

Creating Builds

Your character's "build" is determined by their stat distribution and equipment. Each build has its own unique playstyle, strengths, and weaknesses, and this section will detail the equipment you'll want to search out to maximize your effectiveness based on the core stats you can choose to level up.

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Introduction

These builds serve as a guide to show you exactly how to create an optimal endgame character. Each suggested build is designed around a single stat, and includes the minimum stat requirements to use a wide variety of weapons while maximizing their damage output for their primary Attribute. The equipment listed are only guidelines, so consider using any weapon as long as it matches the Affinity of the build. For elemental builds, be sure to use the corresponding Shrouding Cracked Tear in the Flask of Wondrous Physick for a 3-minute 20% elemental damage boost.

Mind and Endurance are not listed here, they're completely up to personal choice. Level Endurance just enough to maintain a medium roll with your desired loadout with stamina to spare. The same goes for Mind - it's customizable and entirely based on the cost of your Skills and spells and how much you want to cast them before using a flask.

When selecting a starting class, Vagabond is almost universally the best choice for every build, because the stats that need the fewest invested levels - Intelligence, Faith, and Arcane - are lowest. However, starting classes don't affect anything more than base stats, so your choice here only matters if you intend to cap your level for online multiplayer, in which case every stat point counts.

When these builds are completed and all points are allocated, consider adding 25 Faith to each build for two of the strongest buffs in the game: Golden Vow and Flame, Grant Me Strength. Golden Vow gives a 15% damage boost and 10% damage negation for 80s, while Flame, Grant Me Strength offers a 20% Physical and Fire damage boost for 30 seconds. Because Golden Vow is an aura buff and Flame, Grant Me Strength is a body buff, the effects stack and you can reap the benefits of both simultaneously.

These builds, while very powerful and varied, are not exhaustive, and are general guides that provide some of the best options for a chosen stat to help you reach your goals and gain a sense of direction while you're exploring The Lands Between. Even if your favorite weapon isn't listed here, it's still possible to use it and succeed. Any weapon, spell, or Ash of War can help you become the next Elden Lord, so experiment and try out whichever option is best to you.

Ash of War

Recommendations

Bloodhound's Step

This Ash of War is one of the best defensive options in the game, providing an enormous invulnerability window at a remarkably low FP cost. It is best used with weapons which don't rely on Skills, or on an offhand weapon which can be swapped in as necessary.

Raptor of the Mists

With precise timing, this Ash of War counters an enemy's attack and sets up a jump attack opportunity. Timely use of this Skill in conjunction with the Claw Talisman will make your jumping attacks far more effective, and allow you to use them more often.

Royal Knight's Resolve

This Ash of War grants your next attack an incredible 80% damage boost for the next 10 seconds. While best utilized with weapons that deal high per-hit damage to maximize the effectiveness, it is also effective on an offhand weapon for devastating Dual-Wielding attacks. Royal Knight's Resolve has an additional property: if used with Claws or Fist weapons, it will apply its buff to both hands simultaneously, making it even more lethal.

Flame of the Redmanes

This Ash of War is one of the strongest in the game, bar-none. Its unparalleled potential to stagger enemies and break their Stance trivialize many otherwise difficult encounters. Its Fire damage scales with Strength, but it's worth using regardless purely for Stance-breaking.

Thunderbolt

This Ash of War has excellent range, strong tracking and respectable damage. While its damage scales with Dexterity, this Skill's main benefit is that it can be chain-cast at lightning speed, making it one of the strongest in terms of damage per second.

Golden Vow

Weaker than its Incantation counterpart but still very powerful, this Ash of War provides a 11.5% damage boost and a 7.5% reduction to damage received for 45 seconds. It performs best on an offhand Dagger, which has negligible weight and stat requirements.

Barricade Shield

An extremely powerful defensive Ash of War, Barricade Shield temporarily boosts any shield's Stability and Deflection, allowing you to repel nearly any attack with ease. While it only lasts 5 seconds, it can be reused immediately without lowering your guard.

Assassin's Gambit

If you're having serious trouble with a non-boss encounter like a dungeon or Point of Interest, this Ash of War might just be the solution. Although it can only be used on a few weapon types, it renders you nearly undetectable, allowing you to sneak up on (or past) most enemies with impunity.

Strength

Stat Goals

- Vigor: 60
- Strength: 54
- Dexterity: 14
- Intelligence: 20
- Affinities:
 - Fire
 - Heavy

Recommended Weapons

Greatsword	Ruins Greatsword
Starscourge Greatsword	Beastman's Cleaver
Meteoric Ore Blade	Warped Axe
Greataxe	Brick Hammer
Prelate's Inferno Crozier	Fallingstar Beast Jaw
Serpent-Hunter	Nightrider Glaive
Fingerprint Stone Shield	Giant-Crusher

Recommended Ash of War

Wild Strikes	Lion's Claw
Hoarah Loux's Earthshaker	Troll's Roar
Sword Dance	Giant Hunt
Royal Knight's Resolve	Flaming Strike
Flame of the Redmanes	Eruption
Prelate's Charge	Shield Crash

Pros

- High Attack Rating
- Burst Damage
- Poise Break
- Strong Hyper Armor
- Greatshields

Cons

- Slow Attacks
- Low Range
- Heavy Equip Load
- Less Fire Damage in Rain

Description

Strength builds can wield some of the strongest weapons in the game to deal incredible amounts of damage and devastate foes with charge attacks, jumps attacks, and powerful weapon skills. These builds excel when holding a weapon in both hands due to the two-handed Strength multiplier of +50%. This also provides access to weapons that otherwise would require more Strength, so 54 Strength effectively means 81 Strength when two-handing, and 80 is the Strength damage soft cap.

