

# The Genius Guide to: The Death Mage



**PATHFINDER**  
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

The death mage is a new core class, designed for use with the *Pathfinder* RPG. It is an arcane spellcasting class that focuses on powers drawn from the dead, dying, and undead. Death mages are not just specialist wizards or variant sorcerers, but an entirely new kind of arcane spellcaster with different types of powers and a unique spell list. A death mage is designed to allow characters to draw deeply on the iconic forces of death, spirit and shadow, without requiring them be evil or focus on undead (though both are options).

## DEATH MAGE

Though often mistaken for necromancer-specialist wizards, undead-bloodline sorcerers, or clerics of gods of death and repose, death mages are truthfully closer in function and training to druids. While a druid is servant to and master of the forces of nature – calling upon them for instruction, aid, and power – the death mage is similarly linked to the spirits and powers of the dead. This is an intellectual link rather than a spiritual one, for a death mage has chosen to immerse herself in the trappings of the dead and their graves. The first thing a death mage learns is to listen to the faint echoes left behind by spirits of the dead. While wizards learn spells from dusty tomes, and sorcerers are empowered by their bloodlines, death mages are taught by the shades of the departed.

More than just necromancy, the powers accessed by death mages include many things associated with death including the fog of the graveyard, the dread all living things feel at the decaying remains of their own kind, shadow, the spirit realm, and the decay that sets in when life is gone. These are secrets held by spirits of the departed, which only death mages can hear. The teachers of a death mage are not undead, nor even truly self-aware entities. They are echoes of life, whispers in the darkness the death mage has taught herself to hear

and comprehend. Those things surrounded by the dead and dying, or brought about by death, are all whispered by the mindless voices from which a death mage learns.

Thus the attributes of a death mage are more focused than most spellcasters, but not exclusively built around necromancy and undeath. Death mages can cast powerful damaging spells, augment themselves with fetishes built from slain foes, and protect themselves and allies from harm by creating wards with a strong understanding of the line between life and death. Not every death mage hear the same spirits, as each is attuned

to those invisible, soundless spirits of the passed that most closely match her own personality. A death mage may hear the spirits of her forebearers, those she has killed, or those linked to a given place. Some death mages even believe they are sent their spirit teachers by fate or the gods, though they know it is a combination of force of will and comprehension of the language of the dead that grant them death mage powers, not divine provenance.

**Background:** Most death mages are self-taught, driven to study subjects rarely discussed (and often forbidden) in polite

society. Death mages often see this as a calling, a logical extension of a lifelong fascination with the dead, their resting places, and the reaction of society to the scent of decay. At some point, the death mage learns the secret to hearing spirits of the dead. From this point on, she spends as much time listening to the dead as talking to the living. In most cases, the death mage slowly drifts away from normal relationships with her community and is seen as a person apart from society. This alienness begins as a social difference, but often becomes a physical removal to the edge of the community.

In communities that accept death mages,

this separation may be an act of respect. The death mage is clearly living in two worlds, and her friends and family wish to give her room to commune with the dead without interruption. Such death mages may move to the edge of town, or live in a lone dwelling nearby.

More fearful (and less forgiving) communities see death mages as freaks at best, and active threats at

TABLE 1: THE DEATH MAGE

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells Per Day									
						0	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Pale road	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Voice of the dead	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	+2	+1	+1	+3	Death bond	4	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	+3	+1	+1	+4		4	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	+3	+1	+1	+4	Secrets of the dead	4	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	+4	+2	+2	+5		4	3	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	+5	+2	+2	+5		4	4	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-
8	+6/+1	+2	+2	+6		4	4	3	3	2	-	-	-	-	-
9	+6/+1	+3	+3	+6		4	4	4	3	2	1	-	-	-	-
10	+7/+2	+3	+3	+7	Wisdom of the grave	4	4	4	3	3	2	-	-	-	-
11	+8/+3	+3	+3	+7		4	4	4	4	3	2	1	-	-	-
12	+9/+4	+4	+4	+8		4	4	4	4	3	3	2	-	-	-
13	+9/+4	+4	+4	+8		4	4	4	4	4	3	2	1	-	-
14	+10/+5	+4	+4	+9		4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	-	-
15	+11/+6/+1	+5	+5	+9	Deathly abeyance	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	1	-
16	+12/+7/+2	+5	+5	+10		4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	-
17	+12/+7/+2	+5	+5	+10		4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	1
18	+13/+8/+3	+6	+6	+11		4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2
19	+14/+9/+4	+6	+6	+11		4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3
20	+15/+10/+5	+6	+6	+12	Final guide	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4



worst. Many death mages relocate out of a need to escape persecution, often seeking simply anonymity. Others are never comfortable in the center of places bustling with life, preferring to live in swamps, cemeteries, or ruins. However death mages rarely move into deep wilderness, because they are drawn to places where the living place the dead, and these are generally close to towns and villages.

This makes it easy for death mages to fall into lives of wandering adventure. They are often sought for the lore they can gather from the dead, or for aid dealing with ancient tombs and the creatures moving within them. A death mage is similarly often driven to seek secrets from the dead of foreign cultures, traveling great distances to hear new spirits speak to her. A death mage that deals in fetishes may also take up wandering purely to gather trophies from the recently deceased, an activity difficult to maintain within peaceful societies. Finally, many death mages find the kind of misanthropes, outcasts, and vagabonds that are drawn to lives of adventure make better company than “respectable” citizens, and find companionship in the hard life of an adventurer.

