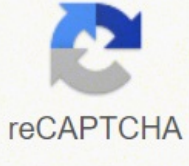




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## Skyrim how to be a mage

Something went wrong. Wait a moment and try again. I've heard people complain that magic is underpowered in Skyrim. I believe this couldn't be further from the truth. Sure, you're not going to get the same pure damage output as a 15X time sneak attack with a high level dagger (If that's what you want, check out our Illusion Stealth Assassin Guide). But the true power of the skyrim mage comes not just from burning, freezing, electrifying and blowing away the draugr scum infesting your homelands, but from the versatile and creative opportunities afforded by a carefully built mage dovahkin. Levitating objects, paralysing your foes, wrapping yourself in dragonhide, repelling the undead and conjuring powerful allies can make you an unstoppable force. It's also a hell of a lot of fun. (The links below are a jump menu. You can click the links to jump further down the page to the relevant section.) Skyrim Mage Play Style Something to keep in mind before embarking on a new mage build is that it's going to involve a LOT of spell switching and inventory management. If you don't like pausing mid battle, a mage build might not be for you. If you're someone who likes equipping your favourite weapon and armour and just plundering through dungeons then this build might not be for you. An effective mage build is going to require you to think about the type of enemy you're facing in each encounter: You'll need to switch between a number of spells and powers to take full advantage of the magic arsenal at your disposal.If you struggle with aiming ranged weapons you also may find some combat frustrating. Unlike archery, where you can slow down time as you line up a wisp in your crosshairs, firebolts and lightning strikes need to be aimed and fired in real time. Spoiler AlertSome of the sections below give away plot points in some side quests. I've tried to keep this to a minimum. But if this is your first playthrough and you don't want any spoilers at all, then maybe give this guide a miss for now. The Best Race For a Mage Build In Skyrim Altmer (High Elf) Mage The best race in Skyrim for a pure mage build is almost definitely the Altmer (High Elf). Altmer have the racial abilities Highborn and Fortify Magicka. The latter starts you off with an extra 50 Magicka in your pool. Highborn gives you the ability to regenerate Magicka faster for 60 seconds (once per day). Breton Mage I named her "Magic Mike", and gave her a buzz cut for some real bad-ass mage chick energy. If I was smart I would have chosen Altmer for my last mage playthrough, but I wanted something different. If you're in the same boat I recommend giving a Breton mage a go.Breton Dovahkin start with Conjure Familiar, have good magic resistance (+ 25%) and good starting levels for magic skills (with an extra high boost of +10 to Conjunction). The starting buff of +5 skill points to Speech is also useful as we'll be raising speech to at least 50 to unlock the Merchant perk. This will allow us to sell any of our looted gear to any merchant in Skyrim, which is really useful for building a mountain of gold. Note: While loading screen trivia states that Breton blood grants a 50% resistance to magic, the actual buff is only 25%. Pure Mage Skills (Major) Destruction This is going to be the primary kicking-ass mechanism for your pure mage. While there are a number of ways to power-level destruction (e.g. harrasing a a horse), you'll also be levelling up naturally as you play as you'll be using destruction magic in every combat encounter. Alteration This is almost, if not more, important than destruction. Alteration makes the difference between a wimpy mage that constantly dies and a more robust dovahkin. Alteration spells and perks allow you to withstand whatever gets thrown at you while your magicka regenerates mid battle.That's mostly thanks to the Mage Armour perks in this skill tree. These give you a massive boost to damage reduction. We're also going to be making use of the magic absorption perk Atronarch. This turns some of your incoming spell damage into more magicka for you to protect yourself and destroy your enemies with. Restoration Heal yourself, heal your friends, give yourself unlimited running juice (stamina), repel undead, boost your magicka regeneration... what's not to love? Conjunction It can get lonely out there in the wastelands. Why not magic yourself up some friends? If the friends in question are Dremora Lords then in addition to companionship you've also got yourself two absolute machines of destruction. Let them take care of almost any threat for you while you chip in with the occasional fireball and spend your time picking mushrooms and looting. Pure Mage Skills (Minor) The minor skills listed below aren't essential for a mage user, but they're incredibly useful for any playstyle in Skyrim. Speech No matter how you play Skyrim you're going to need gold and you're going to spend a lot of time collecting loot. Apart from the branching dialogue options