Because Strength weapons get some of the highest attack ratings in the game, they are well-suited to Skills such as Giant Hunt and Lion's Claw. With only 34 Strength, Fire is the better choice of Affinity; any higher, and Heavy deals more damage. All fire Ashes of War scale with Strength, so they are great options as well, even with the Heavy affinity. Strength builds also have inherent access to Greatshields, which can block most incoming attacks with ease.

Acquiring the Greatsword in Caelid on a new character is highly beneficial while leveling a Strength build. It has high base damage and can scale incredibly quickly with just a few points in Strength. The Flame of the Redmanes Ash of War is also found in Caelid, and is excellent for staggering enemies, essentially giving you free Critical Hits; it will also enable you to imbue your weapon with the Fire affinity, increasing your damage output even further.

Dexterity

Stat Goals

- Vigor: 60
- Strength: 20
- Dexterity: 80
- Affinities:
 - Lightning
 - Keen

Recommended Weapons

Scorpion's Stinger

Antspur Rapier

Dragon King's Cragblade

Bloodhound's Fang

Hand of Malenia

Bolt of Gransax

Guardian's Swordspear

Urumi

Recommended Ash of War

Spinning Slash

Unsheathe

Beast's Roar

Square Off

Thunderbolt

Lightning Ram

Pros

- Quick Attacks
- High Mobility
- Strong Sustained Damage
- Light Equip Load
- More Lightning Damage in Rain

Cons

- Low Stagger
- Low Burst Damage

Description

Dexterity builds are lightweight, fast-hitting and incredibly powerful. Dexterity-based weapons are swift and their attacks recover quickly, allowing for quick dodges after attacks. Learning openings and dodging between attacks is the key to a Dexterity-based playstyle, and mastering it can be extremely rewarding.

The best affinity for Dexterity is Lightning, until you have 50+ Dexterity, at which point Keen affinity provides more damage. Lightning Ashes of War scale with Dexterity and can be devastating with synergistic boosts such as the Lightning Scorpion Charm - especially in water or rain, since lightning deals more damage in those conditions.

Several Dexterity weapons, particularly the Hand of Malenia, can benefit greatly from buffs that increase attack power with successive attacks. There is one Crystal Tear and two Talismans that make consecutive attacks grow stronger, each with three different tiers of attack power boosts that scale with the number of hits. The Thorny Cracked Tear boosts consecutive attack damage by up to 20%, the Rotten Winged Sword Talisman by up to 13%, and Millicent's Prosthesis by up to 11% while providing 5 extra Dexterity. These bonuses all stack, meaning up to a 44% attack boost with all three active.

While the Uchigatana found in the Deathtouched Catacombs (and carried as default by the Samurai class) is a solid starting Dexterity weapon, the Bloodhound's Fang acquired from the Forlorn Hound Evergaol is even better - in addition to its Blood Loss effect, its Skill deals heavy damage for very little FP.

Intelligence

Stat Goals

- Vigor: 60
- Strength: 16
- Dexterity: 22
- Intelligence: 80
- Affinities:
 - Magic
 - Cold

Recommended Weapons

Glinstone Kris	Death's Poker
Dark Moon Greatsword	Wing of Astel
Moonveil	Bastard's Stars
Azur's Glinstone Staff	Lusat's Glinstone Staff
Carian Regal Scepter	Meteorite Staff

Recommended Ash of War

Glintstone Pebble	Glintblade Phalanx
Carian Grandeur	Waves of Darkness
Ice Spear	Hoarfrost Stomp

Recommended Spells

Glintstone Pebble	Swift Glintstone Shard
Shard Spiral	Glintstone Arc
Terra Magica	Comet Azur
Stars of Ruin	Magic Glintblade
Loretta's Greatbow	Ranni's Dark Moon
Carian Slicer	Carian Piercer
Adula's Moonblade	Night Comet
Rock Sling	Meteorite of Astel

Pros

Cons

- Extremely Powerful Spells
- High Damage
- Low Equip Load
- Low Defenses
- Low Poise

Description

Intelligence builds are able to utilize deadly Sorceries to decimate their foes from afar. For this build, the choice between Magic and Cold Affinities is dependent on playstyle: Magic deals more raw damage, but Cold can inflict Frostbite, which stuns, debuffs, and deals a percentage-based burst of damage.

