

The Genius Guide to: Rune Staves and Wyrd Wands



PATHFINDER
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

Welcome to the first Genius Guide product to present a whole new class of magic items, the titular rune staves and wyrd wands. In many ways this book is an offshoot of our *Loot 4 Less* line of magic item books, the main difference being the items presented in *Rune Staves and Wyrd Wands* aren't restricted to a 25,000 gp limit. Indeed, rules included here can be used to create items with a cost as low as 1,500 gp, or as high as 150,000 gp.

Fans of the *Loot 4 Less* line of supplements presenting low-cost magic items will be pleased to see a number of elements from those books (such as the *Behind the Counter* sidebars on pricing) have been continued in this product. So sit back, read, and enjoy a whole new take on wands and staves!

WHAT ARE RUNE STAVES AND WYRD WANDS?

Both rune staves and wyrd wands are examples of a new kind of magic item: the magic implement. Defined broadly, magic implements are handheld devices that assist spellcasters with their casting in much the same way magic weapons assist characters in combat. Wyrd wands give casters enhancement bonuses to caster level checks, attack rolls, damage rolls, and possibly one other area, while rune staves can grant bonuses to a wide range of spell-related effects. Both are assumed to have arcane writing built into them (called 'wyrd' or 'runes,' depending on which implement they are scribed on) that allow them to enhance every spell cast by their wielders, rather than being spells-in-a-can that take over when a spellcaster is out of other options.

WHY MAGIC IMPLEMENTS?

So, why whole new sets of wands and staves? Well, given that both are iconic tools for spellcasters throughout fantasy fiction, we thought it was unfortunate that the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook* makes them little more than fantasy-themed pistols—in other words, handheld, ammo-bearing tools able to harm foes several times before being expended or reloaded. Under the standard rules, a wand or staff is essentially a back-up for a spellcaster who has run out of spell slots for the day. This makes them odd items, since they might not be of much use as long as a spellcaster has plenty of spell slots left, but take over when he runs out.

Looking at popular wizards in fiction, wands and staves ought to serve a more general function than that. A wizard with a wand should receive a modest bonus to spellcasting on par with the kind of bonus fighters with magic weapons and armor enjoy. Redefining wands and staves to act this way both makes them easier to price at low cost (by simply having some very small bonuses), and turns them into something a spellcaster wants to have in-hand all the time. Thus we introduce a new category of magic items, magic implements (which includes both rune staves and wyrd wands), which enhances spellcasters' abilities rather than replacing them.

The other, less obvious, benefit of our new magic implements is that they make low- and mid-level spellcasters potentially more different and more interesting. Imagine two 5th-level sorcerers, Periwinkle Hautter and Dani Gelf, with exactly the same selection of spells. During

the course of an adventure, Periwinkle picks up a +1 *fiery wyrd wand*, and Dani acquires a +1 *alluring rune staff*. Not only will the two characters begin to cast different spells more often (to take advantage of their items), but by 7th level the two characters will have diverged more radically, as they select spells that work best with their magic implements' themes.

HOW MAGIC IMPLEMENTS WORK

All magic implements grants enhancement bonuses, and many have additional magic abilities as well. The enhancement bonus of a magic implement adds to all attack rolls made with spells cast from the wand, damage dealt by the first die of spell damage (see *Bonuses to Spell Damage*, below), and to all caster level checks made for spells cast while using the wand (including those made to overcome SR, those made to check the effectiveness of such spells as *dispel magic*, *remove curse*, or *remove disease*, and those made when attempting to use divination spells against a target warded by *nondetection*). Magic implements cannot have greater than a +5 enhancement bonus.

BONUSES TO SPELL DAMAGE

Adding bonus damage to spells can be slightly tricky, because you have to decide where the bonus damage applies. Does it add to only one target, making it much less useful for area effect spells? Does it add every time the spell deals damage, making it great for *magic missile*, *flameblade*, and similar spells?

THAT'S NOT HOW WANDS WORK!