afforded by Persuasion and Intimidation buffs, the Merchant perk alone makes the speech tree worth investing in. This life changing perk allows you to sell any non-stolen item to any merchant in the game. Alchemy In the mid to late game Alchemy can be one of the best money-makers in Skyrim. Plus if you're anything like me, you can't help collecting any cool alchemical ingredient you wander past. It's nice to have something to do with all those fish, herbs and mushrooms.In our mage build, I also recommend using your Alchemy to keep yourself stocked up with health and magic potions for those moments when you need a little boost mid-combat. Lockpicking This is probably the least necessary skill out of the list. I just love lockpicking in the game and this skill tree makes it easier (and more profitable). Attribute Distribution For a Mage Build Magicka: 3 (75%) | Health: 1 (25%) | Stamina: 0 Put most of your points into Magicka, as nearly everything you do in the game will require it. You can keep your health up with restoration healing spells and alteration mage armour spells. You can pretty much ignore stamina. As you'll only be wearing light clothing you'll move fast anyway. Also the fact that you don't need armour or weapons will mean you'll need the carry weight buff less. If you want to carry more looted stuff you can always use a follower or carry weight enchantments. Also, when you unlock the Restoration perk Respite your healing spells will also restore stamina. When running a long distance I usually keep a healing spell equipped in one hand and cast it every time my stamina gets low for nearly endless sprints. Best Standing Stones For a Mage Build Mage Stone Magic skills gain experience 20% faster. This is the first stone I activated in my mage play though. It's really useful in the early to mid game, because you'll be levelling nearly exclusively magic skills. Plus it's in the first set of stones you come across after escaping Helgen. I recommend activating this ASAP. Lover Stone All skills gain experience 15% faster. This is a good alternative to the Mage stone if you want help boosting your alchemy, speech and lockpicking at the same time as your core mage skills. To see a short video showing how to locate this stone, you can check out the Lover Stone section of our Archery Guide. Atronach Stone Fortifies magicka by 50 points and grants 50% spell absorption. Decreases magicka regeneration by 50%. While the Magicka regeneration nerf is a pain it can be mitigated by the Recovery perk in the Restoration skill tree (+25%/+50% magicka recovery).I also use the dragon priest mask Morokei in the late game, which gives an additional 100% Magicka regeneration. You want to wait until you've unlocked master alteration spells and are using Dragonhide (rather than earlier mage armour spells). At this point the classification of the mask as light armour won't matter any more in relation to the Mage Armour perk. Apprentice Stone Magicka regenerates 100% faster but you take twice as much magic damage. In a way this is the inverse of the Atronach Stone. Like with the Atronach Stone, the Apprentice Stone's nerf can be balanced out with other aspects of your build.If you went with Breton as your race you already have a 25% magic resistance. Once you add the 30% buff from the Magic Resistance perk in the Alteration skill tree, and 15% buff from Agent of Mara you've nearly negated the nerf. This being said, I still find the Atronach stone more useful. Lord Stone Gives 50 additional points of armor rating and 25% to magic resistance. This stone can help ease the difficulty significantly until you get your alteration levelled. Even in the late game the magic resistance can help turn you into a veritable tank. Lady Stone Increases health and stamina regeneration by 25%. Because you won't be putting a lot of points into health and stamina in this build, the lady stone can help keep you alive and running a bit longer. Steed Stone The Steed Stone gives a bonus of one-hundred extra carrying capacity and no movement penalty is received by armor. Armor also has zero weight when equipped. The reduction in equipped armour weight is irrelevant as you'll be wearing light cloth. The extra carry weight can be useful if you're doing a whole bunch of looting and selling. This is especially relevant to our build considering the lack of stamina investment. How To Use Two Standing Stones At Once To benefit from two standing stone powers at the same time you'll need to acquire the Aetherial Crown during the 'Lost to the Ages' quest in the Dawnguard expansion.I highly recommend completing this quest if you have Dawnguard as combining two standing stones can have awesome effects. My personal favourite combo is the Atronach Stone with the Lord Stone for almost unbeatable magic resistance. How to get gold fast in Skyrim There are a few ways to make gold fast in Skyrim. Some of the most popular include: But with all these methods you're still stuck with the issue of how to actually offload your high value gear and potions. Until you unlock Speech perks like Investor and