EDUCATION

Pathfinder Summoner Build Guide

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Mastering the Eidolon: The Ultimate Pathfinder Summoner Build Guide

The Summoner stands as one of the most versatile and thematically rich classes in Pathfinder. Unlike a standard spellcaster who calls creatures to fight and vanish, the Summoner forges a permanent, magical bond with a powerful outsider known as an Eidolon. This partnership offers a unique dynamic in combat and roleplaying, allowing you to effectively control two characters on the battlefield at once. However, this complexity can be daunting for new players. This comprehensive Pathfinder Summoner build guide will walk you through the core mechanics, optimal stat allocations, powerful feat choices, and strategic gameplay tips to ensure you and your Eidolon become an unstoppable force.

Understanding the Core Mechanics of the Summoner

Before diving into specific builds, it is essential to grasp the foundational rules that govern the Summoner. The class revolves around the unique **Summoner Spellcasting** list, which is focused on buffs, utility, and summoning spells. Your true power, however, lies in your **Eidolon**—a customizable outsider that scales in power as you level. You and your Eidolon share a pool of actions each round, referred to as your "tandem" actions. In Pathfinder 2e, for example, you get three actions total for both of you to share, while in Pathfinder 1e, they act on separate turns. This guide will primarily focus on the streamlined and popular Pathfinder 2e version, while offering insights applicable to 1e where relevant.

The most critical decision you will make is choosing your **Eidolon's base form**. This choice defines its role in combat. The primary options include:

- Devotion Phantom: A spiritual entity that excels at emotional manipulation and support, with a focus on mental damage and resistance to physical harm.
- Dragon: A classic powerhouse that deals energy damage (acid, cold, electricity, fire) and boasts high damage output and natural flight later on.
- Beast: A highly mobile and physical striker, perfect for hit-and-run tactics and flanking.
- Plant: A durable controller with abilities focused on grasping, poisoning, and area denial.
- Construct: A resilient tank with high armor and immunity to many ailments, but lower damage potential.
- Undead: A fearsome combatant that deals negative energy damage and can drain life force from enemies.

Your chosen Eidolon form will dictate your attribute priorities, feat selection, and overall combat strategy.

Choosing the Right Ancestry and Background

Your character's ancestry and background provide essential ability boosts and feats that complement your build. As a Summoner, your primary attributes are **Charisma** (for spellcasting and Eidolon skills) and **Constitution** (for survivability). Depending on your Eidolon's form, you may also want **Strength** (for melee Eidolons) or **Dexterity** (for ranged or skill-based builds).

- Human: The versatile Human is an excellent choice for any build. Their bonus feat at level 1 can be crucial

for grabbing an early metamagic feat or a skill feat. Their ability boosts allow you to start with an 18 in Charisma and a 14 in Constitution.

- Half-Elf: The Half-Elf offers excellent feats like "Multitalented" at level 9, allowing a multiclass dedication without spending a general feat. They also get a boost to Charisma and a free skill.
- Aasimar (Plane-Touched): Thematically perfect for a Summoner whose Eidolon is a celestial being. Aasimar get boosts to Charisma and Wisdom, plus innate healing abilities that keep you alive in the backline.
- Gnome: Gnomes receive a boost to Charisma and Constitution, making them naturally inclined toward the Summoner class. Gnomish feats for illusions and stealth can be very useful for a caster who prefers to avoid direct confrontation.

- Scholar: Boosts Intelligence and Wisdom, and grants a Lore skill. This is ideal for a Summoner who wants to be knowledgeable about planar lore and their Eidolon's origin.
- Entertainer: Boosts Charisma and Dexterity. This background fits a "face" character who uses their Eidolon as a stage partner or bodyguard.
- Warrior: Boosts Strength and Constitution. Perfect for a Summoner who fights alongside their melee-focused Eidolon.
- Street Urchin: Boosts Dexterity and Constitution. Great for a scrappy Summoner who relies on agility and survival skills.

Optimizing Your Ability Scores

When building your character, your ability score layout should follow a clear priority based on your role. The standard "caster" Summoner focuses on Charisma and survivability, while the "combat" Summoner blends physical stats with Charisma.

Primary Stat (Charisma 18): Always aim for the maximum starting Charisma of 18. This boosts your spell attack rolls, spell DC, and the effectiveness of your Eidolon's abilities. In Pathfinder 2e, your Charisma modifier also determines the number of actions your Eidolon gets through the "Act Together" action.

Secondary Stats (Constitution 14+, Dexterity 14+): Constitution gives you more hit points, which is critical because when your Eidolon is defeated, you become the primary target. Dexterity improves your Armor Class (AC) when wearing light armor or unarmored, and helps with Reflex saves.

Tertiary Stats (Strength or Wisdom): If you plan to be in melee range with your Eidolon, invest in Strength for attack rolls and damage. Wisdom helps with Perception and Will saves, which are often targeted by mind-affecting spells.