**Role:** How a death mage operates is strongly influenced by her focus in the study of death, especially what decisions she makes regarding her death pact and pale road class abilities. A death mage who chooses an unbreathing companion as a death pact brings an additional combatant to the group’s aid much as a druid might, while one that

focuses on the powers of totems is adaptable to a broad range of situations, and may even augment allies against specific foes. Similarly a death mage that follows the pale road of the reaper mage is able to survive the rigors of melee combat, while one taking the path of the ghoul mage focuses on disabling living foes and drawing power from dead ones.

**Alignment:** A death mage may be of any alignment.

**Hit Die:** d8

**Starting Wealth:** At 1<sup>st</sup> level a death mage begins play with 2d6 x 10 gp.

## CLASS SKILLS

The death mage’s class skills are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Craft (Int), Fly (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (dungeoneering)(Int), Knowledge (geography)(Int), Knowledge (history)(Int), Knowledge (local)(Int), Knowledge (planes)(Int), Linguistics (Int), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Spellcraft (Int), Stealth (Dex), and Use Magic Device (Int).

**Skill Ranks per Level:** 4 + Int modifier.

## CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the death mage.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** A death mage is proficient with all simple weapons, as well as the falchion, flail, kama, net, nunchaku, scimitar, and scythe. Death mages are also proficient with light armor and shields (except tower shields). A death mage can cast death mage spells while wearing light armor and use a shield



without incurring the normal arcane spell failure chance. Like any other arcane spellcaster, a death mage wearing medium or heavy armor incurs a chance of spell failure if the spell is question has a somatic component. A multiclass death mage still incurs the normal arcane spell failure chance for arcane spells received from other classes.

**Spells:** A death mage casts arcane spells drawn from the death mage spell list presented under Spell List, below. A death mage must choose and prepare his spells ahead of time.

To prepare or cast a spell, the death mage must have an Charisma score equal to at least 10 + the spell level. The Difficulty Class for a saving throw against a death mage's spell is 10 + the spell level + the death mage's Charisma modifier.

A death mage can cast only a certain number of spells of each spell level per day. Her base daily spell allotment is given on Table I: The Death Mage. In addition, she receives bonus spells per day if she has a high Charisma score (see Ability Modifiers and Bonus Spells in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*).

A death mage has a fairly limited spell list, but automatically learns all spells on that list when she is of the level needed to cast them. She must choose and prepare her spells ahead of time by getting 8 hours of sleep and spending 1 hour meditating and communing with spirits of the dead. While meditating, the death mage decides which spells to prepare. No one, not even other death mages, can see or hear the spirits a death mage listens to while preparing her spells. Not even *true seeing* reveals them, as they exist only for the death mage that hears them.

**Cantrips:** Death mages can prepare a number of cantrips, or 0-level spells, each day, as noted on Table 1: The Death Mage under "Spells per Day." These spells are cast like any other spell, but they are not expended when cast and may be used again.

**Pale Road (Su):** The spirits each death mage can hear all share a set of similar secrets, based on some aspect of death, dying, and the reactions the living have to the dead. The set of secrets known to each is called their pale road, and each death mage must select one pale road at 1<sup>st</sup> level. Once made, this selection cannot be changed. As the death mage travels down this pale road at the constant instruction of her spirit guides, she masters a special set of powers becoming a lord or lady of one aspect of death.

### CORPSE MAGE

Corpse mages are the death mages most likely to be mistaken for necromancers, for the spirits they hear all follow the pale road of the undead, each coming from a destroyed undead creature seeking to regain its physical form. At first corpse mages can only command undead creatures as they encounter them, but in time they command armies of loyal, unliving minions.

*Dirge of Command (Sp):* You may attempt to control undead creatures you encounter. This functions as the *command undead* spell, except it only functions on undead with no more hit dice than you have death mage levels. You may use this power a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier.

*Army of the Dead (Su):* At 8<sup>th</sup> level, you may have a number of undead minions, which are totally loyal to you. Treat this as the Leadership feat (see the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*), except all minions and your cohort are either skeletons or zombies (your choice). Your cohort is a special skeleton or zombie receiving an Intelligence score and acting as an intelligent undead. If you lose a cohort or minions, they are replaced when you gain a new death mage level. You may also dismiss an existing cohort or minion when you gain a level (destroying them) to select a new cohort or minions.

If you are at least 8<sup>th</sup> level your cohort or minions may be bloody or burning skeletons 1 level lower than your normal cohort or minion level. If you are at least 10<sup>th</sup> level, your cohort or minions may be fast zombies or plague zombies. If you are at least 12<sup>th</sup> level your cohort may be a skeletal champion 2 levels lower than your normal cohort level. If you are at least 16<sup>th</sup> level your cohort may be a vampire 3 levels lower than your normal cohort level.

### GHOUL MAGE

Ghoul mages draw power draw from the dead and undead and use it to weaken or paralyze the living.

