

Rifts Magic Reference

General

- All spells, unless stated otherwise, require verbal incantations and hand gestures.
- A “save vs. spell magic” requires rolling equal to or higher than the attacker’s Spell Strength.
- A “save vs. ritual magic” requires rolling equal to or higher than the attacker’s Spell Strength +4. P.P.E. used to cast a spell is expended regardless of whether the victim successfully saves or not.
- All spells may be set to function at below their maximum range, duration, area of effect, and damage. However, unless the mage indicates otherwise before casting, the spell is assumed to operate at FULL effect.
- Spells exist independently of the mage who casts them. Once a spell is cast, it will continue until its duration lapses or until negated by someone else. Killing, incapacitating, or knocking out a mage does NOT deactivate his spells, unless the spell’s description states otherwise.

P.P.E. Recovery

For most mages and supernatural creatures, P.P.E. recovers at a rate of 5 points per hour of rest/relaxation, and 10 points per hour of meditation. Some practitioners of magic have alternate recovery rates, as indicated in their O.C.C. descriptions.

Casting Times

- 1 Action for spells levels 1-5
- 2 Actions for spells levels 6-10
- 3 Actions for spells levels 11-15 and Spells of Legend
- The Quick-Casting Arcane skill allows for spells to be cast more quickly (see skill description).

Ritual Magic

- Spells level 7 or higher can be cast as rituals.
- Ritual casting times vary. Spells levels 7-10 require a 10 minute ritual, while spells levels 11-15 and Spells of Legend require a 1D4x10+15 minute ritual.
- Rituals may be performed by a solitary mage, or they can make use of participants. The value of participants is that they willingly contribute P.P.E., and their P.P.E. can be combined in order to cast expensive spells.
- In a group ritual, there must be a leader who directs the ceremony. It is the leader who focuses the P.P.E. for the ritual and determines the ritual’s Spell Strength. Participants need not be mages or know the spell being cast. Only the leader must be a mage and know the spell.
- The number of participants who can take part in a ritual is only limited by the amount of P.P.E. that the leader can channel in a melee round.
- Rituals generally require props and components. Circles, pentagrams, crystals, and blood sacrifices can be easily worked into most rituals to provide additional energy.
- Performing a spell as a ritual effectively increases the mage’s Spell Strength by 4 for that specific spell (a spell cast at Spell Strength 12 becomes Spell Strength 16 when performed as a ritual). In the case of a group ritual, it’s the leader who’s Spell Strength gets the +4 bonus.
- Note that there are a few spells that can only be cast in ritual form, and a few others that have added effects when performed as rituals.

Interrupting Magic

- A mage who is struck and damaged by an attack in mid-casting must start the spell over again.
- A mage who is forced to dodge in mid-casting may make a Difficult M E. Check. Success means that the act of dodging did not interrupt the spell. Failure means he must start the spell over again.
- A mage who is forced to parry in mid-casting must start the spell over again. For mages with more than two arms, however, parrying while casting a spell is possible but requires a Difficult ME. Check. As with dodging, success means the spell does not get interrupted. Failure means the mage must start the spell over again.
- If a standard, non-ritual spell gets interrupted in mid-casting, no P.P.E. is lost.
- A magic ritual interrupted for more than 30 seconds is ruined and must be started from the beginning.
- To stop a group ritual, the leader of the ritual is the one who must be interrupted. Interrupting or removing a participant simply reduces the amount of P.P.E. available for the ritual. Interrupting a group ritual causes 30% of the accumulated P.P.E. to leak away unused.
- A mage may cancel one of his own active spells at any time. During combat, the act of cancelling a spell is free; it does not take an action.

The Effects of Ley Lines & Nexus Points

- Being within two miles of a ley line or nexus point increases the range and duration of all spells by 50%.
- Being directly at a ley line or within 1 mile of a nexus point doubles the range, duration, and damage of all spells.
- Being directly at a nexus point triples the range, duration, and damage of all spells, and increases personal Spell Strength by +1. The range also gets +2 to Save vs. Magic and +2 to Save vs. Horror Factor.
- When directly at a ley line, most mages can draw 10 P.P.E. per melee round; not cumulative.
- When directly at a nexus point, most mages can draw 20 P.P.E. per melee round; not cumulative.

