+12 life, +18 mana per level (at level 120 : 1498 base life, 2167 base mana)

Gains +4 life per point into vitality

Gains +6 mana per point into energy

Preferred weapons : wands, staves, scythes, knives, crossbows.

Weapon bonuses



Staff : +25% faster base cast rate.

Crossbow : +25% faster base hit recovery.

SUMMONING SPELLS

NEW ADDITIONS IN PATCH 1.57

Your main source of damage - in fact, your only source of damage until you get a corpse, unless you have a crossbow. Luckily, the summoning skills are more than strong enough to get the job done.

Name	Icon	Effect
SUMMON SHADOWS		Summons shadow minions with low life and weak damage, but an aura that increases maximum life and life regeneration.
SUMMON DARKLINGS		Summons dark minions that are very weak and easy to kill, but strong in large numbers.

SUMMON RAMPAGORS		Summons strong tank minions with low damage, but high defense and lots of life.
SUMMON LAMIA		Summons ghost minions that excel at dealing major damage, but are not so good at taking it.
SUMMON VOID ARCHON		A single minion with an aura that slows enemies and reduces their physical resist, breaking immunities. This skill has a spell timer.
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DEMON BLOOD		Passive, enables the Shadows' aura to increase the party's elemental damage as well.
BARB WIRE		Passive, enables your Darkling minions to reflect a percentage of physical damage back at the attacker.
TAINTED BLADES		Passive, enables your Rampagor minions to deal poison damage on striking, eating away at the life of the target over a long time.
GHOUL TOUCH		Passive, enables your Lamia minions to slow their targets by a percentage on striking.
WARP FIELD		Passive, your Void Archon's aura reduces enemy physical resist by a greater amount.

Summary : These are what helps you stay alive and deal damage. You may want to maximise all of the summoning skills, but you may not need every single passive skill. Invest into those as you see fit.

It may not always be a good idea to summon all of your available minions and send them at the enemy in one big flood. This strategy works in case of massed weak enemies, but if they are stronger, they may swat aside your lower minions, leaving you with the task of resummoning 30 or 50 minions after each fight. If this happens, you may want to roll with just your higher end minions and focus more on totems that help their survivability.


The new 1.57 Void Archon has an aura that breaks physical immunity, allowing your minion swarm to remain good forever. It also serves as a damage multiplier, provided you sink some points into the Warp Field passive.










In short, if you want a low maintenance summoning build that allows you to watch television while playing, look somewhere else.

CORPSE TOTEM SPELLS

NEW ADDITIONS IN PATCH 1.57

These skills target corpses, producing a ward that either buffs your party or attacks enemies. The ward has infinite duration or infinite shots, but has low hit points and can (and will) be destroyed if the enemies reach it. Protect them well.

Name	Icon	Effect
DEATH'S FURY TOTEM		Corpse totem, adds fire, cold and lightning damage to the party's weapon attacks until destroyed.

BLOOD TIDE TOTEM		Corpse totem, increases the party's maximum life by a percentage until destroyed.
MANA TIDE TOTEM		Corpse totem, greatly increases the party's mana regeneration rate until destroyed.
ELEMENTAL TOTEM		Corpse totem, increases the party's elemental skill and weapon damage by a percentage until destroyed.
ALPHA TOTEM		Corpse totem, boosts the party's physical damage by a percentage until destroyed.
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FROSTCLAW TOTEM		Corpse totem, attacks nearby enemies with waves of homing ice and frost until destroyed.
FIREHEART TOTEM		Corpse totem, pounds nearby enemies with meteors until destroyed.
STORMEYE TOTEM		Corpse totem, fires deadly beams of static lightning at nearby targets until destroyed.
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EXPLODING TOTEM		Corpse totem, attracts enemies and explodes with a giant shockwave when destroyed, dealing physical damage and stun. This skill has a spell timer.
<hr/>		
DEMON SEED		Throw demonic seeds that blossom into corpses, which you can use for totems. This skill has a spell timer.

