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THE GAMESPOT GAME GUIDE TO

WORLD OF WARCRAFT

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WORLD OF WARCRAFT IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF BLIZZARD, 2004

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There've been plenty of massively multiplayer games to come out over the past few years, and there are plenty more on the way. Into this crowded (some would saturated) marketplace, Blizzard has finally launched their initial entry into the MMORPG, World of Warcraft. Based on their tremendously popular Warcraft universe, World of Warcraft features what can only be termed a stunning amount of content, and with its emphasis on casual play and soloability, is sure to be a favorite with gamers, perhaps especially those without much experience in online RPGs.

Of course, joining an MMO can be a daunting experience for someone who hasn't done it before. That's where this guide comes in; in it, you'll find a rundown on the various races, a huge amount of info on the various classes, tips for solo, PVE, and PVP play, a short guide to setting up your own macros, as well as descriptions of all of the professions and secondary skills that you'll have available to you. There's a whole world waiting to be discovered, so hopefully this guide will help you get to the meat of it!

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Races

During character creation, you'll need to select both a race and a class. We have a long section on classes coming up; this chapter is intended to give you a bit of an introduction to the different races and let you know what makes them unique.

Most of the differences between the races come in the form of their innate abilities. Each race has a few unique congenital abilities, some passive, some which require activation. In addition to these abilities, though, there are statistical differences between the races. These differences are usually fairly minor, though, and can easily be overcome by equipping stat-boosting equipment later in the game, so don't feel like your favorite race is the "wrong" choice for a certain character class based on the stat bonuses it obtains upon character creation.

Races

Alliance

Human



What precisely the Dalaran wizards are up to inside their magical dome, no one can say for sure....

Humans are something of the benchmark race, as they're fairly average stat-wise. They have the ability to select from more classes than any other Alliance race, though.

Racial Traits

Perception: When activated, your character's stealth detection radius will be increased by ten yards for 20 seconds. Fairly useful when going up against mobs with invisibility or enemy rogues,

as you won't have to wait for them to be right on top of you before they become visible.

The Human Spirit: This gives you a five percent bonus to your spirit. If you plan on making a spirit-heavy mage or priest build, then this is obviously just icing on the cake, but you will need to have a lot of +spirit items on you before you get more than a few points out of this.

Diplomacy: You gain the ability to make quick alliances, which increases your ability to become friendly with the races of your faction by ten percent.

Sword Specialization: You gain +5 to your Sword skill. This can take you beyond the level cap if you use swords fairly often.

Classes Allowed

Humans are able to choose between the Warrior, Paladin, Mage, Priest, Rogue, and Warlock classes.

Dwarf



The Dwarves are masters of siege weaponry, but have precious little opportunity to use it, it seems.

This stout race possesses the highest natural strength and stamina of all the Alliance races, undoubtedly due to the centuries spent mining and excavating. They do suffer from low agility scores, though.

Racial Traits

Stoneform: You gain immunity to poison, diseases, and bleeding effects for 20 seconds. You'll also gain a five percent bonus to your AC for the duration of the effect.

Gun Specialization: You gain +5 to your Gun skill. This is obviously going to be most useful if you're a hunter, and will help compensate for your awful agility score in that case - it'll be a full nine points lower than a Night Elf hunter's agility score at level one.

Frost Resistance: You gain an automatic +10 to your Frost Resistance. This probably isn't as useful as some of the other resistance bonuses, as there aren't a huge amount of powerful frost-using enemies in the game.

Treasure Finding: When you activate this ability, you'll be able to spot any nearby treasure chests on the minimap. Although this has to be activated, it will last until you cancel it, essentially making it a passive ability.

Classes Allowed

Dwarves are able to choose between the Warrior, Paladin, Hunter, Priest, and Rogue classes.

Gnomes



Although the Gnomes have been exiled from Gnomeregan, they've constructed a home for themselves in Ironforge.

The much-maligned gnomes are a race that have been exiled from their city of Gnomeregan due to the influx of Troggs and Dark Dwarves, who've burst up from even further below the already underground capital and taken it over. As such, the survivors have now banded together with the Dwarves of Ironforge and now devise plans to take back their city from its invaders.

Gnomes possess preternatural intellect and agility, but possess less strength and stamina than other races, due to their slight frames.

Racial Traits

Escape Artist: When activated, you'll automatically break out of any snare or rooting spell that's currently affecting you. The short cooldown time on this - one minute - will ensure that Gnomes will probably never be stuck in a root outside of PVP combat, but it does take a second and a half to cast. Note that the Blink spell that Mages gain access is much better than Escape Artist, in that it's an instant cast, so if you're a Gnome mage, you'll probably want to start using that spell when you hit level 20.

Expansive Mind: Automatically increases your intellect by five percent.

Arcane Resistance: You gain an automatic +10 to your Arcane Resistance. This is the school of magic that has no specific element, and isn't particularly seen often in mobs, which usually favor an elemental form of magic when attacking. In PVP, though, you can expect to see a lot of Arcane Explosions and Arcane Missiles.

Technologist: You gain an automatic +15 bonus to your Engineering skill. Although it may not seem all that large when you consider that you can go up to 300 skill, this should help you craft items that you can actually use, especially during the mid levels.

Classes Allowed

Gnomes are able to choose between the Warrior, Warlock, Mage, and Rogue classes.

Night Elf



The secluded homeland of the Night Elves is constantly patrolled by the Ancients.

Although no longer immortal after the fall of the World Tree, the Night Elves still put up barriers between themselves and the other mortal races, even if they do consider themselves to be part of the Alliance against the Horde. This is represented in-game by the fact that the Night Elves' starting area is located halfway across the world from that of the Humans and Dwarves; it's quite difficult to make it from Darnassus to either Ironforge or Stormwind, so if you're planning on creating characters and playing with your friends, you'll probably want to either all be Night Elves or have no one be one.

Statistically speaking, Night Elves gain large bonuses to their agility upon character creation, making them naturally suited for players who want to become rogues or hunters.

Racial Traits

Shadowmeld: Every Night Elf gains an instinctual ability to hide among the shadows, allowing them to emulate the rogue's Stealth ability, but only while they're standing still. Since you become fully visible when you move again, this isn't hugely useful against mobs, but it can be quite handy in PVP if you're willing to wait for your opponents to come towards your location. Groups of Night Elves can have a lot of fun by stealthing, then having one player unstealth and lure in an unsuspecting foe to the trap.

Quickness: This passively increases your dodge chance by either one percent or two percent, depending on your source. The in-game display reads one percent, so we're assuming that that's the current number.

Wisp Spirit: When you die, you'll become a wisp, and will travel at 50% increased speed. (Other

races get a 25% speed boost when they die.) This is kind of a goofy passive ability, and is mostly useful while soloing in the higher-level zones, where your death runs can sometimes be many minutes long.

Nature Resistance: Automatic +10 to your Nature resistance.

Classes Allowed

Night Elfs are able to choose between the Warrior, Rogue, Hunter, Priest, and Druid classes.

Horde

Tauren



The Tauren city of Thunder Bluff is an impressive sight to behold while riding in on a gryphon.

The Tauren are perhaps the least familiar race in the Warcraft universe, having made their first appearance only in Warcraft III: Reign of Chaos. Regardless, this noble species has made an alliance with the Orcs and the Trolls of the Horde, pledging to defend their common borders against external threats.

Tauren receive a large bonus to strength upon character creation, making them ideal warriors, but they're also the only Horde race that's able to become druids. They are less agile and intellectual than other races, though.

Racial Traits

War Stomp: One of the more useful activated racial abilities, Taurens are able to stun any enemy within melee range (five yards) for two seconds with War Stomp. Although two seconds won't be a deal breaker in most melee situations, you can use it to interrupt spellcasting, or to start a quick retreat when you've become overwhelmed. Note that there is a short casting time, though, so you can't Stomp while running.

Endurance: Your maximum health is automatically increased by five percent. This is obviously going to be most useful for warriors, but any class can make some use of it.

Cultivation: All Tauren get +15 to their Herbalism skills. This will let you grab Snakeroot as soon as you pick up the Herbalism skill, and will let you bypass the skilling caps even before you find a new skill trainer.

Nature Resistance: Automatic +10 to your Nature resistance.

Classes Allowed

Tauren are able to choose between the Warrior, Druid, Shaman, and Hunter classes.

Orc



The Orcish capital of Orgrimmar is confusing at first; don't forget to ask the guards for directions when needed.

Although the Orcs have freed themselves from the blood curse of the Burning Legion, their place in Azeroth is tenuous at best. They've situated themselves in a barren land, and are still beset by

the Night Elves nearby and the traditional forces of the Alliance across the sea.

Orcs are more average in their stat choices than most other races, with only a bonus to strength being out of the ordinary.

Racial Traits

Blood Fury: When activated, you'll boost your Strength by 25%, but will cause you to lose around 25% of your health, spread out over the duration of the effect (20 seconds). Obviously this is going to be most useful for classes that need to get up close and personal with their enemies, such as Warriors, but the health drain can be significant if you don't have a healer around. If you're planning on using Blood Fury a lot, then you might want to make a macro that gives your party members advance notification.

Hardiness: Hardiness is pretty incredible for a passive ability: all Orcs will automatically get 25% resistance to stun and knockout effects. Although this won't protect you from roots or snares, there are a whole lot of enemies that will attempt to stun you, so avoiding a quarter of those will undoubtably save your life a few times during your adventuring career.

Command: All Orcish pets get an extra 5% melee damage. This is obviously inconsequential if you're not a warlock or a hunter, and it's not even all that great then, except when you reach exceedingly high levels; pets are more often intended to be distractions rather than real damage-dealers. If you use a Succubus a lot, though, or invest a lot of your hunter's talent points in Beast Mastery, then this might be something you desire.

Axe Specialization: All Orcs get a blanket +5 to their axe skill.

Classes Allowed

Orcs are able to choose between the Warrior, Rogue, Hunter, Warlock, and Shaman classes.

Troll



The Troll homeland of Durotar is...very brown.

The Trolls of Azeroth are a diverse bunch, as you'll see when you reach the jungles of Stranglethorn Vale. Although many stick to superstitious barbarism, the Darkspear Tribe has allied themselves with Thrall and the Orcs in their struggle to create a new Horde homeland, and, as such, have created a small village of their own in Durotar, near the Orcish starting area.

Trolls are the most agile of the Horde races, making them natural hunters and rogues.

Racial Traits

Berserking: When you have less than 20% of your life remaining, you can activate Berserking to increase your melee and spellcasting speed by 25% for a short while. This can obviously be useful to activate just before a priest heals you up, or when soloing an even-match mob, but you hopefully won't be dropping that low on life too often.

Regeneration: If it's in Dungeons and Dragons, it must be true! Regeneration gets you an extra 10% health regeneration bonus, and lets you regenerate health at 10% of normal speed while in combat. (You normally don't regen health at all during battle.) This is just plainly useful, as it'll help you cut your downtime between fights, perhaps without having to resort to eating or first aid.

Beast Slaying: All trolls get a 5% damage bonus when fighting Beast-class enemies. Again, this is pretty useful, as beasts are among the most populous group of enemies in the game, but won't have a huge effect until you boost your damage up into the hundreds of points-per-attack range.

Throwing Weapons Specialization: Trolls get +5 to their Throwing Weapons skill. This is possibly the least useful passive ability of any race. Although throwing weapons are in the game, there are very few that are actually useful or preferable to a good gun or bow; perhaps they'll get

a little developer attention in the future, but at the moment, nobody's going to see a Throwing Weapon Specialization and say "Ooh, I've got to be a Troll!"

Classes Allowed

Trolls are able to choose between the Shaman, Warrior, Rogue, Hunter, Mage, and Priest.

Undead



What with the whole life-in-death thing, we can forgive the Undead a little morbidity in their architecture.

Although the Lich King still plans to turn all of Azeroth into undead minions, the birth of the Forsaken gives all races some kind of ironic hope; although the Forsaken is monstrosly evil, and indeed is advancing in its own plans to initiate a new plague of undeath across all the lands, they at least have resisted the enthrallment of the Lich King and act autonomously of his rule, instead following the lead of their queen Sylvanas, a fallen Night Elf.

Undead characters gain the benefit of higher spirit and intellect than other Horde races, but are somewhat lacking in pure physical strength.

Racial Traits

Will of the Undead: When activated, you'll become immune to fear, charm, and sleep effects for 20 seconds. Although it is an activated ability, this is still tremendously useful, as there are plenty

of enemies that will attempt to fear you or sleep you, mostly of the Humanoid variety (or in PVP).
Cannibalize: The Undead are the only race to acquire two activated abilities, with Cannibalize being the second. When activated, you'll be able to consume a nearby corpse to triple your health regeneration rate for 15 seconds. If you haven't taken a severe amount of damage, this will probably top out your health bar, thus making it a good way to decrease downtime between fight. Still, though, food serves pretty much the same purpose, so at best, this is essentially just going to save you an inventory slot. It can only be used every three minutes, though, so you won't be able to constantly cannibalize corpses, no matter how entertaining it is.

Underwater Breathing: Undead PC's can breath four times as long while underwater as the other races can, due to the whole no-lungs thing. Pretty much every quest that requires you to go underwater will either be timed so that any race can complete it without drowning, though, so this is usually just a party trick. It can come in handy if you're trying to avoid a PVP foe who's been dogging you for a while, or if you feel compelled to go searching for clams (which sometimes contain pearls).

Shadow Resistance: Automatic +10 to your Shadow resistance. Comes in pretty handy when fighting priests in PVP.

Classes Allowed

Night Elfs are able to choose between the Warrior, Rogue, Hunter, Priest, and Druid classes.

Combat Basics

As with any MMO, combat is going to be a central part of your character's life; this section is intended to give you some pointers on how to proceed!

Solo

Know Your Limitations

Every character is going to have different soloing abilities, depending on its class, equipment, and the skill of the player. If you're a total pro and have made multiple runs through the instanced dungeons appropriate for your level to outfit yourself with blue loot, then you can probably take on mobs a few levels above you; casual players will have to settle for a bit more parity in their targets. The reason for this is that monsters are drastically harder to hit with weapons and spells when they start exceeding you by two or three levels. If you have fantastic equipment and can deal more damage than most other characters of your class, then you may be able to overcome these drawbacks, but in general, you're going to want to stick to mobs that are no more than two levels above you, especially when you're just killing for experience.



If you're coming from other MMO's where you have to manually check a monster's difficulty with a key, then you'll have to adjust to the fact that WoW gives you a straight numerical readout of a given monster's level; the comparison between your level and that of your target will give you a ballpark indication of the difficulty you'll face if you try to take it down. If your level is higher than the monster's, then all of your attacks and spells should hit, save for when the game calculates an automatic miss or resist, which will occur on something like five percent of your attacks, or when you're using a weapon that you haven't skilled up.

Know Your Targets

Quest Mobs

So far as quests go, there's a lot of potential for confusion due to the way quests will specify a specific monster type; when this occurs, you need to make sure that you're going after the correct targets. For example, if a quest wants you to retrieve items that drop off of Snapjaw Crocolisks, then you'll find those items only on monsters called "Snapjaw Crocolisk." If you go around killing Saltwater Crocolisks or Sawtooth Crocolisks, you're not going to find what you need. Even if you kill something called an Elder Snapjaw Crocolisk, you're still not going to get the items required for your quest. Thus, you need to be absolutely sure that you're killing the kinds of mobs required for your quest items to drop.



Treants have one of the more entertaining death animations in the game.

Generally speaking, quest items will drop on every third or fourth mob that you kill of the specific type, so if you've killed twenty mobs of the same name and haven't gotten what you need, double-check your quest to make sure you're going up against the correct enemies. (The drop rates are often much lower for items that you only need one or two of, though.) If you're having trouble finding the mobs for a given quest, ask for help in the general channel and you'll hopefully be pointed in the correct direction!

Experience Mobs

If you're just looking for experience, though, then you'll obviously have more options available to you. What you're really looking when you solo for experience is efficiency, meaning that you're aiming to maximize the amount of experience that you gain within any given amount of time.

Obviously, monsters a level or two above you will give you more experience than those a level or two below, but they'll take longer to kill and will require you to rest more often. You want to find a nice sweetspot here, so that you can consistently be killing foes without having to constantly eat food after each fight, but different classes will obviously have different groups of foes that they want to target, based on their own peculiar strengths and weaknesses. Mages, for instance, will probably want to go up against other ranged enemies, as melee mobs will cause problems when they close in and start attacking.

In addition to just finding mobs that are easy to kill, but which still give you experience, you also have to factor in the mob respawn rate and popularity of the area. Even if a group of mobs are giving you great experience without much effort expended, they're still not going to be of much use to you if you have to run around for 30 seconds in between each mob. Whether this is because the mobs are on a long respawn timer or because there are a dozen other players camping the same mobs doesn't really matter; if either case is in effect, it's going to hurt your experience-earning efficiency. For this reason, you'll probably be forced to avoid camping mobs that are also needed for quests, especially on busy servers during the peak gameplay times (afternoons, evenings, and weekends). Blizzard has been pretty good about either increasing the respawn rate or increasing the number of mobs when they've become overcamped, though, so perhaps this won't be as big of an issue in the shipping version of the game.



Humanoids, such as Yetis, are great to kill for experience, because they drop cash and potions.

Lastly, you'll want to maximize the side benefits that you receive from killing enemies. Earning

experience is great, sure, but earning experience and gold at the same time is even better! If you're killing around, note the kind of drops that you're getting, and whether any mobs are dropping items worth vendoring. Humanoid enemies are particularly noteworthy, as they always drop some amount of gold, and will often drop cloth which can be used in First Aid or sold for more cash, or healing potions. Beast enemies will occasionally drop valuable items, usually in the form of some body part, which can often make them just as lucrative as humanoids, albeit with the added hassle of having to carry a bunch of bones and effluvia back to a vendor.

Group

Aggro Management 101

While fighting in a group, it's important to know how to manage the mobs that you'll be up against so that they stick with your main tanks (warriors, paladins) and don't attack the weaker members of your party (priests, warlocks, mages). There are a host of ways a character can attract the attention of a mob (this is called earning aggro, or earning threat), some of which aren't immediately obvious to new players.



Although paladins don't have many skills that count as aggro management, they can feel free to do all the damage they want to mobs; even if they pull it off the tank, they don't stand much chance of dying.

To begin with, it seems that the character who initially gets the attention of a mob gets a bit of a

bonus to his or her threat levels. Thus, it's going to be important to let your warriors do the pulling. "Pulling" is a term that refers to gaining the attention of mobs in the hope that they can be pulled back to a safe area, thus letting you pound on them without having to worry about them escaping and drawing the attention of any other nearby enemies. This is usually accomplished via a gun or other ranged weapon, which will let you grab the attention of an enemy at a distance without having to get close enough to risk attracting anything else.

Of course, you won't always be able to get a single enemy at a time; most of the lower-level instanced dungeons will have good spacing on the foes, but when you start hitting the dungeons for players at level 40 or above, you'll find yourself running into many groups of enemies that cannot be separated, meaning that you'll have to face two or three elite foes simultaneously. This is where crowd control comes in handy; if you have a class with some sort of crowd control ability (meaning an ability that can temporarily remove a foe from battle, like the mage's Polymorph or rogue's Sap abilities), then you can cut the number of foes by a bit and let your party concentrate on the others until the crowd control runs out.

Whether you have one enemy or many, though, it's important to know what precisely causes threat. The most obvious threat-builder is damage; if you hit an enemy with a spell or weapon, you're going to cheese it off, making it likely to attack you. The more damage you do, the more threat you build up. This is why it's important to use the /assist command to be sure that you're targeting the enemy that your warrior is currently fighting; if your warrior both damaging the enemy with her weapons and using her Taunt ability consistently, then she should be able to hold the monster's attention no matter how much damage you're dealing. Within reason, of course; if you're a level 30 mage and are paired up with a level 25 warrior, then you're probably going to be dealing enough damage to consistently get yourself pounded.

Also note that it's difficult for a warrior to Taunt multiple enemies at a time. If she has two enemies attacking her, but is only able to attack/Taunt one of them, then the other will likely slide off and attack the first party member that deals damage to it. Thus, you likely don't want to go around spamming area-of-effect damage spells unless you're sure that you can deal with one of the foes if it does wind up whacking on you.

One of the less obvious sources of aggro, though, is healing. Mobs hate it when someone gets healed, and they're likely to go straight for the healer if they haven't already been attacked. Even if they're currently being Taunted and attacked by a warrior, mobs can still be jolted loose by powerful healing spells, such as the priest's Greater Heal. For this reason, most healing classes prefer to go for weaker healing spells that can be cast quickly and more often, such as Lesser Heal or Flash Heal; these will give you less aggro with only slightly less efficiency, while still leaving you with the option of a big heal in an emergency. Regeneration spells like Renew or Rejuvenation probably earn the least aggro of all, since they spread their healing effects over a long period of time.

Be Nice!