The Effects of Armor

- Armor made from natural materials (leather, animal hide, etc.) does not interfere with spell casting.
- When it comes to channelling P.P.E., metal and most synthetic materials act as insulators (basically, metal is to magic energy what rubber is to electricity). Metal body armor or body armor made from synthetic materials (plastic, ceramics, etc.) covering more than 50% of the body requires the mage to spend 20% more P.P.E. to cast a spell. The mage must also roll on the following table to determine how else the spell is affected. These rules also apply to spellcasting while inside power armor. Vehicles offer enough space as to not directly provide interference.
 - 01-20%:** Reduce spell damage or effects by 1D4x10%.
 - 21-40%:** Reduce spell duration by 1D4x10%.
 - 41-60%:** Reduce the spell's range by 1D4x10%.
 - 61-80%:** Reduce both the duration and the range of the spell by 20%.
 - 81-100%:** Lucked out, no additional problems.

The Effects of Cybernetics & Bionics

- A mage can tolerate one minor cybernetic implant (such as a clock calendar or gyro-compass) without suffering any ill effects.
- Two to three isolated minor cybernetic or bionic implants, or one major implant (such as a full cybernetic arm), will reduce a mage's Personal P.P.E. Reserve by half. Furthermore, the mage will be unable to draw on other sources of P.P.E., such as P.P.E. batteries, ley lines, and nexus points!
- Anything more than three minor implants or one major implant will completely negate the mage's magical capabilities!
- Magical regeneration may cause the subject's body to reject and expel cybernetic or bionic implants, unless those implants are biosystems.

The Limitations of Magic

- Spells are either *resisted* (meaning that they require a Save vs. Magic), or *defensible* (meaning that they are parried or dodged, just like regular physical attacks).
- Most spells work best when there is a fairly unobstructed line of sight with the target. "Line of Sight" isn't limited to eyesight, and can include visual contact via real-time video, magical scrying, or other indirect means.
- Casting spells on targets outside one's line of sight (such as someone inside a closed building or vehicle) is certainly possible, unless the spell specifically requires line of sight. The target gets +5 to Save vs. Magic (this bonus is negated if the mage can see the target through a window or opening). Furthermore, the mage must know the exact location of the unseen target, not to mention that the target must be within the spell's range. All of these conditions must be met, or the spell automatically fails.
- Area of Effect spells can target specific areas outside line of sight (such as the inside of a closed building or vehicle) without penalty, so long as the targeted area is within the spell's range.
- Resisted spells work as normal against people in body armor.
- Resisted spells work as normal against people sealed in power armor, though the power armor pilot enjoys the same bonus of +5 to Save vs. Magic that benefits targets inside closed building or vehicles. This bonus, however, is negated if the mage can see some part of the pilot's body through a window or opening.
- Resisted Spells take hold less effectively on fast-moving targets. Targets with the ability to move at high speeds, or who are riding in very fast power armor or vehicles, enjoy +1 to Save vs. Magic for every 50 mph. difference in speed relative to the caster.
- Spells that are *touch-based* require skin-to-skin contact. They do NOT work through gloves, clothing, body armor, power armor, or vehicles (unless the spell description says otherwise).
- Spells that require *eye contact* with the victim do not work through video monitors or electronic transmissions. Furthermore, the mage's eyes must be visible to the victim in order to initiate the spell. Although the victim may be wearing protective eyewear (e.g., sunglasses, tinted goggles, etc.), the mage may not.
- Spells that have *sound-based* effects, or that require the mage's voice to be heard by the victim (e.g., Deathword, Heavy Breathing, Distant Voice, etc.), work through audio systems, so long as the mage can speak to his victim in real time.
- Most physical magical manifestations (such as Lightblades, Fireballs, Orbs of Cold, etc.) cannot be activated while inside power armor (at least not without directly damaging the armor). Gloves, clothing, and body armor offer no such impediment.
- Most spells function independently of the mage once they've been cast, but there are a few spells that require active concentration or control to be effective (e.g., Illusion Manipulation, Manipulate Objects, etc.).

Sources of P.P.E.