Master Trader, this is going to be a slow and tedious process. That's because you'll need to wait at least 48 hours for each merchant to restock their gold before you can sell to them again.That's where the save, attack, reload method really becomes a live saver. I don't know how or why this technique works, but it does. If you want to force Skyrim's merchant's to restock their gold immediately, try this: Sell them your stuff until they're out of gold.Save the game.Attack the merchant. For some you only need to get them annoyed enough to add a bounty to the Hold that you're in, for others you need to kill them.Reload your game.They now have a restocked inventory and a full purse of gold and you still have the gold that you recently acquired from them.Rinse and repeat. Personally I like to do all my selling, saving, attacking and reloading with Bejethor in Whiterun. Why? Because he's a creepy bastard and it brings me great pleasure to repeatedly set him on fire. To see this method in action check out the video in the Speech Levelling section of our Archery Guide. Tips For Each School Of Magic In Skyrim Conjunction You may think that the first magic skill tree that you want to focus on is Destruction. After all, it's your bread and butter as far as combat goes. That's a fair assumption, but I find a smarter move is to max out Conjunction as soon as possible.Firstly, it's incredibly easy to do. All you need to do is acquire Soul Trap and then cast it repeatedly at any fallen (humanoid) enemy. Secondly, you then get access to some very hardy battle buddies (Dremora Lords) who can act as your personal body guards as you focus on raising the rest of your magic arsenal. How To Level Up Conjunction Fast Once you're a few levels in and you've got a decent pool of Magicka, acquire the spell Soul Trap. This is easy enough to do by visiting a court wizard like Farengar Secret-Fire in Whiterun. If you don't want to wait for it to randomly appear in a court wizard inventory you can visit Phinis Gestor the Conjunction Master in the College of Winterhold. Because soul trap is only an apprentice level spell you should be able to buy it immediately. Once you have Soul Trap all you need to do is find a dead body and cast it repeatedly on said corpse. You'll level up Conjunction extremely fast. You don't need any empty soul gems to make it work. Once you run out of Magicka, just wait for one hour to replenish it and continue.You should be able to level yourself from your starting Conjunction level (25 if you chose Breton as your race) to 100 in less than half an hour. Unlock Apprentice Conjunction as soon as available so you can cast Soul Trap for half Magicka and level even faster. To see a video of this levelling in action, check out the Conjunction section of our Archery Guide. Conjure Dremora Lord Once you've raised Conjunction to level 75, unlock the Expert Conjunction perk. Next, buy the Conjure Dremora Lord spell book from old mate Phinis at the college of Winterhold. Keep leveling until you get the perk to conjure two dremora Lords at once.Now you have strong protection and can delve into higher level areas like Solstheim while you're still at a relatively low character level. Even better, keep levelling until you can unlock Twin Souls and then venture forth wreaking havoc with two Dremora by your side. Conjure Seeker: While not as strong as a Dremora Lord, Seekers are another favourite conjured buddy. If you want some Chulu vibes and have the Dragonborn DLC you can get some creepy floaty alien dudes to follow you around as well. The Conjure Seeker spell book can only be found in the Apocrypha with a Conjunction skill level higher than 40. Destruction If you search online for tips on how to get the most out of destruction magic, you'll find a lot of people advising to try magic balancing mods. This is based on the idea that magic is underpowered in the game for combat and takes too much magicka to cast. Honestly I don't have a hard and fast opinion on the balancing in Skyrim. All I can say is that I've always been a vanilla Skyrim player and still end up with a powerful pure mage through the use of power levelling and strategy. My main point of advice for destruction is to always get the next level of spell as soon as it's available. The only downside here is the magicka cost, but if you've been putting all your attribute points into magicka and are using equipment like the Arch Mage's Robes and standing stone buffs like the Atronach Stone your Magicka pool will be easily sufficient. When you add buffed magicka regeneration you only have to wait a few seconds to refill your magicka and keep up your assault of fireballs and lightning strikes.Another key point is picking the right spell for the right enemy. If you only use fire spells you're going to have a bad time. Finding this dwarven automatons difficult? Try switching to an electric based spell. Restoration Because you're not going to be putting many attribute points into health, investing in Restoration is crucial. An easy way to get a head start on your Restoration building is to plunder