

Swords/Axes/Maces/Staves/Unarmed Combat

Lorrelian

Swords/Axes/Maces/Staves/Unarmed Combat

Type: *Warrior*

Role: *Turbocharger or Payload*

This skill group serves best as a way to augment more powerful skills, or can be used as a source of powerful late game advantage, frequently both. But it is not particularly powerful in the early game.

Theme: *Skillful Use of Your Weapon (Not that one)*

Weapon skills make a particular category of weapon (or no weapon at all) more advantageous to the character in a number of ways, including more damage and more combat related secondary stats. Each tree also offers an activated ability that creates an AoE attack and, sometimes, other effects.

Pros:

Weapon skills make combat easier. Sword skill decreases the damage you take and the damage you deal out by raising your counter attack rate. Axes deal a little more damage than swords, on average, and the Axes skill raises your Critical Hit rate, meaning your attacks will get countered less frequently and deal more damage in a single attack. Maces offers the same damage bonuses as Axes (one more than Swords) and a small critical hit bonus, but the real power is in the tree's two Knockback abilities and one of the best AoE activated abilities. Staves skill translates into more block, a little counter, some damage and increased magical abilities, plus it has pretty much the same excellent AoE ability as Maces. Unarmed Combat offers unparalleled secondary stat bonuses, two activated abilities with knockback and increases the damage of both melee and ranged attacks while leaving both hands free to carry tomes, orbs or shields.

Cons:

Weapon skills only provide bonuses when you are wielding the right type of weapon, meaning you will often find weapons with "better" stats than what you are using that don't get your skill bonuses, which can be disappointing, particularly when you find a Chest of Evil. Their damage bonuses are often smaller than one might like, as well. Unarmed Combat has a hard time dealing damage to creatures on later floors and probably won't hurt Dredmor at all (except for with its Aetherial damage).

Synergies:

All weapon skills combo well with Dual Wielding, as the bonuses from weapon skills will double as well. Unarmed Combat is fantastic with Tinkering (for crossbow bolts) and Blacksmithing (thrown weapons) as well as the relevant ranged combat skills. Staves is good for casters who want a little melee power, just in case, without sacrificing too much casting power.

Blacksmithing lets one make the right type of weapon for your skill.

Takeaway:

While these skills are narrow in their outlook they are powerful in that narrow area. A person looking to maximize melee combat will benefit markedly from both Swords and Axes, a rogue looking for a melee panic button might look into Maces, a wizard without a stave is just asking for trouble and Unarmed Combat has surprising applications. These are good skills for people

who like to build inexorable, but not terribly flashy fighters or are looking to add a little melee versatility to a long range character.

FaxCelestis

My 2 zorkmids: weapon skills are far too restrictive to be of use barring excellent RNG luck or a craft-heavy build. They are, as Admiral Ackbar so qualifiedly puts it:



AllurlewtsRbelongtome

I agree with Lorellian insofar as Weapon Skills are not worth it on their own. However, throw in dual wielding and you are looking at a different beast altogether because it doubles the passive benefits of each level of the tree (Also gives you silly stats from grabbing the capstone). Another important thing to bear in mind is the simple fact that you are wielding TWO BOOSTED weapons. Even with the tree boosts, a non-dual wielder will have a hard time punching through the of enemies that have it, but a dual wielder is generally guaranteed the full damage of at least one boosted weapon at worst.

FaxCelestis said: [↑](#)

My 2 zorkmids: weapon skills are far too restrictive to be of use barring excellent RNG luck or a craft-heavy build.

Dual wield changes everything in those regards as well. If you are not dual wielding, you often find yourself in a situation where you have to choose between a weapon you did not specialize in to maximise your sheer damage, or to stick with a weaker weapon so you can retain the non-damage benefits (accuracy/counter/crit/etc) of your specialist weapon type. Considering you will typically need both to get by (i.e. sheer damage AND non-damage benefits), being routinely forced to choose between either one or the other is an unpleasant place to be. However, if you are dual wielding, you can simply equip both weapons instead of having to choose between either. With that barrier out of the way, on the balance of probabilities, you will find high tier versions of your specialist weapons eventually.

Special Mentions

Dual Wield Swords - The doubled parry stats (18) greatly mitigate the cost of not having a shield equipped. Also synergyzes with dual wielding to give you stupidly high parry stats.

Dual Wield Axes - Increases crit by 24 (!). This is great both for melee and range

Bottom line? If you are going to get weapon trees, get dual wield as well, or don't get them at all.

Shwqa

I love unarmed gish builds. Tomes are very powerful and all of the expect little black book has chance at doing an extra effect that scales off of magic power. Both tomes have a chance at procs even if you wield the same type of tome. This means Dairy of Whills and your money problems are over (40+ gold a hit). 2 universal principles and almost nothing with be able to fight back after your first hit. Dual wielding tomes is a lot of fun but heavily relays on luck because CoE will not drop tomes and they are quite rare. Unarmed gives 14 counter, 11 block, and 7 dodge, making quite a bit harder to hit. Cloak of Sagan was made for this build. I like to take the astrology tree with this build to keep the Aethereal theme going. Just walk into a room throw down Star Aligned until monsters either dead or paralyzed then mop up with your feet and tomes.

Karock

I don't have that much to add, but the fact that the staff weapon skill has an on hit stun proc as well as a controlled 6 square attack that has a 50% chance to stun makes it... stunningly good for a gish character imo. Both of those basically serve to increase defense. While it certainly won't hold up to CoE weapons, if you get a CoE staff that isn't as good as another weapon type, the bonus can carry it above imo.

The 14 block, 4 magic power and more EDR than you can shake a stick at from wielding two with DW doesn't hurt either.

Essence

Welp, let's see.

Swords are a Rogue's bread and butter. Counter naturally runs highest for Rogues (Cad+Nim), and generally Rogues prefer low-armors, so scoring high Counter (and Dodge) is the best way to stay alive. The Trompenant is also good for getting a pre-emptive strike on a closing foe, which is golden.

Axes are for Warriors. Criticaling means less swings per kill in the long run, which means less opportunity to get (counter-)attacked. The Axenado is kind of pointless, though, because as a Warrior the last thing you want (at least until the Inverse Minion Law is fixed) is to be surrounded.

Maces are all-purpose weapons. After all, who doesn't want to keep their enemies away from them? Rogues get more time to throw/shoot stuff, Wizards get to cast another spell or two, and Warriors can buy time to slug a potion or an omlette and get back to hacking. Maces also share the most useful template (imho) with Staves when it comes to activated abilities.

Staves are clearly Wizard fare, but the ability to stun a foe is by far the best proc for Warriors, who benefit most from having an extra turn with the enemy right there in Melee range. This skill just screams for a gish to take full advantage of it, but even a straight Warrior can take decent

advantage of a single skill point put into this tree (remember, you don't need to be wielding a staff to get the proc!)

Thrown/Crossbows

Lorrelian

Thrown/Crossbows

Type: *Rogue*

Role: *Turbocharger or Engine*

While these sound like skills that emphasize ranged attacks, they really just make them better. Don't expect them to keep you well supplied with actual ranged attacks on their own.

Theme: *Modern Warfare At Its Best*

Strategy:

The real problem with ranged attacks is they don't do much damage per hit. These skills provide 6 more damage for you to deal, helping whittle those enemies down to size and making sure you hit more often and harder. It also helps you keep your ammo intact.

Pros:

Increased ammunition recovery is a real plus, as is the added damage. The fleshbore procs aren't great, but a little added damage is nice. Thrown really shines in Monster Toss, a knockback on demand that keeps monsters out of your face and in your ranged attack zone. The Crossbow skill that is similar is a proc, so you have no control over when it happens.

Cons:

By the time you actually have increased ammo recovery you could just have full smithing or tinkering, which will provide you with much more ammo as well as other marked benefits. Either archers or throwers can have lots of knockback from Unarmed Combat, which will also increase the damage on ranged attacks. On the whole, its hard to find something these skills do that isn't done better elsewhere.

Synergies:

Smithing and throwing gives you tons of throwables you won't run out of. Alchemy will make you flasks, probably the most deadly throwables in the game. Tinkering makes bombs, and you can easily have hundreds of them by the end of the game, it also makes bolts, likewise in ridiculous quantities.

Takeaway:

Thrown and Crossbows are "win more" skills. They aren't necessary to make a build centered around their thematic element work, but they do make it better. Of course, ranged attacks are naturally so powerful that that may not seem like a big deal. But remember that Dredmor is a very hard game. Having more power can never hurt...

Mr. Strange

A few more points!

* Crossbow gives you a crossbow at game start! This is a HUGE advantage in many games. I sometimes don't get a crossbow until DL2 or even DL3. Many times I get one right away, but being able to use bolts ASAP totally saves lives. The starting bolts aren't bad, either.

* The starting throwables, by comparison, are pretty meh. Since they rely on melee power to do damage, and you probably have only 1 or 2 points at game start, they just don't help much.

Wootah

I love both. Crossbows goes great with tinkering. Unlimited arrows. Great crossbows. Thrown goes great with smithing but also with fungal arts and puffballs!

Shqwa

I am not a big fan of crossbow skill tree. I don't think it does enough to be worth 1/7 of your skills. Starting with a cross bow is amazing. Recovering weaker bolts is nice. 6 piercing damage, fleshbore, and low chance of knockback are meh. But by floor 4 you should have tons of bolts and a crossbow. In my experience the trifecta for a game winning crossbow build is tinkering, unarmed, and rogue scientist. Those give the best bolts, great damage, and a ton of survivability.

Dual Wield

Lorrelian

Dual Wield

Type: *Warrior*

Role: *Engine*

Dual Wield will be a defining part of your build from minute one, or whenever you can find that second weapon.

Theme: *Anything Worth Doing Once...*

Strategy:

Two-fisted brawling. And lots of counter attacks. Combat Momentum encourages brawling as much and with as many enemies as possible, since it will stack every time you hit, even on counter attacks.

Pros:

Twice the damage is twice the fun. Killing enemies twice as fast means less damage taken and less health lost. And the counter attack stat is really the warrior's greatest time gaining ability (it negates an attack and gives you a free one, essentially stealing a monster's turn and giving you one). Dual Wield also lets you take advantage of weapons with procs twice as often, and even the same proc stacks. It's very powerful even with no points put into it, although all the levels, and the Combat Momentum proc in particular, are nice additions to any melee fighter's abilities.

Cons:

That weapon takes up an item slot usually reserved for other purposes. Shields are a warrior's primary source of magic resist and reflect, giving them up can really hurt. If your aim is 100 block, using a shield is a major step in the right direction. Tome procs, particularly the Tome of Too Much Information, Handbook of Bee Culture, Malleus Maleficarium and Universal Principles, can be incredibly useful to warriors, to say nothing of the exotic damage. Another thing to consider when reaching for that second weapon. You get none of the skill bonuses for Dual Wielding without a second weapon, so if you want to switch back and forth know you'll have a dead skill half the time.

Synergies:

Dual Wielding doubles your weapon skill bonuses, so taking Swords with it makes you a counter attack machine. Master of Arms or Shield Master make up for some of that block and AA lost from a shield. Or take Assassination to steal as much time from enemies as possible. Run roughshod over mobs with Piracy's Swashbuckling, then use Mists of the Corsair to take your distance. Two of Berserk Rage's procs have more chances to proc the more you hit, so a higher counter attack giving more hits is nice. High levels of the Staves skill grant a magic power bonus which doubles nicely when you use two.

Takeaway:

A powerful offensive skill, and not just for warriors, but deceptive as what you give up is often very, very useful.

OmniNegro

I take dual wield even on my most squishy mages. They literally die in a hit on later levels without good equipment, but the damage is unparalleled.

I also never put a single point into it until I have nothing at all better to invest in. The mere presence of the skill choice is enough to carry you all the way through unless you are a melee monster and need all the melee boosts you can get. Even then, the rewards are probably better gained from other things.

Shwqa

Dual Wield is pretty much the way to go for melee builds, especially if you are not using mods. Dual wield is more important skill to a melee build than any weapon skill tree. Melee is pretty weak in this game because you put yourself in hitting range to fight. Most of the time you will take 2-4 hits to kill a monster. That can hurt you quite a bit and put you in a bad situation. On later floors you can run into an unlucky critical hit counter critical hit from a Muscle diggle and taking 100+ damage in a single turn. Doubling your melee power halves the amount of times you get hit in the game. That saves you thousands of points of damage over the course of the game. It is the most defensive and offensive skill tree for a melee build there is. You really only need the first level of dual wield; the rest of the tree is just an added bonus and those bonuses are pretty good too. I wouldn't run a melee build without dual wield.

Berserk Rage

Lorrelian

Berserk Rage

Type: *Warrior*

Role: *Turbocharger or Payload*

Berserk Rage makes the melee experience that much better, and the Killing Blow ability gives the skill enormous late game potential.

Theme: *Aaaargh!*

Strategy:

Berserk Rage is all about melee, hitting and getting hit. A berserker is at his best when he's toe to toe with something, and benefits most from high block and armor absorption stats. A high dodge and counter will decrease his ability to maximize this skill. The procs make a berserker better in melee, increase his maximum HP and give him more armor absorption, making him a beast to try and kill physically, while he also gets a number of passive exotic damage and magic resistances from his third level skill, all in all a nice package.

Pros:

You hit them hard. With the fury of a thousand suns.

Cons:

This skill is not exactly, uh, deep? Basically, a character is maxing out his Rage when he's hitting and getting hit. Kiting and buff management are less important than wading in and whaling on people. Since the second and half the fourth level procs rely entirely on your being hit, Berserkers will want to be well defended in heavy armor and possibly shields, which decreases their synergies with non-warrior builds, although such builds are still viable with good planning.

Synergies:

Berserk Rage procs give you a ton of melee power. Assassination and Axes both up your critical hit rate, allowing you to take greatest advantage of all that melee power. Master of Arms and Shield Bearer let you get some defenses without burdening yourself with heavy armor.

Fleshsmithing and Emomancy both give you healing spells that can fill all those extra HP your buffed Burl and Caddishness gives you. Again, note that skills that buff dodge and counter, like Artful Dodger or Swords, actively work against this skill.

Takeaway:

Berserk Rage is very powerful in a very limited fashion, much like weapon skills. But it's still a solid skill for a person planning on melee, particularly if he does not plan on taking Dual Wield.

OmniNegro

An ideal BR build will have very low dodge but massive block and armor.

BR is notably the **ONLY** skill that I can think of that makes Magnetronic Plate look ideal.

Essence

Berserker Rage: in many ways, it's better than Master of Arms for saving your life.

First level gives 1.33 melee power and a point of armor, lasts 7 turns, and stacks up to 3 times.

Sure, it adds a couple of other things, but it's so minor that who cares? The important part is *up to 3 points of ARMOR*.

Second level gives 1.33 melee power and **TWO** points of armor, lasts 7 turns, and *stacks up to 3 times*. That's **SIX MORE** points of ARMOR -- and because the second level triggers on *being* hit instead of on hitting, you can have up to 4 chances per turn of having this proc activate. That's some crazy Armor, and a few extra points of damage on the side ain't bad either.