*Eat the Dead (Su):* You can gain strength by consuming the recently departed. As a full round action that provokes an attack of opportunity you can eat part of an adjacent creature of the aberration, animal, dragon, fey, humanoid, magical beast, monstrous humanoid, undead (corporeal only), or

vermin type that died no longer than one round per death mage level you possess. This allows you to regain one hit point for every hit die or level possessed by the creature you feast upon (to a minimum of one hit point healed). After using this power, you gain a +1 morale bonus to all attack rolls, saving throws and skill checks for one minute per level. At 10<sup>th</sup> level, the bonus increases to a +2 bonus. You may use this power a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier.

*Sickening Touch (Su):* As a standard action, you can make a target ill by touching it. Using this ability requires a touch attack that forces a living creature to make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + ½ your death mage level + your Charisma modifier). On a failed save, the target is sickened for one round per death mage level. A *neutralize poison* spell removes the sickened effect. Creatures that are immune to poison are unaffected by this ability. You may use this power a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier.

*Ghost Touch (Su):* At 8<sup>th</sup> level, as a standard action, you can paralyze a target by touching it. This is a touch attack that forces living creatures to make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + ½ your death mage level + your Charisma modifier). On a failed save, the target is paralyzed for one round per death mage level. At the end of each of its turns, the paralyzed target may make another fortitude save at a –5 penalty to see if its paralysis ends early. You may use this power a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier.

### TOMB MAGE

Tomb mages study the fringes of necromancy that deal with matters other than death and undeath. They are instead masters of the fear and pain the living feel when confronted by or approaching death — side-effects for most necromancers but useful tools when brought to their full power.

*Calm of the Grave (Ex):* Your deep understanding of pain and fear makes you immune to magical efforts to create these reactions within you. You are immune to any pain or fear effect, as well as the shaken condition.

*Terrible Visage (Su):* Once per day as a standard action you can give yourself the appearance of a horrifying apparition, your face becoming terrible to behold. You gain a gaze attack, forcing foes that can see you to make a Will save (DC 10 + ½ your death mage level + your Charisma modifier) at the beginning of each of their turns or be shaken for 1 minute. This is a mind-affecting, fear, gaze attack (and foes can avoid it by averting their eyes, as detailed under gaze attacks in the *Pathfinder Bestiary*). A foe that is shaken as a result of this ability becomes immune to it for 24 hours after their shaken condition ends.

Your terrible visage remains active for one round per death mage level, though you may dismiss it as a free action if you wish.

*Word of Pain (Su):* At 8<sup>th</sup> level, you gain the ability to speak the terrible word of pain. As a standard action you may say this word to a target that is able to hear you,

and is within 30 feet. The target must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + ½ your death mage level + your Charisma modifier) or be overcome by wracking pain. The pain is so intense the target cannot think clearly, causing it to be confused for one round per death mage level. The target receives a new Will save at the end of each of its turns, with a successful save ending the effect. You may use the word of pain once per day. You gain an additional use of the word every four levels, to a maximum of four times per day at 20<sup>th</sup> level.

### REAPER MAGE

Reaper mages are opposed to the undead in all ways, and cannot cast any spells or use any fetishes that create or command undead creatures (though they still have access to the various *dance macabre* spells, see below). Their denial of the powers of death make them heartier than other death mages.

*Deny Death (Ex):* You gain an additional hit point at each character level. When your hit point total drops below 0, you automatically stabilize. You don't die from hp loss until you reach a number of negative hp equal to or greater than Constitution score + ½ your class level.

*Reap (Su):* As a swift action you can empower a melee attack with the certainty of the grave. The attack gains a bonus to hit equal to equal to your Charisma modifier (to a maximum of your class level), and +1d6 damage (+2d6 if the target is an undead). You must declare if an attack is to be empowered prior to making your attack roll. Empowered attacks count as magic for





purposes of bypassing DR. You may use this power a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier.

At 7<sup>th</sup> level the extra damage from your empowered attack increases to +2d6 (+4d6 if the target is an undead), and it bypasses any DR of an undead target. At 14<sup>th</sup> level it increases to +3d6 (+6d6 if the target is an undead), and strikes even ethereal and incorporeal undead for full damage.

*Protection From Undead (Su):* At 8<sup>th</sup> level as a move action you can create a field antithetical to the powers of necromancy and the undead. The field is centered on you, moves with you, and has a 20-foot radius. While within this field, all creatures gain a deflection bonus to AC and a resistance bonus to saving throws against all attacks and spells from undead creatures and any necromancy spell. These bonuses are equal to your Charisma modifier. This field lasts a number of minutes equal to your death mage level, and you may use it a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier.

### SHADOW MAGE

*Shape Shadow (Su):* You can manipulate and command shadow as if it was a physical, malleable material. You gain the benefit of persistent *prestidigitation*, *unseen servant*, and *spectral hand* spells as a result of your ability to shape and command shadows.

*Shadow Adept (Su):* Whenever you cast a shadow conjuration or shadow evocation spell from the death mage spell list (including lower- and higher-level versions of those spells), you may use it to emulate any cleric,

bard or sorcerer/wizard spell conjuration or evocation (as appropriate). A typical death mage who casts those spells may only use them to emulate sorcerer/wizard spells, as outlined in the spell descriptions in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*.

