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pathfinder summoner build guide

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Pathfinder Summoner Build Guide

In the expansive world of Pathfinder, the Summoner class offers a unique blend of spellcasting, strategic summons, and battlefield control. Whether you're a veteran of the 2nd Edition or a newcomer exploring the 3rd Edition, mastering the Summoner requires a clear understanding of its mechanics, the right choice of pacts, and a build that suits your playstyle. This guide provides a comprehensive, step by step walkthrough that will help you craft a powerful, efficient, and fun Summoner character from the ground up.

Understanding the Summoner Class

The Summoner is a versatile spellcaster who calls forth creatures from other planes to aid in combat. Unlike traditional spellcasters who rely on raw spell slots, Summoners gain their power through the bonds they forge with their summoned entities. These bonds are defined by the **pact** you choose, and each pact offers a distinct set of abilities, spells, and thematic flavor.

Key features that define the Summoner include:

- Summon Creature: The core ability that allows you to bring forth a creature onto the battlefield.
- Pact: A chosen relationship that determines your spells, bonuses, and thematic elements.
- Spellcasting: Access to a wide array of spells that complement your summons.
- Summoner"s Resolve: A unique trait that grants bonuses when your summoned creature is active.

Understanding these fundamentals is the first step to building a Summoner that feels both powerful and cohesive.

Core Mechanics

Spellcasting Basics

Summoners use a spellcasting system similar to other arcane spellcasters. They have a limited number of spell slots per day, which they can allocate to various spells. The spell list is expansive, but the most effective choices typically revolve around control, buffing, and damage over time spells that synergize with summons.

Summon Creature Mechanics

When you cast a summon spell, you must specify the type of creature and its level. The creature's statistics are determined by the pact and the level of the summon. Each summon has a limited duration, usually measured in rounds or minutes, after which it disappears unless you maintain it or cast a higher level summon.

Bond Strength and Pact Benefits

Your pact determines the **bond strength** you maintain with your summoned creature. A stronger bond often translates to better bonuses, more spells, and additional combat advantages. Managing this bond is essential for maximizing your Summoner's potential.

Choosing a Pact

The pact is the linchpin of your Summoner build. Each pact offers distinct benefits and thematic flavor. Below are

the most popular pacts and their key features:

- Elemental Pact: Grants access to elemental spells, increased damage with elemental summons, and bonuses against elemental creatures.
- Beast Pact: Focuses on animalistic summons, grants bonuses to hit points and melee damage, and allows for more natural attacks.
- Celestial Pact: Offers divine spells, healing abilities, and strong defensive bonuses.
- Infernal Pact: Provides fire-based spells, higher damage output, and access to powerful demon summons.
- Arcane Pact: Emphasizes pure spellcasting power, with a wide array of arcane spells and strong control capabilities.

When selecting a pact, consider your desired playstyle. If you prefer a frontline presence, a Beast or Infernal pact may suit you. For a more support or control-oriented build, an Elemental or Celestial pact could be ideal.

Key Abilities and Traits

Summoner''s Resolve

This trait provides a bonus to attack rolls and damage when your summoned creature is active. It encourages you to keep your summons alive and on the front lines.

Summon Mastery

At higher levels, Summoners gain the ability to summon multiple creatures simultaneously or summon creatures that can act independently of the Summoner’s initiative.

Bonding Techniques

These are specialized feats that improve your bond with the summoned creature, allowing you to increase the duration, reduce the cost, or add additional effects.

Feats and Class Features

Choosing the right feats can significantly enhance your Summoner’s effectiveness. Here are some essential feats to consider:

- Improved Summon: Reduces the spell level required for summons, allowing you to summon more powerful creatures at lower levels.
- Summon Resistance: Grants your summoned creature resistance to a chosen damage type.
- Summoner''s Insight: Provides a bonus to spellcasting checks and saves when your summons are active.
- Summon Mastery: Allows you to command your summons more effectively, granting them additional actions or improved coordination.