Summary : The other half of the necromancer's skill set. The totems may be easy to destroy, but increasing their skill level fixes that.


Totems can affect other totems. For example, an Elemental Totem will increase the damage of a Stormeye Totem, and a Blood Tide Totem will give it more life. It is not entirely impossible to put all of your skill points into totems, wait for your hireling to kill an enemy, then use your totems to kill the rest.

Totems are powerful on their own as support for your army, but if you want to use them as your main source of damage, you will need Demon Seed. The skill has a long timer, so you will need to max it to increase the corpse count.

CROSSBOW SKILLS

NEW ADDITIONS IN PATCH 1.57

Those necromancer-specific crossbows can pack a punch, dealing huge area effect damage. Be aware that you still need minions to tank for your crossbow attacks, unless you have 'Boxer micro'.

Name	Icon	Effect
WIDOWMAKER		Using a minion or totem as a focus, sends out a flurry of crossbow bolts around the target unit.

DEATHSTRIKE






Necromancer crossbow attack that targets an area with a searing dark energy beam, carrying your weapon damage.

Summary : Lock and load. Crossbows are a new necromancer weapon, and with some support from minions, can be devastating.

Do not attempt to use a crossbow - or a necromancer - if you have no intention to invest into some warm bodies. Deathstrike tends to be very inaccurate unless you have a minion to tank for it, and Widowmaker requires a minion to cast it in the first place.

SUPPORT SPELLS

Random gadgets that make you look cool, do more damage and survive better. They are not your first priority, but are worth it once your damage and resilience needs are solved.




Name	Icon	Effect
UNHOLY ARMOR		Casts a shield around self or target ally, absorbing all damage except poison. This skill has a spell timer.
DARK POWER		Temporarily increases the party's damage, attack speed, and provides crushing blow and damage reduction.
NIGHTMARE		Curses enemies, reducing their movement speed and attack rating. Also prevents enemies from using magic to heal.

Summary : More damage and survivability, and especially the crushing blow can greatly improve your kill speed. And the weakening effects of Nightmare. And Unholy Armor...

If you are going to attempt any uberquests at all, get Nightmare. Many uberbosses heal when they kill a player or minion, and without Nightmare to prevent this, you may never manage to do enough damage before they kill a minion and receive a full heal.

NECROMANCER UBERSKILLS

Each character class has 3 'uberskills', which become available when you reach level 90. You must pick one and stick with it; once you choose an uberskill, the other two become permanently disabled. Choose wisely.

Name	Icon	Effect
NECROMANTIC TRANCE		Temporarily increases the number of minions you can summon. When the skill wears off, the extra minions die. This skill has a spell timer.
RATHMA'S CHOSEN		Targets a single minion or totem, rendering it immune to all damage and adding lots of magic damage to its attack. This skill has a spell timer.
SOULSHATTER		Casts a powerful magic nova, but also targets one of your minions and renders the sacrificial unit very vulnerable for 5 seconds.

Summary : You decide! Necromantic Trance increases your maximum minion count for an even bigger zerg rush. Soulshatter is a nice solution for crossbow builds to deal with physical immunes. If you have only a few minions, Rathma's Chosen feeds them some steroids.

In patch 1.57, you can no longer accidentally cast Soulshatter on yourself. While it was barrels of fun while it lasted, it did not exactly encourage heavy use of the skill.

THE PALADIN

The paladin, defender of the light or offender of the shadow. In Median 2008, the paladin has two very distinct build paths - light and shadow - and your first skill point determines his destiny for the rest of the game.

Strategy

A straightforward character, but the schism between holy and unholy paladins complicates matters. Generally speaking, holy paladins are more built for melee, whereas unholy paladins need to worry more about spell damage.

BASE STATS

Strength : 25

Dexterity : 20

Vitality : 25 (75 life)

Energy : 15 (15 mana)

+18 life, +12 mana per level (at level 120 : 2217 base life, 1443 base mana)

Gains +6 life per point into vitality

Gains +4 mana per point into energy

Preferred weapons : swords, spears, sceptres.