- **Personal P.P.E. Reserve:** This is the permanent P.P.E. base that every mage starts with, and that he or she builds up with each level of experience. Permanent expenditures of P.P.E. (used in the creation of permanent magic items, for instance) can only be made using energy from one's Personal Reserve.
- **Other Living Beings:** Every living creature has P.P.E., even if only a few points. A practitioner of magic can tap into that energy in a variety of ways. In all cases, the victim must be within 20 ft. for the mage to access his or her P.P.E. Only one person can be drained at a time, and each attempt takes one action. In a single hour, a mage can draw P.P.E. from a number of people, willing or unwilling, equal to his M.E. attribute divided by 4 (round up). To draw from even more people, the mage must initiate a ritual.
 - Drawing P.P.E. without Another's Knowledge: The average person has no way of detecting when his Personal P.P.E. is being accessed. Still, a person unknowingly being drained of P.P.E. automatically gets a Save vs. Magic. 12 or higher is a success, and means the mage couldn't take any of the person's P.P.E. A failed save means that the mage can take up to 50% (round up) of the person's available P.P.E. More than half of a person's P.P.E. can never be taken without his consent. **Note:** A practitioner of magic (including most supernatural creatures) can immediately detect if someone is trying to draw on his P.P.E., and a Moderate Perception Roll (8 or higher on a d20) will tell that magic-user who it is.
 - Drawing P.P.E. with Another's Consent: If P.P.E. is freely given with the person's knowledge and consent, then a mage can draw up to 70% (round up) of the donor's available P.P.E.
 - Drawing P.P.E. from the Unwilling: It's difficult to syphon P.P.E. from someone who is aware of what the mage is doing and doesn't wish to share his energy. The unwilling person gets a Save vs. Magic at +4. If the target successfully saves, it means that none of his P.P.E. can be drained away for the next hour. If the save fails, then the mage can draw up to 10% of the victim's P.P.E., but no more. It doesn't matter why the victim resists; only that he does. **Note:** Animals are always considered to be unwilling targets.
 - Drawing P.P.E. from Other Practitioners of Magic: Taking P.P.E. from another mage or creature of magic generally isn't possible, unless it's freely given. Mages (and most supernatural creatures) simply have too much control over their own P.P.E. Reserves for any energy to be plundered without their knowledge or against their will. The only exception to this is if the P.P.E. is taken at the moment of death, via blood sacrifice (see below).
- **Ley Lines:** Ley lines are composed of pure magic energy and are potent sources of mystic power for the taking. When located directly at a ley line, a mage gets 10 P.P.E. per round, not cumulative.
- **Nexus Points:** Where two or more ley lines intersect, magic energy is at an all-time high. When located directly at a nexus point, a mage gets 20 P.P.E. per round, not cumulative. Furthermore, certain *Times of Power* allow for additional energy to be drawn, but ONLY when at a nexus:
 - Dawn, Midday (Noon), and Midnight: For the first 1D4 minutes of each of these times, a mage can draw 40 P.P.E. per round, not cumulative.
 - Vernal & Autumnal Equinoxes: During the daylight hours of the Vernal Equinox (around March 20th) and the nighttime hours of the Autumnal Equinox (around September 22nd), a mage can draw 60 P.P.E. per round, not cumulative.
 - Summer & Winter Solstices: On the Summer Solstice (July 21st) and Winter Solstice (December 21st), 200 points of P.P.E. are available per round (not cumulative), from dawn till dusk.
 - Lunar Eclipse: A lunar eclipse occurs about once a year. During this time, 240 points of P.P.E. are available per round (not cumulative) for 90 minutes.
 - Partial Solar Eclipse: A partial solar eclipse happens about once every ten years. During this time, 600 points of P.P.E. are available per round (not cumulative) for 2D4 minutes.
 - Minor Planetary Alignment: Three or four planets in alignment. 200 points of P.P.E. are available per round (not cumulative) for fifteen minutes, starting from when the planets first line up.
 - Major Planetary Alignment: Five or more planets in alignment. 600 points of P.P.E. are available per round (not cumulative) for eight minutes, starting from when they all line up.
- **Super Nexus Points:** This is a ley line junction at which twenty or more ley lines intersect. These massive nexus epicenters are extremely rarely, and only eleven are known to exist in the world. When directly at a super nexus, a mage can draw on 40 P.P.E. per round, not cumulative. All of the above rules for Times of Power apply to super nexuses, except that all of the available P.P.E. amounts are doubled!
- **P.P.E. Batteries:** Some magical items are designed to hold reservoirs of P.P.E. that a mage can draw from, as needed. Such portable batteries of P.P.E. are uncommon, but immediately recognized by practitioners of magic. It typically takes one action to draw on P.P.E. from a battery, and the item must usually be located directly on his person.
- **Blood Sacrifice:** For reasons unknown, a living creature's available P.P.E. doubles at the moment of death. Consequently, a mage can take advantage of this by performing a sacrifice. Animals are a common offering, though intelligent beings provide more energy (particularly mages). Characters of Good and Selfish Alignments will never consider sacrificing an intelligent being. Characters of Good Alignment are unlikely to even consider animal sacrifices. A mage must be within 20 ft. of a creature at its exact moment of death to absorb the doubled P.P.E. If multiple mages are