There's nothing worse than having to party with a jerk, so you'll want to make sure that you yourself treat everyone you encounter with respect. This is most often an issue with loot, where parties can often come into conflict over who deserves items that drop. The game has a number

of looting options that make the ninja looting problem of beta (where players would grab items to sell, even when other players could make better use them) a thing of the past, but there are still plenty of items that will come below the default threshold of the lottery looting method that many groups use.



If you ever get invited to a raid group, it might be worthwhile to go along just to see where you end up - you might even wind up assaulting an enemy capital.

The most contentious items will usually be cloth and green items. Cloth is used in tailoring, engineering, and in first aid, meaning that almost everyone in a given party will have some use for it, so if you're going out as a member of a party, you should set some ground rules on how to split it up. Tailors will often feel justified in asking for a larger share than everyone else, since all of their skill ups are predicated on finding cloth samples, while engineers have plenty of recipes that don't involve cloth, and first aid is something of a less critical ability than a core profession. If you wish, you can add up the total cloth you pick up during a dungeon run and adjust the ratios so that the tailors get most of it, or just say that people keep whatever cloth they themselves find, but if you have a bunch of people who can use it, then you'd be wise to lay out the ground rules before you start your quest, else you wind up with frayed nerves in the middle of it.

Green items, meaning slightly magical equipment, are other things that everyone desires, because they sell for a good bit of money or can be disenchanting. Most groups deal with this with the "need before greed" system, where a player that can actually upgrade his or her equipment with an item that's dropped will get first call on it. If more than one person falls into this category, then they'll both roll for it (meaning that the game will generate a random number for each of them,

with the high roller winning the item). If no one can use the item, then everyone will usually be permitted to roll for it, either for selling or for disenchanting purposes.

Another thing to consider are collection abilities. Skinning isn't usually something to make a fuss about, as collecting skins is so easy that skinners usually aren't concerned about duking it out over every single corpse that comes along. Mining and herb nodes that pop up during a party quest are usually rarer, though, so you'll want to agree between the miners or the herbalists on a rotation schedule, where one miner gets the first node, the second grabs the next one, and so on, so that everyone gets a little bit of resources. Note that you can actually share mining veins so that both players can skill up off of them; if one person right clicks on a vein, gets a skill point, then moves away from the vein before picking up anything from it, the next person to try and grab some ore should skill up as well.

Duos

One of the drawbacks/side effects/benefits (depending on your point of view) to the fact that WoW has been designed to be playable as a solo character is that many of the quests that are possible to solo become quite easy to complete when you play as part of a duo, or a pair of players.



Ranged classes will definitely benefit from having a melee player alongside them.

The real strength behind pairing up with another player is that your abilities don't even necessarily have to complement one another for you to greatly increase the speed at which you can rip

through mobs. Two warriors can pair up, or a warrior and a priest, a hunter and rogue, or whatever you prefer. You should be able to take mobs down much more quickly while you're paired up, and although the experience is split between the players, you both will gain more than 50% of the experience that the monster would. The only real drawback to pairing up is when you have a collection quest; you'll obviously need to kill twice as many mobs to collect enough widgets or whatever item you're looking for to satisfy both yourself and your teammate's requirements. Since you're killing mobs so much more quickly, though, the amount of time you spend on these quests should be about the same as if you played through it solo.

As mentioned, you don't really need to balance out your classes when duoing quests that are completable while soloing, but it can help. Matchups like mage/warrior and priest/rogue will let you get the job done quite quickly. It's generally best to have a healing class matched up with a non-healing, pure DPS class, but again, this is a best case scenario, and isn't completely necessary.

PVP

As of this writing, the final form of PVP (player versus player) combat in World of Warcraft has yet to be decided, or at least has yet to be implemented into the game. The "honor system," which will apparently penalize players for ganking (i.e. killing other players that are drastically below their level) is in the game, but it's unclear as to whether or not your character actually incurs any penalties for making other people miserable. So, be aware that the information outlined here (such as it is) might not be the whole story. Read your patch notes after every patch to see if any changes have been made to the PVP system. For class-specific PVP tips, check the Classes chapter.

Watch Your Back, Jack

The most obvious piece of advice to give for those of you playing on PVP servers is: be alert! You won't have to worry about enemy players until you reach the third tier of zones (usually around level 17-20), such as the Wetlands, Thousand Needles, or Red Ridge. When you notice the name of the area above your minimap change from green to orange, though, it means that you're free game for any enemy players that want to kill you.



Despite being frickin' huge, this Tauren isn't going to stand much of a chance while surrounded by Alliance.

The only real advice that can let you avoid gankage is to be aware of your surroundings, especially when you're playing by yourself. Unless you're a hunter, and can use Track Humanoids to see everyone on your minimap, the only real way to keep tabs on the area around your character is to scan your viewpoint manually. You can do this by holding down your left mouse button and moving your mouse around; you can actually scout out the area behind your character without having to turn around. Although it's easy to forget to do this, you should try to get into the habit of doing whenever you're waiting for an ability to cool down, or for a spell to complete its casting time, as the battlefield conditions can change in the course of just a few seconds.

If you don't manage to spot a PVP opponent incoming before he or she has an opportunity to attack you, then you're usually already dead; most players won't bother ambushing another player unless they're relatively sure of winning. If you want to force an escape, then try using a root or snare, such as Hamstring or Wing Clip, then beating a retreat as quickly as possible.

Travel in Numbers



Having a rogue friend can make a big difference in PVP territory, as they can stealth and go unnoticed until an enemy attacks.

There's really no way around it; if you want to live while travelling through the densely-packed PVP lands, such as Hillsbrad or Stranglethorn Vale, then you'll really probably want to get at least one person to group with before heading out into the wild. This is especially true after you initially arrive in a new zone and are the low man on the totem pole, so to speak, and is especially true if you're a Horde character heading out to Hillsbrad for the first time, where the Alliance is at a distinct advantage due to their advanced levels. This is less of an issue after you get a mount, since you'll theoretically be able to avoid any enemies that are walking around, but you'll want to be sure to scan the area around you (with the left mouse button, as outlined above) even when you're safely on a mount.

Mob Classes

Mobs come in a variety of forms, which we'll list below. Some mobs have different loot types than others, some will have special loot drops, and some will have unique resistances.

Humanoid

A large number of the enemies you'll face in World of Warcraft will be humanoids. Humanoids aren't necessarily humans; it's just a general term to signify that the group has some vestige of civilization, along with abilities that extend beyond those of the beasts in the wilderness. Defias raiders, Dark dwarves, gnolls, troggs, goblins, and the like are all considered to be humanoids.



Luckily, humanoid enemies won't possess all of the abilities that their PC counterparts will; most will stick to a few of the more basic spells or moves, and won't possess much variety. Humanoid mages, for instance, will almost never use spells from more than one school; you won't see the same mage casting Fireball and Frost Bolt. The ultra-powerful abilities are also usually off-limits for mobs; humanoid priests won't resurrect fallen friends, and paladins won't Lay On Hands to completely heal themselves up when they're on the brink of death. We're speaking of regular enemies, mind: mob bosses will possess a much fuller range of abilities than their normal mob counterparts, especially when you encounter said bosses in an instanced dungeon.



The most annoying humanoids in the game are probably Murlocs. Don't let them gang up on you!

Humanoids are unique in one other area, though; they're the only class of mobs to drop cold, hard cash. While every class of monster will drop items that you can sell for cash, humanoids are the only sort that drop money directly, which makes them a favored target for most players, as you can fill up your bank without filling up your inventory with junk items. They're also the only mobs that drop the cloth required for tailoring; if you need linen, silk, mageweave, etc., you're going to have to run out and kill some humanoids.

Beasts

The next most populous group of enemies are beasts. Beasts come in all shapes and sizes, and represent the "natural" enemies of World of Warcraft, in that they're likely to have some vague resemblance to a real-world animal. Raptors, crocodiles, baboons, giraffes, and so on are all members of the beast class.



The wild lands of the Barrens holds many different species of beast.

Besides their resemblance to real-world creatures, beasts don't have many common threads between them, besides their propensity to get up close and personal in combat. Most beasts won't have any special abilities besides a normal melee attack, but a few will have some annoying special talents, such as slow abilities, poison, temporary stat reductions, and the like.

Beasts don't drop gold, but they will drop body parts that can sometimes be quite valuable at vendors. For the most part, though, the only reason to specifically seek out beasts in combat is because they will drop meat that can help you with your Cooking skill, or because they can usually be skinned for your Skinning and Leatherworking professions. Hunters can also tame beasts (and only beasts) to become their pets. Not all beasts are tameable - the largest, like the Kodo of the Barrens, are off limits - but the vast majority can be influenced into your service.

Dragonkin

You won't spot Dragonkin until you've advanced a bit into the game; Alliance players are unlikely to encounter them until they reach level 15 or 16 and start questing in Redridge, for instance. As the name implies, these guys are like dragons, only not quite as big as the real thing. Most of them will still possess a devastatingly powerful breath attack (which usually takes the form of a Fireball or other mage spell) that can chop you down in just a few hits if you try to take them on too early in your career. If possible, you'll want to avoid Dragonkin unless you're sure you have enough HP to take their blows, or until you have some kind of protection against the element of their breath attack (usually fire, for obvious reasons). Dragonkin are likely to carry gold on them, though, unlike other beast-like enemies.

Demons

Demons are encountered very sparingly in the game world; very few exist in any concentrations outside of the zones of Teldrassil, Tirisfal Glades, Desolace, and Ashenvale. (At least, not at this point; presumably when you traverse the Dark Portal and head into Draenor that'll change.) Like Elementals, they're essentially just big enemies, perhaps just a bit tougher than normal mobs. Warlocks have some special abilities regarding Demons, such as Enslave Demon, that make them a bit easier to kill for that class.



You won't see many treants in the game, although the ones you do meet have a reputation for being nasty.

Elementals

Elementals are usually seen as incarnations of one of the four main elements (fire, earth, air, or water), but some other forms of nature have their own particular avatars that roam the lands. Most of the core types of elementals are physically quite imposing and difficult to kill, especially at low levels. Luckily, though, they will usually wander by themselves, with plenty of space in between them, allowing you to take them on individually rather than be forced to deal with them in large groups. As with most elementally-themed enemies, if you use magic, you'll probably want to avoid matching fire with fire, and so forth, as these fellows are often rather resistant to magic that they share an element with.



Goblin shredders make a return from Warcraft III, and can often be quite difficult to kill.

Mechanical

Mechanical enemies are quite rare outside of the instanced dungeon of Gnomeregan. Aside from the Harvest Watchers in Westfall, in fact, and the occasional Goblin logging machine, you might not ever see a single Mechanical enemy if you don't wander into the Gnomish instanced dungeon. There's no particular reason for this; they aren't particularly unique, besides for the fact that they're made of wood and metal instead of flesh and blood. They are a bit bigger than normal mobs, can take a bit more damage, and are immune to most status effects like poison, but beyond that, they're usually just like other mobs.

Undead

Although the threat posed by the Undead was the central focus of Warcraft III and its expansion pack, they're only rarely encountered in the course of the game. Although Undead characters will immediately start fighting the forces of the Scourge in their starting zone of Tirisfal Glades, Alliance characters are unlikely to see any undead foes until they start questing in Duskwood in their low 20's, and it isn't until you hit the mid-40's that you'll really start having to deal with the undead threat, as that's when you'll start entering the Scourge lands of the Eastern and Western Plaguelands.

Undead are essentially humanoids, with some special strength and weaknesses. Their most notable strength is their innate resistance to fear, charm, and sleep spells; whereas Undead PCs have to activate this ability, Undead mobs gain the benefit of it perpetually, making them tough to

manipulate through spells. Luckily, they are susceptible to holy magic, letting priests root them with Shackle Undead. Paladins are especially useful when taking on undead, as they have a whole host of spells that only work on undead, but which work on them exceedingly well.

Mob Types

You're going to come across many different species of creatures in World of Warcraft, but you'll find that most of these can be divided into just a few different types of enemies. Each type of enemy will have its own special way of dealing with attackers; the more you know about the enemies in the world, the more ready you'll be for their tactics.

Warriors/Melee

Most of the enemies in the game world are straightforward melee attackers; when you aggro them, they'll charge towards you and attack at melee range until either you or they are dead. Melee enemies have the most health and defense of any comparable enemy, and will thus usually take longer to kill, but will often deal less damage per second than magicians or ranged attackers. When fighting against mixed groups, then, it's usually wise to focus first on the individuals that deal out lots of damage, but possess lower amounts of health. Beyond that, there isn't too much to these guys; just do whatever kind of damage you can to them.

Offensive Spellcasters

This is another popular kind of enemy. This group includes enemy magicians, of course, but there are also any number of beasts around that will cast spells on you, such as firebreathing dragonkin. Again, these are usually the weakest enemies around (speaking of their defense, at any rate), but are able to deal much more damage over time than standard melee attackers. As such, they should be your first target when you close in on a group.

More often than not, the best strategy to use on spellcasters is to just rush them. Although spellcasting doesn't have a minimum range for use, like ranged weapons do, you can slow down an enemy's spellcasting by hitting them constantly. This effect is much less pronounced on mobs than it is for PC spellcasters, as you'll rarely be able to actually cancel a spell being cast (and boss mobs are seemingly immune to this effect), but it will make a difference over time.



When offensive spellcasters run out of mana, they'll usually charge in and try to kill you with melee combat. This Kolkar isn't going to get the chance, though.

Since offensive spellcasters have such low hit points, they're often easier to kill than other mobs, if you're willing to take some damage while doing it. If you have good magical defenses, then, a group of magician mobs can be a great place to farm experience and money, especially if they're humanoids. In most cases, magician mobs will be mixed in with warriors, but in some locations, such as the Venture Co. Mining Camp at Lake Nezferiti (in Stranglethorn Vale) or Stonecain Lake in Elwynn, you can find large concentrations of magicians without any tougher mobs interspersed. If you can consistently kill these guys without losing too much health, these can be prime spots for grinding.

Defensive Spellcasters (Healers)

Alright, remember what we said about focusing on offensive spellcasters first? We lied; you should actually go after the healers. In actuality, mobs that heal other mobs are a less common than are mage mobs, so you won't have to worry about this too often, but mobs that can heal their compatriots are a tremendous annoyance, especially when you're dealing with elites. The reason for this doesn't require a lot of elucidation; any time a mob can gain health, you're going to have to spend that much more time killing it, which means that you'll be bleeding a lot more than you need to.

As mentioned, though, these guys are somewhat rare, and almost exclusively humanoid. If you're going up against a group of enemies that you haven't encountered before, look for titles like priest, witch doctor, shaman, cleric, acolyte, etc.; enemies that possess a class that has access to

healing abilities will use them, even if they're not called by the same title as a PC class. You can also tell when a healing ability is about to be used; these will cause the caster's hands to glow green, almost without fail. (Although not all green-hand spells involve healing.) When a caster starts a healing spell, you should do your darndest to disrupt it with any stunning abilities you might possess. The Paladin's Hammer of Justice is ideal for this purpose.

Stealthed Enemies

There are a number of mobs in the game world that possess stealth abilities, and not just rogue bandits, either, although most of them are humanoids. In most cases, these mobs are just normal melee mobs with an added bonus of being invisible, so as long as you don't rush across areas where you know stealthed enemies are present, you should be fine. In most cases, you should be able to spot stealthed enemies from a distance away, if you're higher level than they are; it's when you're equal or lower level that you'll find yourself stumbling across invisible enemies. If you wish, you can attempt to use items or magic to increase the chances that you'll see stealthed enemies; spells like the Hunter's Flare are useful in this regard, even though they're primarily intended for use against Rogues in PVP combat.



Watch out for named elites; although they drop nice loot, they're going to be really difficult to kill.

Elites

The most ferocious enemies in the game are known as elites; these guys will display with the word "elite" in their description, oddly enough, if you click on them. Elites are few and far between, usually congregating in special dungeons or small parts of the overland map, so you

won't see them very often if you stick to soloing, but when you do, you should give them a wide berth unless you're in a five-person group.

What makes elite mobs so challenging is their sheer physical abilities; an elite monster will have something like ten times the health of a normal mob of the same level, and will deal more damage, as well. Thus, they're normally going to be impossible to take on if you're soloing, unless you're of a substantially higher level than the mob you're facing; for the most part, you're going to need a well-balanced party in order to take on elite mobs, and even then, will want to separate the elites as often as possible so that your party doesn't have to fight more than one at a time.

Classes

There are nine classes in World of Warcraft, ranging from the usual archetypes (warrior, priest, mage, etc.) to some that are relatively unique (hunter, shaman). This section is intended to give you a bit of an introduction to each of the classes, and let you know the relative strengths and weaknesses of each.

To begin with, we're going to give you a basic idea of what the class is all about, then segue into a discussion of specific tactics you might want to use in a variety of situations. Since WoW enables you to play solo if you wish, we'll be discussing tactics applicable both to solo and group play, both for player versus environment (i.e., AI-controlled monsters) and player versus player combat.

Warrior

Pros

- You can equip almost any weapon that you find, in addition to all armor pieces.
- Good damage output in melee combat.
- Highest health of any class, equipment notwithstanding, allowing you to stay in the forefront of battle.

Cons

- Expected to manage incoming enemies in battle, which can be difficult.
- Unable to heal themselves unless they use food or first aid.

Does anyone really need to have the warrior explained to them? As in most fantasy-based games, the warrior in World of Warcraft is the big, burly melee warrior that goes toe-to-toe with the enemies and tries to draw their attention away from the weaker members of your party.



When trouble comes knocking, it'll be the warrior's duty to be up front to get the monster's attention.

In point of fact, that's the most succinct description of the warrior: in most group play, your role won't be to dish out extreme amounts of damage (although you can do this quite well), but to hold aggro on enemies so that they don't switch over to your mages and priests. This is accomplished partially through dealing damage (which encourages enemies to attack you) and through skills like Taunt and Mocking Blow, which will have your character appear more threatening to the monster. This will let your pure DPS classes, like mages and rogues, wail away on your target without having to worry too much about getting pounded. Holding aggro on multiple enemies is rather difficult, though, so be sure to encourage your teammates to use the /assist command, or a macro thereof, to automatically aim at whatever your target is. If they target a "fresh" monster, i.e. one you haven't Taunted or attacked yet, it will usually make a beeline for whomever attacks them first, which is bad news! See the Aggro Management 101 section in the Combat Basics chapter for more details on controlling groups of enemies.

One of the aspects of the warrior class that makes them so appealing, beyond the familiarity of the archetype, is the fact that they can change stances to adapt to almost any combat situation. You have three stances as a warrior: battle stance, which is a good balanced stance for most combat situations; defensive stance, which is useful when you're a group's main tank, as it will boost your defense and make it easier for you to control aggro; and berserker stance, which will increase your damage output but also increase the amount of damage that you take. As a new player, you won't have to worry too much about stances at the outset; you initially begin with only the battle stance, but will earn the other stances as you level up.

Warriors, not being much inclined to use magic, rely on a rage meter instead of mana. Unlike mana, energy, focus, or what have you. A warrior's rage meter doesn't refill automatically over time; in fact, it naturally decays down to zero. In order to build it up, you'll have to enter battle and start wailing away on an enemy. (Some of the warrior's abilities will add a bit of rage to the meter, as well.) Thus, in order to use your abilities in battle, you're going to have to ensure that you're landing a lot of blows and are staying in the thick of things - but hey, you're a warrior; this shouldn't be too difficult. It is important to budget your rage, though, as using a bunch of powerful techniques in the middle of a fight can leave you starving for rage near the end, when you'll want to use things like Hamstring and Rend to finish off a foe.

Solo PVE Technique

You have to be careful when choosing a target to attack while soloing. Although Charging is the industry standard method of starting a battle, you should always be aware of the way other enemies are spaced; if you charge into a monster only to aggro two additional mobs, then all you've done is ensure that you'll have to run away. If you want to get a monster away from his friends, use your ranged weapon to pull them out. You won't get as much rage as you would've from a Charge, but sometimes discretion really is the better part of valor. This is also good practice for the pulling duty you'll be asked to take up in groups.

If you do happen to pull in too many monsters, you will probably want to build your rage up and use Intimidating Shout, as it can cause fear or stun opponents for up to eight seconds. If you're in a densely populated area, though, you'll need to use it as a precursor to a retreat, as enemies that are feared will often run into other groups and wake them up.

As a warrior, your rage is your lifeline; if you're out of rage, then all of your powers are essentially meaningless, since you won't be able to use them. In a battle, then, it's important to play conservatively and reserve your rage for when it matters most. After you rack up a bit of experience, you'll be able to anticipate the need for certain abilities in certain situations, e.g. when fighting against a humanoid, you should keep rage in reserve for a Hamstring late in the fight.

Don't forget that you can switch from stance to stance when soloing. In most cases, the regular Battle Stance will be the most balanced choice, as it won't cripple your defense or offense, and gives you the tremendously useful Pummel and Hamstring abilities. If you're grinding out experience against mobs a few levels below you, you can use the berserker stance to quicken the pace of your killing, but you will need to keep an eye on your health!