Of course, some people are simply traditionalists. Since the core rules define wands as working in a particular way, some people aren't going to be happy with the idea of having a separate category of magic implements that give constant-but-minor bonuses. While we here at *Super Genius Games* believe in being a bit more adventurous, we try to accommodate all our customers' needs. So, here are some ways to use this material even if you want traditional wands in your campaign.

First, all the powers listed for our new rune staves and wyrd wands could be added as *additional* powers for traditional staves and wands. This jacks the price of such things up considerably, but it also makes staves and wands more versatile and interesting. If going this route, calculate the cost of the magic implement bonuses you wish to add to a typical staff or wand, and add double that to the normal staff or wand cost. This accounts for the fact the item has two different sets of power, but still takes up only a single hand when in use.

Failing that, the powers of the magic implements presented in this product can instead be given to some other kind of item. If sticking with traditional items, they could all be turned into rings, for example, or rods. Keeping with the handheld sorcerous accessory theme, the wands could be turned in athames (ritual daggers used to aid magic ceremonies). That creates a whole new class of item for spellcasters, which is a good way to add flavor to a campaign. Similarly, the powers could be ascribed to bells, books, or candles (which must be held), holy sigils (giving them a more divine flavor), or other attire such as skullcaps, robes, or amulets. As long as the items either use a magic item slot or must be held to function, game balance is preserved.

Area effect spells already tend to be higher level to represent their multiple targets, how do you make sure an enhancement bonus to damage is equally useful for them without making it ridiculously powerful when it applies to spells with more limited targets?

The best solution we've found is for bonus damage from magic implements to add only to the first die of damage a spell inflicts. Thus when adding damage to a *fireball*, the extra damage applies to all targets, since they all took damage from the first die of *fireball* damage. When applying it to *magic missile*, only the target of the first missile takes the damage. When applying it to *acid arrow*, it applies only to damage dealt when the spell first hits, and it has no effect on each round of damage after that. For *spiritual hammer* and *flameblade*, it applies to the first damage roll made by the spell. This works well in practice, and it's the basis for all pricing in this product.

This rule allows bonus damage from magic implements to work with each type of spell. An area spell gets to add the damage to everyone, but a spell that creates multiple attacks just gets the bonus once. That maintains balance between spells, without ever making the effect useless. The same rule applies to both enhancement bonuses and extra dice of damage, so a 5th-level *fireball* cast with a +1 *fiery wyrd wand* deals 6d6+1 points of damage to all creatures in the area, while a 5th-level *acid arrow* cast with a +3 *caustic wand* deals 2d4+1d6+3 points of damage when it first hits, and 2d4 acid damage on the following round.

MAGIC IMPLEMENTS AND METAMAGIC

Bonuses from magic implements are always applied after any metamagic effect is added to a spell; they do not multiply each other. A 10th-level wizard casting an empowered *fireball* with a +5 *fiery wyrd wand* deals $(10d6 \{x\} 1.5 = 15d6, +1d6+5)$ 16d6+5 fire damage.

Table 1: Magic Implements	
Implement Bonus	Base Price
+1	1,500
+2	6,000
+3	13,500
+4	24,000
+5	37,500
+6*	54,000
+7*	73,500
+8*	96,000
+9*	121,500
+10*	150,000

*An implement can't have an enhancement bonus greater than +5. Use these lines to determine price when special abilities are added.

MAGIC IMPLEMENT SPECIAL ABILITIES

All magic implements must have at least a +1 enhancement bonus prior to having any special abilities. Rune staves can have any number of special abilities, as long as their total bonus equivalent never exceeds +10. Wands are more restricted and can have only a single special ability (though they are still capable of up to a +5 enhancement bonus).



Alluring: The wielder of this implement adds the implement's enhancement bonus to all Charisma-based ability and skill checks made against creatures under the effects of an enchantment (charm) spell.

Moderate enchantment; CL 5th; Craft Magic Wand or Craft Magic Staff, *charm person*; Price +1 bonus.

Arcing: When an *arcing* implement is used to cast a spell that deals acid, cold, fire, or sonic damage, it can cause the spell to deal electricity

damage instead. The spell loses the acid, cold, fire, or sonic descriptor if it had one, and it gains the electricity descriptor.

Moderate transmutation; CL 9th; Craft Magic Wand or Craft Magic Staff, *elemental body I*; Price +1 bonus.