Third level gives some resistances to some pretty common damage types, but importantly also gives you +10 Magic Resist. That's a big chunk of resisting, and very nicely compliments the 75 MR you get from Celestial Circle. (In fact, the whole 'you can't move' of Celestial Circle and the 'bennies from being attacked' aspect of Berserker Rage make Mad Demonologists a pretty decent gimmick.)

Fourth level gives 2.66 melee power and two points of armor, lasts 7 turns, and **ALSO** stacks up to 3 times. It triggers on attacking and on being attacked, but only half as often on each as the first two levels. Still, it's fully feasible to get 15 points of Armor going from just this one skill provided you stay in combat continuously for a long time. That's enormous.

Fifth level, of course, is the auto-crit of doom. Much less powerful now that crits are avoided by any single successful defense roll, but because crits multiply your melee power, and this skill gives you +5 melee power in addition to auto-critting (and in addition to the up-to 15.33 melee power you can get from levels 1, 2, and 4), any crits that do make it through will do huge piles of extra damage to your foes.

Berserker Rage pairs well with any skill that benefits you for leaping into the middle of the fray, getting surrounded, and getting pounded on. In particular, Bushido, Master of Arms, Shield Bearer, Axes, Demonology, and, perhaps weirdly, Astrology (stunning everyone around you is a good prelude to an Axenado) That said, if you get unlucky and it fails to proc for a few rounds, you'll also desperately want a way out, which is why Berserkers are so often paired with Fungal Arts, Burglary, or a mod skill like SwiftStriker, Clockwork Knight, or Wind Magic that has either an early knockback, early teleport, or is something melee-oriented with a teleport later on.

Basically the only real downside to Berserker Rage is that you could be taking Fungal Arts or Burglary in that slot instead. (Glass-cannon wizards, of course, being the exception proving the rule.)

Artful Dodger

Lorrelian

Artful Dodger

Type: *Rogue*

Role: *Fuel Tank* or *Turbocharger*

Mostly dodging saves you HP, and this skill is the most guaranteed source of dodge in the game! Keeps your HP in you and makes you better in melee combat by extension.

Theme: *Can't Touch This (da, na na na)*

Strategy:

Dodging only keeps you out of trouble, it doesn't actually kill things for you, so the key is to have a high dodge while still getting damage from somewhere. Preferably melee damage, since dodge isn't worth much to a ranged fighter.

Pros:

Just to get it out of the way, there's Knightly Leap. This ability is really good. It lets you hop over one or two pesky enemies, grab stuff on islands and generally run roughshod over obstacles. The interdimensional dodge is a good way to put distance between yourself and a single dangerous enemy most of the time, but it's not useful against large groups. Akido for Adventurers is a great defensive proc up there with Dwarven Handshake, will buy you time for potions or just an extra ranged attack that will quite frequently be the difference between walking away with your head high and limping away hoping nothing catches up to you.

Cons:

This tree is short, and it only protects you from melee attacks. None of its many potent powers will really be a benefit against ranged attacks, which are pretty much all magic, or traps. You'll need a gameplan for both of those, or tons of HP, which you won't get from Artful Dodger either.

Synergies:

Combines well with Unarmed Combat, which gives you good dodge and counter bonuses to help protect yourself from attacks and lets you dual wield shields to add some AA and other defensive stats on top. It's also a huge boon to Daggers and other skills that scale to nimbleness.

Takeaway:

Artful Dodger is a good workhorse skill to drop into an empty spot in a build, particularly if you don't want to micromanage crafting or some other such nonsense in your otherwise straightforward rogue or mage. Pretty much everyone but a dedicated counter attack/tank warrior wants dodge, so everyone will like this skill at least some.

Shqwa

I LOVE artful dodger. With the update to combat a little while back dodge takes precedent over all other combat skills. If you got 80 dodge you can pretty much guarantee that nothing can hit you in melee. Artful dodger gives you a whooping 27dodge with stats. That is amazing! You know those blink bats you can never hit? Well they only got 44. You will get over 50 just with artful dodger, parachute pants, and other skill trees (they don't have to be rogue skills!). If you add in Unarmed (8 dodge) and Perception (15dodge) you pretty much melee anything without fear. Add in tinkering for even more dodge and unlimited bolts (with unarmed you will be amazing at long range damage).

Master of Arms/Shield Bearer

Lorrelian

Shield Bearer/Master of Arms

Type: *Warrior*

Role: *Fuel Tank or Turbocharger*

These skills revolve around the idea of making you impervious to harm, one relies on shields (or will soon) the other makes you a walking suit of armor.

Theme: *Go Ahead. Make My Day.*

Strategy:

These builds encourage the player to build for invulnerability by providing high block and damage absorption upgrades, plus piercing resistance.

Pros:

Both skills provide *huge* block bonuses. When maxed, the two skills together give a 35% chance of blocking. Before gear. Plus, each skill starts you with a piece of defensive gear, which is a huge plus for characters on the first floor. The Master of Arms rollout is particularly beefy, pretty much negating DL 1 damages all on its own. Shield Bearer provides more powerful procs when maxed out, and the defensive shield bash is really sweet too.

Cons:

The Tortoise Maneuver and Suit Up abilities will never really do you much in combat, although they're great for walking around the dungeon. Neither skill line provides you with much depth, they just let you tank even *more* hardcore.

Synergies:

Oddly enough, these are skill lines that provide the biggest benefits to someone who doesn't plan on clearing the game with many warrior skills, as they provide you with the HP, the block and the AA to make your way through most melee situations. Thus, they go well with Viking Magic, Astrology, Vampirism, Necromanceconomics and most rogue skills. This way, you can have some block and AA without sacrificing nimbleness or magic power.

Takeaway:

While these skills aren't necessary to be a tank, they do make it a lot easier, and the starting rollouts will save your life time and time again. Well worth looking at for tanks, gish and swashbucklers, but probably not that useful for "pure" rogues or mages.

Mr. Strange

I'll second the final point - getting 20% block from a skill line is nice - but it's not going to make a huge difference in your game if it's just taking you from 10 block to 30.

At the other extreme, if you go unarmed and dual-wield shields, you can pretty easily get over 100% block WITHOUT either skill.

So the best time to use these skills is when you anticipate using gear that gets you around 40-50 block - these skills can get you up to (or close) to that magical 95-100% threshold.

The other general use for these skills is when you simply need more beef in your build. Taking a

Warrior skill AT ALL is often a significant boost in your HP and survivability, and most characters don't want more than 1 weapon skill. That only leaves a scant few warrior options, and Shield Bearer / Master of Arms are unobjectionable skills in any build.

Darkmere

It's worth noting that shield bearer's defensive bash gives you an active tool to knock back dangerous foes out of melee range, while master at arms provides earlier passive pierce resistance and more base health.

Shield bearer's buffs also slightly exacerbate the nimbleness penalty that most shields carry. Shields tend to have more resistances (and straight magic resistance/spell reflect) that can combine with block to negate incoming exotic damage and possibly make brittle buffs last longer (potions of steeling, lobstermane, radiant aura).

Master of arms has a proc that adds to burl, which can help taking out annoying caster targets and synergizes well with berserker rage.

Shqwa

I think that Shield Bearer is a better skill tree than Master of Arms myself. Currently you don't need a shield for any of the tree's skills and I hope it stays that way (or else I would consider it underpowered). Remember a block reduces normal damage by 75% and exotic damage by 50%. So that 35% chance to block with this tree allow is pretty amazing. My favorite part is whole well this tree works with demonology's celestial circle.

Celestial circle gives you 9  9  9  9  10  -12  3  45  70  5 . Now combine that with duck and cover and tortoise maneuver you got 72 7 70 13 (enough for 1hp a turn even in going rogue) 9  9  9  9  and that is and that is before adding in stats or equipment. The best part is it only take 5 levels to set this up! You can do this by floor 2 without burglary or archaeology.

Vampirism

Lorrelian

Vampirism

Type: *Wizard*

Role: *Engine? Fuel Tank?*

Honestly, I'm not sure what Vampirism is meant to be. What it serves as is a poor fuel tank for melee characters, or a decent one for rogues. Not entirely sure why its a Wizard skill...

Theme: *Blood Is Power!*

Strategy:

Vampirism is a strategic balancing act, trying to stay in melee enough to get keep healed but attacking at range to keep from needing healing. And trap skill. You'll need lots of that.

Pros:

The Drain Life proc is actually kind of appealing on the first floor, and there's enough animals on later floors to make it still somewhat relevant. Corpse Drain can actually heal you for a decent amount of life if you really push your Magic Power. The sparkles aren't a great AoE, but they do stun and they do deal Righteous damage, a very useful type. And they do drain. Transylvation lets you fly, the only skill in the game that does. Necro damage is common enough that the resist is nice.

Cons:

You can't heal by eating, nor do you heal over time, and the skill tree's powerful activated abilities and drain proc aren't enough to overcome that. It's really that simple.

Synergies:

Vampirism's Necro resist makes it a great partner for Necronomiceconomics, allowing you to spam Deathly Hex for a bit, until your magic power gets too high. Of course, by that point you can have Pact of Fleeting Life doubling your drain on some targets and giving you a bit of drain for everyone else. Magic Training will give you more raw spellpower to throw around, Master of Arms more HP as a buffer against damage. And Psionics or Fleshcrafting will make up for that loss of healing.

Takeaway:

The ugly truth is, Vampirism as a skill is somewhat underpowered. While it presents an interesting challenge for experienced players, it really isn't a great choice as a skill. There's talk of the skill being rebalanced for the Wizardlands expansions, and if it is it will be revisited at that time. But for now, I'd recommend it only if you enjoy frustration.

Essence

Vampirism: Because GRPD Wasn't Hard Enough.

Interestingly, vampirism is actually a slightly better pick on GR than it is on EE, because you lose less (in that on GR, you regen health approximately 250% slower than on EE, so the 'no natural regen' hurts about 70% less.) Vampires have a variety of hidden benefits that don't even start to make up for it's drawbacks. For one thing, you're likely to get at least 4 extra Lutefisk God artifacts over the course of the game if you dutifully grind up and fisk all your meat and cheese. For another, vampires actually make better use of defensive stats than other characters,

because for a Vampire it's all about maximizing the number of times you hit and minimizing the number of times you get hit -- so going Dual Swords (i.e. Max Counter) + Max Armor + High Resists on a vampire is going to serve you a little better than it will on a mortal meeler.

If you luv mods like I luv mods, any mod that gives you <multibuff> (Drunken Boxing, for example) makes vampirism that much more effective, and any mod that gives you high resists (Bushido, perhaps) supplements the Max Armor builds very nicely.

The Apprentice

Additional note: Vampirism is the only way a player character can drown in DoD to date. That's right, Vampirism gives you a unique way to die!

Burglary

Lorrelian

Burglary

Type: Rogue

Role: *Fuel Tank* or *Payload*

Burglary can be used to increase the general resources at your disposal and/or saved for later development into a powerful survival skill.

Theme: *Grab Their Stuff and Run*

Strategy:

Burglary specializes in moving around the dungeon with no restrictions and getting items for free. However, outside of performing these admirable tasks, the skill is not that threatening. While monster problems can be avoided for a time with Burglary, eventually a character will need a plan for dealing with them.

Pros:

Increased trap skill, nimbleness, activated invisibility and targeted teleport for escaping bad situations, infinite lockpicks that increase XP *and* pretty much increase loot per floor by 1/3 and the ability to steal one item from Brax on your first visit without repercussions. If it's not fighting, this skill probably does it. Seriously, all this skill needs to be stupidly overpowered is a heal of some sort. Which is why it doesn't have one. On the bright side, it fits with just about every skill and build you can cram it into, and is great even with just one point invested in it.

Cons:

No combat potential at all. Other than small nimbleness bonuses to keep you from getting hit just a little bit more, Burglary will not help you win a fight in any way. It can help you walk away from them, and make up the XP by picking locks, but really, who wants a named monster running around the dungeon when they don't know where it is?

Takeaway:

Burglary is a great skill for anyone, not just Rogues. It provides tons of options for just about any situation, including huge resource gains and excellent panic buttons. However, since it doesn't do much else, it's probably not a good choice for a character that already has good skills for those purposes. If you have Mathemagics or plan to craft your way to most of your better midgame equipment Burglary is less good (but still very good.) Still, you may find yourself considering this skill for every character you build.

Essence

Burglary. The first skill is amazing in and of itself as a game-starter -- nabbing an extra dozen booze, food, bolts, thrown, and crafting items from the first floor is a great way to ensure survivability for any Roguey character. But that's not really what anyone cares about. Even if you never plan to see the deeper levels of Burglary, *everyone* who has ever taken the skill puts at least one point in it -- often their first level-up of the game -- for the infinite lockpicks.

That's the level that everyone also talks about the most, so I'm skipping it. The third level of Burglary is the one that *noone* talks much about -- Lockdown. Lockdown has the simple effect of rooting a monster. It's a cooldown effect that roots an enemy. Sounds all good, but there's a

hidden catch (with this and all root effects): the enemy has a chance to break free every turn, and that chance is greatly multiplied if you target that enemy with anything on your turn. So it's a great escape, but if you don't move as far away as possible before recommencing the attack, you're losing out on a good chunk of the effect. Obviously this is much less effective against caster mobs, but it's great against named meleers that you need to soften up a bit.

Next up: Ninja Vanish. 20-turn cooldown Invisibility, lasts 10 turns -- meaning that for the cost of 5% of your turns, you can spend 50% of your turns invisible. More often, though, you'll use this anytime you're overwhelmed. If you're not surrounded, it's a great way to get away. If you are surrounded, you can pop as many mushrooms, potions, food items, and booze as you can manage to stuff in your face in 10 turns before hopping back into the fray. Less common uses: get Invisible in order to safely clear the cooldown time of a more important getaway ability. If your Move in Mysterious Ways has 9 turns left and you have 9 HP left, hit Ninja Vanish and wait for your opportunity to teleport to come around. Similarly, dropping a powerful DoT on a foe and then going invisible is a great way to bring it into melee/nuke range.

Then: Five Finger Discount. It's one of those skills that looks cool, but in reality, is mostly for show. Unless you get super-lucky and manage to rob Brax of an item that's several levels out of depth, FFD is often going to be a few hundred extra zorkmids 2-3 times each floor. Granted, everyone gets lucky a couple of times on each run, and FFD is several more chances to get lucky.

Finally, the ability every build loves -- Move in Mysterious Ways. I expect everyone else to talk about it, and I'm out of time right now, so I'm not going to go into incredible depth on this. You get to go anywhere you can see once every 24 turns. Artifact islands, getaways from mobs, teleporting onto doors so you can see through them safely, and so forth -- the uses are endless and awesome.

TheKirkUnited

Five finger discount is nice for a free item with no risk, but to really make use of the burglary tree, you need to rob Brax blind. Take everything, not just the one item FFD gives you. Once you've reached Move in Mysterious Ways, this is fairly easy. Simply go into Brax's store, grab everything you want then move mysteriously out the door and head for the stairs. Once Brax's big red bullies show up, just pop ninja vanish for an easy getaway. This will allow to get the out of depth items every time instead of hoping FFD nabs it for you. Just make sure to case the joint ahead of time, planning your route to the stairs can be the difference between sweet loot and a re-roll.