When going up against heavy hitters or multiple enemies, you can also flip over to defensive stance. This will open up a few new abilities, such as Shield Bash and Disarm, and will cut the amount of damage that you receive, which will let you live a bit longer, but will also reduce your offensive output.

No matter what strategy you pursue while soloing, don't forget to shout! Although shouts work well for buffing up your teammates, they're just as handy for increasing your own capabilities. Battle Shout is the obvious first choice for your rage reserves, as it'll let you painlessly deal more damage, while Demoralizing is also useful for preventing excess damage from your enemies.

Group PVE Technique

A warrior's primary role in a group is to tank, or to hold aggro from a monster so that it doesn't decide to head off and attack your weaker teammates like mages or priests. The defensive stance is usually best for this, as it makes it easiest to taunt enemies and hold their attention, and will let you take more damage without needing to be healed. Given the versatility of the warrior's battle stances, though, you can also become a balanced tank/damage dealer with the battle stance, or a pure damage machine with the berserker stance. You should discuss your role with the rest of your group before heading out, especially if there are multiple tanks in the party.



Pulling is a lot simpler when you can kill everything around the toughest mobs; then all you need to do is run up and Charge!

If you do become the primary tank, and you often will, that role will often include pulling duties. Again, though, coordination with your party is a must, especially when you're dealing with rogues and mages, who both have their own crowd control techniques. In these cases, it's very useful to have a set of bound party macros to let everyone know which target they should be focusing on. For example:

/point
/p Rogue, sap %t!

Or

/point
/p Mage, sheepify %t!

This works best when you're dealing with mobs of different names, of course; if you're going up against a party of three Defias Wizards, you'll probably have to engage in a bit more talking to coordinate your efforts. But you really do need to make sure everyone's on the same page; if you wind up breaking your teammates' carefully-planned crowd control by attacking a Sapped target, for instance, you're going to generate a lot of ill-will towards yourself within the party. By the same token, though, make sure your party members are using their /assist command to focus on the mob that you're tanking and taunting; if your mages are blasting away at the wrong target, they're going to get hit much more often than they should.

When you do need to perform a pull, though, it's always useful to have some kind of ranged weapon available to you. You don't have to buy the best gun available to you; whatever you can use at level one will be sufficient to cause a pull throughout the game, although it won't do much damage on the level 60 elites you'll eventually be facing. That's all right, though; the point of a ranged weapon on a warrior isn't to deal an insane amount of damage, but rather to get the monster's attention, which it'll do regardless of whether you hit them or miss them, or indeed deal any damage to them at all.

When pulling, though, you'll need to give your teammates clear instructions on where to stand, especially when they're of lower levels than the enemies you're facing off against. Players are able to draw aggro from much further away when enemies are higher level than they are, so don't hesitate to tell everyone to hang back while you run ahead and pull enemies back. The easiest way to screw up a carefully-planned pull is to have a teammate get too close to another enemy without realizing it.

Tips

- Be sure to coordinate with your party members, especially when you have abilities that overlap. You may want to create macros that let your teammates know when you're using abilities like Bash or Pummel, so that your teammates don't inadvertently use their own interrupts on your target at the same time.
- If your party is getting overwhelmed, use Challenging Shout to refocus their attention on you. You have a long cooldown for this power, but it's worth using if it's going to save the lives of your party members.
- Intimidating Shout can be a good last-resort ability, but can sometimes make a bad situation worse, since feared enemies can wake up nearby group s

One-on-One PVP Technique

A warrior in PVP is something that very few other classes want to deal with; their blend of versatility and huge HP make them very tough to take down.

If you expect to have to deal with PVP, you'll likely want to be in your battle stance, which will give you the damage output required to take down enemies, but also let you use the critical Rend and Hamstring abilities, which will be your most important skills in most battles. To open up a

battle, though, you always want to Charge, if possible, which will stun them for a few seconds and interrupt them if they were going to open up battle with a spell, as well as generate a bit of important Rage. Afterwards, you'll want to Hamstring them, and make sure that they stay Hamstrung for the entire battle, to prevent them from running away.

One of the more difficult matchups for warriors is players who can fight from a distance, especially if you don't manage to Charge + Hamstring them at the beginning of a fight, and even more so if they can snare or slow you, because you won't have many ways of dealing damage to them. If you have the cash, try to keep your bow or gun up to snuff; this will let you at least deal a bit of damage while you're rooted. If you're free to move, but having trouble catching up to a enemy, you may want to keep Potions of Swiftiness handy, which will let you cover any intervening distance quickly, but will prevent you from using health potions for a while.

Hunters can be the most problematic of these groups of enemies, since they have both pets and ranged weapons to deal damage with, and can kite you a bit by shooting and running. If you can land a Hamstring on a hunter, he or she is usually dead, but reaching them can be tough. If they use Aspect of the Cheetah to stay out of range, don't hesitate to shoot them with your bow or gun, which will stun them long enough for you to close in. You can also try to use Intimidating Shout to remove their pet from the battle for a few seconds.

If you need to escape from battle, or don't want an enemy to escape, re-apply Hamstring and use it in conjunction with Intimidating Shout. Intimidating Shout is obviously better to use before an escape rather than to kill an enemy before they run, since it's broken when you hit your foe, but you can still use the time in which it stuns your enemies to reposition yourself in their escape path or to prime yourself for a Mortal Strike or other finishing blow.

Tips

- If you're fighting casters, try to increase your resistances by switching out gear. A single resisted root or snare could turn the tide of a battle.
- DoT's are every warrior's best friend. Be sure to apply Rend often, especially if your enemy is almost dead or about to flee; even if they do manage to escape, the Rend will often finish them off, since they can't regenerate health while in battle mode.

Group PVP



If you ever come to chokepoint in PVP, such as at this instance loading screen, it's important for the warriors to hold the bottleneck.

In most group PVP battles, it'll be warriors that instigate fights with their Charge attack, unless you have a rogue or mage along that wants to start out with some crowd control. If one of your teammates does intend to start out with a sap or sheep, be sure to hold off on your charge, and coordinate targets so that everyone knows who you're targeting. Generally speaking, it's best to focus on one target at a time before moving on to the next, although a well-organized opposition will, of course, be doing precisely the same thing. Your initial targets should be priests, shamans, mages, and rogues, with priests probably being your best choice for an initial strike.

If your party is getting into trouble, let everyone know to stop dealing damage, then send out an Intimidating Shout. This will let your threatened teammates to put a little distance between themselves and whomever was hurting them, or will let them focus on whomever you target after the Shout goes off and get a headstart on at least one target.

Unfortunately, Taunt and other abilities designed to create threat for yourself in PVE will be ineffectual in PVP, meaning that you won't be able to forcefully dissuade foes from focusing on your weaker teammates. The best you can do in many cases is to hamstring someone that's fighting a friendly mage or priest, and tell your friend to run. A good player will instantly give up their pursuit when they've been hamstrung and focus on you, thus making this a quasi-Taunt, but even if they insist on giving chase, they'll be out of the action for a few seconds, making it a win-win situation.

Equipment

A warrior's going to need to get stamina, strength, and agility on their armor and equipment, with stamina likely being the most important of the three, as it directly ties in to how much health you have and thus how long you last in battle and how often you need to be healed. Agility will increase your armor as well as your chance to dodge and land critical hits, making it a good deal. Strength will increase the amount of damage that you deal, but this isn't quite as important as making sure that you have a decent weapon in your hands.

So far as your armor goes, you'll obviously want to have a ton of armor, but you'll have to weigh the need for armor against stat increases. Some armor will have no stat bonuses, but will have more armor than most other comparable items, which can lead to some difficult decisions! Keep in mind that armor is useless when you're taking magical damage, so you'll probably want to sacrifice a bit of armor if you're going to get more stamina. You'll also want to keep an eye out for gear that adds to your defense, since this will make it harder for melee opponents to hit you, but gear of this nature is rare.

Skills and Talents

Arms

Most of your most basic, yet useful abilities will come from the Arms family of skills: Charge, Hamstring, Rend, Heroic Strike, etc. You're going to be using these abilities a LOT during your adventuring career, so get their lowest ranks as soon as you level up and become familiar with how they work. Some have more circumscribed abilities, such as Overpower, which isn't of much use against run-of-the-mill enemies, but which can quickly devastate rogues for dodging your blows.

So far as the talent tree goes, Arms talents are usually either Improved versions of normal skills or weapon specializations. If you're willing to emphasize one sort of weapon above all others, then the weapon specializations are going to be quite useful, but they will make it painful for you to switch over if you find a great weapon that you don't specialize in.

The most noteworthy talent here is Mortal Strike, which allows you to deal double damage every six seconds, and which will reduce the effectiveness of healing on the target by half. It'll chew up around a third of your Rage bar, but is a great reward for sinking 30 talent points into this tree.

Fury

The Fury set of skills focuses on increasing your damage output, with many of the skills focusing on simply adding damage to a successful attack, or on allowing you to strike multiple foes simultaneously. In addition, Fury is the home to the Shouts, which can convert your rage points into short-term buffs for yourself and your party, or to debuff or distract your enemies. The classic here is Battle Shout, which pretty much every warrior will want to keep constantly refreshed. It only lasts two minutes, so you'll need to keep an eye on its icon and recast it when it's flashing, but if you can keep it up, you should be able to boost your attack power by a significant amount.

Fury talents are, again, mostly focused on giving you improved versions of the skills that you have access to, but there are also a few unique talents, such as the incredibly useful Cruelty, which will

give you an increased chance to deal critical damage on each blow. If you're willing to build up towards a weapon specialization in the Arms tree, you can combine this with one of the critical-building specializations for some devastation with your weapon of choice, or you can combine it with the Flurry talent to increase your swing speed.

Protection

Protection is oriented towards tank players, or warriors who mostly find themselves in groups. If you focus on Protection, especially when it comes to your talents, you'll sacrifice some of your offensive capabilities in exchange for better aggro management, reduced damage, and improved use of shields.

So far as the skills go, the bedrock of Protection is Taunt, which is often going to be the only thing standing between your party's mages and priests and a quick death. When you cast Taunt on an enemy, you'll build up a significant amount of threat, which should normally either prevent that enemy from changing targets, or will help you encourage that enemy to switch back to you if it does start pursuing one of your casters.

Talents here are useful for getting passive bonuses to your stats or Protection skills. These are really ideal for warriors that use one-handed weapons along with a shield, as there are specializations for both of those.

Mage

Pros

- Probably the highest-damage class in the game.
- Possess a number of valuable support abilities, like teleportation, summoned food/drink, and crowd control (Polymorph).

Cons

- Physically very weak, making it difficult to survive in melee combat.
- Higher damage output requires more mana, which in turn means that you'll be forced to rest more often than other classes.

Mages are always going to be one of the most popular classes in any fantasy-based MMO, given that they're one of the "holy trinity" of classes, along with the priest and warrior. Although they're at or near the top of the charts in terms of pure damage capabilities (depending on who you ask), and are definitely the best class for damaging multiple enemies at once, you have to balance these abilities against the fact that mages can only wear the lightest forms of armor and will usually have the lowest health of any class.

In all, if you're looking to dish out the big hurt on enemies, the mage is probably the class you want to choose. In addition to their damage dealing, though, they also sport some excellent crowd control abilities (such as Polymorph) and support abilities (such as summonable food and teleports).

As a mage, you'll want to pick a single talent tree and stick with it; you can choose from fire, ice, and arcane specializations. You can use any spell from any tree, of course, but your talent points will be best spent if you concentrate on a single tree and sink all of your points into it. You may be tempted to spread your points among the low-level talents and be a jack of all trades, but you'll be preventing yourself from accessing the powerful later talents if you do so.

Solo PVE Technique

Mages are well-known as being good at soloing, mostly due to the way that they're able to deal damage at enemies from a range, then slow or root them in place while retreating, and repeating the process until the target is dead. You can deal more damage per second than any other class, but you can expect to burn through your mana very quickly if you don't pace yourself, which can require you to drink fairly often. As mentioned, you're also going to be quite fragile, especially if enemies are able to close on you, as most of your spells will be interrupted if you're hit while you cast them. There are exceptions to this, and some of your talents will help you make specific spells less interruptable, but you'll still generally want to keep enemies as far away from you as possible. You can either do this by slowing them (e.g., with Frost Bolt) or rooting them (Frost Nova), but you'll have to be careful about enemies with high resists, since if your Frost Nova gets resisted, it'll take a while for it to refresh.

Luckily, you have a great crowd control spell in Polymorph, which can be quickly casted on an add so long as no more than one enemy is engaged in melee combat against you. (If two enemies or more are whacking you, though, you're better off just Novaing and running.) Frost armor will also help you when you have to escape, since it will automatically slow anyone that lands a blow on you. That's assuming the mob doesn't resist it, of course, which it usually will if they're more than a few levels above you.

Group PVE Technique

In groups, your primary role will be to kill enemies quickly. You should generally set yourself up with an /assist macro for your main tank and cast single-target spells on whatever he or she is targetting. If necessary, you can cast area-of-effect spells, but you'll have to be careful when doing so, as this will often disrupt things like Sap and Polymorph, and will also cause any monsters that haven't had threat generated yet to target you.



If you can get close to the action, Arcane Explosion can be a big help in taking out tough enemies.

Beyond pure damage, though, your primary usefulness will come in the form of Polymorph, which is one of the best crowd control abilities in the game, as it can knock a single mob out of a fight for 20 seconds, or more, at higher levels. You won't be able to use it on everything, but it does work on beasts and humanoids, which are the two most populous groups of enemies. Try to use this whenever your tank draws in multiple enemies. You might want to rig this to a targeting macro, such as:

```
/cast Polymorph %t
/p I'm Polymorphing %t! Don't hit it!
```

This way, your teammates will know which mob you're going to Poly, and (hopefully) won't target it until the Polymorph wears off.

You can also expect to field numerous requests for your support abilities, especially for drinks and food. Whenever you join a group, you'll probably want to go ahead and synthesize a stack of drinks for any casters in it, just in case they need them, and don't forget to cast Arcane Intellect on anyone with a mana bar. Don't forget to train in teleports, as well, as these are sometimes the only way to safely extract someone with a burned hearthstone from the end of an instance.

One-on-One PVP Technique

As a mage, you shouldn't have any problems taking out other ranged classes, such as hunters,

since you will almost always deal more damage than they do. A duel with another mage will generally come down to a contest of skill and equipment, assuming both mages are of equal level.

Your main problem, then, will be in dealing with melee classes, especially warriors and rogues. If you want to stand any chance against melee opponents, you need to put distance between yourself and your foe; slowing abilities like Frost Armor work, as do roots like Frost Nova. In a pinch, you can use Blink to instantaneously warp out of harm's way, or use Polymorph to give yourself time to flee from an enemy that's gotten the jump on you.

There's a host of techniques here dependent on which talent trees you specialize in. The general technique is similar. You normally have no problem outgunning ranged classes (such as other casters, hunters, etc). So your main concern should be to put distance between yourself and melee capable classes (warriors, paladins, rogues, shamans). Do this by using frost armor, blink, frost nova, and poly is a great way to take the advantage away from someone who got the jump on you.

One thing to note is that many mages on PVP servers tend to sacrifice pure specialization in one talent tree for a mix of talents in a pair of trees, usually Arcane/Fire or Arcane/Frost. In Arcane, the big PVP spells are Arcane Missiles and Arcane Explosion, but you'll usually want to have a few Fire talents for increased damage or Frost for slowing enemies. You can also specialize on Fire or Frost, while gaining a few Arcane talents for versatility's sake. The usual split is 31 talents in the specialization tree and 20 in the other, since 31 is the minimum required to access the powers on the seventh tier of the talent tree.

Group PVP

As with group PVE, you're going to be responsible for taking down specific targets with your nuke spells, but you'll have to be even more careful about staying alive, since you can't rely on your warriors to hold aggro. On the other hand, you can cast AE spells without automatically gaining the attention of every enemy on the opposing side, so things like Flamestrike and Blizzard are great to cast on the point where most of your melee classes are duking it out. If you stick to spells like these, you probably won't draw too much attention to yourself, but if you insist on using Improved Arcane Explosion while standing next to the melee fighters, you're going to become a priority target right quick.

In addition to pure damage, you can use your crowd control and rooting spells to cause havoc on enemy forces. Polymorph is great to use against any enemies that look to be a specific threat against you, especially those that are outside of any main melee areas, while Counterspell and Frost Nova can also be fairly annoying for your foes.

Your job in group pvp is similar to that of in PVE. Your main focus here is dishing out dmg fast while making life difficult for the other team through careful use of polymorph, counterspell, and frost nova. Since you're sure to have multiple targets, using AE spells such as arcane explosion is certainly a good choice but spamming ae is a sure way to gain the attention of the opposing force.

Equipment

You're going to want to look for three specific types of equipment, with one of the most important

(and most expensive) types being those that add damage to spells from a particular tree. E.g. you will sometimes find a staff that adds six damage to all your Fire spells, or something similar. These will often cost a fair amount at the Auction House, but are well worth your while if you can find one that augments your primary spell tree.

The only other things on equipment that are important for mages are bonuses to Intelligence, which increases your mana pool, and Spirit, which increases your mana regen. The balance between these two skills changed fairly often in beta, but in general, you'll probably want to focus on Intelligence, since it also increases your chance to get critical damage on your spells. Besides those two, though, Stamina is always useful when it crops up, as your low life total and poor armor will make you a knockover in combat.

Commonly a mage concentrates his gear on that particular tree by equipping items that add dmg to his primary line of nukes. Intelligence is also good as it increases spell critical chance as well as mana pool. Otherwise, spirit and stamina are always good choices.

Abilities and Talents

Arcane



The bowels of the Deadmines are the resting place of many an adventurer.

There are plenty of good spells in the Arcane tree, making this a popular choice for specialization. In addition to some pure damage (Arcane Missiles) and good AE (Arcane Explosion), you have a

buff (Arcane Intellect), crowd control (Polymorph), and a number of support spells to choose from. Many of the high-level support spells, such as Slow Fall, Teleport, and Portal, will require you to buy reagents to cast them, though, which require both gold and inventory space, making these a bit more unwieldy as you reach the higher levels for your character. Blink is one of the least-heralded of the Arcane mage spells, but it has a lot of fantastic uses, including getting away from gankers in PVP or breaking out of roots and snare spells.

If you're going heavy into Arcane, you'll need to invest most of your talent points here, especially into Improved Arcane Missiles, to make them uninterruptable, and Improved Arcane Explosion, to make it an instant-cast spell. Arcane Concentration is also useful since, when it's maxed out, it will give every spell you cast a 10% chance to cost no mana. Thinking about it another way, you're essentially getting a 10% mana reduction across the board. Evocation is also a good choice for getting mana back during long battles. There are plenty of talents that emphasize certain spells, though, so if you have a particular favorite spell, work towards the matching talent and beef it up a bit.

Fire

There's no spell tree more self-explanatory than the Fire tree: if you specialize in Fire, you're going to be the best damage-dealer in the game, although you'll have to sacrifice buffs and specialized spells to achieve your burnination goals. You have Fireball and Fireblast as great early nukes and instant-cast spells, and will eventually be able to move on to Scorch, Flamestrike, Blast Wave, and Pyroblast, which will give you an impressive library of damage-dealer spells for any situation.

So far as talents go, many of these are self-explanatory. Most of the talents here involve increasing damage or decreasing casting time; of particular note is the fact that none of the talents involve reducing mana costs for your spells, making this the most mana-intensive tree to specialize in. You'll need to compensate for this with extra Intelligence, or by building up Arcane Concentration or Evocation in the Arcane talents.

Frost

Frost relies is much better at freezing and slowing your enemies than is the Fire tree, but it pays for this by being less damaging. In the end, a Frost specialization is best taken when you plan on mostly playing as part of a duo or group, as your teammates will be able to take advantage of your abilities to affect the movement of enemies and will be able to compensate for your lack of pure damage.

Your staples here include Frost Armor, which is a no-brainer, and something that every mage will want to keep refreshed as often as possible. So far as damage spells go, Frostbolt will be a great way to open a fight, as it will slow your opponent as they charge in on you, letting you get in more spells until they finally get into melee range. Cone of Cold and Blizzard are also good AE spells, but Frost Nova will be usually be the most important spell here, especially for non-Frost mages, as it's the only root spell available to mages.

The talent tree for Frost allows you to do some pretty tricky things, and has a variety of effects that aren't seen in the Fire talents. You'll have a lot of powerful effects to choose from, with many of them dealing with an increase in the length of time enemies are slowed by your spells, or by increasing the amount of damage that your critical strikes do (which works well with an high-

Intellect build).

Rogue

Pros

- Have the ability to stealth almost at will, which effectively makes them invisible.
- Can dish out massive amounts of damage thanks to their critical-hit abilities.