Beckoning: When the magic implement is used to cast a spell that summons a creature or creates an undead creature, the creature summoned or created gains an enhancement bonus to attack rolls equal to

the implement's enhancement bonus. This bonus lasts for 10 minutes per level of the spell cast.

Moderate conjuration; CL 7th; Craft Magic Wand or Craft Magic Staff, creator must have the Leadership feat; Price +2 bonus.

Blazing: When a *blazing* implement is used to cast a spell that deals acid, cold, electricity, or sonic damage, it can cause the spell to deal fire damage instead. The

BEHIND THE COUNTER: PRICING MAGIC IMPLEMENTS ENHANCEMENTS AND ABILITIES

It's fairly straightforward that a weapon that gives you +1 enhancement to attack rolls and damage rolls is 2,000 gp—and +2 is 8,000 gp. The brilliant bonus cost system to special abilities also makes pricing them pretty easy: +1d6 fire damage is worth as much as another +1 bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls. With the flexible pricing system, new special abilities can be compared to existing options and given a cost equivalent to a +1 to +5 bonus. Thousands of possible magic items can be quickly and accurately priced with this system, and the cost of upgrading such items is also easily calculated (especially useful if a player becomes emotionally attached to the +1 *longsword* he picked up on his first big adventure).

Obviously the ease and flexibility of this system is desirable enough that we should use it for our new magic implements, especially since magic implements are supposed to fill for spellcasters the same kind of role magic weapons serve for other characters. That means the special abilities of magic implements should be priced as being worth as much as a +1 to +5 enhancement bonus, and we can use the special abilities of weapons as a guideline for each.

So, how much should our enhancement bonus to spells cost? While it's true that you can swing a sword as often as you want, and characters can only cast so many spells a day, it's also true that a fireball can hit a dozen foes in one casting if things line up correctly. Ultimately, if we assume fighters and wizards are balanced against each other (and assuming that takes a lot less page-count than trying to justify one class over the other), it seems likely that bonus damage to weapons is on par with bonus damage to spells. Since our implements only add to damage (and magic weapons add to damage and to-hit), but most spells don't require an attack roll anyway, we can price enhancement bonuses to spell damage as 75% of the cost of a magic weapon with the same bonus.

That's pricey, but it's also useful. A GM who wants to get really radical with magic implements could easily decide to have a +1 *holy staff implement*, which adds +1 to spell damage, and another +2d6 against evil targets. (And the GM knows the +2d6 should apply only to the first die of damage inflicted by a spell, using the rule from Bonuses to Spell Damage, above.) At 13,800 gp that's both a lot cheaper, and a lot more interesting, than a *staff of size alteration*. Of course that falls entirely outside the price limit of a *Loot 4 Less* book, but it's nice to know the general rule scales well, and it can be used by GMs to create more interesting options.

For staff magic implements, add 300 gp to the final price to account for using a masterwork staff. Wand magic implements don't have any additional cost, because they don't do anything else.

spell loses the acid, cold, electricity, or sonic descriptor if it had one, and it gains the fire descriptor.

Moderate transmutation; CL 9th; Craft Magic Wand or Craft Magic Staff, *elemental body I*; Price +1 bonus.

Caustic: When the magic implement is used to cast a spell that deals acid damage, it causes the spell to deal an additional 1d6 points of acid damage.

Moderate evocation; CL 7th; Craft Magic Wand or Craft Magic Staff, *acid arrow*; Price +1 bonus.

Coven's: As a standard action, the wielder of a *coven's* implement can expend a 1st-level or higher spell slot to grant an enhancement bonus to an ally's caster level. The bonus to the ally's caster level is equal to the enhancement bonus of the *coven's* implement or the level of spell expended, whichever is lower. The ally must be within short range (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels), and the bonus lasts for 1 round.

Moderate evocation; CL 9th; Craft Magic Wand or Craft Magic Staff, *shadow conjuration*; Price +2 bonus.

Deft: A *deft* implement adds the implement's enhancement bonus to all concentration and Spellcraft checks made by the wielder.