There are of course many other methods to rob Brax, but Burglary gives you all the tools you need in one skill tree.

Marak

TheKirkUnited said: [↑](#)

This will allow to get the out of depth items every time instead of hoping FFD nabs it for you.

FFD generates a random item and claims that you stole it from the shop. You don't actually take anything from the Shop; after the FFD pop-up, the Shop will still be full, with all the Shopping Pedestals filled with merchandise. Regardless, your advice to use Ninja Vanish and Move in a Mysterious Way to rob him blind is still sound.

Fun fact: Five Finger Discount is currently bugged in that, if you enter a Shop with a full Inventory, the generated stolen item is Lost and Gone Forever™. It will not drop to the ground like Zoo/Quest Rewards or other "pop-up items" will - it simply is consigned to the Aether.

Karock

Since no one has really talked about it, Burglary is basically necessary for anyone who 'must open / get everything' because of the infinite lockpicks. This is the reason why I, personally, cannot make a build without burglary.

Pretty much everything else has been discussed except for noting the offensive potential of Move in Mysterious Ways for a melee character. If you've ever cleared a Zoo with Octo in it on a pure melee character, you know that after you clear all the monsters out, there will be 7-15 Octo just hanging out in the back of the room. As you try to get to them, they can do some major damage to you with their ranged attacks. Move in Mysterious Ways can be used to teleport right into the fray for ranged monsters (or to a square right by them) and avoid a lot of the ranged damage you might otherwise face.

King Banhammer

It bears mentioning: "In depth" items in the late levels include the Staff of Godewjin, and Crownstars. I had a run a couple of weeks ago where I FFDed four Crownstars inside a couple of levels in the 12-15 range.

Shwqa

Burglary is one of the best skills in the game.

- The first skill gives you a random free item from vending machines. The first room of the game has a food and booze vending machine, so you start the game with more healing items. A number of times I have managed to steal WMD or squid bolts from vending machines which is always very nice.
- The second skill is almost always the skill I get with my first level up. It creates lock picks for free. The first floor alone probably has enough locked doors to level you up once or twice. This skill will level your character several times over the course of one game. Also breaking down doors means you can't close them later which can put you at disadvantage sometimes

- The third skill gives you a trap affinity and can prevent a monster from moving. Just this skill tree up to this point can disarm most traps on the first 2 floors. Which is another great source of experience. Traps will level your character a few times as well over the game. The prevent movement really helps with unique monsters which can easily kill you in 2-3 hits on rogue difficulty.
- I don't really use the fourth skill that much. I don't know how invisibility works to be honest. Maybe a melee character could use it for the end of monster zoos where 10+ ranged monster are all sticking together.
- The fifth skill gives you a random items (like not one from the store) when you enter a shop for the first time. It basically makes all brax shops one inventory spot bigger and gives you that item free. Its nice but not reliable enough to rush to. I basically only get it once I want the next skill.
- The last skill is amazing. A free controlled teleport. It has so many uses it is crazy. Every build can benefit from this skill.

Rarefied Horse Meat

Essence said: [↑](#)

Lockdown has the simple effect of rooting a monster. It's a cooldown effect that roots an enemy. Sounds all good, but there's a hidden catch (with this and all root effects): the enemy has a chance to break free every turn, and that chance is greatly multiplied if you target that enemy with anything on your turn. So it's a great escape, but if you don't move as far away as possible before recommencing the attack, you're losing out on a good chunk of the effect.

This! Lockdown for long-duration single-target CC, plus some form of AoE CC (psi shove is a cheap and easy choice), gives you the opportunity to dictate the terms of engagement for any fight where you're not ambushed.

Thanks for pointing out the hidden catch, I wasn't actually aware of it, despite having used it a bunch. (probably because I use it primarily to keep auxiliary targets away while I tango)

Assassination

Lorrelian

Assassination

Type: *Rogue*

Role: *Turbocharger or Payload*

Assassination makes attacking better by upping crit rate and providing nifty procs, but it's not gonna kill that diggle on its own.

Theme: *Hit 'Em Where It Hurts*

Strategy:

This skill is all about dealing the most possible damage with your physical attacks. You'll need to give a lot of thought to how you're going to deliver those attacks, and how you might increase your critical hit rate even more.

Pros:

Two procs here steal turns. While sleeping monsters will awaken if you are attacked by something else, paralysis pins them down regardless of outside actions. On DL1, the sleep proc alone will probably save your hide more than once. Add the huge critical hit bonuses and the raw damage potential of three damaging procs going off all the time and you have the rogue's equivalent of berserk rage. A high enough critical hit chance also significantly weakens a monster's primary means of ranged defense, namely blocking, so this provides some benefit for crossbow users and throwers.

Cons:

The tree is short, and Slim Jim and Venomous Infusion are both very meh skills. Neither stealth nor toxic damage are very useful at the moment, and the presence of the skills on the tree really slows down your getting to the good stuff at the top (which, admittedly, is probably they point.)

Synergies:

Dual axe wielding assassins may not make much sense, but in DoD they pack loads of *awesome*. Pirate Assassins will benefit from their increased caddishness. Critical hits double melee power, so anything that boosts that is probably a step in the right direction. So, *berserk* dual axe wielding assassin-pirates with clockwork limbs? Yeah, now you're getting the picture.

Takeaway:

Assassination is a solid support skill that helps take physical attacks to the next level. That said, it's pretty mindless. If you want to have the most control you can over when and how things happen, it's probably not for you.

Shqwa

I find assassination to be a very meh skill. It was made back when critical hit by passed a target's ability to counter, dodge, or block. That made it godly to have high critical. Now it is nice, but not needed. It was never balanced for the nerf that critical hit received.

Null

Everyone thinks that crit chance does nothing for crossbows but it does in fact double the mundane damage dealt by the attack. So barbed bolts are great with crits. For thrown weapons they already use melee power so their crits should work fine.

Fungal Arts

Lorrelian

OP now contains updated PDF! We've covered two mage skills and five warrior skills. I'd like to do a pair of rogue skills now, then another mage skill. Today is Fungal Arts, I'm open to suggestions for Friday and next Tuesday. Also, don't hesitate to start on a skill just because I'm a lazy git who over slept instead of posting in the morning like he totally intended to the night before...

Fungal Arts

Type: *Rogue*

Role: *Turbocharger or Fuel Tank*

Fungal Arts is a skill that can be used to greatly increase the effectiveness of other skills or as a way to stave off the crippling effects of attrition through the long slog to DL15.

Theme: *Life From the Dead*

This skill sometimes makes mushrooms on the corpses of dead enemies, and gives a lot of mushroom themed powers like pets and spore clouds.

Strategy:

The basic idea behind this skill is simple: Kill enemies (which you were going to do already), occasionally get shrooms. Level up, put points in the skill, get shrooms more frequently. Profit. While Fungal Arts needs to be maxed early for maximum value, there's no denying that it can help just about any build, from melee tanks to dedicated mages. Perhaps only a serious crossbow user gets nothing from this skill.

Pros:

There are literally mushrooms for anything. Basic and exotic damage resistance, more melee damage, life leech, healing, mana regen, casting bonuses, ranged AoE stunning, you name it. Moldsmithing lets you turn mushrooms you can't use into mushrooms you can use. Sure, there's a "dead end" in the ability, but you're still getting tons of shrooms for free. Plus you get *Toxic Resistance*. Toxic Damage is the most common damage type in the game. Not on a single floor, *in the game*. And you can resist five points of it once this skill is maxed out. That's almost like having a second suit of armor. Oh, and pets. It gives you sort of useful pets too.

Cons:

The skill requires a lot of clicking to maximize. Sure, spores are gone (do you even remember spores?) but Moldsmith still requires some patience, and you may find your inventory open more often than you like. With the exception of the Mob Bonnet, the Night Cap, the Greedy Blucap and the Fairywodger, most of the mushrooms don't scale well to the end game. But hey, that's still four very useful items, right?

Takeaway:

This skill adds a little something to just about everything. It also gives a non-mage character enormous late game reach by solving many healing issues. However, if you don't like puttering around in your inventory a great deal or find yourself agonizing over what is the best way to maximize a small number of marginally advantageous buffs when you could be enjoying the game, you might want to leave it on the shelf.

Essence

The thing about Fungal Arts is that on a well-built character, it makes an excellent 'throwaway' seventh skill. Even without any points in it, you automatically get access to the Fairywodger and the Inky Hoglantern, meaning a single point in Fungal Arts is virtually all a Warrior-class needs to survive to low levels.

You have to put 1 point into it in order to get access to the full gamut of mushrooms (of note, the Greedy Blungecap, Azure Mob-Bonnet, and Odious Puffball aren't available out of the gate), but it makes a great first skill to put a point into -- the slime pet is a huge boost to clearing level 1, especially for a mage. Once you have that one point in Fungal Arts, you never need to worry about it again. Sell or Fisk the crappy mushrooms, and just hold on to the others until you absolutely need them (i.e. DL 9+). By the time you realize you might want to use them, you'll have so many you'll be popping them like corn. Pop corn.

The upper levels of Fungal Arts aren't really all that much to write home about. Mushroom Transmutation is useful, but not really worth a skill point. Battle Mycology is mildly useful on DLs 1-2, but doesn't scale well at all. The Mobile Assault Combat Mushroom is sweet until about DL6, but again, isn't really a strong endgame plan. The most useful things about the later levels of Fungal Arts are the increased mushroom procs (especially since the last level lets you spawn mushrooms without waiting around, albiet rarely.)

All told, Fungal Arts is an amazing skill to have a couple of points in, but it's almost never the focus of a build. If you did want to focus a build around it, a Gish-type character that relied on mushrooms for healing, mana regen, and escapes while relying on it's pet (perhaps even buffing it's pet?) would be pretty fly, synergizing well with non-pet, non-healing caster classes. Which means Mathemagics, Astrology, Viking Wizardry, and Warlockery, I do believe. Actually, those four in conjunction with Staves, Dual Wield, and Fungal Arts would be pretty badass.

tejon

One major issue: pets don't appear to proc target kill buffs. This may or may not be a bug, but at least for the moment it means that your pet slime greatly reduces your mushroom harvest.

Karock

Since the slime has no mana cost, it can act as a small free boost of mana, health, on kill buffs or anything else you can get from attacking a creature with no risk to you as it won't fight back. At least I believe this to be the case, so someone correct me if I am wrong.

Just like all other pet classes, it carries the problem of slowing down combat when you use those abilities.

Wootah

You forget puffballs. They are insanely good for throwers. Even if you aren't a thrower, you can toss them to confuse groups of enemies. The Grunge ear stacks so that +3 resistance to certain resistances, which can be great in certain circumstances.

The mushrooms are definitely the best part about the arts.

The spore clouds do very underwhelming damage and since they are marked as mines and not clouds, they really don't do much.

The low level slime covers you for floors 1-3 if gotten early and the spore master can take quite a few hits and i usually use it through floor 8 and as a pure distraction thereafter. Since it costs no mana, it is great in non-mana builds, although the long cooldown makes it hard to use it as a consistent damage sponge.

I just cleared a dungeon on floor 13.

Puffballs are so good for confusing monsters up front so that they don't flow out of the dungeon en-mas giving you more time to back up and line up your AOE spells (Fleshmithing putrifaction) en-masse. Plus, with my throwing skill, the puff balls are hitting upwards of 70 damage, which added in with the hyperborean mittens and I single puffball is doing 100's of damage. And I my fair share of them back from the zoo. I still have about 130. Love those things.

Marak

I'd say one of Fungal Arts' greatest strengths is that you can use it without worrying about your current Mana or Magic Power. The Mushrooms themselves act like Potions, only more varied and numerous. Put in a point or three early on and you're good to go - you'll Mushrooms faster than you can use them (in general) and if you get to Transmute, you can turn anything you don't like or use into something you do like and use.

Basically, if you're planning on using a build that emphasizes Heavy Armor and you know going in that your Mana pool and Magic Power are going to be non-factors, Fungal Arts is a very solid choice for your "something that can heal me faster than Food" Skill. Fairywodgers and Blunjecaps can keep you going for a long time when you have solid armor and aren't taking a lot of damage in the first place.

Other advantages include Mushrooms that don't wear off over time, so you can eat them whenever and they'll be ready for the next time you engage in combat and the ability to eat several types in succession before opening a door, so you can face the next room or three with a solid mix of buffs without having to buff up in mid-fight.

More Re: Fungal Arts

Going for a semi-early 3rd point to unlock Battle Mycology seems to be the way to go. With it, you can get up to 3 Mushrooms off a single corpse, plus the chance of any kill netting you Sporification (read: a Mushroom will spawn) seems to be in the 50-75% range.

Basically, you get more Mushrooms than you can possibly use, allowing you to keep Lobstermane, Fell Truffle, and the Prince up at all times, and giving you the freedom to add moar buffs with some combination of Plumber's Agaric, Azure Mob Bonnet, Greedy Blunjecaps, Fairywodgers, Night Caps, and Grunge Ears just before opening a door.

See closed door? Eat 3 Mushrooms, open door, proceed to kill whatever's behind it.
Was it a Zoo? Slam the door in their faces, eat every Mushroom you have, open door, proceed to slaughter everything in sight.

Here I am on Floor 5 - my stockpiled Mushrooms are all in my Belt slots. Keep in mind this is after eating them at random before opening doors and using 10-30 for each Zoo I come across:



Some kind of mycological cornucopia indeed.

TheKirkUnited

As crafting has been heavily reworked in the most recent free DLC, which will be released VERY soon, it might be best we wait to deal with crafting skills.

I haven't used fungal very much but I have found mushrooms useful for all of my characters and since this guide is for newer players it might behoove us to explain why some of the the mushrooms are so useful, and by extension why fungal is so appealing.

Inky Hoglantern gives invisibility for a few turns. Doesn't last as long as invisibility potions but still excellent for making an escape.

Greedy Blungecap gives a vampire-like effect that heals you for a portion of the melee damage you deal, excellent for fighters.

Fairy Wodger gives a short term regeneration effect similar to regeneration potion but a bit shorter in duration. Healing is good for everyone right? You like the heals! One of the best mushroom effects.

Grunge Ear buffs you with an assortment of useful damage resistances and can be stacked three times for serious protection.

Night Caps generate mana faster than booze. Good for any mage in a pinch.

Fell Truffles add 7 damage for 6 hits. Not as useful against Fell (read undead/eldritch) enemies due to their resistances.

The Prince, and **LobsterMane Fungus** add brittle buffs that make you tougher for 5 hits. Lobstery toughness can be stacked 3 times for extra toughness.

Azure Mob-Bonnets buff wizardly type stats and the buff can be stacked 3 times, for when you need to blow stuff up in a hurry.

Plumber's Agaric is the Mob-Bonnets burly cousin. Buffs your Burl and stacks 3 times.

Mud Wen is mostly worthless. Has limited usefulness as an alchemy reagent, but don't eat it unless you enjoy horrible stomach pain.

All in all a very useful set of effects. Having a couple on hand is nice for any character, having fungal arts allows you to carry PILES of them. Is this not awesome?