Cons

- Can only use leather armor, leaving them with less protection than any other melee-oriented class.

If you prefer sneaking around in the shadows or sneaking behind an enemy for a backstab to a straight fight, then the rogue is probably going to be your favorite class in World of Warcraft. Although they can't take as much damage as a warrior or paladin, and possess few buffs or support abilities, rogues are near the top of the charts when it comes to pure damage potential, and the ability to use stealthy attacks or poisons to wreak havoc in combat.



Booty Bay is PVP central for rogues, who can hide in the Inn and take out opposing players as they pick up quests.

Like warriors, rogues don't use mana to pay for their powers; instead, they have what's called energy. You have a set amount of energy when you start a new rogue; you're unable to increase your total energy or change the rate at which it recharges. Luckily for you, though, it recharges quite quickly, albeit not quickly enough for you to endlessly spam out special attacks. Managing your energy often just takes the form of using normal attacks in between your special attacks; as you play, you'll get a sense for which special attacks can be used together without completing depleting your energy.

Another aspect of roguedom is your ability to use finishing blows to kill off your enemies. If you ever played the assassin class in the Lord of Destruction expansion pack for Diablo II, you'll be familiar with the basics of this: in combat, you can use combo skills to build up combo points on any given enemy. (These skills will say "Awards One Combo Point" at the end of their in-game description; Backstab and Ambush are examples.) When you successfully attack with one of these skills, that target will have one combo point added next to their portrait at the top of the screen. Each enemy can have as many as five combo points built up on it at any given time.

When you have combo points on an enemy, you can use a finishing move. Finishing moves (Kidney Shot, Rupture, etc.) will have varying effects based on how many combo points you've built up. For example, the most basic finishing move, Eviscerate, will deal an amount of damage based on how many combo points you've built up; when you use it when you only have one combo point, you'll get a small bonus over a normal attack, but if you use it when you have a full five combo points, you should exceed a normal attack four or five times over. Finishing moves don't cost more energy to use when you have more combo points, so it's usually more efficient to use them when an enemy has five combo points on it already, or when the enemy is about to die anyway.

Solo PVE Technique

In solo play, your goal is to dominate your opponents and kill them as quickly as possible to avoid taking more damage than necessary. You'll usually want to enter a fight stealthed and use a stealth opener like Cheap Shot, Ambush, or Garrote; from there, you can build up your combo points with your combo moves and get your finisher in when appropriate. Gouge and Backstab work well as a kind of combo-squared, with Gouge awarding you a combo point and allowing you to get behind the enemy for a Backstab, which adds another combo point. Most normal mobs will drop quickly after getting in an opener and a four or five combo point finisher.

Unfortunately, rogues are unique for a melee class in that they have few ways to heal themselves and can't take much damage due to their armor limitations. Thus, you'll need to be careful not to draw extra adds. You do have a limited amount of crowd control in the form of Sap, but this will force you out of stealth mode when you use it, meaning that any other nearby mobs will automatically attack you. (The Improved Sap talent can help here, if you're building yourself up along the Subtlety tree.) Your ability to stealth yourself should help you bypass groups of mobs, though, and size up the opposition before finding a solo mob and taking it down.

When you reach level 20, you'll be able to start buying and using poisons. These are typically coated onto your weapon, and will last for 30 minutes or until you use up the given number of charges. Each time you hit an enemy after coating your weapons, you'll have a chance (usually 20% or 30%) to dish out the poison effect, which can slow your enemy, increase their casting

time, deal extra damage, and so on. Poisons are a large part of your versatility in later levels, but they can be expensive, so you may want to use them only when you're sure that they'll be necessary to take down mobs.

Rogues are one of the best casting-control classes; they have a number of abilities that will let them stun an enemy or interrupt their spellcasting. Kick, Gouge, and Kidney Shot all work well for these purposes, so be sure to use them when you spot an enemy preparing to cast a heal!

If worst comes to worst, rogues are among the best classes at escaping from danger. If you find yourself getting overwhelmed, you can attempt to Gouge an enemy to distract them (in the case of small groups) or Vanish to disappear completely (in the case of large numbers of foes), then either run or Sprint to get the heck out of Dodge.

Group PVE Technique

In group PVE, a rogue is intended to deal damage, with crowd control and caster control being secondary aspects. When paired up with a tank, you should be able to deal massive amounts of damage with your Ambush and Backstab abilities. You can also contribute by using Sap to knock single members of enemy groups out before a fight begins, but you'll have to quickly retreat to your tank's positions, because any other members of the enemy group will immediately begin gunning for you. Improved Sap can be a big help here, especially in instanced dungeons, as you'll be able to Sap a target without breaking stealth or waking up any other mobs, allowing your mages to safely Polymorph another target, thus letting you more thoroughly break up groups of mobs.

Beyond that, though, you should just concentrate on dishing out as much damage as you can, while using your special abilities to interrupt spellcasters or snare any enemies that attempt to run away.

One-on-One PVP Technique

In most cases, you'll want to begin a PVP attack by stealthing, then sneaking up behind your enemy for a high-damage opening attack. If you have the Cold Blood talent, you can use it before your opener to get a guaranteed critical hit to start out with; against weaker enemies, you can sometimes finish them off with a single blow if you're attacking after they're coming out of combat with a mob or another player. Alternately, you can use Cheap Shot to get a couple of quick combo points followed by a few free attacks while your opponent is stunned.



You'll have to be mindful of hunters as a rogue; they can use both Flare and Hunter's Mark to dispel your stealth.

Most rogues will be best off sticking with Sinister Strike. It might not be as sexy as some of the other combo skills, but it's extra damage on top of your normal attack and can help you build up your combo points quickly. If you're a pure dagger rogue, you may prefer sticking with the Gouge/ Backstab combo. So far as finishers go, you can use Eviscerate for a big burst of damage or Kidney Shot to get more free attacks in. Feel free to try different approaches to PVP combat and see which one works best for you.

There are many different kinds of poisons that can come in handy during a PVP fight. Crippling Poison is often used to prevent your opponents from escaping, or to give yourself time to escape from a fight that you don't believe you'll win. Instant or Deadly Poisons can also be used for extra damage.

Tips

- When going up against melee opponents, don't neglect to activate your Evasion skill to take almost half damage from their attacks, but be careful of warriors, who can use Overpower to pretty much own you while you have this ability activated.
- Vanish is useful in PVP, both for running away when someone attempts to gank you or to break out of any snares or roots that have been cast on you.
- Don't forget to check your talents and use them as needed to increase your DPS, especially when facing off against higher-level opponents.

Group PVP

Group PVP can be where rogues really start to come into their own. You obviously have the damage-dealing capabilities to help out your primary damage dealers, but you can also use your control abilities to confuse enemy spellcasters, Sap and stun threats, and so forth. In large-scale combat, such as town raids, you can use your stealth abilities to sneak behind enemy lines and Sap take down the physically weak rear guard players, such as hunters and mages, who won't be well-guarded by warriors. You have a lot of opportunities to be tricky here, so take full advantage of them.

Equipment

Equipment wise, rogues are restricted to cloth and leather armor - you can't upgrade to mail at level 40 like hunters and shamen. So far as stats go, the usual choice is to go for huge Agility bonuses, which will help you increase your dodge ability, and will greatly increase your chance to get critical hits. Stamina is also important to make up for your lack of armor, while Strength can add to your damage.

So far as weapons go, most rogues will choose to dual-wield daggers, as many attack skills will require you to have daggers in your main-hand slot for them to be usable. Rogues that prefer to concentrate on Sinister Strike may wish to use a sword in their main hand for added damage, but this will make dagger-only skills like Ambush and Backstab unusable. Maces are a less popular choice, but if you load up on the Mace Specialization talent, you'll have a good chance to land random stuns on your opponent, drastically cutting the amount of damage that you'll be taking.

Skills and Talents

Assassination

Assassination is the tree which includes most of the finishing moves that rogues are going to be use. You should be able to look over these skills in-game and figure out what each one does fairly easily; Eviscerate is generally the favorite finisher, due to its straightforward damage bonus. In addition, there are a number of opening combo moves, such as Ambus, Cheap Shot, and Garrote.

For the finishers, it's important to remember that you don't need a full five combo points to use them. For example, if your Kick hasn't refreshed, and a caster enemy is about to heal itself, you can use your Kidney Shot ability with just a single combo point to stun your target and interrupt the spell. In general, yes, you'll want to wait until you have all combo points filled before using your finisher, but keep in mind that you gain no benefits from combo points if the enemy dies before you can use a finisher. If you have three combo points on an enemy that a friendly warrior is about to finish off, then, go ahead and use Slice and Dice, which will improve your melee attack speed when you switch to another target.

The talents in the Assassination tree focus on increasing your critical skill chance and increasing the benefits you gain from landing critical hits. For a tier one ability, Malice is fantastic, and is something that all rogues will probably want to max out, as a 5% increase to your critical chance, in addition to whatever you get from a huge Agility stat, should let you convert a significant

percentage of your hits into critical hits. One notable special talent is Cold Blood, which will guarantee a critical hit on one of your next combo skills. This is fantastic to use in coordination with Ambush for truly spectacular damage to open a fight, especially against a PVP target, and has a relatively short cooldown period.

Combat

Your Combat abilities will tie in with the Assassination abilities somewhat, as there are a lot of combo skills here, including Backstab, Gouge, and Sinister Strike; this last is probably going to be the skill you use more often than any other, as it will let you consistently add damage to your normal weapon swings while building up combo points for an Eviscerate. You'll also have the useful Feint, which will lower the aggro that you've gained and encourage the enemy to flip back over to the tank of the group, and Kick, which will let you interrupt spellcasting.

Your Combat talents are mostly straightforward Improved versions of your skills, with a few weapon specializations thrown in there for variety. Most of the Sinister Strike/Eviscerate rogues will get a lot of mileage out of Improved Sinister Strike, Dagger Specialization, and Aggression, while any rogue will benefit from Adrenaline Rush, which will essentially double the number of number of special skills that you can use for a fifteen-second period.

Subtlety

The most distinctive feature of the rogue is their ability to use Stealth, which effectively makes them invisible to all nearby enemies. This ties in with some of your combo moves, such as Ambush and Garrote, which require you to be stealthed in order to go off, but will also let you scout areas, evade groups of mobs in favor of solo enemies, and use the super-useful Sap ability. Sap is great for soloing or group play; when you're stealthed, you can Sap a foe to stun them for an extended period of time. This will bring you out of stealth mode, but will reduce the number of foes that you'll have to deal with in the ensuing fight, or at least delay their entrance into the battle.

Almost all of your Subtlety talents will, again, be Improved versions of your normal skills. The best among these is arguably Improved Sap, which will let you Sap targets without dropping out of stealth mode. You can combine this with a long-distance puller party member to quite effectively break up groups of mobs without necessarily having them all target you automatically; your warrior friend can instead use his gun to shoot at one of the non-Sapped mobs, letting them scurry away from you and allowing you to follow up and get going with your Backstabs.

Priest

Pros

- Best class for healing.
- Highly desired for instanced dungeons; you won't have any problems finding groups, especially at high levels.

Cons

- Can't take much of a beating, and can't wear anything above cloth armor.
- Not very big on crowd control.

If you're the sort that enjoys helping out teammates by buffing and healing, then a priest is probably going to be the most reliably enjoyable class for you. Although it does have the capability to deal damage, the priest class definitely revolves around healing as the central aspect of its abilities, making it highly desired in dungeon groups. (In fact, one of the more annoying aspects of playing a priest is dealing with the unsolicited group invites and random whispers from players you don't know, especially at high levels.)

Solo PVE Technique

Priests can solo, albeit in the same medium-DPS, highly defensive manner that paladins usually work with. Instead of buffing your defense and Armor, though, you're going to use Power Word: Fortitude and Power Word: Shield to increase your Stamina and make yourself completely resistant to damage.

Power Word: Shield will, indeed, be the most important spell in a solo Priest's inventory, and you may want to set up a custom macro so that a single button press will cast it on yourself, for example:

```
/target yourname (e.g. "/target Onyxis" if your character's name is Onyxis)
/cast Power Word: Shield(Rank1)
/script TargetLastEnemy();
```

This will let you quickly refresh your Shield whenever it drops, and then automatically switch your targetting back to whatever enemy you were focused on before. Don't forget to keep the normal version bound so you can cast it on your teammates, though!

After you have a Shield up, you can go to town with your offensive spells. The Shield will prevent your spells from being interrupted while it's up, so you can use the longer casting spells that dish out more damage. Keep in mind that you can't continually spam Shield onto yourself if it drops, though, as you'll automatically gain a Weakened Soul status effect that'll prevent you from recasting it, but you can invest in the Improved Power Word: Shield talent that'll cut the timer on this status effect by a significant amount. If you anticipate taking a lot of damage from an enemy, you can wait a few seconds in between casting Shield and entering combat to let the Weakened Soul timer tick down a bit. This will let you recast it during battle more quickly, since you shouldn't have to wait for the timer to run out beforehand.

Against normal mobs, a typical sequence of events will go something like this, dependent on your talents. Begin by buffing yourself with Shield, then cast Shadow Word: Pain on your target to get its attention. As it approaches, use Mind Blast and Mind Flay (if you have this latter) until the target closes it. You can keep casting offensive spells if your Shield stays up, then start using your weapon to deal the killing blow, reapplying Shadow Word: Pain when it drops. If the mob starts to run, use Mind Flay to slow it down and get in a bit of damage to boot. You should get in the habit of casting Renew on yourself (perhaps using a macro like the one above) so that you constantly gain back life during fights. Be careful of using Psychic Scream, except as a last resort, because the mob will often attract the attention of other nearby mobs and bring them down onto you.

Of course, all of this is dependent on your specific build; the specific example above presupposes that you're investing heavily into Shadow talents. If not, you may have to shuffle things around a bit, with spells like Inner Fire, Smite, and even Renew to act as a quasi-shield.

Group PVE Technique

Well, this is kind of a no-brainer. Your goal here is to keep your party members alive with your healing abilities, but you will have to be careful here, as mobs are attracted towards healers, and may choose to attack you if you use your healing abilities too often or too quickly. In other words, you shouldn't heal people until they get down to around half their life bar (unless you're fighting enemies with the potential to rapidly deal damage). You'll also probably want to stick to Flash Heal for the most part, as it's low-cast, quick-casting, and does a decent amount of healing. This will help manage your aggro and prevent threat from transferring away from your tanks, and still let you resort back to your bigger heals as necessary.



There's nothing quite as entertaining as dancing naked on a long zeppelin flight.

Beyond pure healing, though, you're going to want to manage your buffs as appropriate. Power Word: Shield is, of course, an excellent way to protect a party member that's about to die, but again, aggro can be difficult to keep under control. In addition to heals, you can also use debuffs, such as Hex of Weakness and Touch of Weakness, to reduce the effectiveness of an enemy's attacks. You'll have access to direct damage spells, such as Mind Blast, Smite, and Shadow Word: Pain, but in general, you won't want to be casting these unless you're engaging easy enemies or

your party really needs the extra damage; against most mobs, the extra damage gained won't be worth the risk of drawing in aggro.

If you do gain aggro in a group fight, then you'll quickly want to hit the Fade switch and take a breather on the healing. It can be easy to get the attention of mobs, especially during fights with multiple enemies, so feel free to use Fade as soon as you gain aggro, and continually cast it as soon as the cooldown's up, or whenever another foe comes along to attack you. This will usually cause your threat to drop down far enough to cause the mob to switch back over to a tank; so long as you don't go absolutely crazy with heals (which is usually either an indication of you being a poor priest or your group being poorly coordinated), you can manage aggro fairly well with Fade.

One-on-One PVP Technique

In PVP, your lifeline as a priest is your mana bar - if you run out of mana before you knock your enemy down to near-death, then you yourself are almost assuredly going to be the one keeling over to the ground. You're also at a disadvantage against opponents that can penetrate your Shields or interrupt your spellcasting with frequency. You need to get your shots in while reducing the amount of damage that you take. This is one of the areas where gear comes into play; in a Priest v Priest matchup, the priest with the better bonuses to stamina and intellect will usually outlast the other.

A good way to start out is to ensure that Power Word: Shield is cast on yourself immediately before a battle begins, then use Mind Blast and Shadow Word: Pain on your target, followed by a Smite while they're still approaching you. (Obviously, this depends on getting the jump on your target - if your opponent manages to ambush you or otherwise close to melee range before you can cast any spells, they'll get something of a head start on you.) The Shield is somewhat optional here, as it's much more easy for PVP opponents to deal with it than it is for mobs; rogues and mages will likely tear through it with a couple of hits, while opposing priests and shamans will be able to dispel or purge it instantaneously, thus leaving you with nothing but a hole in your mana bar to speak of it.

Two spells that should be considered mandatory in PVP are Dispel Magic and Psychic Scream. Dispel Magic is incredibly handy, if only because nearly every player you come up against will have some form of buff laid down on themselves, and Dispel Magic will let you cast them aside without having to worry about losing any yourself. Since it's an instant cast, you can recast Dispel Magic as often as you like until your enemy has no magical defenses whatsoever.

Psychic Scream is another great spell here. Against Undead, you may find it difficult to stick due to their activated racial ability that makes them immune to fear effects, but against any other race, you should be able to cause them to run for a few seconds, allowing you to nuke them, Mana Burn a caster, heal yourself, or even run if you're in a bad spot.

Your main drawback in PVP is lack of any kind of real snare effect; if an enemy wants to run, there won't be much you can do save chuck spells at their back and hope you take them down before they get out of range. You do have some methods of slowing or rooting enemies, mostly involving Shadow talents (Blackout, Mind Flay), but they're rather unwieldy and unreliable.

Group PVP

Unless you outnumber your opponents, you shouldn't have any need for offensive spells in PVP, save perhaps for something like Shadow Word: Pain, and that only because it's instant cast. Beyond that, focus on using your heals, dummy! You don't risk drawing aggro from healing in PVP, so there's nothing to prevent you from casting as many as you want, save your available mana. Let's not neglect that particular risk, though; a priest without mana in PVP is basically worthless, unless you intend to wand people to death, which isn't going to happen anytime this century. If you PVP a lot, you'll want to invest in talents like Improved Healing, Spiritual Healing, and Meditation; the less your healing spells cost, and the more they heal for, the longer you'll last in battle. If worst comes to worst, pop the biggest mana potion you have and hope you don't run out again.



Priests are highly desired in groups because of their healing abilities, as well as for their abilities to intimidate Massive Internals.

Another spell that's also useful in group is Dispel Magic. Since this is cheap and effective, and can be cast on both enemies and friends, you'll want to keep it close at hand. It's more important to dispel effects from your teammates than it is to dispel buffs from your enemies; you can use it to get rid of DoT effects, debuffs, or even fear and sleep effects.

Equipment

You aren't going to be able to wear anything better than cloth armor as a priest, so you won't

have many options there. So far as stats go, you shouldn't really have to worry about anything except Intellect and Spirit, with Stamina coming in as a useful third choice. You'll also want to look for armor and weapons that give bonuses to healing spells. These won't usually be huge bonuses, but even a blanket four or five extra points of healing per cast is something.

Abilities and Talents

Discipline

Your primary buffing category, Discipline includes Power Word: Shield and Power Word: Fortitude, which are two spells that you're going to be using quite often, both on yourself and your teammates. Many of these spells are useful for both solo or group play, although some are exclusively self-buffs, such as Inner Fire, which gives you extra attack power and a huge boost to your armor score for a few minutes. Even Inner Fire is defensively oriented, though, and that's the story of this ability tree: most of the abilities here are intended to improve your defense, or those of your teammates. There are some exceptions, of course, such as the direct-damage Starshards, or Shackle Undead, which is tremendously useful at higher levels. Although it's a simple root, and only works on undead foes, you're going to find plenty of use for it when you start hitting the Eastern and Western Plaguelands, which is where the Scourge has established themselves.

In an odd juxtaposition, though, many of the Discipline talents are targeted towards improving your offensive abilities, with talents like Silent Resolve, which reduces the threat you gain with damaging spells, Wand Specialization, which increases the amount of damage you deal with wands, and Force of Will, which gives a small bonus to the damage dealt by offensive spells. Feel free to mix and match talents here as you like; almost everyone will get something out of Improved Power Word: Shield, which lets you cast the spell more often onto yourself or one of your tanks. Improved Power Word: Fortitude can also be worthwhile, although like many talents that add percentage increases to numbers, it will be somewhat insignificant at lower levels of the spell itself. There are some other generally useful talents, though, including Mental Strength and Meditation. The outstanding member of the class, though, is Divine Spirit, which is a long-lasting and effective Spirit buff, but which is unfortunately locked for you until you spend 30 talent points in the tree.

