EDUCATION

Pathfinder Summoner Guide

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Introduction

The **Pathfinder Summoner Guide**is an essential resource for anyone looking to master one of the most unique and versatile classes in the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game. Whether you are a newcomer intrigued by the prospect of a magical companion or a veteran player seeking to optimize your character, understanding the summoner's mechanics, options, and synergies can transform your tabletop experience. The summoner class combines arcane spellcasting with a bonded eidolon—a powerful outsider that evolves alongside you. This guide will walk you through every layer of the summoner, from building your eidolon to selecting spells, feats, and strategies that make you a force on any battlefield.

The summoner is often described as a "pet class," but that label undersells its depth. You are not merely a support character; you can be a front-line combatant, a battlefield controller, or even a stealthy infiltrator depending on your chosen archetype and eidolon configuration. Because the summoner's power is split between the caster and the eidolon, efficient character building is critical. This guide will help you avoid common pitfalls and maximize the potential of both halves of your character.

Understanding the Summoner Class

Before diving into builds and tactics, it is important to grasp the core mechanics of the summoner. The class features a 3/4 base attack bonus, good Will saves, and a d8 hit die. You gain access to a unique spell list that emphasizes summoning, buffs, and utility, with spells like **Haste**, **Summon Monster**, and **Protective Circle**. Your most defining feature, however, is the eidolon—a customizable outsider that you summon from your home plane.

Eidolon Basics

Your eidolon has its own ability scores, feats, skills, and evolution points (EP). You can reshape it each time you gain a level, giving you enormous flexibility. The eidolon's type (e.g., biped, quadruped, serpentine) determines its base form and available evolutions. Evolutions range from gaining claws and pounce to wings, breath weapons, and even spell-like abilities. Managing your evolution pool is at the heart of any good Pathfinder Summoner Guide.

Spellcasting

Summoners cast spells spontaneously using charisma. You know a limited number of spells, but you can cast them multiple times per day. Many of the best spells for a summoner are those that buff your eidolon or summon additional creatures. However, do not neglect crowd control and protective spells—they keep both you and your eidolon alive.

Building Your Eidolon: Evolution Strategies

Your eidolon is your primary combat tool. How you spend evolution points (EP) will define your role. Here are several popular approaches.

The Melee Brute

If you want your eidolon to wade into battle, invest in evolutions that increase natural attacks, damage, and survivability. Biped forms work well for this. Key evolutions include **Claws**, **Bite**, **Improved Damage**, **Pounce**, and **Large**. Adding **Damage Reduction** and **Energy Resistance** later keeps it alive. Pair this with your buff spells like *Bull's Strength* and *Greater Magic Fang*.

The Skirmisher or Scout

For a more tactical role, choose a quadraped or serpentine base. Evolutions like **Climb**, **Swim**, **Trackless Step**, and **Skilled (Stealth)** make your eidolon an excellent scout. Add **Pounce** and **Reach** for hit-and-run attacks. This build works well with a summoner who stays back and summons additional monsters.

The Magic-User Eidolon

Though less common, you can build an eidolon that uses spell-like abilities. Evolutions such as **Breath Weapon**, **Spell Resistance**, and **Energy Attacks** can give you magical damage. Keep in mind that your eidolon does not cast actual spells—only spell-like abilities. This build is often paired with the **Synthesist** archetype, which merges you and your eidolon into one form.

Key Archetypes in a Pathfinder Summoner Guide

Archetypes change how the summoner plays. Three stand out as most popular.

Synthesist

The **Synthesist** merges your physical body with your eidolon, creating a fused form. You retain your mental ability scores but gain the eidolon's physical stats, evolutions, and hit points. This archetype makes you a powerful front-line fighter with full spellcasting. However, you lose the ability to act independently from your eidolon. It is a high-risk, high-reward option that many players love.

Master Summoner

If you enjoy summoning entire armies, the **Master Summoner** archetype lets you use *Summon Monster* as a spell-like ability many times per day. Your eidolon is weaker, but you can flood the battlefield with minions. This build requires careful management of turn order and area-of-effect spells from enemies.

Wild Caller

This archetype focuses on a single, powerful eidolon that gains the **Wild Shape** ability, allowing it to change forms like a druid. It offers incredible versatility but sacrifices some spellcasting. The Wild Caller is perfect for players who want to adapt the eidolon to every situation.