Weapon bonuses

One-handed swinging weapon : +25% faster base cast rate.

The Iron Curtain


Investing into a skill marked as 'holy' in the skill description prevents you from putting any points into 'unholy' skills and vice versa. You can still acquire forbidden skills by using items with bonuses to single skills, you just cannot invest any hard points.

Holy skills have a **yellow** name, and unholy skills have a **purple** name. The skills on the third skill tab are neutral and available to either side, and have a **gray** name.

HOLY COMBAT SKILLS

NEW ADDITIONS IN PATCH 1.55

When an eye for an eye is not enough. The paladin's physical attack skills react to being hit by a monster attack, after which you have 2 seconds to attack an enemy, dealing area effect damage. If you have not been hit within the last 2 seconds, the melee skills just do a regular normal attack.

Name	Icon	Effect
RETALIATE		Melee attack that reacts to being struck, damaging and knocking back all monsters near the target.

RETRIBUTE



Melee attack that reacts to being struck, lowering the resistances of nearby enemies in a large area, breaking immunities.

HOLY INSANITY



Curses enemies, making the window of opportunity to use reactive melee skills last longer when you get hit by a cursed enemy.

Summary : A powerful tree with a high damage area effect attack. Do not let the 3/4 damage on Retaliate fool you, because it hits and knocks back targets multiple times, especially at higher skill levels. Scoring five or ten hits on the same monsters with one Retaliate attack is not unheard of.

Holy Insanity is uh... insanely useful, because it allows you to keep going with retaliatory attacks without this pressing need to get hit constantly. Max it.

Retribute lowers the resistances of targets within range, breaking immunities on monsters that are vulnerable to charm effects. This includes most monsters in the game. If you can take a few hits in melee range, this skill is just what you need to make your holy magicks inflict a lasting impression upon the minions of darkness.

UNHOLY COMBAT SKILLS

What the light won't tell you. The dark side of your paladin is represented by these elemental melee attacks, which deal major damage to multiple targets, but you can only use them after using Arcane Strike first. You may need fast hotkey fingers...

Name	Icon	Effect
ARCANE STRIKE		Melee attack that temporarily increases all elemental damage done, and activates the following skills...
LEMURES		After using Arcane Strike, this melee attack emits randomly homing ice ghosts at all nearby enemies.
BLOOD THORNS		After using Arcane Strike, this melee attack blasts out bloody thorns, burning nearby enemies.
BLACK SLEEP		Melee attack that converts an enemy to fight evil. This skill has a spell timer.

Summary : These are elemental skills, so your weapon damage does not matter, and they always hit. Focus on caster gear, with elemental skill damage bonuses and +skills. And do not forget a third element in case something turns out to be immune to both fire and cold.

HOLY SPELLS

The holy damage spells do fire or physical damage, enabling you to kill almost any monster in the game. The good guys always win.

Name	Icon	Effect
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SEARING ORB



Casts a glowing beam that streaks to the target and blasts a small area with holy fire.

RING OF LIGHT



Creates a stationary ring of golden flames around the caster, burning enemies attempting to cross it.

HOLY TRAP



Places a holy landmine which detonates when touched, emitting waves of radiant fire around it.

WRATH



After a short delay, fires eight holy fireballs in a circle around the caster. Inflicts 50% physical and 50% fire damage.

Summary : You can rebuild your pet cleric of Lathander now. There is no need to diversify, because Wrath carries 50% physical damage, which very few monsters resist. Of course, you can kill fire immune monsters much faster with an alternate (melee) attack, or you can breach their immunities with Retribute.

UNHOLY SPELLS

Forget what World of Warcraft taught you, shadowpriests are the bomb on raids. With lightning and magic and a timered instant kill attack, they can kill most monsters in the game. And for those things magic can't kill, there is still melee combat.