*Summon Shadow (Su):* At 8<sup>th</sup> level, you gain the ability to summon three shadows to serve you. This acts as a *summon monster V* spell, except it always summons three shadows, the shadows are of your alignment, and the effect has a duration of one minute per death mage level. You may use this ability once per day at 8<sup>th</sup> level, twice at 12<sup>th</sup> level, three times at 16<sup>th</sup> level and four times per day at 20<sup>th</sup> level. Beginning at 16<sup>th</sup> level, you may choose to have the shadows be greater shadows, if you wish.

**Voice of the Dead (Su):** At 2<sup>nd</sup> level, the death mage's ability to hear and understand spirits of the dead is developed enough to allow her to speak in this tongue as well. As the spirits themselves are mindless, talking to them serves no purpose (though many death mages do so anyway). Death mages may use the language to understand and be understood by undead creature (all of which know the voice of the dead as a language, even if it is not listed), and to communicate with each other. Additionally, language is no longer a barrier when the death mage uses a *speak with dead* spell.

**Death Bond:** At 3<sup>rd</sup> level a death mage develops a strong connection to the mystic powers of death and learns to walk a path between the living and the dead. A death mage's training details the many

connections that exist between the living and the dead. While other spellcasters take minor advantage of these ties, death mages learn to forge new connections which create a death bond that may take one of three forms.

The first option is for the death mage to gain an unbreathing companion. This functions as the druid's animal companion, except the companion is treated as a magical beast and has the unbreathing subtype (see below). The companion is calculated as if the death mage were a druid 2 levels lower than her true class level.

The second option is for the death mage to gain access to either the death or repose cleric domains. When determining the powers and bonus spells granted by this domain, the death mage's effective cleric level is equal to her death mage level. A death mage that selects this option also receives additional domain spell slots, just as a cleric does. She must prepare a spell from her domain in this slot.

The third option is for the death mage to create a fetish. Fetishes are personal magic items, small objects weighting 2 lbs. decorated with trophies taken from the corpses of fallen opponents. A fetish is a small object weighing about 2 lbs. A death mage must be holding her fetish to access its powers. Unless specified otherwise, a fetish power functions constantly as long as the death mage has it in her hand. A fetish has a caster level equal to its creator's current death mage level.

Each fetish is contains a collection of powers of the death mage's choosing (see Fetish Powers below). When a death mage first takes this bond, she fills her fetish with two powers, then one additional power every two full levels (5th, 7th, 9th, and so on to a total of 10 fetish powers at 19th level). Unless a power specifies otherwise, you cannot select the same fetish power more than once. The powers granted by a fetish function only for the death mage that created it (though the imbue fetish power allows her to share those powers in a limited fashion).

A fetish's powers can only be used to target creatures of a type to which the fetish is attuned. Attuning a fetish requires that the death mage attach a small trophy taken from the corpse of a recently killed creature—the fetish will then be attuned to any other creatures of that type. There is no limit to the number of creature types to which a fetish can be attuned other than the death mage be able to secure suitable trophies. In order to get a usable trophy, the death mage must have been within 400 feet of the creature at the time of its death and its CR at the time must have been no lower than 3 below the death mage's character level. A fetish may be attuned to the following types of creatures: aberration, animal, construct, dragon, fey, humanoid (each subtype is treated as a separate type for fetish attunement), magical beast, monstrous humanoid, ooze, outsider (air, chaotic, earth, evil, fire, good, lawful, native, and water outsiders are each treated as separate types for a fetish's attunement),

plant, undead and vermin. Adding a trophy to a fetish takes ten minutes of concentration. If a fetish is lost, the death mage must construct a new one, and re-attune it by taking new trophies.

### FETISH POWERS

*Death Focus (Su):* All creatures your fetish is attuned to suffer a -1 penalty to saving throws against your death mage spells and abilities.

*Death Mask (Su):* You can create a temporary fetish by painting symbols on your face and body. This takes one minute, and requires pigments and stains the death mage can gather at no cost. The temporary fetish lasts for one hour per class level. During this time, you do not have to hold your fetish to access its powers.

*Deadly Blow (Su):* You deal an additional 1d6 points of damage with melee attacks made against a target your fetish is attuned to.

*Healing Spirits (Su):* As a move action you may heal a target your fetish is attuned to, if the target is within close range (25 feet + 5 ft./2 death mage levels). You heal the target for 2d6 points of damage. This healing increases to 3d6 for death mages of 8<sup>th</sup> level or higher, and to 4d6 for death mages of 16<sup>th</sup> level or higher. You may use this power a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Wisdom modifier.

*Instrument of Death (Su):* You can turn a melee weapon into a fetish (so you are automatically holding your fetish whenever you are holding your weapon).

*Imbue Fetish (Su):* You can imbue a power from your fetish on an ally. This is a full-round action during which you must touch your ally (leaving a simple death-themed mark, similar to an *arcane mark*, that that remains in place

for as long as the target is imbued). Select one power from the following list: death focus, deadly blow, rictus, shielding spirits, silence of the grave, smell of fear, and warding spirits. Your ally gains the benefit of that fetish power for a duration of ten minutes per level of death mage you possess. During this time you do not have access to that power. You may only imbue one ally with a fetish power at a time.

**Nightmare Spirits (Su):** Once per day, you may afflict a target attuned to your fetish with nightmares. This functions as the *nightmare* spell, but you are always considered to have secondhand knowledge of the target, and a connection at least as strong as a likeness or picture.