Spell Selection for Summoners

Your spell list is small but potent. Focus on spells that amplify your eidolon or control the battlefield. Here are top picks for each level.

- 1st Level: Grease, Enlarge Person (targets eidolon if it is humanoid), Protective Circle
- 2nd Level: Haste, Bull's Strength, Invisibility
- 3rd Level: Slow, Dispel Magic, Summon Monster III
- 4th Level: Dimension Door, Greater Invisibility, Teleport
- 5th Level: Summon Monster V, Wall of Force, Overland Flight

Do not forget your summoner-only spells: *Summon Eidolon* (recast if banished) and *Transmute Potence to Potence* (switch physical ability scores with eidolon). These can save you in a tight spot.

Feats That Elevate the Summoner

Feat selection can make or break your build. Here are essential feats for any Pathfinder Summoner Guide.

General Feats

- Improved Initiative: Getting your eidolon and spells out first is huge.
- Spell Focus (Conjuration): Boosts DCs for your summoning and some spells.
- Augment Summoning: If you summon multiple monsters, this gives them +4 Str and Con.
- Quicken Spell: For important buffs you need in the first round.

Eidolon Feats

Your eidolon gets its own feats. Good choices include **Power Attack**, **Multiattack** (reduces secondary attack penalty), **Improved Natural Attack**, and **Combat Reflexes**. For defense, **Iron Will** and **Great Fortitude**help with low saves.

Tactics and Playstyle

Knowing how to fight as a summoner is just as important as building correctly. Here are battle-tested strategies.

Action Economy

Your eidolon acts on its own turn. Use your standard action to cast a buff or summon another creature, while your eidolon moves and attacks. If you are a synthesist, you use a single turn for all actions. Master summoners often use the *Summon Monster*SLA as a standard action to bring allies, then the eidolon (or themselves) attacks.

Positioning

Stay behind your eidolon or summons. Use *Protective Circle* or *Stoneskin*on yourself. If you are a synthesist, your fused form can tank, but be wary of area-of-effect spells that target both of you (defensively, you are one creature).

Dealing with Anti-Summoner Tactics

Enemies may try to banish your eidolon or target you directly. Keep *Dispel Magic* ready. If your eidolon is banished, recast it with a full-round action using *Summon Eidolon*. If you are knocked unconscious, your eidolon disappears until you wake up—so consider having a *Ring of Sustenance* or a party member with *Breath of Life*.

Equipment and Magic Items

Spend your gold wisely. For the summoner, charisma-boosting items (*Headband of Alluring Charisma*) and defensive gear (*Amulet of Natural Armor*, *Cloak of Resistance*) are priority. For your eidolon, *Amulet of Mighty Fists* and *Belt of Giant Strength* are excellent if you can afford them (eidolons can use items). Alternatively, use *Bracers of Armor* for the summoner and rely on the eidolon's natural armor. A *Wand of Lesser Restoration*is handy for healing ability damage to your eidolon.

Common Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

Many new summoners make mistakes that hinder performance. Here are the most frequent pitfalls.

- Ignoring your own defenses: You are squishy. Do not rely solely on your eidolon—carry a Mithral Chain Shirt and keep Shield or Mage Armor active.
- Over-specialization: Building an eidolon that only does one thing (e.g., all combat evolutions) can backfire when you face enemies immune to physical damage. Keep a few utility evolutions or spells.

- Forgetting to buff before battle: Your eidolon is only average without spells like Haste and Greater Magic Fang. Pre-cast when you know a fight is coming.
- Splitting focus: You cannot be a master of both summoning and eidolon melee at the same time without an archetype. Choose one primary role.

Conclusion

A well-crafted Pathfinder Summoner Guide can turn a complex class into a rewarding experience. By understanding eidolon evolutions, selecting the right archetype, optimizing your spell list, and choosing smart feats, you can build a character that excels in combat, exploration, and roleplay. The summoner's flexibility ensures that no two characters are ever exactly alike—experiment with different eidolon configurations, try out the synthesist or master summoner archetypes, and adjust your tactics based on your party composition. Whether you command a single powerful outsider or an army of summoned allies, the summoner class offers infinite possibilities on and off the battlefield. Embrace the bond between caster and eidolon, and you will become a true force of nature in any Pathfinder campaign.

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