Moderate divination; CL 7th; Craft Magic Wand or Craft Magic Staff, *identify*; Price +1 bonus.

Electrified: When the magic implement is used to cast a spell that deals electricity damage, it causes the spell to deal an additional 1d6 points of electricity damage.

Moderate evocation; CL 5th; Craft Magic Wand or Craft Magic Staff, *shocking grasp*; Price +1 bonus.

Fiery: When the magic implement is used to cast a spell that deals fire damage, it causes the spell to deal an additional 1d6 points of fire damage.

Moderate evocation; CL 5th; Craft Magic Wand or Craft Magic Staff, *burning hands*; Price +1 bonus.

Freezing: When a *freezing* implement is used to cast a spell that deals acid, electricity, fire, or sonic damage, it can cause the spell to deal cold damage instead. The spell loses the acid, electricity, fire, or sonic descriptor if it had one, and it gains the cold descriptor.

Moderate transmutation; CL 9th; Craft Magic Wand or Craft Magic Staff, *elemental body I*; Price +1 bonus.

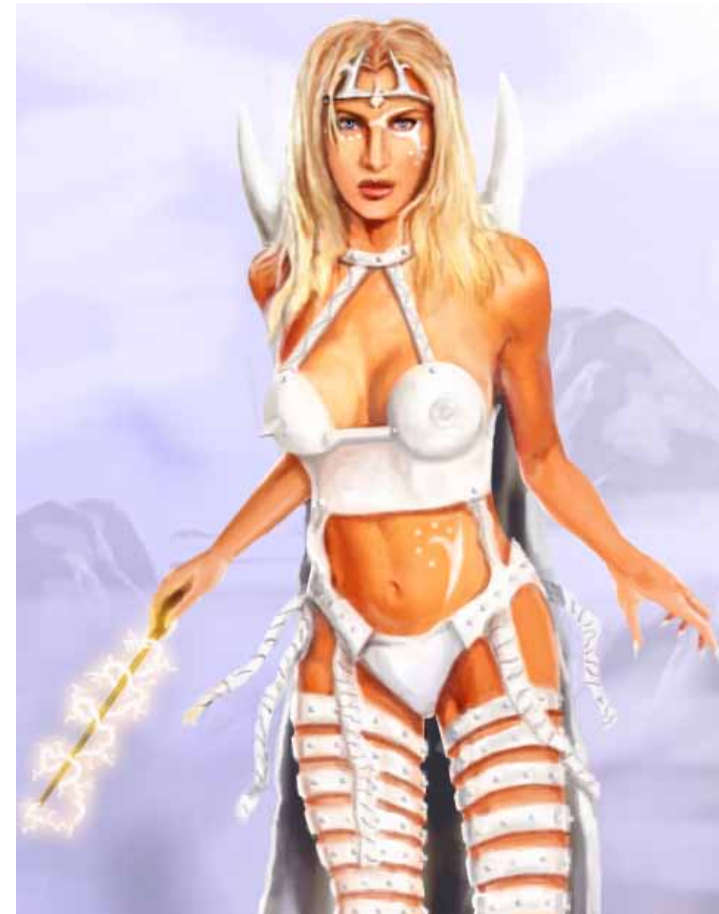
Frosty: When the magic implement is used to cast a spell that deals cold damage, it causes the spell to deal an additional 1d6 points of cold damage.

Moderate evocation; CL 5th; Craft Magic Wand or Craft Magic Staff, *ray of frost*; Price +1 bonus.

Lorebound: A *lorebound* implement grants the caster access to one additional spell known. The spell is chosen when the implement is created, and it cannot be changed. To access the spell, it must be on the wielder's class spell list, and it must be at least one level lower than the highest-level spell the wielder can cast. If these conditions are met, the wielder functions as if he knew the spell in question when holding the implement. Moderate divination; CL 7th; Craft Magic Wand or Craft Magic Staff, creator must know the spell to be granted; Price +2 bonus.