Holy

Holy spells are pretty much the *raison d'être* of the priest class; these encompass all of your healing abilities, including Lesser Heal, Heal, Greater Heal, Renew, Prayer of Healing, Desperate Prayer, Flash Heal, etc. Obviously, you've got a lot of different options available to you, so buy them all and start learning the differences between them and what situations each one is appropriate for! In general, spells like Lesser Heal, Renew, and Flash Heal are the ones you'll want to be using most often in group play; Heal and Greater Heal are obviously powerful, but they have long casting times and are aggro magnets. If you cast one, you can expect to get the attention of any enemies that haven't been Taunted by your party's tank. So far as offensive abilities goes, you do gain Smite from the Holy tree, such as it is. If you compare it to the direct damage abilities of a mage, Smite isn't much to speak of, but it's what you've got, so make the most of it.

If you plan on fulfilling the archetypal priest role in group play, then Holy talents are where you'll want to invest most of your points. Almost everything here is useful, especially the talents on the first three tiers, such as Subtlety, which will reduce the threat you gain when casting healing

spells, Spiritual Healing, which increases the amount of health your healing spells restore, and Holy Specialization, which increases the chance that your healing spells will spontaneously double their effects. You'll want to investigate the effects of all of these talents before deciding which ones to invest your points into, but they all have some utility.

Shadow Magic

Shadow Magic is the priest's primary damage-dealing and offensive spell tree, encompassing as it does spells such as Shadow Word: Pain, which is a helpful damage-over-time effect, and Mind Blast, which is a better offensive spell than Smite for solo play, due to its lower casting time and increased damage. There are also a number of less overtly offensive spells here, though, such as Psychic Scream, which is going to be incredibly useful for soloing, as it causes enemies to run away from you so that you can hit them with more spells, and Fade, which will reduce your threat against nearby enemies and allow your warriors to get an enemy's attention once more.

The most useful talents here will unfortunately only be available after you make your way up the tree a bit. One of the biggies here is Mind Flay, which combines a slowing effect with damage-over-time, and can be constantly recast, allowing you to prevent enemies from escaping from battle while quickly ensuring their death. Mind Flay also makes for an excellent match with Vampiric Embrace, which will let all of your teammates gain 20% of the damage dealt by the former spell, but you'll want to cast these on something tough, such as a boss monster, to ensure that they last long enough to be useful. Silence is another good choice, as it costs only one talent point and will let you prevent targets from casting spells for a short period of time; this is obviously great when you can foresee a high-damage or healing spell coming down the pipe, and while the 45-second cooldown is a tad long, it's short enough to allow you to use the ability once every fight or so.

One of the most important abilities here is Shadowform. Although you have to work your way through the entire tree to get to it, it becomes incredibly useful when you do, as it'll increase the amount of damage you deal with your shadow spells by 15% and will reduce the amount of physical damage you take by 15%, thus effectively making you 30% more effective when pairing off against melee-oriented enemies. You're not going to see many talents offering you that kind of benefit with only one talent point required. The big caveat here is that you can't cast holy spells while you're in Shadowform, so it's not something you're going to want to use a lot while partying, but it can make soloing a heck of a lot easier.

Warlock

Pros

- Gets to use a pet to distract/damage enemies.
- Can steal the souls of enemies and make a number of useful support items with them.
- Can summon in teammates from anywhere in the game.

Cons

- Physically weak, relies on pets to protect them from damage.

- Most of their damage takes the form of damage-over-time; can be difficult to dish out big nukes.

The warlock, like the hunter, is a class that relies on a pet to reach its true effectiveness. Instead of training beasts, though, warlocks are able to wrest demonic entities from the nether world and bind them to do the warlock's bidding. In addition to their demonic pets, warlocks are the king of damage-over-time spells, and are also great at debuffing your enemies and effective crowd control.



One of the drawbacks of Warlock summons is their long casting time, meaning that you won't be able to quickly replace a pet that dies in combat.

Also like the hunter, you don't begin the game with the ability to summon a pet; you'll have to wait until level three or four to get your Imp, until level 10 to get your Voidwalker, and will receive the ability to summon a new pet after you complete a quest that becomes available every tenth level thereafter. These quests are often difficult to solo, so you'll either have to cultivate a group of friends who'll be willing to help you proceed through quests (which they likely won't have access to, and thus won't be rewarded for), or hook up with other warlocks who similarly need to complete their summon quests. Your pets are quite distinct in function: the Imp, for instance, will buff your stamina while chucking fireballs at your enemies from range, but is quite low on health, while the Voidwalker prefers getting up close and personal with your enemies, has a lot of health, but can't deal very much damage. You'll need to pick and choose from your various pets depending on the situation that arises.

Besides the pet abilities and spells, though, you do have some support abilities, mostly revolving around your ability to capture the souls of defeated enemies via the Drain Soul ability. When you use this on an enemy that then dies, you'll gain a Soul Shard, which appears in your inventory. Although Soul Shards are bulky (they don't stack, so each shard you get will take an individual inventory space), you can convert them into handy (and free) restorative items. The most prominent of these are the Healthstones, which instantly restore a set amount of health to the user, and Soulstones, which automatically bring a party member back to life if they die. The Soulstone is one of the primary reasons why warlocks are valued in groups.

Last, but not least, the Warlock possesses one of the most useful support abilities in the game: the Ritual of Summoning. When you hit level 20, you'll be able to summon players from anywhere in the world to your present location. You will need two friendly players along to help you perform the ritual, making this most useful when you have part of a group together, but need to retrieve one last player before you can head into an instance.

Solo PVE Technique

Needless to say, soloing is a lot easier if you have the right pet. The Voidwalker is the ideal soloing companion for the warlock, due to its tanking abilities, but it's not obtainable until level 10 at the earliest; before that, you'll have to make do with your Imp and the limited damage spells that you have at your disposal. Luckily, you're going to gain the Fear spell at level eight, which will make it much easier to kill off enemies; you can use direct damage spells, such as Immolate or Shadow Bolt, to get their attention, use a DoT effect like Corruption as they approach, then Fear them when they get close, which will send them running, giving you more time to cast offensive spells on them.

When you do have a Voidwalker along, though, things become much easier, because it can use an ability similar to the warrior's Taunt to try and keep enemies focused on itself, letting you hang back and blast them from a distance. The Voidwalker will do little damage when compared to yourself, though, so its presence is intended more to give you room to cast your spells than to let you sit and watch it rip through foes.

Group PVE Technique



Imps are great for group play, moreso because of the stamina boost that they give than their damage, but both help.

Group is a bit different than solo play, if only because you won't have to worry as much about drawing aggro, at least in theory. If your group has a good tank along, then you shouldn't feel the need to use a Voidwalker to draw your foes' attention, and will instead probably want to go with either an Imp or a Succubus, depending on how high of a level you've obtained. The Imp's Blood Pact spell will boost all of your teammate's Stamina scores, and you can level up its fire magic to increase its effect so that it stays useful in battle. The Succubus is more of a crowd control device; you can use its Seduction ability to mesmerize enemies and take them out of combat. She has the potential to deal more damage than either of the previous pets, as well, but is fairly fragile.

In addition to your normal curses and direct-damage spells, you'll also want to start flexing your crowd control muscles when playing in groups. Banish is a great (if very situational) stunning move, and Fear is great for sending mobs away from the group for a few seconds while you target something else.

Besides pure combat technique, though, you'll undoubtedly be asked to supply Soul Stones for your party, so be sure to use Drain Soul as appropriate on the party's designated foe. You can even make a little macro for this:

```
/assist nameoftank
/cast Drain Soul(Rank 1)
```


Or something similar.

One-on-One PVP Technique

The Warlock can have a difficult time in PVP, especially one-on-one PVP, because of the way that most enemies won't bother attacking your pet, and will instead make a beeline straight for you. Your saving grace here is going to be the Fear spell; you'll want to cast it often to keep melee opponents off of you, but keep in mind that it will become more easily resistable after each casting, so that eventually it won't affect your target at all. Thus, you'll want to take full advantage of the first couple of castings by laying all of your DoT's and damaging spells on the target, or just taking the opportunity to run if you don't think you can win the fight.

As mentioned, your target will eventually start resisting your Fears, so you'll need to get all of your hits in before this occurs. Keep your pet trained on your enemy, and make sure that they're using all of their special abilities to deal extra damage. When you're facing off against lower-level enemies, then Corruption, Curse of Agony, and Immolation can usually deal enough damage to kill them off by themselves, but against higher-level enemies that are strong enough to withstand your DoTs, or whom have healing spells to regain their life, you're going to have to get as much damage in before your Fears wear off and hope that you've hurt them enough to either make them easy to finish off or to convince them that running away is a useful option.

Group PVP

Warlocks aren't highly desired in group PVP, but if you know how to play your class well, then you should be able to contribute a lot of damage. You're especially going to be useful against the powerful tanks on the other side, if you can get close enough to them to bust out your Curses and DoT effects. You can follow these by busting out Rain of Fire and casting it on the primary area of combat to aggravate any enemies within the area of effect.



Warlocks are essential for raiding due to their Summoning spell; it makes it tremendously easy to assemble the troops.

Again, though, any enemies you meet will probably be smart enough to realize that they can kill two birds with one stone, since killing you will also make your pet disappear. For this reason, you're going to want to stay back behind your tanks and use Fear to keep enemies off you; casting Fear on enemy tanks will only make it more difficult for your own melee character friends to kill them off. If you can get close to an enemy spellcaster, though, you should do your best to cast Curse of Tongues on all of them; it can be easily eliminated by mages, and they usually will, but priests don't have any way to get rid of curses, so they'll be forced to deal with a 60% slower casting time for almost all of their spells for the duration, which should reduce the overall efficacy of your enemy's healing.

Equipment

As with most of the pure spellcasting classes, you're going to be restricted to cloth armor as a Warlock, and you'll want to focus primarily on intellect and spirit as your main stats. There isn't much equipment that's tailored specifically for warlocks, but there's enough general spellcasting equipment around that you shouldn't have too much trouble finding something to fill up your slots.

Many warlocks at higher levels, though, tend to start adding to their stamina stats. With the Life Tap spell that you gain in your Affliction tree, you will always have the ability to instantly convert health into mana, which effectively means that health can be used either as health or mana. If

you get used to using Life Tap a lot, then you might as well have as much health as possible, and convert it when necessary, or simply keep it in your life pool to prevent awkward deaths.

Abilities and Talents

Affliction

Affliction houses all of your Curses, including the one you'll probably use most often, Curse of Agony. Since you can only have one Curse active per target, you'll likely want to just go ahead and use Agony to get a bit of extra damage going, especially after you get your Voidwalker and can use it to keep your foes off your back. Agony can also stack with Immolation and Corruption to spread out massive amounts of damage over time instead of having it all hit up front, which will usually cause enemies to jump over to you from your tank or pet.

Beyond the Curses and other debuffs, Affliction is also going to hold Fear, which is useful in almost every kind of combat, Drain Soul, which will let you make Soul Shards that are used in many of your more powerful spells, and Drain Life, which will allow you to heal yourself while also doing damage to your enemy, hopefully while they're locked in combat with a tank or pet.

Your Affliction talents are mostly straightforward Improved versions of the spells you already have in your inventory. The notable new talents here are Amplify Curse, especially when used in conjunction with high-level Curses of Agony, and Siphon Life. Although Siphon Life might at first appear to be merely a weaker Drain Life, the important distinction is that it doesn't require channeling, meaning that you can shoot off a Siphon Life on a tough target, then use other spells while its effect remain active.

Demonology

Although Demonology might sound like it deals primarily with demon-related spells (and it does have a few of those), it's mostly useful as a source of support abilities. With Demonology spells, you'll be able to embrace yourself with Demon Armor, create Soulstones and Healthstones out of Soul Shards, and use the incredibly useful Ritual of Summoning to instantly bring in new party members from anywhere in the game world.

It's in the talents that Demonology really starts to live up to its name. There are different Improved talents for your Imp, Voidwalker, and Succubus, so you'll probably want to wait until you have all three of these, then judge which ones you use most and allocate your talents appropriately. If you group often, though, the 30% improvement from a fully-loaded Improved Imp will help a lot, as it will greatly increase the efficacy of the Blood Pact spell that increases all party members' Stamina. Demonic Embrace is also a good talent to invest in if you plan on using Life Tap to increase your effective mana pool.

Unfortunately, the talents start to become somewhat less effective as you climb the ranks of the Demonology tree, so you'll want to take a hard look at the talents above Fel Domination and make sure that you're going to get plenty of use out of them before you start allocating your points.

Destruction

Most of the spells in the Destruction tree are straightforward damage or DoT spells. Immolate is perhaps the best of these, as it deals a bunch of damage up front, then deals more over time; it's

great for tapping enemies at the outset of combat so that other players can't whack them and get the experience for the kill. The rest of the tree usually consists of either nukes (Shadow Bolt, Soul Fire) or AoE's (Hellfire, Rain of Fire). Use them as appropriate.

The Destruction talents are just obviously powerful, but since you're going to have to invest a lot of points to get the most out of them. Some aren't hugely useful, such as Cataclysm, which has a marginal mana cost reduction for your Destruction spells; you can obviate most of your mana problems in the late game by using Life Tap. It isn't until late in the tree that you'll see the powerhouse abilities like Emberstorm, but there are plenty of lower-tier abilities, like Aftermath, that can have significant effects when you pile enough points into them. Aftermath works especially with your AoE spells, and can be even more devastating when combined with Pyroclasm later on; these two talents, when used with an AoE ability, will give you a good shot at either dazing an enemy or stunning them outright.

Paladin

Pros

- Can wear the heaviest armor in the game and can act as a secondary tank.
- Combines the health of a warrior with healing abilities and useful buffs.

Cons

- Lower damage than a warrior.
- Can't control aggro very well, at least when compared to warriors.

Paladins are, along with warriors, going to be the primary tanks in any group; they can use the heaviest armor and get more HP than almost any other class. Where paladins differ from warriors, though, is in their secondary skills. While warriors are almost entirely focused on dishing out pain and controlling aggro on enemies during combat, paladin skills are generally more focused towards becoming a secondary healer and buffer, with things like seals and auras that can significantly increase the power level of your other party members. In addition, paladins are well-known as smiters of undead, whether they be mobs or Undead PCs from the Horde, and they have a few spells that give them quite a bit of power against these kinds of enemies.

One of the unique aspects of the paladin is the way that he can cast buffs on himself, then discharge these buffs onto enemies with his Judgement skill. You'll notice that many of the Seal powers have rather longwinded in-game descriptions; this is because they all have both a positive effect when cast on the paladin, then have a secondary effect when they're discharged onto an enemy with Judgement. Although this appears to be a bit confusing at first, it doesn't take too long to get a handle on the basic mechanics, which consists of: cast a Seal on yourself; cast Judgement to transfer the Seal onto your target (which erases the Seal from the paladin); then recast the Seal (or another Seal of your choice) onto yourself.



If you don't have a warrior, then a paladin can make a decent tank with their threat-management Blessings.

For example, let's take the Seal of Light. This Seal, when cast on a paladin, allows you to have a chance to heal yourself for some amount of HP each time you hit an enemy. When you use Judgement, though, your Seal of Light cast on yourself becomes a Judgement of Light spell cast on your targeted enemy, which will allow any attacker to have a chance to gain life when they strike, although the amount of life gain will be lower. For instance, you might cast Seal of Light on yourself, which will let you gain a chance to gain 75 health each time you hit any enemy; if you use Judgement to transfer this ability over to an enemy, though, all of your party members that are using melee abilities will have a chance to gain 50 health each time they strike that particular enemy. Sound confusing? It sort of is, to be honest with you; it takes a bit of gameplay experience to get a handle for how it works.

What makes Seals and Judgements fairly useful is when you consider the fact that you can combine them in a few different ways. For example, if you cast Judgement of Light on an enemy, you'll have something like a 20% chance to gain back health with each hit. If you then cast Seal of Righteousness on yourself, though, you'll also gain a chance to deal extra Holy damage each time you land a blow, giving you a chance to gain health, deal extra damage, or both, each time you attack. Seal of Righteousness also goes well with Judgement of the Crusader, which increases damage dealt by Holy sources for 30 seconds.

Since you can shift around your Seals and Judgements as you like, Paladins can be quite flexible in combat, using something like Seal of Righteousness and Judgement of the Crusader (perhaps

combined with the Sanctity Aura talent) when you want to deal a lot of damage, or switching over to Seal and Judgement of Light when you're looking to get some healing going on.

In addition to these powers, though, you also have access to Auras, which are free, permanent buffs that will affect the paladin and all nearby party members. Some examples of this are Devotion Aura, which increases the armor of all nearby allies, and Retribution Aura, which will reflect Holy damage back onto any enemy that strikes yourself or an enemy. You also have access to Blessings, which are short-term buffs (usually on the order of five minutes or so) that can be cast on any party member.

Solo PVE Technique

For soloing monsters, there isn't a whole lot to do except Seal yourself, use Judgement, use another Seal, then attack until the monster's dead. Unfortunately, the experience of playing a paladin isn't terrifically interactive; you really only have your primary attack skill to use against the enemy, with very few other ways to directly damage them. Thus, well, being a paladin can be kind of boring, especially in the early levels, before you gain access to a good variety of Seals and the Judgement spell at level 10.

That said, you have enough defensive and healing spells to make it almost impossible for you to die against most mobs your level. If you get into trouble, you can start running; if you're almost out of life, try using Blessing of Protection. If that runs out, try using Divine Favor or Divine Shield. If that runs out, then Lay On Hands will get you automatically back to 100% health. So, if something wants to kill you, it'll have to knock you almost to the bottom of your health bar, wait at least ten seconds for Divine Favor and Blessing of Protection to run out, then kill off a whole other health bar from Lay On Hands. (These don't necessarily have to be used just to run away, of course; they'll make almost any mob four or five levels above you killable if you have them all charged up before the fight begins.)

Group PVE Technique

Group play is where paladins really shine, as they can spread their Blessings out across the entire party, and change Auras based on shifting battlefield conditions. (See a big physical attacker coming down the hallway? Kick in Devotion aura. Spot a dragonkin coming along? Throw up Fire Resistance Aura, etc.) Judgements are also quite useful, with Judgement of Light being incredibly useful as a quasi-healing spell when you have a warrior or rogue concentrating on the Judged enemy.

Beyond your support and buffing abilities, though, you're going to want to try and keep enemies focused on you as much as possible, thus fulfilling your role as a secondary tank. You can also use your Holy Light and Flash of Light spells to become a decent secondary healer, especially when you gain access to Blessing of Light at higher levels. (You can also use heals as a roundabout way of drawing monster aggro, since they're given to attack healers.)

One of the unique aspects of paladinhood is your ability to act as something of a reset button in battles that spiral out of control. With your abilities to stay alive via Lay On Hands, Blessing of Protection, Divine Shield, and the like, you can often retreat far out of harm's way and then return to resurrect your teammates

In a group, the Paladin will function as a secondary tank by backing up the Warriors and helping them hold aggro (I'm typing this in anticipation of the next patch). You'll also have to help keep your teammates alive; when you have a Priest along, you can hold off on healing and instead focus on using your Seals on your teammates as appropriate. Micromanaging seals can be a pain, though, so try to have a good set up.

One of the unique things about Paladins is their ability to act as a reset button; when your party starts dying due to a bad pull or overwhelming enemies, you're expected to run like hell, using Divine Shield or Lay On Hands to keep yourself alive, and then return to your team's corpses and Resurrect them.

One-on-One PVP Technique



When going up against enemies with elemental attacks, like these Yetis, switch over to the appropriate Resistance aura to reduce the damage that you take.

The Paladin in PVP is made of health. You essentially have three lives: the first bar of health, a second bar from Divine Shield and your biggest healing spell, and a third bar from Lay On Hands, not counting Seal of Protection when you're facing off against a melee enemy. Unfortunately, because your DPS is so much smaller than most classes, you'll usually need to use up a few of these before you can wear down an enemy, and if they decide to run, you won't have any way to stop them save a three-second stun. You'll have to match your Aura up to your opponent; Retribution vs. Rogues, Resistance vs. Mages, and so on. Against Undead, you have the upper

hand, so switch over to your Undead bar and go to town.

Group PVP

In group, your job is to protect the weakest members of your party as much as possible. Seal of Fury and Seal of Salvation become useless in PVP, obviously, so try to hit up your Rogues and Warriors with Reckoning, and if a Mage gets targeted by an enemy, use Sacrifice or Protection to keep them alive. Sacrifice is especially noteworthy in PVP; if you can cast it on the correct teammate, you can cut that teammate's damage in half. Also, don't forget that you have Cleanse; you can remove everything but curses with it, so keep an eye on your teammates' debuffs and use it as appropriate.

Equipment

If you solo a lot, you'll probably want to focus on Strength above Stamina, since you'll need higher DPS to kill efficiently, and you'll be able to use your spells to stay alive longer than most Warriors. If you're focusing on group play, then Stamina becomes a better bet, as it'll let you concentrate on protecting your teammates rather than healing yourself.

In long battles, a Paladin can find themselves running out of mana, so don't hesitate to focus on Intellect as a third stat.