Colette Marence's hidden chest. When you start the game, after the intro, catch a carriage ride from Whiterun straight to Winterhold and head up to the college. Turn right when you enter the college grounds and go to the hall of countenance. Follow the video below to find and loot Colette's hidden chest for some basic Restoration robes and whatever spells you want. How To Level Up Restoration Fast Equilibrium: Make sure to get this Alteration spell book during the College of Winterhold questline, in Labyrinthian Chasm. It can form the basis of a more tanked mage than people normally build, by putting more attribute points into health. Then when you need extra magicka and just use the Alteration spell Equilibrium to swap some of your health for magicka. Equilibrium is also useful for leveling restoration. Once you have Equilibrium simply cast it in one hand (draining 25 health per second and converting it into magicka) while casting a healing spell in the other. This will allow you to spam your healing spells indefinitely and (slowly but surely) level your Restoration. Alteration Alteration is the key to staying alive as a mage. As mentioned earlier it is vitally important for giving you increased damage resistance both magical and physical. It also allows you to convert incoming magicka damage to useable magicka. Level Up Alteration Fast With Telekinesis Catch Get the Telekinesis spell book from either Labyrinthian, during the College of Winterhold questline, or from Redwater Den. And then play catch with some baskets. This is going to be the most effective when you've got a decent magicka pool to play with. Anything above 400 is great. You'll also want to have unlocked the Adept Conjunction perk. A set of Adept Alteration Robes wouldn't hurt either. Once you've got all that that you can level up from 40 Alteration skill level to 100 in about 10 minutes. It's fun too. 1. Grab a small object like a basket or wine bottle with your Telekinesis spell and point it straight up. Try to get as close to a 90 degree angle as possible. 2. Hold down the Telekinesis spell until your Magicka depletes completely, at which point the small object will rocket skyward. 3. As soon as you shoot your object above you press the wait button. Wait for one hour. After waiting, your magicka will be refilled and the object will still be where you left it. High above you. 4. Cast telekinesis again with your aim still at the same angle as where you last released it. Catch the object on its way down again. Repeat. Another way to boost Alteration earlier is when you start the college of Winterhold questline. You can level up Alteration by training with Toldir as you travel through the ruins of Saarthal. Buy levels off him and then sell looted treasure items back to him to recoup some of your money. Once you level up you can get 5 more skill levels off him. Rinse and repeat. Illusion I didn't utilise Illusion in my pure mage build. I found that this school was most suited to a sneaky thief style of gameplay, and I wanted to save my skillpoints for the other magic schools that helped me build an unstoppable full frontal assault style battle mage.If you're interested in how to best use Illusion and level up super fast, check out my blog post 'Skyrim Assassin Build: The Best Sneak Build In Skyrim', which was completely built around illusion magic. Enchanting I also didn't use Enchanting in this build as I wanted to focus on the other skill trees. If you're interested in tips on how to level up and use enchanting you can check out my blog post 'How To Be A Monk In Skyrim: Unarmed Healer Build' which used enchanting to buff up my monk's unarmed prowess. If you're more interested in a ranged combat build, I also detailed the strategic use of Enchanting in our Archery Guide. Alchemy Players greater than I have already put a lot of time and effort into creating standalone Alchemy guides, so I'm not going to try and reinvent the wheel here. For a good starting point I'd recommend checking out this video from YouTube user Tiddly Oggy (while you're there check out some of their other awesome videos). Some small points that I'd mention is to jump into the College of Winterhold quests as soon as possible. You can pick up and steal heaps of common and rare alchemy ingredients in the Hall of Countenance. When you finish the College of Winterhold quests and become the new Arch Mage, you gain ownership of the Archmage's Quarters, which includes a rich alchemical resource in the form of your own personal rare ingredients garden. There are normally a lot more ingredients to harvest in the Archmage's garden, I'd just recently harvested them all when I took this screenshot ./ The Green Thumb perk which gives you twice as many ingredients when harvested is also a must for ramping up your potion production and hauling in all that sweet, sweet gold. I hope this guide has helped give you since inspiration for your own Skyrim mage adventure. Drop me a line below with any feedback, questions or suggestions of your own. More Skyrim Guides





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