BEHIND THE COUNTER: PRICING LOREBOUND

The *lorebound* special property is priced using the feat Expanded Arcana (from the *Advanced Player's Guide*) as a basis. That feat allows a spontaneous caster either access to one additional spell known, or access to two additional spells known as long as they aren't the highest level spell the character can cast—or about half what a *lorebound* implement does. Using the *gloves of arrow snaring*, we can see that unlimited access to a feat costs about 10,000 gp. As a +1 bonus ability, *lorebound* costs at least 4,500 (the 6,000 gp for a +1 *lorebound wand* minus the 1,500 gp for a +1 *wand*), which is close enough to keep things reasonable.



Manxome: Whenever a creature rolls a natural 1 on a saving throw against a spell from a *manxome* implement (the die roll shows a 1), and is affected by the spell, the target's heart explodes. For most creatures this results in instant death, though the GM might decide that some creatures (including most undead, plants, and constructs) can function just fine with no heart.

Major necromancy; CL 18th; Craft Magic Wand or Craft Magic Staff, *power word kill*; Price +5 bonus.

Morphic: When a transmutation (polymorph) spell is cast from a *morphic* implement, the caster can choose one target of the spell to gain a bonus to Strength, Constitution, or Dexterity equal to the wand's enhancement bonus.

Moderate transmutation; CL 7th; Craft Magic Wand or Craft Magic Staff, *alter self*; Price +1 bonus.

Pinpoint: When an evocation spell with an area entry in its description (rather than target, targets, or effect) and a duration of instantaneous is cast through a *pinpoint* implement, instead of affecting an area it can affect one or more specific targets. The total number of targets affected cannot exceed the implement's enhancement bonus, and all must be within an area the spell could have covered if cast normally.

Moderate transmutation; CL 7th; Craft Magic Wand or Craft Magic Staff, *Precise Shot*; Price +1 bonus.

Potent: A *potent* implement adds the implement's enhancement bonus to caster level when determining the spell's range, area, targets, and duration.

Moderate transmutation; CL 7th; Craft Magic Wand or Craft Magic Staff, *mage hand*; Price +1 bonus.

Profane: A *profane* implement adds its enhancement bonus to the wielder's caster level when determining the outcome of any spell with the evil descriptor. This does not affect the spell's range, area, targets, or duration.

Moderate necromancy; CL 7th; Craft Magic Wand or Craft Magic Staff, *cause fear*; Price +1 bonus.

Rejuvenating: When the magic implement is used to cast a healing spell, the implement's enhancement bonus is added to the points healed by the first die of healing of the spell.

Moderate conjuration; CL 7th; Craft Magic Wand or Craft Magic Staff, *cure light wounds*; Price +1 bonus.

Reliable: Spells cast from a *reliable* implement might not be expended if they have no effect. A number of times per day equal to the implement's enhancement bonus, a spell that has no effect on any target or object (potentially as a result of being negated by saving throws or failing to penetrate spell resistance) is not expended. If the spell is normally prepared, it remains prepared. If cast by a spontaneous caster, no spell slot is expended.

Moderate evocation; CL 11th; Craft Magic Wand or Craft Magic Staff, *mnemonic enhancer*; Price +3 bonus.

Sacred: A *sacred* implement adds its enhancement bonus to the wielder's caster level when determining the outcome of any

spell with the good descriptor. This does not affect the spell's range, area, targets, or duration.

Moderate conjuration; CL 7th; Craft Magic Wand or Craft Magic Staff, *bless*; Price +1 bonus.

Subduing: The wielder of a *subduing* implement can choose to have any damage dealt by spells cast through it be nonlethal.

Moderate conjuration; CL 7th; Craft Magic Wand or Craft Magic Staff, *cure light wounds*; Price +1 bonus.

Viewing: When the magic implement is used to cast a scrying spell, the caster adds the implement's enhancement bonus as a circumstance bonus to all Perception checks made using the scrying spell.

Moderate divination; CL 7th; Craft Magic Wand or Craft Magic Staff, *clairvoyance/clairaudience*; Price +1 bonus.

Warding: When the magic implement is used to cast a spell that grants a bonus to AC or saving throws, that bonus is increased by half the implement's enhancement bonus (minimum +1).

Moderate abjuration; CL 7th; Craft Magic Wand or Craft Magic Staff, *mage armor*; Price +2 bonus.

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