Name	Icon	Effect
MIND FLAY		Beam of dark energy that explodes on the target, dealing area effect lightning damage.
SLAYER		Summons a shadow demon to guard an area, attacking enemies with magical shadow bolts.
PUNISHER		Slow moving death bolt that kills or heavily damages and poisons a target. This skill has a spell timer.



Summary : You can rebuild your pet cleric of Bane now. You may need a third element, because unlike at the holy side of things, the unholy spells do not carry physical damage. Danged good guys always win.

Punisher is a special skill. It inflicts enormous damage, enough to kill most regular monsters in one hit, and stuns any monster that somehow manages to survive it. Its drawback is the long (up to 10 seconds) skill timer. Use it to take out strategic targets, like shaman or priests that resurrect or buff their underlings, and uberquest bosses.

SUPPORT ABILITIES

NEW ADDITIONS IN PATCH 1.55

Mere damage is not enough. These support skills enable you to survive better, take more hits, or yes, deal more damage.

Name	Icon	Effect
LIONHEART		Toggleable buff that increases your damage and defense, but slows down your run speed.
VINDICATE		Curses enemies, causing the party to gain a damage boost and receive healing over time when a cursed enemy is killed.
BLOOD FLASH		Short ranged radius blast that strikes enemies next to you, stealing back a percentage of your life.
SHADOWFORM		Shrouds the caster or a target ally in shadows, increasing resistances and damage reduction.
VANQUISH		Grants a huge damage bonus to self or target ally for a few seconds. This skill has a spell timer.
HOLY ARMOR		Temporarily shields the caster from all damage except poison. This skill has a spell timer.
VESSEL OF JUDGEMENT		When activated, periodically shoots beams of holy or unholy energy at nearby enemies.

Summary : All of these are nice to have, but they are not critical to your success. The exception is Lionheart for melee builds, enabling them to deal with packs more successfully. You may also want to add Shadowform to your arsenal for a small resistance boost and more importantly, damage reduction.


If you intend to use Blood Flash in Destruction difficulty, you will need to max it to overcome the leech penalty.

Holy Armor absorbs all damage taken except poison. This is a great tank skill, with the slight drawback of a very long skill timer. Use it if you have no other timered skills.

Whether you are a holy paladin who finds himself unable to kill ranged attackers, or an unholy paladin looking for a physical attack, Vessel of Judgement will serve you well, provided you enhance it with the Light and Shadow skill.

PASSIVE SKILLS

As with most other classes, passives can make the difference between winning and losing. If you have trouble surviving or simply have no idea what to do with your skill points, this is where you can find salvation.

Name	Icon	Effect
BLESSED LIFE		Passive, reduces physical damage taken by both a percentage and a set number, and increases the healing rate of potions.

DARK KING



Passive, increases all attributes (strength, dexterity, energy, vitality) by a flat amount.

LIGHT AND SHADOW



Passive, adds damage to Vessel of Judgement if you are holy or adds more bolts if you are unholy. Make up your mind first, though.

RADIANCE



Passive, blinds melee attackers when they strike you, causing them to lose sight of you if you move out of melee range.

Summary : Blessed Life is a very powerful skill. It reduces all incoming physical damage by a huge amount, nullifying most ranged physical attacks and greatly reducing damage taken from all but the most powerful melee attackers. If you use melee attacks, get this skill or else.

Dark King involves selling your soul to the shadow in exchange for power. A big bonus to all attributes increases your damage, life, mana and a whole lot more, making the Attribute Challenges a breeze.

PALADIN UBERSKILLS

NEW ADDITIONS IN PATCH 1.57

Each character class has 3 'uberskills', which become available when you reach level 90. You must pick one and stick with it; once you choose an uberskill, the other two become permanently disabled. Choose wisely.

Name	Icon	Effect
HYMN		Grants self and nearby allies the ability to regain set amounts of life when the recipient makes a physical melee attack.
SUPERBEAST		Increases damage and spell damage of self or target ally. The bonus is dispelled when you use a healing potion or skill.
PLAGUE		Passive, adds huge amounts of poison damage to your weapon-based attacks, devastating anything you choose to attack in melee.