**Rictus (Su):** You gain a +4 bonus to all Intimidate checks made against targets your fetish is attuned to.

**Seeking Spirits (Sp):** You may use your fetish to locate targets it is attuned to. This functions as the *locate creature* spell cast at your caster level, but can only be used to locate creatures your fetish is attuned to. You may use this ability once per day for every five full death mage levels you possess. A death mage must be at least 9<sup>th</sup> level to select this power.

**Seeking Spirits, Greater (Sp):** Once per day, you may use your fetish as a powerful tool of divination. This functions as the spell *discern location*, but may only be used to locate creatures your fetish is attuned to. A death mage must be at least 15<sup>th</sup> level and the fetish must already contain seeking spirits to select this power.

**Smell of Fear (Su):** You gain the scent ability, but can only use it to detect targets your fetish is attuned to.

**Shielding Spirits (Sp):** Against any divination or scrying efforts made by creatures your fetish is attuned to, you are treated as if you had a permanent *nonetection* spell. A death mage must be at least 9<sup>th</sup> level to select this power.

**Silence of the Grave (Su):** When the situation allows you to attempt a Stealth check, all opponents to which your fetish is attuned suffer a –4 penalty to Perception checks to notice you.

**Sympathetic Pain (Su):** As a standard action you may make a ranged touch attack against a target your fetish is attuned to, if the target is within close range (25 feet + 5 ft./2 death mage levels). To use this power you must have your fetish in one hand, and a melee weapon in the other, and hit the fetish with the weapon (though the fetish suffers no damage). On a successful ranged touch attack, your target is shaken for one round per 2 death mage levels. The target may make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + ½ your death mage level + your Intelligence modifier) to halve the duration of this effect.

**Sympathetic Strike (Su):** As a standard action you may make a ranged touch attack against a target your fetish is attuned to, if the target is within close range (25 feet + 5 ft./2 death mage levels). To use this power you must have your fetish in one hand, and a melee weapon in the other, and hit the fetish with the weapon (though the fetish suffers no damage). On a successful ranged touch attack, your attack deals 2d6 points of damage, as though it came from a spell with the force descriptor. This damage increases

to 3d6 for death mages of 8<sup>th</sup> level or higher, and to 4d6 for death mages of 16<sup>th</sup> level or higher. You may use this power a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Wisdom modifier.

**Warding Spirits (Su):** You gain a luck bonus to AC against attacks made by targets your fetish is attuned to. This bonus is equal to your Charisma modifier (to a maximum of your death mage level).

**Secrets of the Dead (Su):** At 5<sup>th</sup> level, the number of spirits talking to a death mage, and the secrets they constantly whisper to her, takes a major upswing. As a result, the death mage may add her class level to any Knowledge check regarding a dead or undead person or creature, necromancy, places where people are buried, or ceremonies regarding the dead.

**Wisdom of the Grave (Sp):** At 10<sup>th</sup> level, as a standard action, the death mage may ask a single question of any creature that has been dead for no more than one round. This functions like a *speak with dead* spell, though the death mage is allowed only a single question.

**Deathly Abeyance (Su):** At 15<sup>th</sup> level, you can hold the spirits of death at bay, preventing yourself or an ally from dying. Once per day, as an immediate reaction, you can grant a creature within 30 feet that has just died a second chance at life. If the target has died as a result of hit point loss, you grant the target a number of temporary hit points equal to your class level plus your Charisma score. If the temporary hit points are enough to prevent the target



from being at a negative value greater than its Constitution, the target does not die. The temporary hit points last for 1 minute per death mage level, so to remain among the living your target must seek healing before this time runs up.

If the target died as a result of a failed saving throw, you grant the target an immediate second saving throw. If the die roll of the second saving throw is a 1-10, the target adds +10 to the die roll (resulting in a die roll that must fall between 11-20). If the second save succeeds, the target does not die, though it suffers any other consequence of the effect. If the second save fails, the target still dies.

If the target died as a result of neither hit point loss or a failed saving throw, the target remains alive for one round per your class level, then dies.

**Final Guide (Sp):** At 20<sup>th</sup> level, a death mage can actually guide the spirit of a slain creature back to its body once a day, restoring the creature to life. This is only possible if the spirit is nearby, and thus this power must be used within a number of rounds equal to your class level since the creature's death. This functions like the *resurrection* spell except there is no material component, and the casting time is 1 full round. Once a creature has been restored to life by a death mage's guide ability, that creature cannot benefit from that ability again (from any death mage) until it gains an additional class level or hit die.

## SPELL LIST

Spells marked with an asterisk (\*) are detailed in the New Spells section below.