Equipment and Gear

While the Summoner’s power comes from spells and bonds, the right equipment can provide crucial bonuses to survivability and spellcasting. Consider the following gear:

- Arcane Focus: A wand, staff, or orb that increases spellcasting efficiency.
- Robe of the Summoner: Grants bonuses to spell save DC and reduces the cost of summon spells.
- Amulet of Protection: Increases your AC and saves, providing a defensive buffer.
- Boots of Speed: Enhances movement speed, allowing you to reposition and maintain optimal distance from enemies.

Tactical Playstyle

Positioning

Summoners thrive when they maintain a safe distance from front line combatants while keeping their summons within reach. Positioning your summons in the center of the battlefield can maximize their area of effect and damage.

Timing Summons

Timing is critical. Summon a creature before the enemy engages or when you need to control a specific area. Use control spells like *Hold Person* or *Web* to set up your summons for maximum impact.

Resource Management

Balance your spell slots between direct damage spells and summon spells. Keep a reserve of high level slots for emergency summons or powerful spells that can turn the tide of battle.

Sample Build 1: Elemental Pact – The Storm Caller

Class Features

1. Level 1: Elemental Pact, Summoner''s Resolve.
2. Level 3: Improved Summon, Elemental Mastery.
3. Level 5: Summon Mastery, Elemental Fury.
4. Level 7: Summon Resistance (Fire).
5. Level 9: Summoner''s Insight, Elemental Shield.

Key Spells

- Summon Elemental: 1st level.
- Lightning Bolt: 3rd level.
- Wall of Fire: 4th level.
- Storm Sphere: 5th level.
- Chain Lightning: 7th level.

Equipment

- Robe of the Summoner (+2 to spell save DC).
- Wand of Fireballs (for emergency damage).
- Amulet of Protection (+1 AC).

Playstyle Tips

- Use Wall of Fire to block enemy movement and funnel them into your summons’ attack range.
- Maintain at least one active elemental summon to benefit from Summoner''s Resolve.
- Leverage Chain Lightning for high damage against grouped enemies.

Sample Build 2: Celestial Pact – The Radiant Guardian

Class Features

1. Level 1: Celestial Pact, Summoner''s Resolve.
2. Level 3: Improved Summon, Healing Touch.
3. Level 5: Summon Mastery, Celestial Shield.
4. Level 7: Summon Resistance (Radiant).

5. Level 9: Summoner"s Insight, Divine Intervention.

Key Spells

- Summon Celestial: 1st level.
- Healing Word: 1st level.
- Shield of Faith: 2nd level.
- Mass Healing Word: 3rd level.
- Divine Favor: 4th level.

Equipment

- Robe of the Summoner (+2 to spell save DC).
- Holy Symbol of the Celestial (granting extra healing).
- Boots of Speed.

Playstyle Tips

- Keep your celestial summon near allies for continuous healing and protection.
- Use Mass Healing Word to keep the party alive during heavy combat.
- Employ Shield of Faith on yourself or key allies to increase survivability.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Neglecting Summon Duration: Failing to monitor your summons' remaining time can leave you vulnerable.
- Over reliance on Direct Damage: Summoners are meant to control the battlefield; using too many direct damage spells can waste resources.
- Ignoring Feat Synergy: Skipping feats that enhance your bond or summon efficiency can severely limit your build's potential.
- Improper Positioning: Standing too close to enemies or leaving summons exposed can result in unnecessary damage.

Tips for Advanced Play

1. Multi Summon Strategy: Use Summon Mastery to keep multiple creatures on the battlefield, creating a layered defense and offense.
2. Spell Slot Conservation: Use lower level summons and spells when possible, reserving higher level slots for emergencies.
3. Synergize with Party Members: Coordinate with melee classes to position your summons where they can best support or control enemies.
4. Plan for Crowd Control: Incorporate spells that restrain or incapacitate enemies, giving your summons the time to deal damage.

Conclusion

Building a Pathfinder Summoner is a rewarding endeavor that blends strategic planning, spellcasting mastery, and creative bonding with otherworldly creatures. By selecting the right pact, honing key abilities, choosing supportive feats, and employing smart tactical play, you can create a Summoner that not only excels in combat but also adds a dynamic, thematic presence to any adventuring party. Whether you choose to command blazing elementals, heal with celestial allies, or command the forces of darkness, the path to becoming a formidable Summoner is

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