Summary : This should be an easy choice. Superbeast is a must have for unholy paladins, no questions asked. Plague adds huge amounts of poison damage to your attacks, which is especially potent when delivered by an area effect attack like Retaliate. That leaves Hymn, which is the ultimate tank skill, stealing a large amount of life when you or a minion strikes an enemy. Melee range only!

If you have Scourge, the summoned minions will also be affected by Plague. This is especially potent for unholy paladin builds, whose Scourge deal less damage. This bonus has been significantly improved in 1.57, and is capable of killing lots of enemies on its own.

Superbeast is cancelled when you use a source of healing over time, like a potion or when your merc casts Inner Fire on you. It is not disturbed by leech spells including Blood Flash.

THE SORCERESS

The sorceress, mistress of magic and of blowing things up from a distance. She is the weakest character in the game, easy to kill but with powerful magical defenses.

Strategy

If the monsters catch you, you are dead. Therefore, it is in your best interests to kill them before they get close, but this does not always work. Your defensive passives, Cold Fear and a high defense rating are your second layer of protection, and should not be ignored.

BASE STATS

Strength : 10

Dexterity : 25

Vitality : 15 (65 life)

Energy : 35 (35 mana)

+9 life, +21 mana per level (at level 120 : 1136 base life, 2534 base mana)

Gains +3 life per point into vitality

Gains +7 mana per point into energy







Preferred weapons : staves, orbs, crystal swords.







Weapon bonuses

Staff : +25% faster base cast rate.

DIRECT DAMAGE SPELLS

The sorceress is all about damage, and these skills reflect this. Direct damage skills gain a bonus from energy, but the more points you invest into energy, the lower the benefit of each additional point. Know when to stop.

Name	Icon	Effect
APOCALYPSE		Creates explosions beneath the feet of nearby enemies, inflicting fire damage.
CATACLYSM		Nova of fireballs that causes massive damage to nearby enemies, especially at close range.
METEOR SHOWER		Pummels a very large area with meteors over time. This skill has a spell timer.
FLAMESTRIKE		Blasts the target area with a pillar of flame from the sky, burning all enemies within range.
FROZEN SOUL		Casts an ice orb at a random nearby enemy, dealing huge damage on impact.
DOOM SERPENTS		Fires out whirling loops of frost, striking everything in front of you, possibly multiple times.







GLACIAL NOVA		Gigantic nova that freezes and severely damages nearby enemies. This skill has a spell timer.
FROZEN CROWN		Shoots out a cold missile that damages all enemies around the target monster on impact, but not the target itself.
FLASH		Shockwave of lightning that hits all enemies right next to you multiple times for major damage.
LIGHTNING CASCADE		Fires great bolts of lightning at all nearby enemies within a radius around you.
LIGHTNING WALL		Wall of lightning that disintegrates when touched, inflicting high damage.
VORTEX		Creates a lightning bolt that circles around the target point for a short time, damaging all in its way.

Summary : Dumb firepower. Most sorceress builds will be elemental, and will need some of the above skills. Remember to get all three elements to defeat immunities, and try to use a timered skill together with an untimered one for maximum effectiveness.

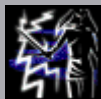
ACTIVE SUPPORT SKILLS

NEW ADDITIONS IN PATCH 1.57

Don't just cast spells, be a spellcaster. These spells can turn the tide of a battle.

Name	Icon	Effect
COLD FEAR		Icy nova that sends all nearby enemies fleeing for a short time. This skill has a spell timer.
INNER FIRE		Heals the caster or a target ally very quickly to full life. This skill has a spell timer.
HEX		Curses enemies, causing them to briefly increase your damage and spell damage when they hit you.
STARTOUCH		Sends out trails of sparks in random directions around you, reducing the resistances of nearby enemies, breaking immunities.
COLD BLOOD		Explodes a corpse, freezing all nearby enemies in a large radius and dealing major cold damage.
NOVA CHARGE		Electrifies your character, causing you to emit large novas when enemies approach you.