Omni Negro

Fairy Wodgers stacks too. And basically makes you invulnerable in the early game if you have enough of them. I think Night Caps do too. I do not recall. I need to check the DLC and see if this has changed any.

Perception

Lorrelian

Perception

Type: *Rogue*

Role: *Fuel Tank*

Perception helps you hang on to resources and use them more efficiently

Theme: *Find a Penny, Pick It Up*

Strategy:

Perception is all about mini-maxing. It maxes out your chances of finding useful resources. It boosts your ability to deal out resources at the right time. It makes you more resilient and protects you from traps. It's a handy skill, with more power than people think.

Pros:

+10 dodge and +15 EDR for starters. By reducing the hits you take by 10% above and beyond normal, Perception makes for a great Rogue survival skill, but it really shines with Warriors or Mages who will have much lower dodge chances. While Artful Dodger gives more raw dodge, it doesn't give something else those archetypes are really lacking in as well: Trap Sight. Which is all you really need to avoid traps effectively. Sure, you can get the same (or really, better) results from Burglary and Dodger together, but if you're not playing a rogue you might not want to spend the slots on it.

The ability to purge invisibility, buff your sight radius and dodge even more, and make free exotic ranged attacks is a nice bonus. But most of all, the Lucky Find proc and its cousins give every build a chance to find items that will benefit it that don't always spawn in the dungeon at all. A real boon to all archetypes.

Cons:

Like many rogue skills, Perception does little to answer the game's most pressing question: How will I kill *that*? (For values of "*that*" which can range from "sickly diggle" to "ancient conniving lich" and include a number even stranger things inbetween, like Footies.) Many of the good things about the skill can be gotten from other skill lines at a higher power level, albeit at the expense of taking up more skills. And it really doesn't wow you.

Synergies:

Perception provides a lot of solid raw crafting material, so crafting skills will get a lot of use out of the Lucky Find drops. The boosted vision area is a real bonus for casters, bowmen and throwers... who are shooting horizontally. It has much less impact on the game vertically.

Burglars who spend a lot of time invisible will likewise enjoy the sight boosts.

Takeaway:

An excellent skill for the warrior or mage who is looking to get all the basic benefits of rogue skills without committing two or three skills to that archetype.

Essence

Perception, my darling. How I love you. I was so happy when I learned that the GLGods had adopted my 'pet tweak' that I literally cried. So, let's see how the skill fares nowadays:

Level 1: Superhuman Perception. 5 EDR, 1 Sight Radius, and a 5% chance on kill to find one

item off of the Lucky Find list (below). Notables include Leather Boots, Leather Cap (two crafting ingredients that are very easy to miss out on, especially in NTTG) Cheese, Sliced Bread, (hello!) and Steel Ingots. Even without putting any points into it, Perception helps out all of the craft skills with small doses of useful components.

Level 2: 5 Dodge, 1 Sight, 1 Trapsight, and another 5% chance on kill to trigger Lucky Find, for a rough total of 9%, and rare opportunities to get 2 Finds off of one body.

Level 3: 5 more Dodge, 1 more Sight, 1 more Trapsight, and 2 points of Trap Affinity. Even if you get nothing else, those 2 points of Trap Affinity are enough to disarm half the traps in the first 3 levels of the game, which can mean a lot of spare XP. Also adds 5% chance to trigger Luckier Find, which adds potent new findables like Potions of Healing, Black Pearls, and Diggle Eggs to the mix. At this point, even strictly non-crafters will enjoy their finds if for nothing other than great selling material.

Level 4: 5 more EDR, 1 Sight, 1 Trapsight. At this point, you should be seeing traps so far before you step on them that you can start manipulating monsters into stepping on them instead, which is a surprisingly good tactic in the lower levels (and even better once they fix those damned Blink Traps). 5% more to get a Luckier Find brings you up to about 9% on average, or a total of about 19% to find something on each kill.

Level 5: 5 more EDR (mostly useless except when you reach Dredmor), 1 Sight, and a completely pointless spell that reveals invisible stuff. But since you can see invisible stuff at your Trapsight radius, which is already at least 3 by now, it's basically redundant. 5% to trigger Luckiest Find, however, is phat and all that, giving you occasional drops like Potions of Invisibility, Hordratic Lutefisk Cubes, Hand Grenades, and added Trap Affinity in the form of Trappers Toolbelts and Thieves' Gloves.

Level 6: Eye Lasers. A 32-downtime nuke that delivers decent blasting, conflagratory, and aethereal damage (a nice mix, by the way, few monsters have resistances to all three), sets the target on fire, and leaves a small fire burning in their square. The damage scales to Sight Radius, so you have at least a nominal reason to be happy if you find any further Sight-enhancing gear, though generally the 5 points you get from Perception should be enough.

All told, as Lorr said, it's an amazing tree for characters low on Rogue skills, and for crafters. The EDR is a bit extreme for a Rogue -- you usually won't need it all -- but the Dodge is welcome for absolutely everyone.

Golemancy

Wootah

Golemancy is a very powerful caster skill set that should not be underestimated. It is one of the caster skills that can be easily mixed into a melee/rogue build without any other offensive spell trees and still do very well.

Animate Blade Being

The only skill that is underwhelming is the blade golem. Not only can it hurt you, but it does very little damage, even early game. It basically places a trap on the ground that does pretty poor damage. It needs to scale better

Mustache Golem

This ability is a game changer if you get it early. Most people say to pick this up at your level 2. Not only is that badass mustache an amazing tank early game but it does significant damage and can pretty much clear the dungeon for you for the first 2-3 levels. This sets you up early to get good melee attacks in and level other skills you might need before you get to your other golemancy spells.

Unliving Wall

This ability is the core of the tree. What you say? A Wall? That's it? Really though, it is. The mana cost can get down to 3 mana meaning that you can spam the crap out of it later, with enough savvy. Not only that, but you can pretty much choose all your engagements. Open a door and find a zoo? NO problem. Most of the monsters are 1-2 tiles from the door, meaning that you can put up walls faster than they can even reach you, especially if you have a Golem (mustache or machine) distracting them. Once you have your little wall blocking monsters, feel free to cast mad non-projectile spells over your wall and let everything melt, all while never getting hit once. The best part? Zoos have this cool feature which gives you site of the whole thing, even when obstructed by walls! Go wally Happy! And the best part is when you are in a tight situation, you can just box yourself in until your golems and thaumites calm things down.

Invive Thaumite Swarm

The key to Thaumites is not to get them on yourself. They sting like the dickens, but more importantly they are your main damage ability in the golem tree. Lasting 8 turns and with a decent scaling with magic power Thaumites spread themselves! Thaumites are very handy and can clear zoos by themselves. The secret to Thaumites is two fold. 1) They spread. 2) They are pretty expensive to just be spammed. If you wanna win a fight with thaumites, especially in a zoo, target the weakest enemy first, so that they die before the thaumite infection runs its course and then then can move to a new target. By emphasizing magic power, you make sure that your thaumites kill things faster and earlier, and benefitting from the ability to spread.

Mortal Machine

One of the tankiest, beefiest of the minions. Not only that but it does decent damage early and the 10 Putrifying resistance makes it immune to your thaumites until late game when you have a lot of magic power. Interestingly this makes levels with machines also difficult to deal with if you only have Golemancy, but then again, you can keep smacking them with walls which do small amounts of damage.

Digging Ray

While quite expensive the digging ray really can be game breaking, or just VERY convenient. It isn't advisable to rush to it, especially if you have no other caster abilities because you may not even have the mana to cast it. When casting it, remember to click far away from your hero to complete a line. Also, narrow tunnels are a golemancer's best friend with walls and thaumites.

Pros: Great control

Cons: Low damage output, especially late game.

Tip: Ranged weapons can be shot through diagonally created Unliving Walls.

OmniNegro

Golemancy needs a major buff for the Robot that Loves. Specifically it needs an AoE attack that it can spam with a reasonable chance to proc fleshbore, and several times the HP too. (It also needs to fly to be useful over Promethean Magic.)

The reason is that by the late game it is useless, yet still costs a load of Mana. It then gets instagibbed by anything at all after DL 10. By level 7 or so you are better off never casting it again since it is unlikely to do anything more than take a hit for you and die. The 'Stash golem can do that just as well, or if you have Promethean Magic, the summon is better than everything in Golemancy since it flies and costs nothing at all with boosted Magic Power.

As it is, the only reason to take Golemancy is the Digging Ray. That spell is awesome.

Aside from Digging Ray, there is exactly nothing I want in the skill. Hell, there could be a multi-spawn like that used in the mod Fax made called Meteorology. (Spelling?) With a skill to spawn a half dozen little flesh shields you could get some actual defense out of them rather than just having to recast it every turn since it dies that fast.

mining

The walls are a skill of their own. Plonk down a wall, lob spells at enemies, profit.

The thing with digging ray is you can easily dig into the back of a store (i.e. without entering the pink zone) and steal things without getting caught. It's pretty crazy.

Shqwa

Golemancy tree is kinda a boring but useful tree to me. This build spends a lot of time laying back and lets summon and spells do the work. This tree can make its very hard for monster to reach you.

The first skills is completely and 100% useless, it does almost no damage, cost quite a bit of mana, and requires a set up.

Mustache Golem on the other hand is quite good. Getting this on level 2 means you can destroy the first 2 floors with no other offensive skill. This gives you time to raise Burglary, Alchemy, Lay Lines, and/or Killer Vegan. Though the zoo can be tough with just a golem but some monster will walk past it.

Unliving Walls is amazing spells that is useful all game long. It is 48 turns blockade of one spot. You can turn chock holds into a chance to recover for 48 turns. Without any regen all that is 6 mana and 4hp, which for a mage character should be enough to recast unliving wall. This spell makes you near invincible with the last skill of this tree.

Invite Thaumite swam does nice damage and creates a trap which re-spreads itself on top the corpse after a few turns. The few turns part means that most monsters will walk past the trap before it sets itself up. You really need to plan ahead to use this as your offensive spell. If a monster resist it then it become worthless. After level 8-9ish then it can't kill a monster without it being damage first making it kinda pointless. Very expensive.

The Mortal Machine is a better version of Mustache Golem but its only works till about floor 6-7 before becoming completely useless. Unless you rush to max this tree you'll probably never use it.

Digging Ray is AWESOME! It blows a path through walls, I think about 4 tiles in front you. Use this spell plus unliving wall to give your self an easy 144 turns of protection. Throw down some thaumite swams/ rune of exploding/ tenebrous rift outside your fort and kill everything outside. Great for Zoos or just any time your in trouble. Also its great for when the map tries to make you walk around the whole map for a quest/store. Just yell "I'm thinking with portals" out loud and blow through the walls of the map.

Golemancy works wonders with Killer Vegan, Ley Lines, Psionics, Nerconomiconomincs/Promethean Magic. Vegan and Ley Lines give you extra HP and MP regen. This makes creating a fort just that more useful. psionics gives you a push back skill which allows you to create more situations to use unliving wall. Psionics+Digging Ray+Unliving Wall can be an infinite fort. Nerconomiconomincs/Promethean Magic allows you to attack monster outside your fort better than golemancy can.

Lorrelian:

Golemancy

Type: *Wizard*

Role: *Turbocharger*

Golemancy serves best as a skill that augments more powerful skill that actually do something for you.

Theme: *Battlefield Control*

Golemancy gives a wide variety of abilities that let you change the battlefield by adding friendly monsters, "traps" and obstacles - or remove them

Strategy:

Golemancy encourages the player to hide behind summons and obstacles, allowing DoTs and summons to deal damage for you. If you're having trouble making choke points, just burrow one into a wall!

Pros:

Thaumite Swarm is, probably hands down, the best DoT in the game. For the initial investment this spell can easily wipe out 5-10 monsters in a zoo as it recasts itself over and over. Unliving Wall is a great combination of strategic terrain and panic button. Digging Ray is interesting, if not particularly useful in combat.

Cons:

All three summon spells scale to uselessness by DL10, and Digging Ray is not a damage dealing spell, leaving you with Unliving Wall and Thaumite Swarm to carry the skill for most purposes in the late game. Wall destruction is nice on occasion, but would be more useful in a game that isn't a roguelike, where the idea wasn't to eventually fight everything and being sneaky was more of a strategy. The summons slow down combat.

Takeaway:

Golemancy is a lackluster skill compared to many of the other wizard skills available. It does allow a fair amount of strategic play with the Unliving Wall but, since you're likely to just wind up hunkered behind them throwing Thaumites or waiting for your summons to finish things, or using more powerful spells from other trees, I generally find it to be a waste of skill points. Recommended for those who like the petmaster experience or building walls a la Tower Defense games. Those who like faster gameplay should avoid.

onesandzeroes

I actually don't find the first golemancy spell that bad. You need to line the monsters up, but it can take most of the floor 1 mobs down in 2 or 3 goes. It helps with surviving the first couple of floors as a squishy wizard, and allows you to take some of the other wizard skills like psionics or mathemagics that don't really have direct damage spells early on.

Marak

As for Golemancy in particular, I find it to be much like Promethian Magic as far as pets go: getting that Mustache Golem ASAP makes the first 2-3 Floors quite easy, but beyond that you

better have a backup plan, because it's going to be up to you to kill things again once you reach Floors 4 and beyond.

Fleshsmithing

Lorrelian

Fleshsmithing

Type: *Wizard*

Role: *Fuel Tank or Payload*

Odds are, if you're using this skill, you're looking at a cheap, easy way to keep your HP full or banking on the endgame power of spells like Corpus Burst or Miasmatic Putrifaction.

Theme: *Waste Not, Want Not. Corpses.*

Strategy:

Fleshsmithing looks surprisingly flexible - you can play minion master, tank or sling damage. Be warned, however, that the tree isn't actually *good* at most of those things.

Pros:

Even in the late game, raising a ton of zombies is a good way to distract monsters. The fact that you can get several of them means that even the hardest hitting named boss will be distracted for multiple turns. Knit Flesh is a wonder as a healing spell, probably the best in the game. While it won't haul your fat out of the friar against named enemies it is good for most everything else. Just watch out for the debuff that comes with it.

Cons:

The rest of this tree is pretty much junk. Corpus Burst is strong, but requires something dead already to work on. Meatshield is a flat out trap, offering little of value and threatening to leave you dead and buried when it wears off. Unless you're trying to pimp out Necromoniceconomic's Pact of Fleeting Life as much as possible, those extra HP won't help you. The Miasma does a reasonable amount of damage but entirely in types that are well resisted on the lower floors. Corpus Burst has much the same problem, except it replaces the Asphyxiative damage with Blasting damage, which starts higher, scales better and is less resisted (though AA does reduce it, so it is resisted some).

Takeaway:

Fleshsmithing is really a good Gish support skill. The healing and the distraction from the corpses is pretty good. The Meatshield buff can even be nice, if you want it. But a true caster shouldn't be expecting much from this skill, there's better trees for this spot that give much better return on MP.