Abilities and Talents

Holy

Paladins have a ton of skills in the Holy tree, running the gamut from simple healing abilities, such as Holy Light and Flash of Light, to resurrections, buffs, and Undead-specific damage spells. Most paladins will be investing quite a bit of their talents here, but even if you choose to go for a non-Holy build, you're still going to constantly use the skills found here, so know them and love them. One of the most useful skills here is the easiest to gloss over: Purify and Cleanse are both great multi-use skills for removing debuffs from yourself and for teammates. Cleanse, especially, is a marvel of economy, as it can remove poison, magic, and disease effects, leaving behind only curses.

Most of the Holy talents will revolve around increasing the efficiency of your healing abilities, with the Illumination / Divine Favor combo being notable. When you max Illumination, it and Divine Favor will allow you to cast a free heal every two minutes and have that heal's effect automatically doubled, and that's just plain great! Improved Seal of Judgement goes well with the Improved Seal of the Crusader talent in the Retribution tree, as well as with Sanctity Aura.

Retribution

Retribution is the ability tree that will revolve around doing whole lots of damage to your enemies, and as this is an area where paladins often fall short of other melee classes, you'll want to use these skills to make up the difference when possible. The notable talents here include Seal of the Crusader, although moreso for its Judgement form than for the Seal itself. When you Judge an enemy with Crusader, you'll always deal a significantly larger amount of damage when you land any Holy damage on them. If you combine this with Seal of Righteousness or Seal of Command,

you should notice a significant increase in your DPS. Hammer of Justice is something you'll want to have close at hand, as it's your only surefire method for stunning enemies, and will thus let you interrupt spellcasting or trap an enemy as it runs. Retribution Aura is also a good choice if you don't need the armor bonus from Devotion Aura.

The Retribution talent tree includes most of the paladin's straightforward melee buffs, but will also let you Improve your most oft-used skills, including Seal of the Crusader. You can also allocate a single talent point to get Seal of Command, which effectively doubles your weapon damage every few swings. At high levels, Consecration can be a devastating AoE spell, and can greatly increase help your ability to draw in aggro, since it does damage to all nearby enemies.

Protection

As you might surmise from the name, Protection is the defensive branch of the paladin's skill base. The notable skills here include Devotion Aura, which gives all party members a big boost to their armor, the resistance Auras, which are great when you're going up against elemental spellcasters, Divine Protection/Shield, which will render you completely immune to damage for anywhere from six to ten seconds, and Blessing of Protection, which can be cast upon yourself or another party member to offer complete protection from physical damage for a short period of time. Those are the biggies, but there are plenty of other skills that you'll need to have shortcutted, such as Blessing of Salvation and Seal of Fury, which let you manage aggro while playing in groups.

The Protection talents are somewhat less than overwhelming, as many of the Improved spells come in the form of increased duration/decreased cooldown buffs, which are generally not as preferable as direct improvements to how a skill performs. You do get a few useful melee combat buffs, as well a few unique spells, including Blessing of Sanctuary, which directly reduces the amount of damage a Blessed party member takes (combined with Aura of Retribution, this can effect some sizable DPS swings in tough fights), and Holy Shield, which can be spam-cast during tough fights to greatly reduce the amount of damage you take and dish out a bit back to your target.

Shaman

Pros

- Very versatile class, with heals, good melee abilities, nukes, and instant-cast spells.

Cons

- Will rely on melee to deal damage much of the time, but can't wear as much armor or have as much health as exclusively-melee classes.

This Horde-exclusive class is focused on harnessing elemental magic to their bidding in combat. Shamans are somewhat like druids in that they meld melee abilities, ranged magic, and buffs and healing spells into one complete package.

As mentioned, shamen are elemental spellcasters, drawing on the power of earth, wind, fire, and

water to achieve their goals. In order to control the elemental forces, though, you'll need to acquire totems, powerful magical items which will allow you to, well, control elemental forces. These are acquired through the completion of shaman-specific quests. You can cast some spells of a particular elemental school without acquiring its totem, but many of them will be locked away from you until you do go through and complete your quests.

Indeed, the most distinctive Shaman spells will require you to access the totem items; these are the totem spells themselves. When you have an elemental totem in your inventory, you'll be able to cast totem spells from that element; you can cast up to four totems, one for each element, but you can only have one totem from each element active at a time. For example, if you have an Earth Totem and a Fire Totem in your backpack, then you could cast both a Searing Totem and an Earthbind Totem and have them be active at the same time, but you couldn't cast both an Earthbind Totem and a Strength of Earth Totem, since they're both from the Earth element. When you have all four totem items in your inventory, you'll be able to have four totems out at one time.

As mentioned, totems are unique to the shaman, in that they are spells that create small items on the battlefield (in the shape of a totem - are you getting sick of that word yet?) that can have a variety of effects, from direct damage against your enemies, to buffing your party, to debuffing your opponents. The one thing to remember is that Totems can be attacked by your enemies, which will prematurely end the effect, but in most PVE combat, this won't be much of a problem. If a Totem does get destroyed, though, they're easy to recast, and they're immune to most area-of-effect spells.

There are plenty of totems to choose from, giving shamans quite a bit of versatility in combat, making them one of the best soloing classes. Not to say that they aren't desired in groups, though; their combination of hard-hitting melee abilities, totem buffs, and heals/resurrections will certainly make it easy for you to find a party when you want one.

Solo PVE Technique

Being a shaman is to be good at soloing; that's just axiomatic. You can melee well, you can take hits, you can buff yourself, you have powerful offensive spells, you can heal yourself, etc. Your versatility will give you a huge advantage when it comes to soloing, as you can adjust your tactics as needed based on the circumstances.



Even-level mobs can be easily left in the dust with an Earthbind Totem.

In general, the soloing process for shamans doesn't vary much based on the type of mob. Hit yourself up with the best weapon buff you have available to you, then pull in a mob with a ranged attack spell. Drop whatever totems you require (Stoneskin and Healing Stream are usually the favorites, but mix and match as you like), then start pounding away with your weapon, casting Lesser Healing Wave and your instant-damage spells as necessary. Against enemies that flee, you can use Frost Shock or the Earthbind Totem to prevent them from escaping from combat.

When a battle appears unwinnable, you can also use Earthbind or Stoneclaw Totems to effect your own escape. Earthbind Totem slows the movement speed of any enemies, allowing you to outdistance them, while Stoneclaw will taunt enemies and attempt to draw them off of you. Since Totems are instant-cast, you can drop them behind you as you run, which will hopefully let you leave your enemy in the dust. Both of these effects can be resisted, though, so if you're going up against enemies that are a few levels higher than you, then you shouldn't expect these Totems to magically extract you from danger.

Group PVE Technique

In groups, shamans are great secondary healers, as you can use Lesser Healing Wave for spot healing, Healing Wave in emergencies, and Healing Spring Totem and Chain Heal to heal up multiple teammates at a go. You're also excellent at buffing, mostly through things like Stoneskin and Strength of Earth Totems, but you can pick any relevant Totem based on the situation.

Although shamans possess ranged magical attacks, you're going to deal most of your damage in

melee, thanks to your weapon buffs. Get in there with your warriors and rogues, then; if your team has a decent tank, you shouldn't have to worry too much about gaining aggro. After level 40, you can actually become a decent secondary tank, since you'll be able to upgrade to mail armor.

As with the paladin, shamans are something of a reset button when a fight goes bad. If it looks like your team is going to wipe, retreat under cover of Earthbind and return when the aggro's off to resurrect your teammates.

One-on-One PVP Technique

As a shaman, you have the ability to both cast offensive spells and melee, and you should divide your PVP tactics up appropriately, based on your target. Against casters and ranged classes, such as mages, priests, and hunters, you'll want to try and close in, using your melee abilities to dish out damage and interrupt their spellcasting. You have quite a few instant-cast damage spells which can be seamlessly integrated into your battle strategy, so use those liberally. Totems are also useful here, with Earthbind being good for preventing them from running, while Tremor and Grounding Totems can be used to avoid damage and status effects from spells.

Against melee classes, though, such as warriors, rogues, and paladins, the opposite tactic should be used; stay away from their heavy melee damage capabilities and use your ranged attacks to take them down. Your best friends here are the Earthbind Totem and Frost Shock, which will limit your opponent's speed and let you kite them while casting your nukes. If you do drop an Earthbind, try to kite around the edge of its radius of effect so that they can't easily run in and knock it out. (Most enemies won't go after your Totems, though, since they'll know how easy they are to cast.) You can also use your Searing Totem to passively deal damage to them while kiting them.

Tips

- Your Shocks are going to be your primary tools in PVP.
- Frost is great against melee opponents, as it'll allow you to kite them with your nukes.
- Use Earth against casters to interrupt their spells and temporarily silence them.
- Don't forget the Magma Totem, though; its near-constant damage will prevent rogues from stealthing.

Group PVP



It's relatively easy to drop a bunch of totems in important battles, so try to make sure that everyone can benefit from them by laying them near the center of the fight.

As in group PVE, your primary focus here is on healing. You'll want to avoid damage as much as possible, so running into melee range isn't advisable. You can, however, feel free to use your nukes against fragile enemies, such as mages and priests, as well as melee them if you happen to spot a good opportunity. Totems are just as useful in PVP as in PVE, so try to lay them down where they'll have maximal impact on either your frontline troops or those of the other team. Earthbind (which, if you haven't gotten clued in yet, is good in just about every situation) can screw up enemy positioning or prevent weakened melee participants from retreating.

Tips

- You can use your Purge spell to eliminate the popular priest spell Power Word: Shield from melee participants, allowing your melee teammates to kill them off much more quickly.

Equipment

Shaman equipment can usually be emphasized into one of three areas, depending on your playing style and talent allocation.

- Casting Specialization: Magic-heavy shamans will want to focus on getting large bonuses to Intellect and Spirit, as well as finding items that increase their healing or offensive magical spells.

- **Melee Specialization:** Strength, Stamina, Agility, and pure armor become more important for shamans who focus on using their weapons.
- **The Balanced Approach:** If you want to achieve maximum flexibility, then, well, you'll have to balance out your stat bonuses between a number of stats. This is kind of liberating, in that any piece of equipment will be useful, but can also be difficult to manage.

Luckily, you're not locked into one of these roles; feel free to switch out your equipment for different stat emphases if you find that your approach isn't working for you.

For weapons, most shamans go for a shield and a one-handed weapon to increase their defense. If you intend to go for a melee build, though, then you do have the option of using a two-handed mace or axe for extra damage.

Abilities and Talents

Elemental Combat

Elemental Combat is the domain of the shaman that chooses to let his spells do the talking. Most of your direct-damage spells are here, including your instant-cast nukes that you'll be using so often in combat, but you also have a number of non-damaging, yet still useful spells, such as the oft-mentioned Earthbind Totem. As you play through to the middle levels of your character's lifespan, you'll get a feel for whether you want to emphasize the direct-damage spells that are available to you, in which case you'll want to soak your talents into this tree, or whether you prefer to go for a more emphatic approach with your weapons, in which case you're more likely to favor Enhancement.

The Elemental Combat talents are straightforward and, if not tremendously exciting, then at least useful in a utilitarian fashion. There are, of course, a number of Improved versions of spells, with a few that will let you decrease your mana cost or increase the chances of a critical hit with a spell, which are plainly useful for the distance-casting shaman. Most of the Improved totems, on the other hand, have underwhelming effects, so you may not want to invest in those. At the high end of the talent tree, you have the Elemental Fury/Elemental Mastery talents, which, when combined, will give you a 100% chance to deal triple damage on your next offensive spell, which is great for opening a fight or finishing off a wounded enemy in PVP.

Enhancement

Enhancement, as the name implies, is the buffing branch of the shaman's ability tree, with most of the spells here focusing on increasing your attacking ability with weapons or increasing your defensive capabilities via Totem spells. There are a lot of great spells available here, including the useful Lightning Shield, which will punish physical attackers if you can recast it often, and the must-have Ghost Wolf, which lets you travel 40% faster when you access it at level 20.

Enhancement talents are mostly focused towards passive buffs to your weapon and defensive abilities, with bonuses to your Defense stat, armor, and critical strike chances. Some of these talents, such as Two-Handed Maces and Axes, and Parry, are the equivalent to the skills of traditional melee classes, such as warriors and paladins; you're effectively penalized by having to allocate a talent slot to these abilities rather than paying gold for them, but that's the shakes.

Restoration

Not much to say about the Restoration tree; most of the abilities here mirror those of priests, with a number of healing options and disease/debuff removers. All shamans will want to have these spells packed away close at hand. The one aspect of healing that shamans don't have access to is a Renew-type spell that heals over time; all of their healing spells take the form of one big lump of healing, save for the Healing Spring Totem.

Again, a cursory glance at the talent tree here will give you an idea of what you're in store for; if you choose to sink your talents into the Restoration tree, then you can easily become a primary healer in any group, as these talents will reduce the casting time and mana required for your healing spells, give you a better chance for critical effects, and increase their general efficacy. One of the best unique talents available to shamans is Nature's Swiftess, which will let you cast a Healing Wave instantaneously; use this if yourself or a teammate needs an immediate burst of health. If you intend to play in groups more often than solo, then Restoration is a great tree to specialize in.

Druid

Pros

- Another versatile class, which can take on the role of warrior, rogue, or secondary healer in a group.
- Shapeshifting makes for a diverse gameplay experience.

Cons

- Lack of specialization means that they don't excel at any one thing.

The druid class is something of a jack of all trades, but in a different way than the shaman. Like the shaman, it incorporates melee abilities into an offensive/healing spellcasting class, but instead of including totems as a way of buffing your party and debuffing your enemies, the druid is able to shapeshift into bear and cat forms. In effect, this allows the druid to take on the role of either a warrior tank (in bear form) or of a rogue damage dealer (in cat form), in addition to the secondary healer/offensive spellcaster in your humanoid shape.

Of course, there are some limitations to these abilities, the most telling of which is that you can't cast your normal druid spells while shapeshifted. You'll only have a few core abilities to use while shapeshifted, which are generally similar to those of the classes that the shape matches; the cat form even uses the same combo point/finisher system as rogues do. Of course, you shouldn't expect to be quite as good at the warrior or rogue roles as an actual warrior or rogue would be - you don't get any skills that correspond to the Taunt or Sap abilities of those classes, for instance - but you can still stand in for one of them in a pinch.

Solo PVE Technique

Druids have good survivability in one-on-one PVE combat, provided you choose your targets

effectively. Pure melee classes, such as opposing humanoid warriors, can be troublesome for druids, as you won't have the kind of armor and health required to really stand up to a beating, at least not in your humanoid form; you may want to switch over to Bear form when going up against high-damage/high-health targets.

While in humanoid form, though, there's a very basic series of steps that will see you through most combat. After spotting a target, you'll get its attention with Wrath or Starfire (long-cast nukes), follow up with Moonfire (insta-cast DoT) and perhaps Faerie Fire (insta-cast armor reduction), then go melee. You can reduce the amount of relative damage you take both with Thorns (which deals damage to your enemies each time they attack you) and Rejuvenation, an insta-cast regeneration spell. All of this should let you enter combat while the enemy has a bit of life taken off, is bleeding extra because of the Moonfire DoT (which you can recast as often as you like) and because of Thorns, and while you're gaining life because of Rejuvenation. This should help balance out the fact that you won't deal as much damage and have to wear lighter armor than pure melee classes.

Group PVE Technique



If your group is good at managing aggro, then feel free to get up next to your enemies and go to town with a melee weapon...

In group, your role will usually be to use your healing and offensive spells from the rear lines, in addition to making sure that your teammates are properly buffed with Mark of the Wild and Thorns. As mentioned, though, you have your bear and cat forms available to you; if you have

adequate mage/priest/shaman presence in a party, you can use either of those to act as an off tank or to increase your damage output.

One-on-One PVP Technique

Solo PVP is one of the areas in which the cat form can really come in handy, mostly due to your stealth ability, which will let you sneak up on an enemy while he or she is engaging someone else and use your Ravage move for super opening damage. After you're in combat, you can either continue on with a cat combo or switch back to humanoid form for spells or to bear form for extra health and armor. You really do rely on a large initial burst of damage, though, as you won't be able to out-damage a rogue or mage or out-last a warrior or paladin; solo PVP is one of the areas in which you pay for your versatility, unfortunately.

Group PVP

As with shamans, your primary role here will be to sit back, heal your teammates (using Rejuvenation on whomever is currently taking the brunt of the damage) and use your offensive spells to dish out damage to whomever your party's primary target seems to be. As with a rogue, you will be able to use your cat form to get behind the enemies and hit 'em where it hurts, but you can expect opposing hunters to tag you with Hunter's Mark to prevent you from doing so, especially when there aren't any rogues on your side of the playing field, so get stealthed quickly if you intend to pull this off. This will often be a self-sacrificing move, as any rear-line enemies will quickly turn to kill you, and without the Vanish ability of a rogue, you aren't going to be able to do much to prevent this. If you can find a target that's sufficiently isolated, though, you'll probably be able to take them down before needing to retreat.

One of the notable talent setups for PVP druids is with a full loadout in Nature's Grasp and Improved Nature's Grasp. If you soak five talents into these abilities, you will be able to immediately root anyone who enters into melee range with you, with a 100% chance of success. Even if you don't go with the full five points, you'll still have a good chance of eventually rooting your enemy, which will let you engage at a range, switch over to your travel form to escape, heal yourself, or what have you. Roots are huge in PVP, and although the talent isn't quite as useful in PVE combat, it's definitely worth a look if you're on a PVP server.

Equipment



...Of course, sometimes discretion is the better part of valor, such as when facing off against the big hurt here.

Your versatility here is both a blessing and a curse; if you find yourself using all of your various forms, you'll likely want to get a bit of everything so that you're not crippled when you find yourself having to shift from Bear to Cat to humanoid. Each form has its own peculiar stat emphasis: Bears will want strength and stamina, Cats will need high Agility, and spellcasting humanoid forms will need high intellect and spirit to keep from running out of mana. On the plus side, you'll be able to use almost anything that comes along for this reason; on the bad side, if you specialize in stats for a particular form, you might find yourself having problems when you need to use another form.

Since so much of the druid spellbook revolves around the Nature element, be on the lookout for staves and other items that add to Nature damage or healing effects.

Abilities and Talents

Balance

Your two most-used spells here are going to be Thorns and Moonfire. The Druid is one of the few classes that gets two long-timer buff spells that can be cast on any teammate, and you're going to want to make sure that everyone gets Thorns on them, and then refresh it every ten minutes or so. Although it may appear to be a minimal amount of damage, it's effectively free, and it does add up, especially against opponents who attack quickly. You can even cast this on the pets of your hunter and warlock teammates!

Moonfire is one of the game's best DoTs, in our opinion, if only because it's an insta-cast effect. While it doesn't do as much damage as Immolate, its instacastability lets you easily slip it in during any kind of combat, or use it to tap a monster in an area where a bunch of people are fighting for spawns. It makes a great way to open up a fight regardless, especially when an enemy's a good distance away from you; use it to get their attention, then cast a longer casting-time spell like Starfire or Wrath, then refresh the Moonfire as needed while you engage in melee combat. It does a bit of up-front damage, like the Warlock's Immolate ability, so you can even use it for a killing blow on an enemy that's running after losing most of its health.

So far as the talents go, as per usual, you'll need to decide which are going to be most useful to you based on your own gameplay experiences. We found that things that boosted the above spells were usually the best choice, so things like Improved Moonfire, Improved Thorns, Moonglow, and Moonfury were high on our list of things to go after, but there are obviously plenty of talents relating to other spells in the tree. One easy choice for almost any player is Omen of Clarity, which can easily be recast when it runs out and will occasionally let you cast a spell for zero mana, and all at the low cost of one talent point.

Feral Combat

The Feral Combat spell tree is at least a bit more understandable at a glance than other spell trees, since they're simple abilities, for the most part, that work with either your Cat or Bear forms. There are a lot of abilities here, though, which will make for some expensive level-ups if you actually tend to use your other forms fairly often. If you can afford to, though, you'll want to get all of the abilities here, as they'll make your shapeshifting forms that much more usable.

The Feral Combat talents, though, are where you're going to have to make some difficult decisions, especially if you find yourself nearly splitting your time between shapeshifted forms for combat and humanoid form for healing in groups. Unfortunately, most of the talents are only applicable to one kind of shapeshifting or the other, with only a few talents (such as Sharpened Claws) affecting both. This may let you specialize in one form or another, if you find yourself using one much more than the other, but it also means that, if you split your talent points more or less evenly, then you'll only gain the benefits of half of them at a time. Since talent points are so valuable, this is definitely a case of waiting until you get a feel for how you're most often going to be playing the class before allocating your points.