MOONSTRIKE



Attack with a staff, orb or crystal sword, dealing increased damage and some magic damage, and creating an arcane shield that protects you.

Summary : If you and/or your mercenary have trouble staying alive, consider some or all of the above skills. They may not be needed in the early game, but can and will save your hide in the late game and especially on higher 'players X' settings.

The controversial Hex spell provides an enormous bonus to elemental (and with the synergy, physical) damage for a very short time after an enemy hits you. The sorceress is fragile and easy to kill, making this a fairly suicidal strategy, but if you are daredevil, you can obtain ridiculous damage with this skill.

Moonstrike is a melee sorceress attack. Mainstream builds should not apply, but it is more useful for melee sorcs than Enchant ever was.

MANA FEEDBACK SPELLS

How about something very different this time? These skills inflict damage based on the difference between your current mana and your maximum mana. After draining your mana with some of the above spells, use one of these for a double whammy.

Name	Icon	Effect
MANA COIL		Fires a bolt that inflicts damage based on mana lost, and steals most of your mana back. This skill has a spell timer.
MANA SWEEP		Strikes all nearby enemies with damage based on mana lost, and steals some of your mana back. This skill has a spell timer.
ARCANE TORRENT		Wave of magic energy that deals damage based on mana lost, has no timer and does not steal mana.

Summary : If you find yourself often running out of mana, the feedback skills may be worth your attention for the mana refill alone. A full mana replenish every five seconds is nothing to laugh at.

If you are looking for damage, it is a toss-up between the powerful, timered and leeching Mana Sweep spell and Arcane Torrent, which deals less damage but has no timer and leaves your mana low where it belongs.

PASSIVE SUPPORT SKILLS

Ahh, passives. Passives make your life easier, and are often an easy way out when you have no idea where to put your skill points.

Name	Icon	Effect
CIRCLE OF MANA		Passive, returns mana to you when you kill an enemy with spell or weapon.

ARCANE POWER



Passive, adds bonus damage to all your elemental spells, and any weapon attacks you choose to make.

MAGE ARMOR






Passive, provides a percentage based bonus to your overall character defense and life.

The sorceress is blessed with the lowest life of all classes, and tends to die at an angry glare from any Destruction difficulty monster unless you take some measures to boost defense. Although you may consider armor and defense below your dignity as a sorceress, the Mage Armor skill is critical to your success in Destruction difficulty.

As for the others, extra damage and spell damage is always nice, especially if you are not using Hex. Without Arcane Power, expect to have some serious troubles dealing enough damage in Destruction difficulty. Circle of Mana is a good alternative to Mana Sweep for your mana recovery needs.

SORCERESS UBERSKILLS

Each character class has 3 'uberskills', which become available when you reach level 90. You must pick one and stick with it; once you choose an uberskill, the other two become permanently disabled. Choose wisely.

Name	Icon	Effect
SLOW		Curses a group of enemies, massively slowing down their movement speed.
SUMMON ICE ELEMENTALS		Summons multiple ice elementals that cast Glacial Nova on striking, freezing enemies in a wide area.
BLADESTORM		Melee attack that unleashes homing blades that seek random enemies and pass through them, inflicting some of your weapon damage.

Summary : For most builds, this will be a toss-up between Slow and Ice Elemental. Slow is reliable but subtle, whereas Ice Elementals completely freeze enemies but are somewhat countered by the 50% chance of freeze immunity on Destruction.

Bladestorm is a melee sorceress skill. If you use a melee sorceress, get this skill, it will serve you well until the end game.

Many players make the mistake of expecting to obtain godly tanks when they put their first point into Ice Elemental. In fact, like every other minion class, you will need items that increase minion life.