Marak

I've actually used Fleshsmithing as my Primary Means of Healing on melee characters before; it works surprisingly well. Hit it before you charge in (possibly even combined with some long-lasting food) and you'll effectively negate a lot of incoming damage. Used this way, it plays nicely with the procs from either Master of Arms or Shield Bearer (or both). Plus, if you're playing a "pure melee" character, it gives you something to do with A) your Mana Bar and B) all that Booze the game throws at you. It's basically like having a stack of Fairywodgers that almost never runs out (you're not using that Mana for anything else, after all).

Granted, this is a pretty limiting thing to get an entire tree for, but if you're tired of taking Alchemy or Fungal Arts all the time, it *does* work as Melee Needs Healing, Badly tree.

TheKirkUnited

Red warrior is about to die.

Zombies also useful to melee characters for a cowardly retreat if knit flesh isn't keeping up. Not really worth climbing any higher than flesh knit though unless you've got levels to spare.

Shqwa

Knit Tissue is the best means of pure healing in the game hands down. You heal 12 HP without any Magic Power. Every for Magic Power gets you another 8 HP. All for the low price of 3-15 MP. It only takes 8 Magic Power to make the healing strength of a healing potion, though it does take 6 turns.

I don't really see Fleshsmithing as a tool used by pure wizard (who likely benefit more from Emomancy) or Warrior (fugal or alchemy) but rather by Rogues. Lay lines+ Fleshsmithing is a rogue's dream. A 3 cool down teleport, a massive summons, and a great cheap healing.

Mathemagic

Lorrelian

Mathemagic

Type: *Wizard*

Role: *Engine or Turbocharger*

This skill is great for a primary damage skill or as a way to set up other skills to increase their effectiveness (particularly with the Mod skill Archmage.)

Theme: *Careful Manipulation of Time and Damage*

Mathemagic deals exponentially increasing damage due to its linear stacking debuffs creating a self-contained scalar weakening effect. Which is to say, each casting of the spells from this skill stacks to bury your enemies under crippling status effects.

Strategy:

You basically want to establish DoTs on enemies, then teleport away from them until they die. It's important to have Xeuclid's as soon as possible if Mathemagic is your only damage skill, but really that's not recommended 'cause there's no AoE in the skill line at all. For the most part, you'll be a kiter, dealing powerful DoTs to enemies then 'porting away from them until they're dead.

Pros:

This skill is very powerful simply for the targeted teleport and Recursive Curse. The Curse, when stacked twice on a single target, will usually kill unless it is resisted, and its debuff saps the stats magic resistance comes from. Try to get lots of haywire to prevent that. Xeuclid's lets you escape any harry situation. Froda's isn't really great as a panic button, but helps you survive 'til you get there. Golden Ratio is expensive but lets you buy anything you want whenever you want it. And Belkzam's is useful to the gish, because it debuffs melee hardcore. Plus its a cheap damage spell. Also, every damage spell in the tree deals at least some transmutation damage, which isn't commonly resisted.

Cons:

No AoE. This skill is terrible at clearing zoos. Plus it doesn't do damage fast, it does it as DoT effects, which isn't always useful. But the teleports mitigate that somewhat.

Synergies:

Mathemagics goes well with any skill that wants to make ranged attacks unhindered but is particularly useful with Emomancy (healing, AoE), Necronomiceconomics (there is no "too close" for rifts with Xeuclid's) and Psionics (master of status effects!)

Takeaway:

Mathemagics is a workhorse magic skill. Not as flashy as Promethean or Necronomiceconomics, but powerful and efficient in what it does do. I highly recommend it for anyone who doesn't want their mage runs to consist of just spamming AoE every time you open a door.

Shwqa

I'm not a big fan of mathemagic. I only like the last three skills so I pretty have to waste 2 level ups just to get anything from the tree.

- Zenzizenzizencic is an amazing buff but it eats up a lot of mana points. 6 sagacity, 9 magic power, and 3 mana regen is huge. However it is a pain to keep up because you need to cast it 3 times for best effect and you need to do that again every 42 turns. It is just not fun to keep using.
- Xeuclid's Translation is a nice teleportation spell. Everyone was gushing about burglary's capstone skill. This is it but instead of a cool down it cost mana. It doesn't even cost that much mana. This spell is amazing
- The recursive curse is a great damage over time (DOT) spell. This is the best DOT spell in the game. This spell and any prevent movement spell/skill will kill any unique monster. I'm not sure how well it will work on Dreamor though...

So the these three skills is nice, but:

1. Zenzizenzizencic is annoying to use
2. You don't need Xeuclid's Translation and burglary's capstone skill
3. Recursive curse is only helpful for small parts of the game, though it does its job VERY well.

Stryke

Froda's is quite funky for allowing (with a bit of persistence) passage through unbreakable walls via blind teleports that normally you'd need a tunnelling ability for which can be a very nice time saver on occasion.

Rarefied Horse Meat

On the topic of **Mathemagic**, it's a great skill any time you want to play more tactically. Goes pretty well with the aforementioned Burglary, actually, and the concept of moving about, CCing, and picking off targets one by one.

It's a horrible skill if you DON'T have the patience to play tactically, however. Wanton spamming of your spells will not work with anything in this tree.

The Kirk United

Actually with enough savvy wanton spamming is quite possible. All Mathemagic spells become very cheap with a high savvy. You can cast Recursive Curse for as low as 6 mana, and while the DOT can be resisted the initial damage can't. This is great for wrecking any single monster, excepting Dredmor. Dredmor is immune to the DOT entirely and his resistances are so high, he laughs at the initial damage. Also, this may be a bug, but I've found that you if you click really fast you can often cast the curse or diminishing calculus multiple times before enemies get to move.

The only real downside to Mathemagic is the utter lack of AOE spells, so you should probably back it up with something that makes up for that. Synergises excellently well with magic training, for the aforementioned savvy.

Essence

Interesting note: a zenzizenzizencic is a number taken to its 8th power. So the zenzizenzizencic of 3 is 6,561.

Mathemagics. Ugh. I'm iffy on it. Here's why.

Froda's Jump Discontinuity: It's an escape button that doesn't actually escape very well at all. Unless it's a single named mob you're running from, FJD is about 50% likely to deposit you in as much or more danger than you were just in.

Beklam's Diminishing Calculus: is great on DL1. It saps 3 Melee Power and 3 HP from a foe as well as dealing, as much as makes no difference, 2 Necro and 2 Transmutative damage to it. It stacks up to 10 times and on DL1, it's totally worth it. Two floors later...not so much. Buffs and debuffs need to scale, dammit. 🙄

Curse of the Golden Ratio: does 6-7 damage/turn for 6 turns, and the monster poops gold while it dies. This is actually a pretty solid DoT to put on the back row of a horde while they approach so that they die while you kill the front row. Unfortunately, the only two characters that really use those tactics are gishes and Necro Beatsticks, neither of which will put in the 3 skill points necessary to reach this skill before DL 6 or 7.

Zenzizenzizencic: One of the best ways to get Mana Regen, but you have to have a little bit to start with or it doesn't pay for itself. If you can nail 5 points of Mana Regen from, say, Ley Line Walker and a choice Kronging or two, there's basically no reason not to have ZZZ up for the rest of the game.

Zeulid's Translation. Better than Move In Mysterious Ways, except that the path to get here is so harsh.

The Recursive Curse: let's not lie -- the stat penalties inflicted by TRC are basically fluff. The important part here is that it's a decently long-term DoT that inflicts a mostly-not-resisted kind of damage, and it's **cheap as hell**. If you have the mobility skills and the mana regen -- OH LOOK YOU DO! -- you can basically flit around the dungeon dropping this on everything that moves and then waiting for it to die. This might not look like it, but it's actually a hell of a capstone skill.

In total: Pair Mathemagics with Ley Line Walker and some form of first-few-rooms offense, and be prepared for a long, kite-filled adventure. Probably could benefit from some boosting of the first two levels, but if you manage to grind through them, you at least have a valid built-in strategy from this skill. I just happen to not be a big fan of that strategy.

Psionics

Lorrelian

Psionics

Type: *Wizard*

Role: *Engine or Fuel Tank*

Psionics can carry the bulk of your run *and* keep your most important resource, HP, at full between almost every combat.

Theme: *Mind Over Matter*

Strategy:

Psionics is all about maxing out secondary spell effects to help you reach your goals. Magic Power is not as important to Psionics as it is other spell lines.

Pros:

Psionics is a great wizard skill for non-wizard characters. The sleep, shove, heal, paralysis and charm effects all do their thing without caring about your Magic Power, and for the most part costs scale downwards very quickly. 36 HP healed for 3 MP over 9 turns is pretty good, even if it won't help you much in the middle of clearing a zoo. The big secret is, Psionics is also a great skill for actual wizards. Narcosomatic Induction is a damage spell on the first level. While it won't be very useful past the first DL, the work it does on that floor is more than enough to get you to better spells. The shove and healing are useful for everyone and the Nerve Staple/Pyrokinesis combo is top notch single target damage for only 8 mana at cheapest.

Cons:

The capstone is junk. Charmed monsters don't aggro other monsters like summons do, so they're useless as a distraction, and after DL 7 magic resistance is high enough that it will fail most of the time, unless you Haywire is something really special. In fact, you need a lot of haywire for spells other than Pyrokinesis and Crystal Healing to be useful on lower levels at all, one factor in weakening this skill for non-mages. The skill has no AoE outside of the shove, which scales slowly and deals Blasting damage, which AA will reduce.

Synergies:

Great with Mathemagics for an incredible Kite which will fear zoos with a great fear. Take Magic Training for your Turbocharging needs, the savvy will bottom out spell costs and pump Haywire to make sure your secondary spell effects actually, y'know, effect. Skills that leave damage fields, like Promethean Magic and Emomancy, like the ability to shove people back into the damage zone. All spell trees love Nerve Staple's Magic Resistance debuff.

Takeaway:

Psionics is a great toolbox that can power you through most early situations, but beware relying on it as you get deeper. The middle floors particularly, where magic resistance is high but your haywire has a way to go yet, will need something else to carry you through. Also, the skill is entirely almost useless against Dredmor himself, as he resists both Fire and Existentialism at respectable amounts.

r_b_bergstrom

Nerve Staple does existential damage but grants the target existential resistance hereafter. So while it's a good debuff, subsequent castings on the same monster don't zap the HP nearly as

much. Spread the lovin' around, don't go steady. Also, if you pick up a solid Chest of Evil weapon that does a big chunk of it's damage via existentialism, you may have to reign in your stapling.

OmniNegro

The biggest strengths of Psionics are the abilities on the low end of the skill tree. They are very useful and will keep you alive for half the game. Shove will remain useful until the bitter end. Staple is useful when you do not want to aggravate a whole bunch of monsters, but need to take one out of the fight for a few turns at any expense.

The healing is weak, but it is reliable when you have some room to work with and time to recuperate mana. Despite what Lorrelian said above, I think that Psionic Fire is useful against Dredmor. He is immune to the actual damage it directly does, but he can be set aflame from it and that does more damage than it ever should do. If you lack Promethean then setting him aflame with this is the best thing you can do. Then you can basically use any sort of antimagic on him and spam Shove to keep him from dangerous melee range and just be certain to reflare him as needed.

In short, Psionics is the ultimate catch all ability tree. It only lacks a few minor things. It does not do anything better than other skills, but it does most everything you will need in the game. Sadly it does piss for damage from the single AoE spell, Psionic Shove. But it costs almost nothing and can usually be cast every turn if you are careful. This makes it a way to stay alive for really, really cheap.

I have used Shove to keep a zoo from swarming me while I heal with impunity. This no-longer works when you have casting opponents, but a summon will almost negate the chance of anyone casting at you.

Marak

One thing that wasn't mentioned was making a Gish character and using Nerve Staple once you're in melee range for 2 free hits (assuming it isn't resisted).

Since, as was mentioned, the entire tree doesn't require high Magic Power to function, it works well as a melee-supplementing skill set: you have your healing spell (crystals), your way to get at Island Artifacts (shove), two ways to get mobs out of your face in a pinch (shove and staple), a way to get free, counter-attack-proof attacks in (nerve staple) and a way to do a % damage of a monster's health over time (firestarter).

All in all, a very useful tree that will carry you through the first eight floors or so, but then begins to wane heavily as you get deeper down in the dungeon and monster health pools and resistances start to balloon.

Necronomiceconomics

Lorrelian:

Necronomiceconomics

Type: *Wizard*

Role: *Engine or Payload*

Necronomiceconomics can serve as the driving force of your run, carrying you from floor to floor, or it can serve as a late game nuke, with skills invested during the mid game once engine skills are maxed out, and used to clear sticky situations like zoos when needed.

Theme: *Debuff Management*

Necronomiceconomics spells all feature a few things: 1) Lots of effect for little mana. 2) A DoT effect called Necropain, which is inflicted on the caster. 3) Various additional debuffs on specific spells, some of which decrease (or will decrease once the game is updated) Necro Resist, making Necropain more dangerous.

Strategy:

Balance Necropain and debuffs through Necro Resist and careful healing.

Necronomiceconomics currently supports use as either a carefully managed range attacker that handles creeps via DoTs and targeted damage or a gish that melees with a pair of very useful buffs. Both styles are well augmented by the capstone skill, which wipes out hordes and zoos with incredible AoE damage.

Pros:

Versatility in spells offered. The skill does point damage, buffs and AoE very well and, once the Necropain is handled, the spells don't cost much, too. Massive AoE damage in the capstone makes Zoos much less of a danger. Nightmare Curse makes named monsters much easier to handle. Spells scale to Magic Power very quickly.

Cons:

The capstone spell, Tenobrous Rift, is very capable of killing you if you're too close, and its sooooo big being too close is easy. Particularly if you're targeting the bottom of the screen. It also takes a lot of skill points to get to the Rift, the tree's only AoE. Lots of stuff resists its damage types on lower floors.

Synergies:

When combined with Viking Magic you have a pretty relentless gish when all the buffs are running. Astrology has two buffs that provide Necro Resist, one at first level. Both are brittle, though, and will require a lot of recasting on lower floors. Emomancy provides a hungry buff that provides Necro Resist, but it will require a lot of investment. Fortunately, The Cure will also remove all your nasty debuffs and give you a more manageable one, and that's the second spell you get! Diggle God of Death buff makes you pretty much invincible.

Takeaway:

A powerful skill, but one that isn't fun for everyone.

Marak:

To add on: [Little Black Books](#) are pretty easy to find, even on Floor 1, are cheap to buy in a shop, and are a **great** way to completely nullify the wracking pain-thingies you're inflicting on

yourself. In a pinch - if you find your Magic Power outpacing your Necro Resist - you can even dual-wield them for a short time until you can get some rings, etc. with Necro Resist on them.

OmniNegro:

On the subject of how to counteract Necropain, you can equip tank armor to reduce your Magic Power. This can usually reduce the amount of Necro Resistance needed to avoid Necropain.

It is well worth considering.

Rarefied Horse Meat:

Necronom-nom-nom exemplifies the good and bad about "ultimate power, but balanced by a drawback" design. When you don't have any necrotic resistance, Necropain can wreck you; you have to rely on other skillsets while carefully metering your Necronom usage, or you'll find yourself dead at your own hands. When you have a bit of necrotic resistance, Necropain is annoying but manageable, and only deadly in rather large quantities. When you're pimped out for immunity to the skillset's drawback, you're able to dish out massive damage right and left even to creatures that have necrotic resistance; the drawback is no longer a drawback.