Restoration

As with most healing trees, the Restoration tree isn't too difficult to figure out. Instead of emphasizing straight healing, though, druids are going to find themselves emphasizing regeneration abilities (meaning healing spells that heal over time, rather than in one quick burst), such as Regrowth and Rejuvenation. While these aren't abilities that you want to whip out when your tank is about to die (Healing Touch is better for that, long casting time notwithstanding), but they're great to cast during the early portions of a fight to staunch some of the wounds that your tanks are suffering from. Rejuvenation is particularly handy for this purpose, as it's an insta-cast ability and will spread out its healing over 12 seconds, thus lowering the chances that you'll shift aggro due to its effects.

Although the healing effects aren't going to rival those of a priest, the mere fact that you have them (as well as a resurrection ability after level 20), will let you act as a decent secondary healer

in busy instances. The Mark of the Wild buff here is also useful, even though it has a minor effect on a bunch of different things (to mirror the druid's overall efficacy) when compared to the buffs of a mage or priest, which have a huge bonus to a single stat.

The Restoration talent tree is rather odd, in that it appears to be a receptacle for some of the shapeshifting talents that there wasn't quite enough room for in Feral Combat. Those aside, there are some decent talents here that are worth investing in if you spend most of your time healing teammates. There are Improved versions of all of your core healing spells, of course, but don't overlook Gift of Nature, which gives a boost to all of your healing spells in one fell swoop, and Nature's Swiftness, which lets you cast a Healing Touch spell with zero casting time once every three minutes.

Hunter

Pros

- Can use a pet to distract enemies while dealing damage from a distance.
- The only class with Auto-Shoot, which lets them shoot continuously without having to continually tap a button.

Cons

- One of the weakest classes health-wise, and can't use their weapons at point-blank range. Almost useless while meleeing.

Ah, the Hunter. When you choose to be a member of this mighty clan, you're setting yourself up for a play experience quite unlike that of any other class in World of Warcraft. The Hunter combines the strengths of melee classes and those of ranged classes into one powerful package. It isn't the easiest class to play, but being a Hunter will allow you to use ranged weapons more effectively than another class, and will let you tame monsters that you encounter in the game world to use as a pet. In essence, you get to be both a tank and a DPS character, but you'll pay for this by having to manage two characters in battle.



The proper place for a hunter: well outside the combat, dishing out hurt with his or her bow or gun from a distance.

As you start your adventuring career, you'll have to venture out into the world with naught but a bow or a gun as your weapon of choice. For the first ten levels, you'll need to be backed up by a powerful melee weapon; bows and guns can't be fired at enemies after they close to point-blank range, which means that you'll only have time to get off two or three shots at most enemies before they manage to get into melee range.

At level ten, though, you'll gain the ability to summon pets, which will be a major part of your arsenal from then on. When you do manage to train a pet, you'll be able to command it in battle by telling it to attack your targeted enemy, stay in one spot, stop attacking, or even use its special abilities. Since your pet will help keep enemies at a distance from you, you'll be far more capable of soloing if you pick a powerful pet and bring it along. They won't do a huge amount of damage to your enemies, but they will be able to hold aggro and keep it, thanks to their Growl command.

Pet Basics

Hunter pets are a fantastic help while soloing, but they also come with a lot of little bars and readouts that can sometimes make them confusing when you first obtain one. Here's a few definitions that will hopefully make things a bit more easy for you.

Loyalty Level: This varies from level one to level seven; higher ranks mean that the pet is more loyal to you. This doesn't seem to affect any kind of gameplay mechanics, but each time a pet levels up his or her loyalty, it'll gain more training points. You can increase a pet's loyalty by

keeping it well fed and at its maximum happiness level (where a green smiley face icon shows next to its health readout). If it's a happy pet, it will increase its loyalty automatically, even while you're sitting around doing nothing, so try to keep your pets well fed.

Training Points: Your pet will need training points in order to learn abilities, such as the various Growls. A new pet will start out with zero training points, but will quickly earn more as you level up its loyalty by keeping it fed.



Pets used to be really big (and we mean really big), but Blizzard eventually started shrinking them after their capture. This was done so that they didn't interfere with targeting in group play.

Happiness: Your pet's happiness indicates how much loyalty it's gaining and how much damage it'll deal in combat. A Happy pet will quickly earn loyalty and will deal 125% of its normal damage in combat; if you can, keep your pet at this level. A Content pet will do 100% of damage in combat, and earn loyalty at a normal rate. An Unhappy pet will do 75% of damage in combat, and will actually lose loyalty over time, so be sure to feed it if you spot this level! A pet will lose happiness naturally over time, when it's Dismissed, or when it dies.

Energy: Pets use a rogue-like system of energy for their combat abilities. Growl, the most basic ability, doesn't require much energy, but Bite and Claw will both drop your pet's energy fairly quickly, so you may not want to keep these abilities on auto-cast mode during long fights.

Experience: Your pet will earn experience, just as you do. It can reach a level equivalent to

yours, but will then stop earning experience until you gain another level, meaning that it will often be a level below you. Pets seem to be subject to the same decreased accuracy as you are when fighting mobs several levels higher than they are, and their Growls are similarly more likely to be resisted, so be careful when using a low-level pet!

Stabling: You can stable a pet at any time you wish, by purchasing a stable slot from the Stable Master outside any inn, save those in the capital cities. When you have a slot, you can place your current pet in it, then go out and tame another one, usually for the purpose of learning new pet skills, then switch back later on.

Renaming and Abandoning: If you right-click on your pet's health bar portrait while it's by your side, you will be able to either rename it or abandon it. Renaming can be performed once per pet, after which you won't be able to change it again, so pick something good! Abandoning a pet will permanently dismiss it; you can't get a pet back after you abandon it, although you can tame another pet of the same sort and start all over again.

Pet Abilities: Thus far, there are four pet combat abilities in the game. The easiest one to obtain is Growl; this is purchasable from Pet Trainers, which are often found near Hunter Trainers. When used in combat, the mob your pet is focusing on will continue to attack it, even if you start dishing out a lot of damage. You should always have the highest rank of Growl available to your pet, and should always have it on autocast. (You can toggle autocast by right-clicking on it on your pet's ability bar.)

The other three pet abilities are Claw, Bite, and Cower. These come in various ranks, with lower ranks being less effective than the higher ranks. You can't purchase these abilities; you have to find them by taming beasts in the wilderness. Bear enemies will usually have some rank of Claw, spider enemies will usually have some rank of Bite, and striders or big cats (panthers, tigers, lions, etc.) will generally have Cower. Bite and Claw are straightforward; they let your pet deal extra damage by burning extra energy. Cower is the opposite of Growl, in that it will actually reduce the amount of threat your pet is earning in combat, and as such is pretty much worthless in almost any conceivable situation.

After you find a pet with one of these abilities, take it into combat and kill a few mobs with it; eventually you'll learn the ability yourself and will be able to train your original pet with it. If you switch back to your older pet, you can hit P to bring up your abilities menu, find the Pet Training ability, and use that to train the new ability to your pet. Then you can flip over to the Pet tab and drag the ability down to your pet's combat menu.

PVE Technique

In PVE, Hunters have to be rather deliberate in their engagement of mobs. Although a Hunter and Pet duo will have around as much HP as a same-level Warrior, you'll still be much more vulnerable to damage if you don't properly manage aggro and watch your adds.



If an enemy closes in on you, don't hesitate to Wing Clip and run.

The typical sequence of events when engaging a mob is to send your pet in first, so that it can get the initial aggro (which is usually the most powerful), and then top it with an immediate Growl to ensure that the mob is locked on nice and tight. If you've had the same level of Growl for a while (you only get one every ten levels, remember), you might notice that it becomes less effective as you level up, and you might want to wait for your pet to growl twice before you let loose your arrows, or just be a little more conservative with the Arcane Shots. Even after your pet seems to have a mob locked up, you can still knock its aggro over to you by dishing out too much damage, which is easy to accomplish when you're a Hunter.

However, you shouldn't be too worried about having a solo enemy transfer over to you, unless it's a devastatingly powerful melee opponent. Against normal mobs that are close to your level, your pet should be able to hold aggro long enough for you to get a Serpent Sting and a few Arcane Shots off, as well as numerous normal arrows. In most cases, even if the mob does transfer to you, it'll be close enough to death that you should be able to finish it off with your melee weapon and whatever damage your pet is doing. If you actively anticipate the monster transferring, lay down an Immolation trap ahead of time and lure the enemy over it for a quicker finish.

Problems arise when you draw in more enemies than you can handle. Unfortunately, you won't be able to soak up as much damage as a Warrior or a Paladin will be able to, due to your diminutive HP reserves and your light armor, so if you find that a battle's getting out of hand, don't hesitate to sacrifice your pet and get the heck out of dodge. Your pet can aggro as many enemies as you like, and he should be able to capture them easily if you tell him to attack a mob that you yourself haven't damaged yet, but he'll die quickly when facing off against two or more mobs that are his

level or higher. Better him than you, however; your pet can be quickly summoned back when it dies, but you'll be required to make an oft-lengthy run from a graveyard when you yourself perish. If you manage to get your pet to aggro all hostile mobs, though, you can often prevent its death by running away from the combat as quickly as possible. After you get 100 yards or so away, the pet will disappear from your radar, and you'll be able to resummon it without having it die.

Group Technique

In groups, a Hunter is intended solely to deal damage, and lots of it. With a good warrior along, you won't have to worry about transferring aggro back to yourself, so feel free to go crazy with the special arrows like Scorpion Sting! Just be sure that you're picking the proper target; use the /assist command to automatically flip over to what your warrior or paladin is attacking.

One thing to consider in group combat is whether or not you bring your pet along. Since pets are miniaturized versions of their mob counterparts, they shouldn't get in your teammates' way, but if you do choose to use a pet in combat, you have to control it precisely, especially in instanced dungeons, where they can sometimes draw in unintentional aggro. When used well, though, your pet can be a subsidiary tank, able to draw the attention of a mob and hold it while your group focuses on someone else. It's best to poll your group members before you set out on a quest to see what their preferences are; if they resoundingly tell you that you shouldn't bring it along, then don't.

One-on-One PVP Technique



Your ability to negate stealth is huge when dealing with rogues or druids. Don't forget that these latter can enter stealth mode while in Cat form!

Hunters have a difficult time in one-on-one PVP due to their poor defensive capabilities and low HP totals, and because of the minimum distance error that they get when they try to shoot someone at point blank range; if your enemy closes on you, you won't be able to do much except whip out your melee weapon and use the underwhelming skills available to you for that. Unfortunately, no other class has a minimum range restriction, so any mage worth his salt will try to get in close and use instant-cast spells to whittle away at your life. Your pet is usually irrelevant in these battles, as human opponents are immune to Growl, obviously, and will shrug off the low damage that a pet deals and focus exclusively on you.

That said, you do have a few tools at your disposal to help you out, especially against stealthing enemies. Hunter's Mark is worth using on hostile PCs when you spot them, but you have to consider that, although Mark does no damage, most players will consider it to be a hostile act and will attack you, even if they had planned to just pass you by. This is because Hunter's Mark is really annoying; having a big red arrow bouncing over your head for ten minutes isn't something that anyone really enjoys. Against most enemies, then, you'll probably want to hold off on the Mark unless the enemy is making a beeline for you or is otherwise indicating that they plan to attack. Even if you get creamed, the knowledge that your enemy will have a big arrow over their head for the next ten minutes can dull the pain a bit. (Paladins and Priests can remove the Mark easily, so the annoyance factor for them is somewhat reduced.)

In PVP, Mark is really intended to be used against stealthing enemies, like Rogues and Druids. If you spot a hostile member of these classes, it's usually better to Mark first and ask questions later. As noted, though, this has the side effect of really cheesing off your target, so if you don't think you'll be able to take them down, you might want to start proceeding in the opposite direction as quickly as possible. While your enemy is Marked, though, you'll be able to spot them on your minimap, so you should at least be able to tell whether or not they're following you.

Two other notable skills for PVP are Wing Clip and Rapid Fire. Wing Clip is really your only chance to escape from melee combat; when it hits an opponent, they'll be slowed to 50% of their normal movement speed for ten seconds, which will let you run away a bit and get off another Scorpion Sting and Arcane Shot. With it, you can kite melee characters somewhat and get in more damage via your Sting arrows; when facing off against mana-using characters, you might want use Viper Sting instead of Scorpion Sting to drain away their mana and prevent them from casting spells. In cases of extreme duress, you can use Wing Clip on your enemy as the preface to an out-and-out retreat. Most classes won't have a response to it, except for Warriors, who will usually exchange the favor with a Hamstring; and if this occurs, you're going to die unless the Warrior is a much lower level than you.

Next up is Rapid Fire. If you can get the drop on an enemy, such as by attacking them while they're preoccupied with a monster, Rapid Fire can put the fight out of reach for them right quick, as it lets you fire 40% more quickly for fifteen seconds, or, put in other terms, will let you do 40% more damage for 15 seconds. The big trick here is keeping them at firing range for most of that fifteen minutes; there isn't much you can do here except to open fire from maximum range, immediately use Concussion Shot, and send in your pet in the hopes that they'll be distracted by

it.

Group PVP

In group PVP, your task is simple: deal damage. In all honesty, there isn't all that much else you can do in group PVP, so focus on your strengths! Besides wailing away with your Stings, though, you should also try to keep any Rogues in the opposing forces tagged with Hunter's Mark, and Flare them if they happen to near your party or start to creep around to your rear.



In group PVP, try to keep a low profile; you won't be able to do much if a rogue or warrior manages to close in on you.

You shouldn't need to be told to stay behind your tanks, so we won't insult you by repeating that advice. If possible, though, you might want to rush up to the front and tag someone on the opposite line with one of your Stings; hitting Mages with a Viper Sting can be really handy way to knock them out of a long battle, or force them to withdraw while their mana regens. Other than that, though, try to drive people crazy with your Hunter's Mark, or focus on helping out your Warriors by using Scorpion Sting on their targets.

Equipment

Hunters gain extra damage from both strength and agility, but agility should be what you focus on, as its side benefits are much more useful to you than those of strength. Namely, the ability to get more critical hits will increase your damage output even more, while the increased dodging

will help you out when you get into sticky melee situations. The rest of the stats will be less critical, although stamina can definitely help you out, especially in PVP.

Since you're going to be rarely engaging in melee combat, you can emphasize stat increases on your weapons instead of pure damage. Since you can dual-wield weapons, you can get plenty of stat increases from these slots, but you don't want to spend all of your cash here; focus on your armor and ranged weapons.

Abilities and Talents

Beast Mastery

Most of these abilities are, oddly enough, related to the mastery of beasts, in that they'll contain spells that will heal your pet, scare away mob beasts, and so on. The most commonly-used abilities in Beast Mastery, though, will be your Aspects, of which Aspect of the Hawk (increased ranged damage) and Aspect of the Cheetah (increased movement speed) are the most useful.

Of the talents in Beast Mastery, there are a few that will come in handy, especially Improved Aspect of the Hawk, which, luckily is available at tier one. Since every Hunter will usually have Aspect of the Hawk up during combat, this is a great talent to invest in. The rest of them mostly focus on pet buffs (increasing their damage, armor, health, etc.), which you'll probably want to hold off on until you get an idea of how useful your pets are in general. Although having a superpet might sound like a good idea, any talents invested here will prevent you from increasing your own combat skills in the Marksmanship talent tree, so you'll want to examine both trees carefully before deciding how to invest your talent points.

Marksmanship

Marksmanship is the ability tree that deals with enhancing the Hunter's natural prowess with ranged weapons. You have a lot of spells and skills in this tree, but the standbys are going to be: Hunter's Mark, which helps you increase your attack power on a target (and lets you see enemy rogues after they stealth); Arcane Shot, which is an instant-cast extra attack that can be seamlessly inserted into your normal sequence of attacks; and Serpent Sting, which adds a DoT effect that will sap even more health from your target during combat.

Unless they get drastically nerfed, Marksmanship talents are where you want to be spending almost all of your talent points. Almost all of these are simple buffs, which might not have a drastic effect on the way you play, but which will let you deal much more damage with your ranged weapons and your Marksmanship skills. The obvious ones here are Improved Hunter's Mark, Serpent Sting, and Arcane Shot, as well as Ranged Weapon Specialization, all of which taken together should let you be an absolute DPS machine, and which will let you get along without a pet much more effectively in groups.

Survival

Survival can be roughly split into three groups: tracking abilities, melee abilities, and traps.

The tracking abilities are just baldly useful, especially the first two variants that you get, Track Beasts and Track Humanoids. These are free, unlimited-time skills that will pop up their targets onto your minimap; e.g. when you have Track Beasts active, all beast-class enemies will appear as

dots on your minimap. Track Humanoids is great when you're in areas that are densely populated by mobs, as it will help prevent you from accidentally backing into another mob, and can give you an idea when another player on a PVP server is moving towards your position (human players tend to move more quickly than mobs). You can mouse over the dots on your minimap to get a name for each target. These can't be active at the same time as Find Herbs or Find Minerals, though.

Traps can be quite useful for soloing or crowd control in group combat. You can only place these out of combat, though, so you'll need to plan ahead when using them. The two notable traps here are Immolation Trap, which will give you a good amount of extra damage should an enemy approach you (especially useful when you're unsure of your pet's ability to hold aggro), and Freezing Trap, which will freeze an enemy for a while, letting your party deal with other threats. Explosive Trap is going to be rarely used, as you won't be facing off against multiple mobs in solo play very often, and it has a tendency to draw in a lot of aggro onto you in group PVE. Frost Trap can be useful to prevent enemies from running away, but in group PVE that shouldn't be your beat anyway.

Your melee abilities are going to be rarely used; simply put, you should rarely be using your melee weapon after you gain your pet at level 10. Wing Clip is going to be the most useful of these, as it'll afford you time to get out of harm's way when a melee opponent closes in on you; this should be your standard opener when dealing with a PVP melee attacker.

Although you may find your Survival skills useful, you're unlikely to want to spend even a single talent point here, as most of them deal with melee weapon buffs. If you're using a melee weapon often enough to consider buffing your abilities with talents, then you're ignoring the whole *raison d'être* of the hunter class, which involves dealing massive amounts of damage at range. Even if you soak all of your talents into the melee buffs of the survival tree, you're still going to be a poor imitation of a warrior, at the very best, in which case you might as well just play as a warrior!

Professions

There are nine different professions in World of Warcraft, roughly divided in number between collection abilities and crafting abilities. Collection abilities will let you travel out into the game world and gather the raw materials that you'll need to create items with your crafting ability. Note that some of the crafting abilities, notably Tailoring and Enchanting, have no associated collection abilities; you'll collect the items required by these crafting abilities as you normally play the game.

The process of advancing your skills in these professions is relatively straightforward. For the collection abilities, you'll skill up as you collect more items, which will allow you to collect more advanced materials. As you continue to skill up, though, you'll find that only the most advanced materials will gain you any skill points. For instance, when you first start out with mining, you'll get your skill points from collecting copper ore, but after you get your mining skill up to 65, you'll have to switch over to tin, since copper will rarely or never give you any extra skill points. (You can feel free to continue to collect copper, of course, since you'll probably still need it for your recipes.) The same system is in place for your crafting professions, of course; in order to increase your skill here, you'll have to constantly be buying new recipes from your trainers and using them

to create more advanced items.



Watch out for enemy mages, who have the ability to Polymorph you! They'll usually cast a damage spell immediately afterwards, though, which cancels the effect.

All of this is color-coded in such a way as to tell you what your chances are of skilling up with a profession. If you're attempting to collect a resource, or create a new recipe, it'll appear with a certain color corresponding to its difficulty. Red means that the resource or recipe is currently beyond your abilities, and you can't even attempt it; orange means that collecting the resource or making the recipe will definitely give you a skill point; yellow means you have a good chance of skilling up, but it's not guaranteed; green means you're unlikely to skill up, but you might; and grey means that you have no chance to skill up from the action.

Note, though, that you cannot fail while crafting an item. You can "fail" in a collection if it's at the limit of your abilities (when this occurs, just try the collection again and you'll eventually succeed), but you can't fail in a crafting. If you have the required ingredients for a recipe and whatever else you need to proceed (e.g. an anvil for a blacksmithing recipe), then you will always successfully craft the item. You can't fail a crafting and lose the ingredients you've collected, in other words, as you can in many other MMORPG's.

Training In Professions

You have a maximum of two professions available to your character; this will usually consist of a collection ability and its related crafting ability, but you can feel free to mix and match as you like.

Some players choose two collection abilities, then sell off what they find at the auction house, for example, for other crafters to make use of. If you try out a profession and decide you don't like it, then open up your character screen (with the C button), go to the "Skills" tab, select the profession, and click on the small X button to the right of the skill level indicator. This will let you delete the profession, but be sure you want to do so before you do it! If you change your mind later on, you'll have to start your profession all the way over at skill level one.

When you've made up your mind about a profession, then you'll have to find a trainer to get you started. There are usually going to be one or two random trainers in the second town your character comes to, but if you want a full selection, you'll need to head to one of the capital cities. After around level 10, you'll usually be given a quest that will take you to one of these cities, so head on in and ask a guard for the location of the trainer in the profession you've chosen. They'll give you a vague text description of their location, but will also mark it on your map, so head there and start your new job. Training in professions is free, but it will cost money to learn new recipes.