### 0-LEVEL DEATH MAGE SPELLS

**Bleed:** Cause a stabilized creature to resume dying.

**Detect Magic:** Detects spells and magic items with 60 ft.

**Detect Poison:** Detects poison in one creature or object.

**Disrupt Undead:** Deals 1d6 damage to one undead.

**Guidance:** +1 on one attack roll, saving throw or skill check.

**Read Magic:** Read scrolls and spellbooks.

**Touch of Fatigue:** Touch attack fatigues target.

**Stabilize:** Cause a dying creature to stabilize.

**Virtue:** Subject gains 1 temporary hp.

### 1<sup>ST</sup>-LEVEL DEATH MAGE SPELLS

**Cause Fear:** One creature of 5 HD or less flees for 1d4 rounds.

**Chill Touch:** One touch/level deals 1d6 damage and possibly 1 Str damage.

**Dance Macabre I\*:** Summons breathless creature to fight for you.

**Deathly Pall\*:** Gain cold resistance 5, +2 Strength, 1d6 temporary hit points.

**Deathwatch:** reveals how near death subjects within 30 feet are.

**Grave Shield\*:** Gain bonuses to saves against effects undead are immune to.

**Inflict Light Wounds:** Touch attack deals 1d8 damage +1/level (max +5).

**Obscuring Mist:** Fog surrounds you.

**Ray of Enfeeblement:** Ray causes 1d6 Str penalty + 1 per 2 levels.

**Remove Fear:** Suppresses fear or gives +4 on saves against fear for one subject + one per four levels.

**Spectral Eye\*:** Create a magic sensor that allows you to alter your point of view.

### 2<sup>ND</sup>-LEVEL DEATH MAGE SPELLS

**Command Undead:** Undead creature obeys your commands.

**Dance Macabre II\*:** Summons breathless creature to fight for you.

**Death Knell:** Kills dying creature; you gain 1d8 temporary hit points, +2 to Strength, and +1 caster level.

**False Life:** Gain 1d10 temporary hp + 1/level (max +10).

**Fog Cloud:** Fog obscures vision.

**Gentle Repose:** Preserves one corpse.

**Ghoul Touch:** Paralyzes one subject, which exudes stench that makes those nearby sickened.

**Inflict Moderate Wounds:** Touch attack deals 2d8 damage +1/level (max +10).

**Remove Paralysis:** Frees creatures from paralysis or *slow* effects.

**Scare:** Frightens creatures of less than 6 HD.

**Spectral Hand:** Creates disembodied glowing hand to deliver touch attacks.

### 3<sup>RD</sup>-LEVEL DEATH MAGE SPELLS

**Animate Dead:** Creates undead skeletons and zombies out of corpses.

**Anti-Undead Shell\*:** Keeps undead creatures at bay.

**Dance Macabre III\*:** Summons breathless creature to fight for you.

**Deeper Darkness:** Object sheds supernatural shadow in 60-ft. radius.

**Halt Undead:** Immobilizes undead for 1 round/level.

**Inflict Serious Wounds:** Touch attack deals 3d8 damage +1/level (max +15).

**Ray of Exhaustion:** Ray makes subject exhausted.

**Shadow Conjunction, Lesser\*:** Mimics conjunctions below 3<sup>rd</sup> level, but only 10% real.

**Speak with Dead:** Corpse answers one question/two levels.

**Vampiric Touch:** Touch deals 1d6 damage per two levels; caster gains damage as temporary hp

#### 4<sup>TH</sup>-LEVEL DEATH MAGE SPELLS

**Bestow Curse:** -6 to an ability score; -4 on attack rolls, saves, and checks; or 50% chance of losing each action.

**Contagion:** Infects subject with chosen disease.

**Dance Macabre IV\*:** Summons breathless creature to fight for you.

**Death Ward:** Grants bonuses against death spells and negative energy.

**Enervation:** Subject gains 1d4 negative levels.

**False Vigor\*:** Grant a target 2d10 temporary hit points +1/level (max +15).

**Inflict Critical Wounds:** Touch attack deals 4d8 damage +1/level (max +20).

**Inflict Light Wounds, Mass:** Deals 1d8 damage +1/level, affects 1 creature/level.

**Fear:** Subjects within cone flee for 1 round/level.

**Shadow Conjunction:** Mimics conjunctions below 4<sup>th</sup> level, but only 20% real.

#### 5<sup>TH</sup>-LEVEL DEATH MAGE SPELLS

**Blight:** Withers one plant or deals 1d6/level damage to plant creature.

**Dance Macabre V\*:** Summons breathless creature to fight for you.

**False Life, Greater\*:** Gain 3d10 temporary hit points +1/level (max +20).

**Inflict Moderate Wounds, Mass:** Deals 2d8 damage +1/level, affects 1 creature/level.

**Insect Plague:** Wasp swarms attack creatures.

**Magic Jar:** Enables possession of another creature.

**Shadow Evocation:** Mimics evocations below 5<sup>th</sup> level, but only 20% real.

**Slay Living:** Touch attack deals 12d6 damage +1 per level.

**Symbol of Pain:** Triggered rune wracks creatures with pain.

**Waves of Fatigue:** Several targets become fatigued.

#### 6<sup>TH</sup>-LEVEL DEATH MAGE SPELLS

**Circle of Death:** Kills 1d4/level HD of creatures.

**Create Undead:** Raises ghouls, ghosts, mummies, or mohrgs from physical remains.

**Dance Macabre VI\*:** Summons breathless creature to fight for you.

**Eyebite:** Target becomes panicked, sickened, and comatose.

**Harm:** Deals 10 points/level damage to target.

**Inflict Serious Wounds, Mass:** Deals 3d8 damage +1/level, affects 1 creature/level.

**Shadow Conjunction, Improved\*:** Mimics conjunctions below 6<sup>th</sup> level, but only 50% real.

**Shadow Walk:** Step into shadow to travel swiftly.

**Symbol of Fear:** Triggered rune panics nearby creatures.

**Undeath to Death:** Destroys 1d4/level HD of undead (max. 20d4).

#### 7<sup>TH</sup>-LEVEL DEATH MAGE SPELLS

**Control Undead:** Undead don't attack you while under your command.

**Dance Macabre VII\*:** Summons breathless creature to fight for you.

**Destruction:** Kills subject and destroys remains.