CHARACTER AND SKILL LEVELS

Maximum character level is 120, and you gain 10 attribute points per level. This adds up to 1205 attribute points to distribute during your career, including the Black Book quest rewards. You still gain 1 skill point per level.

SKILL LEVEL

Skills do not go up to level 20. Instead, when you first meet the level requirement to learn a skill, it has a maximum level of 2. For every six character levels thereafter, the maximum skill level goes up by 1.

Regular skills have a required level between 1 and 24. Your Level Challenge skill has a required level of 30. Your Attribute Challenge skill and your three uberskills have a required level of 90.

Civl/Req	1	6	12	18	24	30	90
1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	3	2	-	-	-	-	-
12	4	3	2	-	-	-	-
18	5	4	3	2	-	-	-
24	6	5	4	3	2	-	-
30	7	6	5	4	3	2	-
36	8	7	6	5	4	3	-
42	9	8	7	6	5	4	-
48	10	9	8	7	6	5	-
54	11	10	9	8	7	6	-
60	12	11	10	9	8	7	-
66	13	12	11	10	9	8	-
72	14	13	12	11	10	9	-
78	15	14	13	12	11	10	-
84	16	15	14	13	12	11	-
90	17	16	15	14	13	12	2
96	18	17	16	15	14	13	3
102	19	18	17	16	15	14	4
108	20	19	18	17	16	15	5
114	21	20	19	18	17	16	6
120	22	21	20	19	18	17	7



This does not affect items with +x to skill levels, only the number of hard points you can invest into the skill. You may, however, find items that increase this cap...

Some synergies increase the skill level cap. This does not automatically raise your skill level; you will still need to come up with the skill points to actually make use of the increased level cap. Although these synergies are potentially very powerful, they are huge skill point vortexes.

Btw. The usual character level limitations to maximum skill level still apply, ie. you cannot put more than one point into a skill when you first reach the required level.

ITEM-ONLY SKILLS

Separate from the learnable skills, Median 2008 features a grab-bag of 50+1 item-only skills, which can be found as chance to cast or charges.

Name	Icon	Effect
Melee Skills		
BLOODSPEAKER'S MARK		Spear attack that summons several Bloodknights with a stomp attack that lowers enemy life by a percentage.
CHERUB STRIKE		After being struck, this melee attack spawns a floating avatar that blasts out holy fire at nearby enemies.

CLAW TORNADO



Melee attack that launches several twisters that move outwards, carrying your weapon damage.

OVERPOWER



Melee attack that hits multiple times after the initial hit, doing reduced damage on subsequent hits.

Bow and Crossbow Skills

ARROW



Fires an arrow, using your weapon damage, which is identical to a regular arrow from a bow.

GUIDED CHAIN



Arrow that homes in on random targets, piercing and choosing new targets, or coming back to hit again.

PHALANX



Hidden archers fire arrows from off screen, dealing increased damage. This skill has a spell timer. Only usable in wide open areas with no walls.

SCATTERSHOT



Bow attack that pierces its targets, exploding with a powerful nova on each target struck.

Crossbow Only Skills

SILVER DART



Crossbow bolt that shatters on impact, sending out more crossbow bolts at nearby targets.

Javelin Skills

FLURRY OF
JAVELINS



Similar to Barrage, launches javelins in random directions around the character.

Other Weapon-Based Skills

SPIKE NOVA



A nova of spikes, carrying 1/2 weapon damage and dealing it to all nearby enemies.

THUNDER HAMMER



Throw a hammer that inflicts 1/2 weapon damage, stuns and knocks back the target.

THUNDER WAVE



Similar to Thunder Hammer, but multiple hammers are shot out in a wave pattern.

Crowd Control

TYPHOON SENTRY







Creates a sentry that attacks enemies with wind blasts, doing no damage but knocking them silly.

Fire Spells





DEATH OF A GOD






The Que-Hegans' fiery death effect, spewing waves of golden flame in all directions.