in the vicinity and want the P.P.E., then whoever is physically closest gets the energy. If distance cannot act as a determiner, then the GM may have each mage competing for the doubled P.P.E. perform a Difficult M.E. Check. Whoever succeeds by the largest margin (or fails by the least) wrestles away the P.P.E.

Generally, a mage requires time to prepare for absorbing P.P.E. at another creature's moment of death; usually about one melee round of mental preparation (without any distractions or interruptions). As such, it's often impractical to try to absorb P.P.E. from slain opponents in the midst of combat.

- **Crystals:** Crystalline formations have special shapes that seem to attract P.P.E. Wearing ten or more carats of any type of covalent crystal/crystalline mineral (quartz, diamond, silicon, rock salt, etc.) against one's skin provides an additional 2 P.P.E. per 12 hours (not cumulative). Wearing multiple crystals does NOT have a cumulative effect.
- **Circles:** A circle represents infinity, as it is a line without beginning or end. Sitting or standing within an unbroken, geometrically-precise circle (large enough to accommodate the mage in a seated position) provides the mage with an additional 5 P.P.E. for each spell he casts. This energy is only available while inside the circle, and immediately leaks away if the mage exits the circle or the circle is broken. Using multiple circles does NOT have a cumulative effect.

The circle can be produced in a variety of ways: it can be drawn (typically with charcoal or chalk), painted, furrowed into the ground (if on soft dirt), created by poured sand, or even engraved. This requires 1D4 melee rounds in most cases; only 1 round for those with the *Art* skill. Engraving a symbol will likely take much longer. The G.M. may ask for a Moderate P.P. check or Art skill roll if the mage is rushing or distracted. Sloppy circles garner no benefits and may necessitate that the mage start over again.

- **Mystical Symbols:** Magic is full of esoteric symbols that hold special power for practitioners. These symbols vary immensely depending on a mage's cultural background, religion, magical style, and homeworld/dimension of origin. Each magic-user may select *one* primary mystical symbol to associate with his magical workings, and gains a few minor benefits when using it. Though mages work with many different mystical symbols in their spells and rituals, they only gain the following benefits when using their primary, *chosen* symbol; using another mage's chosen symbol (if different) garners no benefits. Each chosen symbol, regardless of what it is, confers the exact same benefits to its user.

- Wearing one's chosen symbol around one's neck, as an engraved or crafted pendant, provides a mage with an additional 5 P.P.E. per 12 hours (not cumulative). Wearing multiple pendants does NOT have a cumulative effect.
- Standing or sitting inside a large version of one's chosen symbol provides the mage with an additional 5 P.P.E. for each spell he casts. This energy is only available while inside the symbol. The extra P.P.E. immediately leaks away if the mage exits the symbol, or the symbol is somehow broken or damaged.

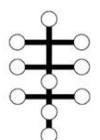
The symbol can be produced in a variety of ways: it can be drawn (typically with charcoal or chalk), painted, furrowed into the ground (if on soft dirt), created by poured sand, or even engraved. The symbol must be large enough to fully encompass the mage in a seated position and needs to be geometrically-precise. This requires 2D4 melee rounds in most cases; only 1D4 rounds for those with the *Art* skill. Engraving a symbol will likely take much longer. The G.M. may ask for a Moderate P.P. check or Art skill roll if the mage is rushing or distracted. Sloppy symbols garner no benefits and may necessitate that the mage start over again.

- Standing or sitting inside one's chosen symbol circumscribed by a geometrically-precise circle provides the energy of both (10 P.P.E.) for each spell. All of the above rules for circles apply.