**Finger of Death:** Deals 10 damage/level to one subject.

**Inflict Critical Wounds, Mass:** Deals 4d8 damage +1/level, affects 1 creature/level.

**Power Word, Blind:** Blinds creature with 200 hp or fewer.

**Shadow Conjunction, Greater:** As *shadow conjunction*, but up to 6<sup>th</sup> level and 60% real.

**Symbol of Weakness:** Triggered rune weakens creatures.

**Waves of Exhaustion:** Several targets become exhausted.

#### 8<sup>TH</sup>-LEVEL DEATH MAGE SPELLS

**Clone:** Duplicate awakens when original dies.

**Dance Macabre VIII\*:** Summons breathless creature to fight for you.

**Create Greater Undead:** Creates shadows, wraiths, spectres, or devourers.

**False Vigor, Mass\*:** Grant targets 3d10 temporary hit points, +1/level (max +25)

**Horrid Wilting:** Deals 1d6/level damage within 30 ft.

**Inflict Grievous Wounds, Mass\*:** Deals 5d8 damage +1/level, affects 1 creature/level.

**Shadow Evocation, Greater:** As *shadow evocation*, but up to 7<sup>th</sup> level and 70% real.

**Symbol of Death:** Triggered rune kills nearby creatures.

### 9<sup>TH</sup>-LEVEL DEATH MAGE SPELLS

**Astral Projection:** Projects you and companions onto Astral Plane.

**Dance Macabre IX\*:** Summons breathless creature to fight for you.

**Energy Drain:** Subject gains 2d4 negative levels.

**Harm, Mass\*:** As harm, but affects 1 subject/level.

**Shades:** As *shadow conjuration*, but up to 8<sup>th</sup> level and 80% real.

**Soul Bind:** Traps newly dead soul to prevent resurrection.

**Wail of the Banshee:** Deals 10 damage/level to 1 creature/level.

### ADDING NEW SPELLS TO THE DEATH MAGE'S LIST

When playing in a group that uses an expanded source of spells, new spellcasting classes are often at a disadvantage. While any supplement that includes additional spells will assign them to classes listed in the *Pathfinder Roleplayign Game Core Rulebook*, classes from other sources rarely receive that level of support.

As a result, we provide a few simple guideliens, to assist GMs in adding spells from new sources to the death mage's spell list.

Any spell from the Necromancy school is a good bet for a death mage, even if it's not a sorcerer/wizard spell. Similarly, spells from domains of gods of burial, death, undead, repose, or similar themes are excellent choices, even though they are divine. Similarly, spells dealing with shadow, the undead, and fear are likely candidates for the death mage. Spells with weaker connections to the dead, graveyards, and similar themes may be allowed (such as spells focusing on fog, burial, dirges, mourners, and superstition), but should be treated as one spell level higher. The power of a death mage to restore or bring back the dead, abilities normally beyond the purview of any arcane spell short of some form of *wish*, is so limited that we advise against adding any such spells from new source's to the class' spell list.

Beware jumps in power from giving a death mage a spell from a class that gets spells at later levels. If you grant a death mage a bard spell of 3<sup>rd</sup> level or higher, you'll likely want to increase the spell level by +1. If giving a death mage a paladin or ranger spell, increase the level of a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> level spell by +1, and a 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> level spell +2. These general guidelines can also be used when adding spells from class that have a spellcasting progression similar to bards, paladins, or rangers.





# NEW SPELLS

## ANTI-UNDEAD SHELL

**School:** abjuration; **Level:** death mage 3

**Casting Time:** 1 round

**Components:** V, S

**Range:** Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

**Area:** 10-ft.-radius emanation centered on you

**Duration:** 1 min./level

**Saving Throw:** Will negates (see text); **Spell Resistance:** Yes

You bring into being a mobile, hemispherical energy field that prevents the entrance of most types of undead. Mindless undead (those with no Intelligence score) are automatically affected by this spell. Other undead receive a Will save when they first come into contact with an anti-undead shell. On a failed save they are unable to enter the shell for its duration, on a successful save they ignore the spell.

This spell may only be used defensively, not aggressively. Forcing an abjuration barrier against creatures that spell keeps at bay collapses the barrier.

## DANCE MACABRE I – IX

**School:** conjuration (summoning); **Level:** death mage 1–9

These spells function as *summon nature's ally* spells of the same level except they can only summon animals, magical beasts, and humanoids. All creatures summoned are of the unbreathing subtype. An animal summoned with this spell is treated as a magical beast, though no changes to its statistics are made other than those specific by the unbreathing subtype. (For more information on the unbreathing subtype, see below.)

## DEATHLY PALL

**School:** abjuration; **Level:** death mage 1

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Components:** V, S

**Range:** personal

**Target:** you

**Duration:** 1 min./level

You call upon the immunities of the already dead to grant yourself some of their resilience. You gain cold resistance 5, a +2 enhancement bonus to your Strength, and 1d6 temporary hit points, +1 per 2 caster levels (maximum +5). Your skin becomes pale and your eyes turn dark, giving you a +5 bonus to disguise checks to appear to be dead or undead.