FIRE CASCADE		Launches a volley of explosive fireballs at up to four nearby enemies.
FIRE SPLASH		Spawns a small but damaging fire under the target, dealing area effect damage over time.
FIRE STAR		Casts an expanding pentagram of fire that does huge damage to nearby enemies.
PYROCLASTIC FLOW		Summons a molten wave of rocks and lava that rolls across the screen, slaying all in its path.





Cold Spells

AVATAR		Summons a floating angel that emits waves of frost in random directions. This skill has a spell timer.
FROG PRINCE		The death effect of demon frog type monsters; spawns a 'prince' that blasts out frost novas. The prince can be killed by running through it.
PANDEMONIUM		Unleashes waves of ice flame that track random nearby targets, dealing cold damage.
SHACKLES OF ICE		Traps the target in a block of ice, rendering it frozen and immobile while the ice lasts.


Lightning Spells

FORKED LIGHTNING		Fires snaking lightning bolts, striking everything in a cone in front of the caster.
STATIC TRAP		Places a landmine of lightning that detonates when touched, stunning nearby enemies and inflicting minor damage.
SUPERNOVA		Casts a massive nova around you, dealing damage to everything on the screen; nearby enemies take more damage.

Magic Spells

DEATH SPIRAL		Only available on a special charm, this ability blasts out a slowly rotating energy beam, dealing massive damage to nearby targets.
EXORCISM		Melee attack that carries the fire of holy vengeance, setting the target and nearby enemies on fire, which causes magic damage over time.
PAIN SPIRIT		Casts a glowing yellow ghost that tracks a random nearby target and impacts, doing magic damage.
RAVEN FLIGHT		A flock of ravens travels across the field, dealing magic damage and stun. This skill has a spell timer. Only usable in wide open areas with no walls.




Physical Spells

BLAST WAVE		Multiple thundering shock novas that stun and knock back. This skill has a spell timer.
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Bufs

BLADES OF LIGHT		Grants the caster and nearby allies a shield that reflects melee damage to the attacker.
BLOODY MARY		Cast on self or target ally, imbues the recipient's healing potions to increase vitality by a percentage when active.
CELERITY		Greatly increases movement speed for 10 seconds, and protects the character against being frozen.
DEMONIC SPEED		Toggleable buff that grants a huge speed bonus, but you die in one hit when active.
GIFT OF CELERITY		Area effect version of the Celerity spell, otherwise identical to the parent spell.
GIFT OF INNER FIRE		Area effect version of the Inner Fire spell, otherwise identical to the parent spell.
GIFT OF SHADOWS		Area effect version of the Shadowform spell, otherwise identical to the parent spell.
GIFT OF THE WILD		Area effect version of the Mark of the Wild spell, otherwise identical to the parent spell.
GIFT OF VANQUISHING		Area effect version of the Vanquish spell, otherwise identical to the parent spell.
LIGHTNING SHIELD		Grants the caster and nearby allies a shield that deals lightning damage to melee attackers.
PAGAN HEART		Cast on self or target ally, imbues the recipient's mana potions to increase energy by a percentage when active.
RAVEN HEART		Similar to Blood Fury, this spell increases your cold spell damage and slowly drains your life.

Curses

BANISH		Curse, reduces the maximum and current life of the target by a significant amount.
POSSESS		Hexes an enemy, converting it to fight for your case; similar to Charm. This skill has a spell timer.
RUST STORM		Curse, dramatically cuts the target's armor by -75% and movement speed by -25%.

Summoning Spells

CHAMPIONS OF THE
SUN



Summons golden spearwomen with a powerful attack and an aura that increases resistances and damage reduction.

GOLDEN CALF



Summons a stationary golden calf idol that distracts enemies and blinds them when they attack the calf.

LICHE TOTEM



Corpse totem, increases all attributes of the party by a flat amount until destroyed.

SUMMON OVERLORD



Summons a menacing shadow demonlord with an aura that increases your maximum minion count.

Quest Skills

DARK SUMMONING



The skill on your Book of Summoning, this spawns a random monster, or occasionally a special one...