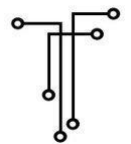
Not all magic-users have a chosen mystical symbol; it's not required. In general, only characters who've selected a Practitioner of Magic O.C.C. make use of such accoutrements. Supernatural creatures with innate spell casting abilities (faeries, dragons, elementals, etc), who use magic as a natural ability and not a practiced skill, most often don't have chosen symbols, though they may eventually select one if pursuing further magical studies.

A chosen mystical symbol always has deep spiritual and magical significance to the mage who adopted it; it is not an emblem he takes lightly. For spell casting clergy, this is almost always the official symbol of their religion or god. Symbols traditionally associated with magic, esotericism, and spirituality are the most common choices. Provided below are a few examples of chosen mystical symbols common among practitioners of magic:

- **Pentagram:** One of the most ubiquitous and potent symbols of magic on Rifts Earth, very common among mages of North America and Europe. This symbol is employed by sorcerers from all walks of life, human and D-Bee alike. The Pentagram (called a *Pentacle* when inside a circle) often represents the four cardinal points, which also coincide with the Four Elements. The fifth point is said to represent the Fifth Element, Spirit (P.P.E.).
- **Tree of Life:** An arrangement of ten interconnected "sephiroth" (Hebrew for "spheres") that is said to be a map of the universe and the psyche. The Tree of Life represents the order of the cosmos and the path to illumination. Though traditionally associated with the pre-Rifts Kabbalistic tradition, this symbol has been transposed to represent many other beliefs, such as the Norse World Tree, the main yogic chakras of the body, etc.



- **Yantra:** A type of mystical diagram often associated with the Tantric traditions of India. There are many kinds of yantra, and they usually involve squares, circles, triangles, and floral designs. Each geometric element in the symbol is representative of a different type of metaphysical energy (e.g., elemental, sexual, intellectual, etc.). Focusing on a yantra is supposed to balance the mind and reveal spiritual truths. The Buddhist correlate is the *mandala*.
- **Yin Yang:** A Taoist symbol representing the interplay of cosmic forces; ever-popular in the magic of Southeast Asia. The Yin reflects a passive, cold, feminine force, while the Yang is movement, heat and masculinity. Their pairing represents idealized harmony, and the black and white colors denote ignorance and enlightenment.
- **Chaos Star:** A symbol of chaos and opposition to law; commonly employed by Necromancers, Shifters, and Witches. Though typically (and unfairly) associated with the Dark Arts, the symbol itself is actually neutral and represents infinite possibility rather than disorder (though it can represent that, too).
- **Spiral:** One of the oldest of symbols, dating back to the art of the Neolithic Period. This symbol, and its many variations, is found throughout the shamanistic traditions of the world – from Native American Medicine Men, to Celtic Druids, to Australian Aboriginal Mabarns. Shamans typically use the symbol as a mental focus, and “walk the spiral” with their minds in order to cast magic or astrally project.
- **Vever:** The vever (pronounced vay-vay) is a traditional symbol used in voodoo and few other forms of afro-caribbean magic. Each type of loa/god/spirit has its own vever, which serves as the loa’s physical representation during rituals. The symbol acts as a beacon to the loa, facilitating communication and interaction. Offerings and sacrifices are placed atop it.
- **Xeno-Circuit:** Unlike the other listed symbols, this is a fairly recent icon that has only come into use within the last thirty to forty years. Popular among North American Techno-Wizards, magical hackers, and other proponents or users of techno-magic, the so-called “Xeno-Circuit” represents the fusion of magic and technology; the bridging of the divide between two seemingly opposing forces to produce a greater whole. The symbol represents innovation, ingenuity, dynamism, adaptation, industry, and the relentless march of progress.