What's cool:

- Drawbacks are very flavorful things; other nuke skillsets can feel comparatively boring and straightforward, e.g. "I do tons of Fire damage, because... because fire."
- You have to invest many of your items, or a skillset or two, into fully resisting Necropain. That makes abusing Necronomiconomics harder, and prevents you from using other items or skills in those slots.
- Necronom itself has a wonderful amount of internal variety for a nuke skillset; it lets you get the job done in different ways for different scenarios. Picking on Promethean Magic again, having 4 slightly different ways to do AoE Fire damage is redundant and unexciting.
- The complicated nature of 'nomics is very appropriate for a roguelike: gives you a chance to be screwed once, then learn from it and be super-badass next time you play.

What's goofy:

- When you use X to balance Y, Y is no longer balanced once players find a way to avoid or minimize X.
- This is a "trap" skill for players who don't pay attention to tooltip details, or who don't yet know what all the little icons mean.

Things that could've been done differently:

- More necrotic resistance sooner, so that fewer unlucky players wind up scratching their heads wondering where all their HP went. Necropain would necessarily scale more strongly with magic power in order to keep up with the additional resist. Early access to resists would be less "make-or-break" for the build, but stacking resists will still be important late-game.

- A minor penalty to damage which scales off your necrotic resistance . Doesn't affect players with low resistance values, but slightly slows down the damage output of players who fill up on resists. Necronomicists dislike profiteers who don't pay the toll!

Mining:

Regarding Necro: Pairing it with the unarmed tree is very strong, as the melee buffs synergise well with dual shields gameplay (add damage, add bulk, add life steal which goes well with tankiness).

TheKirkUnited:

The melee buffs synergise well with any melee build, as long as you can mitigate the necro pain. Pact of Fleeting Life is one of the most powerful melee buffs in the game with life steal easily keeping you at full life in most early to mid-game encounters. I've melee'ed whole zoos with this on mage builds on some of the earlier floors. I can only imagine how amazing it would be with a more gishy style build. The biggest drawback is its limited duration (about 30 turns I believe) which can leave you in the lurch if you aren't careful.

Shwqa:

Necronomicomonomics is one of the trees that starts out slow but is awesome by end game. I'm not a big fan of Deadly hex or Nightmare curse.

- Deadly hex doesn't scale very well.
- Nightmare Curse is nice for stopping named monsters for a bit but its a gamble and can be resisted.

At level 3 is where Necronomicomonomics starts to really shine.

- Mark of Chthon is a pretty good buff. It gives the player and extra 4 damage and a 42% to deal a 3 damage sleep spell. The sleep can be resist like nightmare curse but it is likely to have many more chances to succeed.

At level 4 you start get a Necro Resist for each level which a pretty common damage type.

- Pact of fleeting life has already been talked about and with good reason its awesome. 32 turns of 90% life steal. this spell pretty makes the whole vampire tree worthless (all trees do actually).
- Eldritch Inhabitation is very cheap to cast. It causes bleeding, confusion, flesh bore, DOT, AOE, and acts like a thermite bomb. All that could be yours for the low low press of 4 mana... and temporary blindness, that also part of the cost
- Tenebrous Rift is the capstone skill and you better believe it does its job well. This would be the best spell in the game hands down if Necro Resist wasn't so common after floor 13. Massive damage, Massive AOE, DOT which cast more spells. A decent mage can clear a zoo with 2-3 of these no problem. The biggest drawback of this spell is that the AOE (range of 4) is so big you are likely to kill yourself.

So what combos really well with Necronomiconomics? Well mages and melee. Melee Blood magic vegans do quite well. The blood magic keep you pretty much full magic while adding magic power and magic regen. The only drawback of blood magic is that it lowers but vegan will never face this damage. The drawback of vegan is that you can't melee animals but Necronomiconomics can handle that. I really like the build Unarmed, Shield Bearer, Necronomiconomics, Blood Magic, Vegan, Tinkering, Demonologist/ Berserker Rage. Its a vegan that fights demons by using the blood of the living to summon demons 😊. Stick with shield and armor that don't reduce magic and you can melee and spell caster quite well.

Essence:

Note for everyone not aware: Necronomeconomics' debuffs (specifically Curse of the Mind and Soul Price) are supposed to debuff your Necro Resist, and will start doing so with the next update, but it's currently borked. That's all.

Viking Magic

Lorrelain

Viking Magic

Type: *Wizard*

Role: *Engine, Turbocharger or Payload*

Viking magic is the Gish (melee mage) base skill. It makes that role easier in just about every respect, both providing the driving force and excellent support skills. Or you can wait until the end to level it up, and just nuke people.

Theme: *Hail Odin!*

Strategy:

Use DoTs to manage enemies so you can fight them one on one!

Pros:

Viking Magic offers a pair of powerful DoTs that will be useful in the early game and some buffs/debuffs that you can use as a Gish to stay alive. Thor's Fulminaric Bolt is probably the most powerful single target damage spell in the game, and it has a nice splash effect too. The most important spells are Skatha's Roots, which can tack down enemies so you're not overwhelmed, Power of Magic Steel, which will make the first floor much easier and the stun proc gives it relevance on later floors, and Thor's Fulminaric Bolt, which will flat out kill whatever you point it a very quickly. Hand of Belwimar is nice for Gishes as well.

Cons:

Arctic Vortex doesn't offer much. Most undead are highly resistant to its damage, as is everything on DL7, and there's the fact that DoTs do sod all when they're resisted, which is frequent on later floors (barring haywire). Hand of Belwimar is really only useful to a Gish, and even then it's not as good as Magic Steel. No critical bonus and burning isn't that useful to a person already in melee, it's far too slow. The raw damage is kinda nice, but maybe not worth the mana investment. Unholy warcry is weak in that the penalties it gives aren't really meaningful and the other status effects will, as is so often the case on later floor, be resisted.

Synergies:

Viking Magic actually does best with some warrior and rogue skills backing it up. While it likes Magic Power, particularly for the Bolt, it doesn't really *need* it to do what it does, so gish play is a real possibility for Viking mages. Astrology also pushes this theme. The right Necronomiceconomics build will too. But the most amusing skills to pair with Viking Magic are Assassination and Berserk Rage. (I stun him! He falls asleep! THAT MAKES ME SO ANGRY!)

Takeaway:

Viking Magic is great for a gish, provides some decent early game options for a true wizard, and is a menace to anyone at later levels. Even Dredmor can't eat Thor's Bolts all day, and hey, they say that payback is good for the soul...

FaxCelestis

Viking Magic is a key skill for a gish: melee buffs and procs, lockdown, and stunning AoE are important. The damage is immaterial, really: it's the stun and lockdown you care about. Stuns allow you to fight who you want when you want to, and the lockdown on Skatha's roots allows you to hold down dangerous monsters so you can pelt them to death safely.

Viking Magic's biggest problem is that most of the good parts of it are replicated elsewhere:

fulminaric bolt can be replicated with a narwhaand, magic steel mostly by a wand of Tesla, Skatha's roots by banzai bombs.

Oh yeah, Unholy Warcry is terrific for finding breakable walls.

Shwqa

Viking is kinda a meh spell tree to me, but it does have uses. The first spell can make any build clear the first floor no problem. That means builds that rely on high level skills can have the time to prepare. Artic wind is just terrible. I think cold resist is the most common exotic resist that enemies have and that just 1-2 resist makes the spell do near nothing. The hold skill is good but by this time burglary could have a hold skill for no mana. I never used the shout for anything. The fire melee spell is worse than the lightning melee spell. The last spell is awesome. It is the highest damaging spell I believe. Too bad you have to get the rest of the tree first.

Stryke

I found the shout to be pretty sexy on a pure crossbolt character.

Astrology

Lorrelian

Astrology

Type: *Wizard*

Role: *Turbocharger* or *Payload*

Astrology is a very buff-centric skill line, but it also offers quite possibly the single most massive damage spell in the game, if you're determined enough.

Theme: *Dancing With the Stars*

Strategy:

Astrology offers a wide slew of close combat support spells and can stun a couple of different ways, on the other hand it only has one spell that can be used at range, so expect to get up close and personal.

Pros:

Radiant Aura is all you need to take advantage of the many monsters out there with a weakness to Righteous damage. The Stars Aligned deals absolutely bonkers quantities of aetherial damage, which isn't resisted much, if at all. Synergy likewise gives out aetherial damage, along with some OK nimble/dodge bonuses that will be of use to a Gish while also giving a slight boost to casting ability. Solar Inscription is a good trap spell, fun to lay down while waiting for onrushing enemies to arrive.

Cons:

Radiant Aura and Celestial Aegis are both brittle, and will require a lot of recasting over the course of a run. On later floors particularly, where persistent damage fields are common, they will need multiple castings per combat. The tree's lack of range overall costs it one of the biggest draws of magic, spamable ranged combat.

Synergy:

Radiant Aura provides CL 1 Necro resist, making it a fantastic Necromancy support spell. DL 1 is a breeze with this combo. The Aegis continues the trend. Synergy goes well with the Viking Magic hungry buffs to make you a better Gish. TSA is funny with Burglary or other skills that turn you invisible.

Takeaway:

Astrology is good at buffing you and sometimes incapacitating your enemies, but it only really shines in a character prepared to rip around the dungeon getting personal with their magic.

FaxCelestis

Astrology is an excellent gish backup.

Radiant Aura gives good defense (especially the proc, which can buy you several rounds), and Syzygy and Celestia Aegis give good exotic damages. My favorite gish build (admittedly, using mods) is Astrology, Viking Magic, Demonology, Inquisitor, Druid, Leylines, Archaeology.

Mining

SQUUUUUUUUU ASTROLOGY!!!!!!

Radiant Aura is amazing. It gives you sight, damage and resists that remain good throughout the

game. Blinding Flash is similarly amazing - keep things stunlocked.

The capstone is where its at though. Where Stars Align is one of the best spells in the game, bar nothing.

Code:

```
<requirements mp="40" savvyBonus="0.30" mincost="6" />  
<effect type="damage" aethereal="28" aetherealF="0.71"/>  
<effect type="paralyze" amount="2" turns="5" self="0" />
```

Huge template, massive paralysis, and 28+ 0.71 of your MP in damage. The best part? If you can pull 70 or 80 Savvy, you can cast this spell for nearly free.

I'd say that the most important synergies are with Magic Training [Savvy!], Killer Vegan [If they hit you, they're stunned], and other skills that let you deal with single target while you AoE nuke everything else, e.g. Mathematics.

Marak

Seconding the "take it for Radiant Aura and the 1 Necro resist it gives you." This serves gishes well, but also is a huge boon to a Glass Cannon mage-y type that needs a few levels under their belt before they can survive, well, anything. Being able to literally spam Deathly Hex until you're Level 2 or 3 is a godsend for those builds that otherwise wouldn't have the tools necessary to reach those all-important early Levels.

Just watch out that you don't stack Lingerin Weakness to the point that you're running about with 6 Max Health. Um, not that I've ever done that and then died to a Sickly Diggle on GRPD. Nosirree. Not *this* veteran DoD player.

Promethean Magic

Lorrelian

Promethean Magic

Type: *Wizard*

Role: *Engine or More Engine. Or possibly Fuel Tank.*

Promethean magic kills things by setting them on fire. It also makes you highly resistant to fire. Really, what more could you need?

Theme: *Is It Burning? No? I'll Fix That!*

Strategy:

Kill it with fire. Really, that's the bare basics of it. To a certain extent there is deeper strategy. The familiar makes for some interesting tactical situations, especially as your magic power builds, but eventually he just becomes another one hit wonder. The burning rune is nice, but not as brutally efficient as the fireball. The fire dance skill is neat, but not as brutal as The Stars Aligned and really not as defining in the tree, since it has so much AoE spam. The Tactical Pyre, however, does live up to its name.

Pros:

A level one damage spell is massive for mages, who rarely have damaging magic until level 2. The whole tree is basically AoE, with the exception of the wyrmling and the pyre, which makes spamming damage everywhere a simple thing. The scaling isn't the best in the game, but it's aggressive enough, but adding aggressive mana scaling makes the spamming much easier. The burning DoT will often give you the last few points of damage you need to drop an enemy. If you're looking for a skill that wipes out zoos, hordes or even two or three monsters at a time, this is your skill. Fire resist prevents a huge chunk of damage both from you and enemies.

Cons:

There is pretty much no versatility to this tree what so ever. It sets things on fire. Period. Does it resist fire? You're outta luck. Do you need a shove to keep monsters off of you? Outta luck. Need a spell that won't blow up in your face because you've outscaled your fire resist and don't have the pyre? Outta luck. It's gameplay isn't that varied either. Think about taking some different flavored skills to break up the monotony.

Synergies:

Promethean eats mana fast, particularly if you haven't bottomed out all the costs yet, so Ley Walker and Blood Mage are great fuel tanks to keep you going. Magic Training will help you bottom out those costs. Alchemy helps you upgrade your booze to keep in mana and makes you mana potions for emergency recharges. Mathemagics will let you keep your distance for tactical nuking. Or, if you prefer, Psionics will let you push them away for a nuking, and heal yourself.

Takeaway:

Promethean is the damage skill of all damage skills, and you should probably play with it once, just to know what's possible in that direction. If you really enjoy spell spamming, this is your tree. But if you want something else, you might wish to look elsewhere.

Banjo2E

I actually prefer Rune of Exploding to Tactical Fireball. The reason I say this is, Tactical Fireball is a projectile spell but the rune works on any square you can target. This makes the Rune much, *much* more useful against monster zoos; with the fireball, you have to either teleport backwards or set it off in your face, but with the Rune you can just find the nearest

unoccupied space in the zoo, set the mine, and repeat, and watch the carnage. I beat Dredmor on GRPD with the only Promethean spells I regularly used being Runes and the Wyrmling. Didn't even use Tactical Pyre once.

OmniNegro

I am with banjo2E on this. While Obvious Fireball rules for steamrolling through masses of lesser beasties, the Rune is more tactical than the Tactical Pyre.

About the only way I can see TP being better is if it's damage scaling was doubled.

But in general about Promethean Magic: Since people to this very day still say it is vastly overpowered and argue back and forth on this subject, I say it is a solid choice for a skill. OP? I do not give one flying Diggle "Eff about it possibly being OP.

It works remarkably well until those aforementioned enemies that resist it. If there was one single thing I wish I had on a Promethean build, it would be a stackable fire resistance debuff to spam on those resistant enemies. Correct me if I am wrong, but I do not think it is currently possible to even hurt Dredmor with this skill.

Essence

Pretty much said it all about this straightforward skill tree, but for two notes:

1) The Wyrmling casts an AoE fire spell when summoned, so it's kind of like it's own fireball.

and

2) Smithing provides a few extra points of Fire resist, and Alchemy provides one. Not really major since Smithing doesn't really synergize with Promethean Magic in any way shape or form, and Alchemy is only one point - but hey, you'll probably want Alchemy anyway, right?