A sample array for a standard caster Summoner: Strength 10, Dexterity 14, Constitution 14, Intelligence 10, Wisdom 12, Charisma 18.

Selecting the Best Feats for Your Summoner Build

Feat selection defines your Summoner's capabilities. You have class feats, Eidolon feats, skill feats, and general feats to choose from. Below is a guide to the most impactful choices.

- Level 1: Fresh Produce (Plant Eidolon) / Magical Understudy: For a Plant Eidolon, "Fresh Produce" provides excellent sustained healing. "Magical Understudy" allows you to learn a cantrip from another spell list, expanding your utility.
- Level 2: Tandem Movement / Bloodline Conduit: "Tandem Movement" is phenomenal for battlefield positioning, allowing you and your Eidolon to Stride together as two actions. "Bloodline Conduit" lets you use your Eidolon as a point of origin for a touch spell, keeping you safe.
- Level 4: Reinforce Eidolon / Vital Evolution: "Reinforce Eidolon" is a reaction that gives your Eidolon temporary hit points, significantly increasing its durability. "Vital Evolution" gives your Eidolon a permanent +2 hit points per level.
- Level 6: Effortless Concentration / Merge with Eidolon: "Effortless Concentration" makes sustaining a spell

a free action, allowing you to cast other spells. "Merge with Eidolon" is a powerful defensive option, letting you fully absorb your Eidolon to protect it from harm, but you lose your offensive partner.

- Level 8: Expanded Summoning / Eidolon's Opportunity: "Expanded Summoning" gives you access to the full "Summon" spells, not just your Eidolon. "Eidolon's Opportunity" grants your Eidolon an Attack of Opportunity reaction, making it a formidable controller.
- Level 10: Dual Energy Heart / Legendary Summoner: "Dual Energy Heart" gives your Eidolon two different energy resistances, which is powerful against enemies with varied damage types. "Legendary Summoner" increases your action economy by allowing you to use "Act Together" once per round without spending a focus point.

These feats customize your Eidolon's physical form and abilities.

- Pounce (Requires Beast Form): Allows your Eidolon to Stride and Strike in the same action, enabling devastating charge attacks.
- Energy Heart (Any Form): Gives your Eidolon a specific energy type for its attacks (e.g., Fire, Cold). This bypasses physical damage resistance and can exploit enemy weaknesses.
- Rend (Requires Beast or Dragon Form): If your Eidolon hits the same target with two claws, it deals extra slashing damage. A fantastic damage booster.
- Spell Resistance (Any Form): Grants your Eidolon spell resistance, making it incredibly difficult to affect with magic. This is a must-have for fighting enemy casters.
- Wings (Requires Dragon Form): Grants a fly Speed. This opens up tactical options against grounded enemies and allows you to bypass obstacles.

- Multitalented (Half-Elf): Pick up a dedication like "Beastmaster" or "Witch" to gain additional animal companions or familiar, respectively.
- Toughness: An essential general feat for any character that sees combat. More hit points are always welcome.
- Fleet: Increases your Speed. Crucial for keeping up with your Eidolon during combat maneuvers.
- Incredible Initiative: Boosts your initiative bonus, allowing you and your Eidolon to act before your enemies.
- Skill Focus (Deception or Diplomacy): As a high-Charisma character, you are the party face. Skill Focus makes you exceptional at social interactions.

Strategic Gameplay and Combat Tactics

Playing a Summoner effectively requires managing two units on the battlefield. The key is to understand your action economy and the synergy between you and your Eidolon.

Positioning is Everything: Never let your Summoner stand in the front line. Your Eidolon is your shield and sword. Use "Tandem Movement" to reposition both of you. Keep your Summoner behind cover or at maximum spell range. Your primary role is to cast buffs on the Eidolon and debuffs on enemies. Spells like *Haste*, *Bless*, and *Fear* are your best friends.

Action Economy Management: In Pathfinder 2e, you and your Eidolon share a pool of 3 actions, plus 1 reaction. Each round, you can use the "Act Together" action to give one of your actions to your Eidolon. This means your Eidolon can act twice (once from Act Together, once from your shared pool) while you use your other two actions to cast a spell and move. Practice this rhythm. A common turn is: Act Together (Eidolon Strides and Strikes), Summoner Casts a Buff, Summoner Moves to Safety.

Spell Selection for the Summoner: Your spell list is tailored for enhancement and control. Prioritize spells that don't require attack rolls, as your Eidolon is your main source of damage. Excellent choices include:

- Cantrips: Light, Telekinetic Projectile (for when you need to damage at range), Shield (for an immediate +1 AC).
- Level 1: Illusory Object, Summoner's Protection (grants your Eidolon resistance), Heal (if you have the

Divine list).

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