Supplemental P.P.E.:

- Any P.P.E. beyond a mage’s full Personal Reserve is considered extra or “supplemental.”
- Supplemental P.P.E. can be drawn from a number of sources, including ley lines, nexus points, .P.P.E. batteries, blood sacrifices, and people (see *Sources of P.P.E.*).
- The maximum amount of supplemental P.P.E. that a mage can hold (a.k.a. his *Holding Limit*) is 50% of his full P.P.E. Reserve, and it can be held for equal to his P.E. in melee rounds (so a mage with 90 P.P.E. and a Physical Endurance of 12 can hold an additional 45 P.P.E. for 3 minutes).
- Holding supplemental P.P.E. for more than a minute is uncomfortable for mages. It causes feelings of bloatedness and dizziness. Spd, Actions Per Melee, combat bonuses, and Perception Rolls are all reduced by half, and skill performance is reduced by 10%.
- When drawing on P.P.E., any supplemental P.P.E. is always used up first before using the mage’s personal Reserve.
- A mage can always channel vastly more P.P.E. than he can hold (600 points per level), so long as he uses all that P.P.E. within one melee round (15 seconds).
- Any permanent investments of P.P.E. (as one would use to create a familiar or permanent magic item) can only be drawn from a mage’s Personal Reserve. Permanent investments of P.P.E. can NEVER come from a mage’s supplemental P.P.E.

Learning New Spells

It’s important to make a distinction between the “Magical Sciences” and the “Mystic Arts.”

- A practitioner of the Mystic Arts gains his spell knowledge intuitively (as is the case with mystics and shamans), or is bestowed such knowledge by an outside force (as is the case with witches, warlocks, and priests). He CANNOT learn spells {torn spell books, scrolls, or other academic media. New spells can only be gained by achieving a new metaphysical plateau (experience level), or as a boon from a patron (such as a god, spirit, or elemental force).
- A practitioner of the Magical Sciences learns his spells through intensive study, book learning, and practice. His ability to use magic is based off of a preconceived set of complex, hermetic theories. Magic is very much like an empirical science to such an individual, and he can therefore learn spells in the following ways:
 - Learning a spell from a competent instructor or a spell book takes 48 hours per level of the spell. In the case of a spell book, the mage must be literate.
 - Learning a spell by reverse-engineering it from a magic scroll takes 96 hours per level of the spell at a Base Skill of 10% +2% per level. A failed skill roll means that the mage must start the entire process over again. The mage

- must be literate.
- Spells that are specific to a Mystic Art (such as Elemental Magic spells) cannot be learned by a practitioner of the Magical Sciences, unless he is able to find a hermetic equivalent.

Rapid Spell Casting

Although generally not recommended, a mage can rush a spell in order to cast it more quickly. By rattling off the spell at a great clip and with frenzied gestures, he can speed up the spell casting process. If successfully done, a spell levels 1-5 can be cast as an automatic action (meaning that casting the spell does not use up one of the mage's actions per melee), a spell levels 6-10 can be cast in one action, and a spell levels 11-15 or a Spell of Legend can be cast in two actions. However, rushing a spell in this fashion has unpredictable and potentially harmful results.

Rapid Spell Casting may only be attempted once each round. Roll on the table below each time that Rapid Spell Casting is attempted:

01-20%: The correct spell, at full strength and normal P.P.E. cost. Lucked out!

21-40%: The correct spell, but the mage overexerts himself. He expends double the P.P.E. necessary to cast the spell. If the mage cannot afford the doubled P.P.E. cost, then the spell doesn't work, all of his P.P.E. is used up in this futile attempt, and he still uses up his action.

41-60%: The correct spell at the normal P.P.E. cost, but at only half the range, duration, damage, and Spell Strength (round down). It may still get the job done, but the result is less than desired.

61-70%: P.P.E. Burn!!! The desired spell does not occur, though the P.P.E. for it gets expended. Instead, the mage suffers 6D6 points of damage (SD. to S.D.C. beings, and M.D. to M.D.C. beings) from the resulting energy feedback. Imperviousness to energy offers no protection.

71-80%: The desired spell does not occur, though the P.P.E. for it gets expended. Instead, the P.P.E. causes poltergeist activity (random loud noises, objects moving, etc.) for 2D6 hours. The mage cannot control or negate the effect, and it follows him around until wearing off. The activity is mostly harmless, but annoying. Can prove problematic if the mage is attempting to stay hidden or unnoticed.

81-100%: Tongue-tied, and the spell doesn't work. The mage stumbles over the incantation, jurnbles the word sequence, performs the wrong hand gestures, can't maintain focus, or just balks. No P.P.E. was spent, but the mage has used up his action. He may not make another attempt to rapid spell cast until the beginning of the next round.