The Apprentice

Perhaps surprisingly, Dredmor (the Tougher) only shows as having 15 Fire Resist in the Dredmorpedia. So he is assuredly damagable, it just requires a sufficiently high Magic Power. If I'm reading the damage formulas right, a Magic Power of 53 will damage Dredmor via Obvious Fireball (for example).

Magic Training

Lorrelian

Magic Training

Type: *Wizard*

Role: *Turbocharger* or *Fuel Tank*

Magic Training boosts the effectiveness of your spells and makes them cheaper, letting you wring more magic out of limited MP.

Theme: *From Harry Piddler to Gandalf the Great*

Strategy:

A formally trained mage seeks to maximize his magic power, so as to hit as hard as possible as fast as possible, thus using the smallest possible portion of resources on a given enemy, and give them the shortest possible time to close and maul him. In particular, the formally trained mage creates haywire events as often as possible, so his spells cannot be resisted.

Pros:

This skill ups your magic power a tad, which is nice, but it also helps your Haywire out a bit more, which in many ways is better. While a +4.5% chance of haywire above and beyond normal isn't much in and of itself, every percentage point helps, particularly on the lower levels where haywire can feel like the only way to punch through effects on high magic resistance enemies. The antimagic skill deals OK damage of a rarely resisted type and silences, which is nice, and very effective against Dredmor. Trancendental Meditation gives huge mana replenishment.

Cons:

The skill doesn't actively help your MP like the other mage support skills do, at least not until the Meditation skill, which is not the best way for AoE-centric builds to regain mana. The Savvy it grants is often superfluous in reducing the costs of spells in the long run, you won't need more than what a character normally gains from levels, this just gets you there sooner.

Synergies:

Any spell tree that has a number of spells that rapidly scale to magic power benefits from this skill. Further, spell trees that have secondary effects that can be resisted, such as Mathemagics, Psionics and Viking Magic, will enjoy the boosted haywire chance. The raw MP boost is good for trees that like to spam cheap spells, again like Psionics. Ley Walker gives steady mana regen for further spamming of spells, while Blood Magic can make up for Meditation's poor fit with AoE trees. Magic Training is suboptimal for trees that neither care about magic resistance nor scale very much with magic power, like Astrology or Golemancy (yes, thaumites benefit from the magic power boost, but they're pretty much all that needs it) or to a lesser extent Emomancy

Takeaway:

Like most Turbochargers, Magic Training is only as good as the skills its paired with. This skill is more about nuking targets with a few powerful blasts of magic than it is about creating massive webs of complicated hungry buffs and/or passive summons. Still, it's a better value than it is often given credit for.

mining

I actually found Magic Training strong with Astrology - you need **113** savvy to minimise the cost on The Stars Align, and it scales pretty well with magic power for the fact its a large AoE with a potential cost of **6**: $28 + 0.71 \text{ magic power}$.

OmniNegro

I am with mining on this. I take Magic Training any day over Blood Magic. And usually even over Lay Lines. Blood magic does not scale well by the middle game, and is regrettable at best by the end. Magic Training gets you more damage in every magic skill, and usually reduces your costs by a sizable amount too.

Blood Mage

Lorrelian

Blood Mage

Type: *Wizard*

Role: *Fuel Tank or Turbocharger*

Blood Mage pretty much serves to help keep your mana full. It's either crazy good at that, or terrible, depending on your build.

Theme: *Kill Enemies, Get Mana, Profit!*

Strategy:

Blood Mage works best with a caster who has a lot of AoE at his disposal. It underperforms for utility casters or people with a lot of single target damage, like Math-mages or Viking mages. Gishes will get fair value, and they actually have cause to put points in it.

Pros:

Blood Mage gives you mana when you need it - right after you've spent it. Assuming you've spent it to kill something. The more you kill, the more mana you get. At higher levels, each kill buffs your ability to kill things, and also slightly increases your ability to regain mana. Finally the Phylactery is a really great way to get your hands on panic button healing if you don't have it already.

Cons:

The Righteous resist can really hurt you vs. Fish, and if you're not a really, really strong AoE caster it'll be hard to get enough mana out of the skill to justify it.

Synergies:

Blood Mage is just plain bonkers when combined with Promethean Magic or Necronomiconomics, both of which will provide you with enough AoE to flat out nuke entire rooms and recoup your spent mana if not on the turn cast, then on subsequent turns as the DoT effects take their toll. Astrology has The Stars Aligned, a punishing spell that frontloads most of its damage and can also easily pay for itself. Golemancy gives you Thaumites, which will frequently re-harvest mana all out of proportion to your initial investment. Magic Training makes all your spells cheaper and gives you more raw spell power to harvest more mana with.

Takeaway:

Blood Mage is a decent magic support tree, but it will shine best with a handful of trees and it is not at all subtle. If you're looking for a side of magic with your warriors or rogues, this might not be the best way to go...

Essence

Wonderful writeup, but you barely glossed over the Hidden Secret of Blood Magic(OMT): The Magic-Buffered Warrior (i.e. The True Gish). Blood Magic is, for example, dropjaw amazing when used by someone who fully intends to melee the entire dungeon to death but uses magic for backup.

Take for example, a classic: Staves, Dual Wield, Emomancy, Necronomiconomics, Astrology, Warlockery, and Blood Magic. At early levels, you can use Radiant Aura + Mage's Mana Maille to spam Deathly Hex with no effort at all, getting your mana back from Blood Mage because

Deathly Hex is so cheap. Build up to Mark of the Black Eyeliner and/or Celestial Aegis to resist the debuffs, and suddenly you can throw down Mark of Cthon and Pact of Fleeting Life and just walk around busting heads and gaining mana and buffs from Blood Magic for it. At higher levels, this will easily fuel a continuous Essence of Battle, making it even easier to crush skulls (and empowering your other Warlock spells at the same time).

This works *so much better* than being a spellslinger for one simple reason: Vital Siphon. Vital Siphon triggers on 30% of melee attacks and grants you somewhere between 1 and 5 mana per iteration. Considering that gishes swing their swords a hell of a lot more often than casters cast spells, this is a HUGE boost to the amount of mana you get from Blood Magic. And it's the first point you have to invest in the stuff!

Gishes also benefit more from Haematic Phylacteries in my experience, but I haven't played enough spellslingers that got up to the Phylactery level to really know that for sure.

Silvas Ruin

I have a question about Blood Mage that would be handy to know in such a guide. I've never found anything that's quite clear on this: What debuff removal methods work on the Phylactery creation debuff, or conversely what debuff removal methods don't work on it? Whichever answer's shorter. A friend of mine who's played this longer thought it was entirely immune to debuff removal, but I've seen a claim that the healing fountain room is effective on it.

If there is a reliable way to remove it, then wouldn't that mean any build (so long as they have that method) could benefit from this just by stockpiling a great number of phylacteries?

Essence replies:

AFAIK, there is no way to get rid of the Phylactery debuff anymore. It used to be marked as a curse, in which case just about anything would remove it -- but it's coded as though it's a beneficial buff now, which means the only thing that can remove it is a specific removebuffbyname effect...which exists only on the Phylactery itself! (Editor's note: Phylacteries remove only one stack of the debuff at a time! Making multiples will give multiple debuffs, and require you using all of those Phylacteries to get rid of them. Don't let them get stolen!)

Shwqa

Blood magic works well with killer vegan. Killer vegan makes it so the only reliable source of righteous damage won't try and hurt you. Also killer vegan gives mages a ton of extra health and blood magic gives you a sort of way to heal. Most of my Mage builds have blood magic and killer vegan.

Ley Walker

Lorrelian

Ley Walker

Type: *Wizard*

Role: *Fuel Tank*

This skill is all about having mana all the time.

Theme: *Tap In, Pump Out*

Strategy:

Ley Walker is the polar opposite of Blood Mana in the attrition wars, it makes sure you're always getting a little trickle of mana, but if you're full up that trickle doesn't do much.

Pros:

Boosting your mana regen isn't a huge perk, but this plus a good hat and orb can give you the magic one mana per turn, even on GRPD. While this isn't enough to carry you through zoos, it is enough to top off the tank quickly in between most combats. Mana regen can also help offset the costs of hungry buffs. The conflux proc on level four guarantees one man per turn while it's active, and pumps your spell power some, at the expense of magic resistance. But most importantly, Thaumaturgic Tap will solve all your early mana problems and alleviate most of your later ones. It gives 24 MP over 12 turns, essentially doubling your mana regen rate over the 30 turns it takes to cool down, and this mana come in on top of normal mana regen and booze. It's not Transcendental Meditation, but it'll keep you going when you need it.

Cons:

Mana regen is powerful, but once your tank tops off it doesn't do you anything, and when things get intense and you need a spell every turn it usually doesn't give you more than one or two spells extra before you run dry. The capstone is pretty lame. There's rarely a situation where a directional teleport will be more useful than one of your cheaper spells, and it will seriously hurt your MP, leaving you at the mercy of any wandering monster you encounter in the first few turns afterwards.

Synergies:

Ley Walker goes great with Viking Magic, Astrology or Warlocky, those schools with powerful hungry buffs. It goes fine with all other magic builds, but your mileage versus Blood Magic will vary.

Takeaway:

This skill is solid, but not exciting, as Fuel Tanks are wont to be. That said, it does a ton of valuable work in many spellcasting builds. If you've played mages without it and found yourself low on mana, it might be worth looking into for your next run.

Banjo2E

Never take both Ley Walker and Blood Magic at the same time. There are no builds in the vanilla game that need both of those skills to be viable.

Essence

Warlockery.

Lorrelian

Actually, I think that Astrology benefits from both, particularly if The Stars Aligned is your endgame. I had a fun run where I played Astrology, the three mage support skills, Dual Wielding, Staves and Master of Arms. You can take out ten or so monsters per cast in midgame zoos with one casting. The catch is the late game, when a single casting of TSA won't cut it anymore.

Alchemy

Lorrelian

Alchemy

Type: *Wizard*

Role: *Fuel Tank or Turbocharger*

Alchemy keeps you alive, and sometimes makes you better in combat.

Theme: *Brew fame. Bottle glory. Stopper death.*

Strategy:

Alchemy is a great resource management skill. It lets you repurpose everyone's favorite MP restorative, booze, into the base item for a number of other useful restoratives. You can also use it to get more MP, if you want.

Pros:

Alchemy gives you healing, MP gain and, if you're lucky enough to find the right recipes, invisibility and resistance to voltaic, conflagatory and hyperborean damages. It also allows you to make the Window of the Elements, a nice necklace until you find a Crownstar or three, and transmute gems. Y'know, if you need something like that. Finally, exotic resistances are good all around and acid, in particular, is common throughout the game.

Cons:

A lot of the good stuff from Alchemy is hidden. You don't start with much of note, if you don't consider the Health and Mana potions to be of note, so you're very much at the mercy of the RNG. Advanced potions also demand some rarish items, like gems (partly mitigated by your transmute ability) and/or coal or brimstone. Also, while not a power consideration, like most crafting skills, Alchemy requires a fair amount of inventory management. It's not one of the worst offenders, although it can be somewhat tedious. Those who dislike inventory juggling should avoid.

Synergies:

Smithing or Tinkering can turn one hunk of hematite into two iron ingots, instead of just one, making health potion spamming more realistic. Additionally, Transmuter allows you to amass large numbers of emeralds, useful for making several of Smithing's jewelry pieces, including the amazing Emerald Encrusted Gold Ring, probably a warrior's best ring choice outside of Powerlimbs. The Sagacity bonuses are decent for any mage.

Takeaway:

One important thing to keep in mind about crafting skills is that they are almost always getting better, with each patch adding new craftables, hidden and basic, to every skill and just about every skill level. They're only going to get better as time goes on. That said, they're not for everyone. Alchemy is a good crafting skill for a person looking for pure survival power, with a little buffing on the side.

FaxCelestis

Alchemy is my favorite skill. I feel naked without it these days. It has healing (in instant and regeneration flavors), mana restoration, escape mechanisms in the form of spatial instability infusions, bonus damage and resists, armor (potions of steeling), some pretty class items (window of elements), and AoE damage (brimstone flasks). The best thing about alchemy is that

90% of its recipes are Aqua Vitae + something or Empty Flask + something. If you really want to cut back your inventory space, you can hold on to acidum salis, aqua vitae, brimstone, saltpetre, salt, rust, aluminum dust, and empty flasks and be able to make pretty much anything you want as you come across the rest of the ingredients.

Alchemists are best served by emptying drink vendors of all the booze that can be turned into aqua vitae and immediately making aqua vitae out of it. Really, I find that most often, the ingredient I'm missing is aqua vitae, which means when I find a booze vendor, I immediately have a stack of new potions.

Rogue Scientist works amazingly well with alchemy: salvage ooze powers a lot of the cooler alchemical recipes, acidical projector and gas canister are scaled on your alchemy level, and the tinkering levels that rogue scientist give let you do the 1 hematite -> 2 iron ingots -> 4 rust -> 8 healing potions chain.

Shqwa

In my opinion Alchemy is the best crafting skill. It works for every single build in the game. Healing potion are the second best reliable healing in the game. With only 2 skill you make 2 healing/mana potion with rust/powered aluminum and aqua vitae. I normally have about 100+ healing potion by floor 4-5 with the invest of only one skill point. By sides having healing/mana healing potion alchemy does a wide range of other useful potions. Having a supply of Invisible, Purty, Replenishment, and instability potions is amazing. Having a horde of Invisible+replenishment potions is enough of a push to make some builds able to defeat dreadmor. Alchemy combos very well with Perception.

Essence

Let's not forget offense, either. While Alchemy's throwing weapons are largely sub-par (Y U NO SCALE?), the one exception is the Noxious Brimstone Flask, which scales (.2) with Magic Power. That's not a hell of a lot, but considering that if you're willing to give up Cheesy Omlettes (hel-*lo* Vegan!), you can pump out several dozen of these babies (Empty Flask + 2xBrimstone; 5 Alchemy nets you 3 per craft), you can put a few of the nastier zoos on 'easy mode' by chucking one of these things out every 14 turns or so.

Alchemy also produces the Jingly Jangly Staff of Crystals, which is one of the highest-base-damage staves in the game, and the Fruitful Staff (hel-*lo* Vegan!) which can singlehandedly keep you stocked on Aqua Vitae for the rest of the game as long as you have enough Alchemy to...oh, right. =)

Finally, every Alchemist should be familiar with the following mana engine:

Empty Flask + Aqua Regia --> Acid Flask

Acid Flask + Mud Wen --> Grog

That might not look like much, but at 5 Alchemy, you get seven Grogs (112 Mana) out of that little exchange. It's a good thing you can't purify Grog into Aqua Fortis.

Alchemy synergizes with Veganism, ([hel-/o, Vegan!](#)), and oddly also with Fungal Arts (turning the dreaded Mud Wens into Grog -- and also, Night Caps are the only thing in the game that crafts into not one but *two* Aqua Fortis with enough Alchemy skill. Also, Puffballs confuse enemies, which means they'll wander around in your Brimstone clouds longer, making them extra effective.

Wand Crafting

Lorrelian

Wand Crafting

Type: *Wizard*

Role: *Fuel Tank or Turbocharger*

Like most crafting skills, Wand Crafting gives you more resources to make your builds better and last longer. It's unique in that it does so pretty much entirely by mimicking spells.