In addition to the recipes that you can buy from your trainers, there are also rare and powerful recipes that only come in the form of treasure drops from monsters. If you find or buy (from the auction house) a recipe that you can use, then all you need to do is right click on it to add it to your repertoire. This destroys the scroll that the recipe comes on, though, so be sure you're actually going to use the recipe before you learn it!

Lastly, note that professions are entirely optional; they might get you a bit more money or some items here and there, but it's not necessary to have a trade to enjoy the game.

Alchemy

Alchemy is one of those professions that's suitable for almost any class, as there are plenty of potions to be made, with a wide variety of effects. Using the herbs you gather from your herbalism collection skill and empty vials that are purchaseable at any trade skill vendor, you'll be able to get your fix as often as you like.

Of course, the most alluring aspect of Alchemy will be the ability to make healing and mana potions, since these aren't available for purchase in stores. In addition to these straightforward concoctions, though, there are plenty of other delectable treats in store, from stat-buffing potions, to regeneration potions, to damage-absorbing potions, and so on. All of these have only temporary benefits, but they can still be useful when you're heading into a tough fight or into an instanced dungeon. In addition, you will eventually be able to transmute metal bars from one sort to another, or even the high-end elemental essences, which will let you more easily obtain the reagents required for your potions.

One thing to note is that alchemy isn't a big money-making profession. Although you can sell or auction potions to other players and they can use them freely, most people aren't willing to pay a huge amount of money for items that will only grant them temporary buffs.

Blacksmithing



Chipmunk god or no, Ironforge is the center of the Alliance blacksmithing industry; this is where you can pick up blacksmith-exclusive quests.

After you've managed to get ore up out of the ground and have converted it into bars at a forge, you'll be ready to create arms and armor with your blacksmithing ability. Blacksmithing is unique in that it's one of the only professions that's capable of creating weapons, and indeed that's one of the biggest draws of it. In addition to plenty of armor that'll be rolling off of your anvil, you're going to be able to create daggers, swords, maces, axes, and plenty of other varieties of weapons. Many of these won't be as good as the weapons that you're likely going to be finding, at least through the early portions of the profession, but if you stick with it until you reach the higher-level crafting, you're going to be able to make a host of blue weapons, such as the coveted Truesilver and Arcanite Champions, which are exceedingly difficult to find the ingredients for, but which will make you well-respected in your guild, or just obscenely wealthy when you put them up for auction.

The main drawback to Blacksmithing is that there aren't many support items that can be created with it, meaning that you'll mostly be rolling out weapons and armor that you have no intention of using, just to increase your skill level. There are a few useful items, of course, such as Mithril Spurs, which can increase the speed of a mount, and the various Whetstones and Sharpstones, which can increase the damage dealt by a weapon for up to half an hour, but much of what you create will be outclassed by the items you find or obtain via questing. You can earn a good amount of money by custom crafting for guild members, or placing hard-to-create items up on auction, but until you reach the upper levels of the profession, you're probably not going to be making many items for yourself.

Enchanting

Enchanting is one of the few professions that is completely self-contained; there's no collection profession to learn alongside it, which makes it a popular choice to pair up with tailoring. If you do decide to become an enchanter, then you'll be able to permanently upgrade armor and weapons with sometimes substantial bonuses. Of course, at the earlier levels of the skill, you're going to be enchanting stuff just to be enchanting it, as the bonuses are fairly insignificant (+1 to all resistances, +5 to mana, etc.); it isn't until you significantly increase your abilities that you'll start seeing the stat increasing or +X damage enchants. This can make it frustrating to level up, but once you do gain some of the higher-level enchanting recipes, you can at least make a bit of money by offering your wares in the general chat of a major city.

Of course, if it was easy to be an enchanter, then everyone would do it. Unfortunately, it isn't as simple as just putting your hands on an item and magically making it better - as with most professions, you're going to need to have reagents before you can cast your enchantments. The trick here is that these reagents can only be found by disenchanting high quality items, i.e. anything green, blue, or (god forbid) purple.

After you train into the lowest level of enchanting, you'll automatically obtain the Disenchant skill; when you use this on a green or higher-quality item in your inventory, you'll destroy the item and gain one or more enchanting reagents, such as Soul Dust, Magic Essences, Astral Essences, or so on. Like items, enchanting reagents come in various rarities, with higher-quality items more likely to be disenchanted into the rarer reagents. Of course, the more powerful enchants will usually require the rare reagents, which are the toughest ones to find, since the blue items that will yield them when disenchanted are themselves tough to come by. If you plan on being a serious enchanter, then, you'd be advised to get yourself into a lot of instanced dungeon runs and roll on any green or blue items that the other members of your party don't need; you'll find a lot more of them while doing these dungeons than you will while running around in the overworld.

In fact, one of the reasons that tailoring goes well with enchanting is that many of the items you make with tailoring can be immediately disenchanted to provide more reagents. All an item needs to be is green or blue to be disenchanted, and many of the tailoring recipes you receive as you skill up that profession will at least be green. In this fashion, you can continue to increase your tailoring abilities while providing the reagents needed to simultaneously progress in your enchanting skills.

Engineering

Engineering is a more circumscribed profession than many of the others, in that the items that you make will often not be sellable, due to the fact that most of them require the user to have a certain amount of engineering skills to use them. Thus, most of these will be purely for your own entertainment. Most of the engineering recipes require ore or rock, meaning that you'll want to have mining as a secondary profession if you choose to be an engineer.



You can make some pretty weird stuff with Engineering....

On the plus side, engineering gives you a large array of items to make, with a really wide variety of effects. With engineering, you'll gain items that will let you increase your movement speed, trap an enemy in a root (which is devastating in PVP), take control of a mechanical mob, resurrect a fallen ally, or even use mind control on a humanoid opponent. Of course, if these were all guaranteed effects, then everyone would want to be an engineer, but that's not the case; most of these items stand a chance of backfiring, which will usually cause either the opposite of the intended effect, or will directly damage the user. For example, the Goblin Jumper Cables may shock a dead player back to life, but they might also explode when used and kill the user. The Net-O-Matic Projector, on the other hand, is intended to trap your target in a net for ten seconds, but may catch on the user's clothing instead, thus trapping you in the net.

Although plenty of the items created by engineering have these drawbacks, many do not. The most common of these are going to be the dynamite and bombs that you can make; these give engineers a quick form of AoE damage, albeit one that requires sometimes significant cooldown times in between uses. Hunters will also find engineering a useful skill, as it allows them to make guns, bullets, and even scopes which can attach to guns and bows for extra damage. There currently aren't any professions that allow players to craft bows or arrows (a serious oversight!); hopefully there'll be a fletcher profession at some point, but for now, engineering is the only way hunters have to increase their offensive capabilities.

Herbalism

This is the collection aspect of Alchemy. This works in a similar fashion to Mining; when you have the Find Herbs skill activated, then herbs will appear on your minimap, allowing you to track them down and collect them. You don't need any kind of collecting implement in your backpack, as you would with Mining or Skinning, so you'll have more room for your precious herbs, and you'll need it, as you'll usually be wanting four or five different kinds of ingredients at a time.

Luckily, herbs can be found almost anywhere in the game world, as opposed to mining veins, which are generally found only on rocky outcroppings. Still, you have to pay attention to context while collecting; if you're in a group, it's generally considered rude to consistently run off to collect herbs, especially if you're all trying to travel somewhere.

Leatherworking

Leatherworking is the crafting companion to skinning; with it, you can turn your various kinds of leather into an assortment of items. Most of these will be leather armor, of course, of a variety of types, with a number of items that'll give good agility bonuses, which are perfect for hunters and rogues. In addition to the armors, the main support items are armor kits, which can be applied to four different kinds of armor to permanently enhance their defensive capabilities, and quivers or ammo pouches, which all hunters will find necessary.

One of the main drawbacks of leatherworking is that it will become precipitously less useful after your hunter or shaman hits level 40, since they'll be able to switch over to mail at that time. This is more of a problem for a shaman than hunters, as the latter will be primarily concerned with pure stat bonuses on their equipment rather than its capabilities as armor qua armor; shamans, though, will need both the higher armor of mail as well as the strength and stamina bonuses that are more readily found on that type.

Mining

Mining is the collection skill that matches up with both Engineering and Blacksmithing. Before you can mine, you'll have to have a Mining Pick (which you can buy at any trade skill merchant), and will obviously need to train your mining skill up to at least level one. Then you can head out into the world and start looking for mining veins, which will let you unearth valuable metals.



You can never tell where you'll find mining veins.

Metal is usually going to be found in veins near mountains and hills - it'll rarely be found out in the open areas of a zone. This means that metal collection will usually require a bit more dedication than either herbalism or skinning. You won't be able to create your own resources just by killing beasts, as you will in skinning, and you won't be running across your resources as you run around the bulk of a zone; you'll probably have to dedicate portions of your time to "mining runs," as they're called, and run around in zones where lots of metal veins are known to be located. A good example of this is the range of mountains stretching from just above Crystal Lake in Elwynn Forest all the way around to the Eastvale Logging Camp; if you run from one end of those mountains to the other, you'll usually find a number of copper veins. Unfortunately, after a player gets three or four pieces of ore from a vein, it'll disappear, and won't respawn for a few minutes. Thus, if you have the misfortune of starting a run a minute or two after another player, you're unlikely to find much of anything to mine. This can make mining something of a random pastime. We'll see how Blizzard deals with the increased server population in retail; if enough people have a hard time finding mining veins, it's reasonable to assume they'll either increase the number of them or decrease their respawning time.

Anyway, when you whack at a vein with your mining pick (if you have one in your inventory, all you need to do is right-click on the vein while you're standing next to it to do so), you'll get a window showing you what you've mined. This will always include at least one piece of ore, but may also include various other items like pieces of rock or valuable gems, many of which will also be usable in your crafting profession, or, if not, then can be sold for good chunks of change.

It's the ore that you really want, though. Before you can use it, you'll need to convert your metal

ore into metal bars; this can only be done at a forge, which can usually only be found in towns with enough of a population to support an NPC blacksmith. (I.e. the smaller a town, the less likely it is to contain a forge.) When you're standing close to a forge, you can use your smelting ability to smelt the ore into bars, which are what you'll need before you can start smithing items.

Now, when you have bars of metal, you can feel free to start making engineering items, if you have the other required ingredients. To blacksmith, though, you'll need an anvil; check the blacksmithing section for more details on that.

Skinning

Skinning is the collection aspect of leatherworking. In order to skin, you'll need to train at a Skinning trainer, buy a Skinning Knife (available from Leatherworking and most Trade Skill merchants), and find yourself something to skin! Of the various mob types, only beasts are skinnable, but not all beasts. Insects and birds are often not skinnable, but most other types of beasts are, so you shouldn't have a problem finding something to take your knife to. You can check whether or not a target is skinnable by mousing over its corpse after it dies.



Skinning is the easiest collection skill; just be careful not to overload your inventory during long quests.

When you have your skinning ability set up, you can head out into the wilderness and start skinning away. If you obtain your skinning after your character has levelled up a bit, though, you

may notice that you can't skin mobs of your level after you kill them; like any profession, you'll have to start out on easier targets, which in this case means that you'll have to return to a newbie area and find low-level monsters to kill and skin. You should be able to skin anything at level 10 or below with a single point of skinning, but that's just to get you started; to skin higher-level monsters, you'll need to have five points in skinning for each level of the mob. For example, if you want to skin a level 30 monster, you'll have to have a skinning skill of 150 or higher. As with most collection skills, the difficulty of the collection will impact whether or not you'll gain a skill point when you perform it, meaning that you'll have to consistently skin enemies near your theoretical limit in order to consistently skill up skinning.

On the good side, though, it's very, very easy to skill up skinning, since there are good populations of beasts in every zone; you won't have to hunt down mining veins or keep your eyes peeled for herbs, in other words. If you skin everything that's available to you, you should be able to maximize your skinning skill without having to make "skinning runs" or anything like that, leaving you more time to focus on your leathercrafting.

Tailoring

Tailoring, along with Alchemy and Engineering, is one of the professions that most suits mages and warlocks. With it, you can create cloth clothing, armor, and other items that are most suitable to classes that aren't heavily armored. Many of the armor pieces that you're able to create will have inherent bonuses to intellect and spirit, and some will even give you direct bonuses to magical damage or healing, making them recursively useful for spellcasting classes. In addition to the normal armor items, though, you'll also be able to make tailored shirts of various colors, odd items of clothing like the Tuxedo Jacket, as well as bags that will often fetch a good price at auction. (If you manage to max out your tailoring skill, you'll eventually be able to create bags with up to sixteen slots!)

One of the unique things about tailoring is that, like Enchanting, it doesn't have an associated gathering skill; the raw materials for tailoring (namely, linens of various quality) drop on humanoid enemies throughout the game world. Thus, there's no need to do anything to obtain your materials except adventure as normal, assuming you face off against humanoid enemies fairly often. Unfortunately, the same linens used in tailoring are also used in First Aid, which is available to all classes regardless of their main professions. These means that, when fighting through an instanced dungeon, you'll usually have to compete with almost every other member of your party for the cloth drops, unless you all agree beforehand on a fair distribution of them.

Secondary Skills

Unlike professions, you can obtain as many of the secondary skills as you wish, even if you already have two professions. These skills revolve around creating or finding items that will let you more easily heal yourself; they're not usually highly lucrative and won't let you create equipment or long-term buffs.

Cooking

Cooking is simple, albeit somewhat circumscribed at this point in the game. As a cook, you'll be tasked with finding meat of various animals, ranging from the commonplace, such as boars and wolves, to the relatively obscure. (Meat drops off of beasts naturally; you don't need any other collection skills to find it.) When you have meat, you can bring it back to a fire or cooking rack to make it into food.

Most of the food that you can create is straightforward, of the sit, eat, and regain health variety, but you will eventually be able to make food that will buff your spirit and stamina for 15 minutes with each meal. This can be fairly useful, but it takes an awfully long time to get up to the higher levels of the skill, and when you do, you might find that many of the recipes you're interested in will also require a high level of fishing skill to acquire the ingredients in what can be an unpleasant bait-and-switch if you haven't been spending a lot of time fishing.

First Aid

First aid is likely going to be something that almost every player will want to pick up, mostly because it's easy to use and lets you cut the downtime related to health drain, or lets you heal up your teammates, no matter what class you are, even during combat!



You can use First Aid on almost anything, including other players and pets.

To start out with First Aid, you'll need to gain the skill from a First Aid trainer, then find some cloth. Cloth (linen, wool, silk, etc) is a common drop on humanoid enemies, and can be made into

bandages with your First Aid ability; these bandages can then be applied to yourself or to a teammate, and will heal your target over a short period of time. The best part of all this is that cloth is pretty easy to find, which makes First Aid an easy skill to build up, especially if you grab it at a low level. If you wait until you're a high level before you nab it, you'll have to start out with the linen recipes before you can work your way up to the higher-quality cloth, which will either force you to buy a bunch of linen at auction or camp a bunch of low-level spawns, neither of which is a very palatable option.

It's important to remember, though, that applying a bandage is considered to be a channeling action. This means that your target (or yourself) won't get all of the benefits of the bandage right away; it'll take around six seconds for the complete effect to be felt, during which time you can be interrupted if you're hit. (This prevents you from bandaging yourself during solo combat, by the way, or at least prevents you from getting the full effect of a bandage, as it'll cut out as soon as you're struck by a weapon or spell.) Also note that when a bandage is applied, the target can't be bandaged again for sixty seconds. Thus, first aid is best used for either shortening the downtime between solo fights, or for healing yourself during combat when you don't have aggro, or for healing a teammate who's on the cusp of death. You're never going to be able to match the pure healing power of a class with healing spells, and you'll find that over-reliance on bandages will result in your running out of them at inopportune times, especially in instanced dungeons, but still - it's a free skill that every non-healing class will find use for at some point or another.

Well, almost every non-healing class, we should say. The only reason you might not want to pick up first aid is if you're also a tailor; since tailoring requires large amounts of cloth, then you'd have to be splitting your resources between two skills, meaning that you'd be unlikely to excel in either of them. Since the classes that are most often tailors are mages (who can summon in food to heal themselves in between fights) and priests (who obviously have little need for first aid anyway), you're unlikely to miss first aid if you choose to be a tailor.

Fishing

Whether you consider fishing to be merely boring, really boring, or brain-liquefyingly boring, will depend on your level of patience. After you receive your initial training in fishing, you'll be asked to buy a fishing pole and optional bait. (You'll probably want the bait, as it greatly increased your fishing skill for a few minutes.) When you have a pole, you can walk up to the edge of a body of water and use your fishing skill to cast your line. If for some reason the water is unfishable, you'll get an error message telling you so, so pack it up and head somewhere else when this occurs.



BOOOO-RING!

When you've cast a line, all you can really do is wait for your bobber to, well, bob; when you see it splashing around, right click on it to see what you've caught. The thing here is that your bobber will rarely splash before the timer drops below halfway, sometimes won't splash until the timer is almost done, and sometimes won't splash at all, forcing you to recast. The tedium really starts to set in when you realize that, even if the bobber does splash, you're not guaranteed to get anything; at low levels, at least, you're going to get an awful lot of "Your Fish Got Away!" messages.

The thing about fishing is that, if you're willing to put the time into it, you're going to find plenty of restorative items (fish that can be eaten like any other food), including some that are a bit more powerful than what you would normally be able to buy. If you're a real cheapskate, then, and don't want to have to pay for food, then fishing might be a good alternative for you, if you're willing to soak up some of your time with it. (You might also want to try out cooking and see which one is easier for you.)

In addition to plain old edible fish, you can also find inedible fish (these are useful in alchemy and can sometimes be valuable at the auction house), messages in bottles (usually containing scrolls of some sort), and lockboxes (which are rare, but will usually contain something decent). Of course, you're going to have to stand around by a body of water to get anything at all, unlike first aid and cooking, which at least have the benefits of letting you gain experience while you gather the materials required for them. Still, though, it's relatively inexpensive to train yourself in fishing, so you might want to give it a shot and see whether or not you enjoy it.

Macros

Macros are small strings of commands that you can save as a special icon, which can be hit at any time to execute all of the commands at once. These are most useful in combat, but can also be used to save specific text messages or non-combat commands that you don't wish to have to manually enter over and over again.



You can name your macros as incongruously as you wish. You can also access the macro screen by typing `/macro`.

You can open up the macro window by first hitting Escape, then selecting Macro. In order to make a new macro, select "New," then select an icon for the macro that you're going to create and name the macro. When you're ready to start typing in commands, you can start entering any valid slash commands into the box; you can type `/help` to receive a list of valid commands here.

These are the valid chat commands that can be bound (or used in general):

- `/w` name message This will send a whispered message to a player (change the word "name" for the name of the character you want to whisper. Only they will be able to hear the message.
- `/s` message This is shorthand for "say," and will send a text message to any nearby players.
- `/y` message This is shorthand for "yell," and will yell a message to all the players around you, with a bigger radius of hearing than `/s`.

- /p message This is shorthand for "party," and will send a message to all members of your current party.
- /g message This is shorthand for "guildchat," and will send a message to all members of your current guild.
- /raid message The /raid command will send a message to all the members of your current raid group.

Using a macro, you can communicate with multiple individuals at the same time, using a macro like:

/w FriendOne I'm working on my Blacksmithing, let me know if you need any weapons/armor!

/w FriendTwo I'm working on my Blacksmithing, let me know if you need any whetstones!

Or you can let your party know whom you're targeting for an attack or heal. This is especially useful for parties with multiple healers, so that you don't accidentally cast a heal on the same person, e.g.:

/p I'm casting Greater Heal on %t!

/cast Greater Heal(Rank 4)

/script TargetLastEnemy();

This would require you to manually target the player that needs a heal before you initiate the macro, but after its execution, you would automatically flip back to the last hostile target you had in your crosshairs, letting you get back to the killing without much fuss. You can also use this to cast spells or abilities on yourself, then flip back to your last target, e.g.:

/target yournamehere

/cast Thorns(Rank 1)

/script TargetLastEnemy();

Keep in mind that you can bind anything into a macro by shift-clicking on it in your ability book while entering macro commands, not just spells. Since you can only have one spell or ability per macro, though, this is generally only useful for fun or roleplaying purposes, e.g.:

/p Come to me, BigBear!

/cast Call Pet

Also keep in mind that you can add emotes to macros, as well. There are over a hundred emotes in the game, ranging from the ubiquitous /dance to the lovely /nosepick. (You can find a listing of the most popular of these by clicking on the small text bubble next to your general chat window.) For example, a warrior could incorporate one into a targetting macro like so:

/point

/p I'm gonna kill %t till it dies from it!

And so forth. Macros have some built-in restrictions, the most notable of which is that it doesn't

seem to be possible to cast two spells in the same macro, but they can still be a big help if you set them up properly.