## FALSE LIFE, GREATER

**School:** necromancy; **Level:** death mage 5

This spell functions like *false life*, except the temporary hit points gains are equal to 3d10 +1/level (maximum +20).

## FALSE VIGOR

**School:** necromancy; **Level:** death mage 4

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Components:** V, S, M (a drop of blood)

**Range:** touch

**Target:** creature touched

**Duration:** 1 hour/level or until discharged, see text

**Saving Throw:** Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance:** Yes (harmless)

You harness the powers of unlife to grant the target a limited ability to avoid death. While the spell is in effect, the target gains temporary hit points equal to 2d10 +1 per caster level (maximum +15).

## FALSE VIGOR, MASS

**School:** necromancy; **Level:** death mage 8

**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

**Targets:** One or more creatures, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart.

This spell functions like *false vigor*, except as noted above. It grants temporary hit points equal to 3d10 +1 per caster level (maximum +25).

## GRAVE SHIELD

**School:** abjuration; **Level:** death mage 1

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Components:** V, S

**Range:** personal

**Target:** you

**Duration:** 1 hour/level

You call your personal spirits to form a barrier to protect you in the mortal world. This creates a flickering disk of swirling grey forms, which moves to intercept any threat to you. While this has no effect on hit point damage, the grave shield does weaken many effects the dead and undead are immune to. You gain a +1 luck bonus to all saving throws against mind-affecting effects, death effects, disease, paralysis, poison, sleep effects, stunning effects, energy drains, and exhaustion and fatigue effects. This bonus increases every 5 caster levels, to +2 at 5<sup>th</sup> level, +3 at 10<sup>th</sup> level, to a maximum of +5 at 20<sup>th</sup> level.

## HARM, MASS

**School:** necromancy; **Level:** death mage 9

**Range:** Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

**Targets:** One or more creatures, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart.

This spell functions like *harm*, except as noted above. The maximum number of points of damage dealt to each creature is 250.

## INFLECT GRIEVOUS WOUNDS, MASS

**School:** necromancy; **Level:** death mage 8

This spell functions like *mass inflict light wounds*, except that it deals 5d8 points of damage +1 per caster level (maximum +40).

## SHADOW CONJURATION, IMPROVED

**School:** illusion (shadow); **Level:** death mage 6

This spell functions like *shadow conjuration*, except that it duplicates any sorcerer of wizard conjuration (summoning) or conjuration (creation) spell of 5<sup>th</sup> level or lower. The illusory conjuration created deals half (50%) damage to nonbelievers, and nondamaging effects are 50% likely to work against nonbelievers.

## SHADOW CONJURATION, LESSER

**School:** illusion (shadow); **Level:** death mage 3

This spell functions like *shadow conjuration*, except that it duplicates any sorcerer of wizard conjuration (summoning) or conjuration (creation) spell of 3<sup>rd</sup> level or lower. The illusory conjuration created deals one-tenths (10%) damage to nonbelievers, and nondamaging effects are 10% likely to work against nonbelievers.

# UNBREATHING

Unbreathing is a subtype that can be applied to magic beasts and humanoids. Unbreathing creatures are alive, but share the appearance of and some traits with undead creatures. Unbreathing creatures have strong connections to the powers of death, just as creatures with the cold or fire subtype are connected to those forces. Unbreathing are not undead, however, and must eat, sleep and even (occasionally) breathe. Most unbreathing creatures look like zombie or ghoulish versions of their normal cousins, though a rare few have transparent hide and flesh, making them look like animate skeletons.

- Unbreathing creatures can choose to not breathe for a duration of one minute per point of Constitution score. After this duration, they use normal drowning/suffocation rules.

- Spells and effects that affect or damage undead also affect or damage unbreathing creatures. Spells or effects that specify they do not affect undead do not affect unbreathing creatures.

- Unbreathing creatures cannot have the fire subtype. They gain resistance to cold equal to one point per level or hit die.

- Unbreathing creatures are resistant to healing magic. They receive only half the hp of healing granted by any magic source of healing.

# USING DEATH MAGES IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Death mages are designed to fill the role of dabblers in dark arts, without creating a class that is exclusively useful for evil characters. The term “death mage” can be considered generic, and specific cultures may refer to them as bokor, houngan, obeah, skull men, spirit-talkers, or necrothurses. Death mages may be more common among a particular nation or race, and makes an excellent cultural option for groups with less of a Western European feel than paladins and rangers.

While the core assumption is that death mages are rare and self-taught, this is not the only way to run them. Death mages could be taught with a strong master-to-apprentice tradition, with older death mages recognizing the talent to speak to spirits in young members of the community, and removing them to become apprentice death mages. This makes them less hated by most communities, but likely no less feared.

Not all death mages may be treated equally. Those working to become reaper mages may be seen as a necessary, if unpleasant, part of society, while shadow mages and tomb mages are treated with suspicion at best. In this set-up corpse mages and ghoulish mages are seen as practitioners of forbidden secrets and always hunted as villains. Indeed, one of the main duties of reaper mages may be to hunt down and destroy their dark brethren, for the good of both their own traditions and life as a whole.



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