Theme: *Make Zappy Stick. Impress Jaegers. Never get rid of the hat.*

Strategy:

Make a bunch of wands and lay them up for a rainy day.

Pros:

Wand crafting gives you healing, a couple of forms of crowd control (namely knockback and lockdown), and a couple of nifty buffs for a reasonable investment. If you feel like going all out, it also grants you a total of 6 aetherial damage, a damage useful against most everything in the game, including Dredmor, and you'll get that on all your attacks, melee and ranged. The 15 magic resistance is nice, too. All told, it's a solid offensive and defensive buff for warriors or rogues between the spell effects you can craft and the passive bonuses. Mages will enjoy the boosted sagacity and the starting wands make those first few level ups much easier.

Cons:

Many recipes require gems, or other hard to come by ingredients. The higher level wands are not as varied and exciting as the lower level ones are solid and useful. Also, while not a power consideration, like most crafting skills, Wand Crafting requires a fair amount of inventory management. Those who dislike it should avoid.

Synergies:

Piracy keeps you full of gems for crafting. Also, since it tends to compete with these skills for some major ingredients, Wand Crafting does not play nicely with Blacksmithing or Alchemy.

Takeaway:

One important thing to keep in mind about crafting skills is that they are almost always getting better, with each patch adding new craftables, hidden and basic, to every skill and just about every skill level. They're only going to get better as time goes on. That said, they're not for everyone. Wand Crafting is great for a person who likes a little bit of everything and doesn't mind that he probably won't ever get a lot.

FaxCelestis

I disagree on the Alchemy thing: Alchemy's oft-overlooked Transmutationer ability means you can get rid of gems you don't want for gems you do.

Also keep in mind that most wands scale with crafting skill now.

Shwqa

Wand Lore also increases the damage of the Rogue Scientist's capstone skill. However a fully powered up Death Ray is worse than Astrology's capstone skill. Truth be told I hate wands and I hate wand Lore. Most wands are just terrible. The wands that are good only keep up until about

floor 4-5 and then their power just drops off. Making wands is annoyingly difficult without much of a payoff. Having a stock pile of wands eats your inventory up like none other. If all wands doubled in power, had twice as many charges, and were twice as common then I might consider them useful. As of right now I don't believe any wand can do over 30 damage in a single turn. Stony Wands and Zodiac Wand are the only wands I ever really use past the first few floors.

Essence

Coral Wands, Zodiac Wands, Stony Wands, and Wands of Transmogrification are all solid and useful for a long time -- and now that most wands scale to Wandcraft, it's kind of a self-sustaining thing. Even just for the ability to consistently heal quickly, purge yourself of debuffs, create walls, and turn monsters into useful stuff, Wandcrafting is pimp.

Everyone always raves about the 5 Righteous damage from Vegan, but the 6 aetherial damage from Wandcrafting is stronger in most ways. And synergy with Demonology -- Celestial Circle + Maxxed out Wand Lore (and the high Stubbornness Wand Lore gives you) is all by itself enough to reach 100 magic resistance, at which point you can ignore Corruption and most other annoying monster effects.

Wand Lore is a strange skill because the primary benefits aren't obvious, and the obvious benefits aren't primary -- but it's definitely a SOLID skill if you plan around it a bit.

Archaeology

Lorrelian

Archaeology

Type: *Rogue*

Role: *Turbocharger or Fuel Tank or something...*

Archaeology helps you out with traps and does truly wacky things to that all important resource meter, the XP bar.

Theme: *I'm So Glad There's No Snakes In This Dungeon*

Strategy:

Archaeology encourages you to explore every little nook and cranny in the dungeon. It helps you get around most of the non-combat obstacles and it turns artifacts from an extremely marginal sidestrategy into a spamnable well of XP.

Pros:

Let's just get it out of the way; It Belongs In a Museum = Craploads of XP. It will more than pay for the one level you put in it over the course of the game, probably keeping you two or three levels ahead of the curve the whole time. But there's actually more to the skill line than that. For starters, there's the hat. While it seems marginal at first, the roguelike bonuses on that hat are not equaled by any other piece of headgear in the game (the Vampire Hunter's Hat is admittedly better, but also very rare). Plus, you can Krong it bunches, particularly when you learn the Ritual, which is a decent but not spectacular skill. Unless you like Kronging stuff (Disclaimer: I don't.) This Translation is All Wrong, a confusing skill which is explained as clearly as possible [here](#), is useful if you're a Krong lover or just like tinkering with Lutefisk/Inconsequentia swag. Most importantly, Remember Your Charlemagne is a fantastic multipurpose AoE skill suited to retrieving stuff on islands, opening destroyable walls and occasionally knocking foes out of your face.

Cons:

All that XP is probably superfluous by the end, unless you like skipping floors or have bunches of 8 point skill trees (a rarity at the moment). Other than its artifact manipulation abilities, and the afore mentioned XP, the skill doesn't really offer a whole lot, and it's short.

Synergies:

Blacksmithing and BGH allow you to crank out artifacts (Omnipotent Pork Sword) that can be cashed in. Piracy and Alchemy do the same. The trap skill stacks well with Tinkering to let you disarm everything in the game.

Takeaway:

Like Burglary and Perception, the other non-combat non-craft skills, it's extremely powerful in extremely narrow ways. Some people will take it for the XP every time, and it is good for helping you flesh out a build and test synergies, but I highly recommend breaking yourself of the addiction if you put it in every build. There's so much else out there that's worthwhile...

Banjo2E

Archaeology's most useful on Going Rogue. On that difficulty, you'll need all the levels you can *get*.

Don't take it on Elvish Easy, you don't need levels that badly on that difficulty.

Kazeto

That is, unless you have enough patience to be able to watch the paint drying process, in which case you might want to just spend a lot of time grinding and get a more combat-oriented skill instead.

Shqwa

Archaeology is one of the best trees in the game because it gives you control over the game.

It belongs in a museum gives you .75 to 1.5 extra levels per floor. That means you can skip floor that are bit too difficult and in the difficulty Going Rogue that is really important. Floor 4,9, and 13 are extremely difficult floor for certain builds. The ability to skip a floor and then come back to it can turn a game around. That alone is enough to justify taking this tree.

The extra trap skill can get you an extra level or two in the early game as well. Add in the amazing starting equipment and you got an impressive tree.

The rest of the tree is no slouch either. Remember you Charlemagne deals 3+Sagacity blasting damage while knocking back and confusing the enemies in a AOE. Every build in the game should be able to damage even dreadmor (though not for much damage). It is great for a pyromancer up against a heavy fire resistance monster.

This translation is all wrong lets you turn artifact that are of no use to you into something that is.

The last skill doubles the amount of kong anvils in the game. Get a high star amulet and use every re-use of an anvil on it. It will have a insane amount of stats on it. Once you have used all anvils twice then you can use this translation is all wrong until it has the stats you want or you get fed up and feed it to the museum.

TheKirkUnited

Biggest downside of Archaeology is that it requires patience to go back and reuse old Krong anvils and then tinker with the translation all day. I personally find this annoying, but it's great for those who want the best possible equipment and are on speaking terms with Krong.

For this reason and the fact that Krong is a total *&#@\$@!, who keeps cursing my equipment, I tend to ignore this skill set in favor of other skill trees.

Mr. Strange

I usually don't mind curses on my equipment - there are just a few exceptions, like - or -, which are DEATH to many builds. That's when I use TTIAW!

Interestingly, I've never really used Charlemagne to good effect - that's probably because I only use Archeology when I'm playing a heavy Rogue build - so my sagacity is minimal.

Smithing

Lorrelian

Smithing

Type: *Warrior*

Role: *Turbocharger or Payload*

Smithing makes most weapon skill trees better and keeps the tanky builds in better armor than the RNG provides for the first half of the game, and in the deep levels its an engine for massive stacks of throwing weaponry, which will offer huge versatility for warriors in dealing with pretty much anything that corrupts.

Theme: *Catch 'em between the hammer and the anvil.*

Strategy:

A smith makes gear. He makes pretty good gear, but he doesn't make crazy great gear. What he does do is squeeze melee-centric value out of every iron ingot you find.

Pros:

With a little luck you can craft a steel breastplate, maybe even full plate, by the end of DL2. This and Iron weapons will make everything down to DL 6 fairly easy, and upgrading to serpentine plate makes it even better. Once you've spent the bulk of your early steel on good armor you can think about getting some decent weapons. But armor is really where the skill shines. Two trap skill is nice if you've got a primary source, such as Burglarly, and you want to keep harvesting traps a little bit later. But the biggest static bonus the tree gives you is its 3 fire resist. That's haus. There's 15 unique enemies in the game that deal fire damage, and they average around 7 points per hit. Resisting three of that will really add up over the course of the game. And that doesn't take into account the traps and spells that deal fire damage which you'll be facing.

Cons:

All the best stuff in the game can't be crafted by smithing. Kronghammer? Nope. Dual's Possible? Nope. Savvarius? Nope. The closest you can get is the Royal Beatdown and the Hexaxe (which is admittedly the best axe, but what if you don't want axes on this run?) All the best armor and many of the better weapons are Tinkering crafts, although admittedly Tinkering crafts that are based on Smithing crafts. This is annoying, but not fatal to the skill.

Synergies:

A lot of the Tinkering crafts depend on Fine Steel gear easily gotten from Smithing. Alchemy likes the ability to double ingots, and hands you lots of emeralds for various crafts. Perception keeps you in ingots and provides some of the harder to find base items, like leather boots for steel shod boots. Weapon skills love the fact you can craft excellent weapons to use.

Takeaway:

One important thing to keep in mind about crafting skills is that they are almost always getting better, with each patch adding new craftables, hidden and basic, to every skill and just about every skill level. They're only going to get better as time goes on. That said, they're not for everyone. Smithing is for the warrior who wants to use specific gear, and wants to be sure he can find it. It's the least bookshelf-dependent crafting skill outside of Wandcrafting, making it a good choice for starting crafters who want to see real results from their crafting skill. But it doesn't do you much but give you throwables and static bonuses on later levels, which is nice but not exciting.

Shqwa

I feel that smithing is a bit of medicore skill myself. When I design a build I'm worried about the first 4 floors and last 4 floors. Smithing is the kind of skill that is useful for first 8 floors, but after that you don't need it for anything. You will find better equipment, weapons, and throwing items after floor 8. The extra Burl, Crushing damage and resistances aren't that useful compared to a whole another skill tree that is useful the whole game. The main draw of smithing is to get early armor. I would rather have shield bearer or berseker rage for that purpose. I would consider this the second worst crafting skill being just a bit better than wand lore.

Mr_Strange

Lorrelan's write-up on Smithing is excellent - totally nails that the biggest consistent benefit is good AA n the early game - which is huge. I personally find Smithing very usefull - it gives solid benefits to Burl and fire resistance, which I always appreciate, and many of the hidden things you can craft are actually useful.

The downside of Smithing is that there are a WHOLE LOT of intermediary weapons / armor which nobody would ever make, period. I'd say a good 40% of the Smithing craftables are junk - or at least they are by the time you have the materials to make them. Golden Axe, anyone? These useless craftables don't bother experts - who just ignore them - but they make smithing less accessible for new players, who can't see exactly what they will be getting for their time & effort, and are likely to be disappointed.

Essence

Exceptions to the above: an Axes run and/or a Throwing run. Hexaxes are fly, and pelting enemies to death is significantly easier when you have 100+ Nzappa Zaps and Javelins.

Smithing is also good for Unarmed runs as many of the best shields can be Smithed, especially the anti-magic ones.

TheKirkUnited

Smithing. Awesome for early game armor, nice for late game throwing items, best used by blitzing up the tree for crazy armors as your reagents allow. Great synergies with any melee build and is best friends with tinkering. Even better for clockwork knights, and a sweet burl progression on top for extra face beating fun.

Smithing is one of my favorite skills for warrior builds but if you aren't going to gun it early you should probably pass on it entirely.

Tinkering

Lorrelian

Tinkering

Type: *Rogue*

Role: *Fuel Tank* or *Turbocharger*

Tinkering is immensely useful to both a melee fighter, as a source of absurd amounts of melee damage, and crossbow users, as an almost unlimited source of bolts.

Theme: *You have the technology! You can make him, yadda, yadda, yadda...*

Strategy:

Tinkering provides you with a lot, and I do mean a lot, of upgrade potential. Tinkering is all about folding your reagents down into ever-more-compact packages that will increase your death dealing potential. Better crossbows. Clockwork gear. Crossbows o' doom. Build. Expand. Conquer.

Pros:

The best crossbows in the game can be crafted with this skill and, when maxed out, it gives 12 (12!!!!) ingeniously scythed bolts from a single ingot. Put the two together and you're hell on wheels. Literally if you choose to craft clockwork power gear, which frequently provides far more melee power bonuses than you could hope to get from any other piece of gear. While melee power is better for throwing weapons than bolts, it does give you options. The chain axe/sword and clockwork thunderclap are solid, single damage type weapons for the end game, even if they aren't anything to write home about most of the time they *are* really good for killing Dredmor, since they'll only hit his AA and not his exotic resistances. Even mages love the trapskill and trapsight.

Cons:

All the best recipes are hidden, leaving you at the mercy of the RNG, particularly if you're looking for melee boosting gear. *Not* recommended for fans of NTTG unless they're willing to live with a little disappointment now and then. Also, while not a power consideration, if you absolutely can't stand the thought of needing to pull up your inventory more than three times per floor and sorting through stuff, or consulting your recipe list every time you find an unfamiliar reagent then this skill is *not for you*. Unless you just want bolts, Tinkering is a very time intensive crafting skill, and if you're not using it every run you'll need to look over your recipes every so often to keep ingredients freshly in mind.

Synergies:

Tinkering rocks with the Crossbow skill, since it really, seriously boosts the effectiveness of all crossbows. That said, Tinkering doesn't *need* the Crossbow skill to make you an awesome archer. The reverse is not true. Something to keep in mind. Perception makes it much easier to get your hands on all the ingredients you need to keep cranking out ammo and other crap.

Takeaway:

One important thing to keep in mind about crafting skills is that they are almost always getting better, with each patch adding new craftables, hidden and basic, to every skill and just about every skill level. They're only going to get better as time goes on. That said, they're not for everyone. Tinkering is a powerful skill for people who see resource management and attrition as

an important part of victory, but people who want to ignore those aspects are free to do so and still be just as powerful as other players. Or almost, at least.

TheKirkUnited

Lorrelian has done an excellent job of summing up the pros and cons of the tinkerer. I'll just add this.

Tinkering has excellent synergies with smithing since much of the best melee gear is clockwork and those clockwork recipes generally require items that are crafted via Black smithing. (chain axe, thunderclap, boilerplate, etc.) Powerful clockwork items can be found on the lower levels of the dungeon subject to RNG but for a touch of reliability a bit of both worlds does the job admirably. Getting the right recipes is still subject to RNG however... so your mileage may vary.

It should also be noted that the new DLC adds the Clockwork Knight and Rogue Scientist skill trees, which both synergise EXTREMELY well with tinkering.