There are two optimal staves for this build: Lusat's Glintstone Staff and the Carian Regal Scepter. Lusat's gives sorceries 10% more damage, but spells cost 50% more FP. Carian Regal Scepter is the second-best option, providing excellent sorcery scaling without the drawback of increased FP cost. The latter also buffs Moon Sorceries and comes with a unique, much deadlier version of the Spinning Weapon Skill.

Cast speed is extremely desirable as a caster, with 70 Dexterity being the cap. To achieve this without leveling the stat, equip Azur's Glintstone Staff in the off hand for the equivalent of 40 Dexterity and the Radagon Icon Talisman for 30, granting maximum casting speed without leveling Dexterity.

Intelligence builds have access to a variety of spells, providing loads of ranged damage options. Moreover, Terra Magica boosts magic damage by 35% for all allies within its area of effect, making it a great spell to put down before casting any others. Following it up with a spell like Ranni's Dark Moon will not only deal heavy damage, but also reduce the target's magic damage negation by 10% and up to 30% total if you inflict Frostbite. For close range, two great options are Carian Slicer and Carian Piercer. Carian Slicer deals high damage per second at maximum cast speed with a very low FP cost, while Carian Piercer deals heavy single-hit damage and will cause many enemies to stagger.

The Flask of Wondrous Physick provides excellent synergy for this build by means of the Cerulean Hidden Tear, which provides infinite FP for 15 seconds. For those 15 seconds, all of the strongest, most FP-intensive spells will be free to cast. Comet Azur is the strongest opener, and can annihilate most bosses in seconds.

For early game progression, a great option is the Meteorite Staff in Caelid. It's unique in that it can't be upgraded, but it has astronomical base damage and an "S" rating in Intelligence scaling, so it can be easily used until the endgame. It also boosts the power of Gravity sorceries by 30%; this includes Rock Sling, which deals heavy damage, has very long range and breaks enemy stances with astonishing ease.

For a melee-focused Intelligence build, try the Moonveil Katana, acquired in Caelid. Moonlight's weapon skill, Transient Moonlight, is incredibly strong, and can even stagger bosses from a distance in 2-3 hits, while scaling extremely well with Intelligence up to 80. It also inflicts Blood

Loss, which is great for enemies with a lot of health.

Faith

Stat Goals

- Vigor: 60
- Strength: 27
- Dexterity: 24
- Faith: 80
- Arcane: 15
- Affinities:
 - Flame Art

Recommended Weapons

Coded Sword

Inseparable Sword

Blasphemous Blade

Golden Order Greatsword

Sacred Relic Sword

Godslayer's Greatsword

Magma Blade

Magma Wyrn's Scalesword

Envoy's Horn

Marika's Hammer

Envoy's Long Horn

Inquisitor's Girandole

Siluria's Tree

Vyke's War Spear

Halo Scythe

Winged Scythe

Cipher Pata

Godslayer's Seal

Recommended Ash of War

Black Flame Tornado

Prayerful Strike

Golden Land

Prelate's Charge

Recommended Spells

Golden Vow

Erdtree Heal

Blessing of the Erdtree

Lightning Spear

Honed Bolt

Ancient Dragons' Lightning Strike

Fortissax's Lightning Spear

Catch Flame

Flame, Fall Upon Them

Flame, Grant Me Strength

Bestial Sling

The Flame of Frenzy

Unendurable Frenzy

Burn, O Flame!

Black Flame Ritual

Pest Threads

Frenzied Burst

Ekzykes's Decay

Pros

- Strongest Buffs
- Access to Spells

Cons

- Many Enemies Resist Holy Damage

Description

Faith builds specialize in powerful buffs and healing for themselves and allies, but still have potent Incantations in their arsenal. The Flame Art Affinity is recommended over Sacred, because many enemies resist Holy damage, especially in the later parts of the game, making Sacred weapons highly situational.

For offensive spells, Lightning Spear boasts a favorable FP-to-damage ratio, while Honed Bolt deals high damage per second with strong tracking. The Flame of Frenzy is great for staggering enemies, but only Tarnished enemies are vulnerable to the Madness ailment, so keep that in mind. Against larger enemies and bosses, Pest Threads and Ancient Dragons' Lightning Strike deal incredible damage. Don't forget to use buffs, since Faith builds have access to some of the strongest options in the game, with the best two being Golden Vow and Flame, Grant Me Strength.

At close range, Catch Flame is a great choice due to its fast cast speed, low cost, and excellent damage. On the other hand, Frenzied Burst is one of the longest-ranged spells in the game - when fully charged, it can hit hard without even getting close.

When starting out, try the Winged Scythe found in the Tombsward Ruins - it deals high damage early on and has innate Blood Loss, which will help with bosses. Unfortunately, a lot of the best weapons and spells for Faith are found later in the game, so the early game can be difficult.

Arcane

Stat Goals

- Vigor: 60
- Strength: 24
- Dexterity: 22
- Faith: 15
- Arcane: 80
- Affinities:
 - Occult

Recommended Weapons

Reduvia	Regalia of Eochaid
Flamberge	Marais Executioner's Sword
Bloody Helice	Scavenger's Curved Sword
Nagakiba	Rivers of Blood
Eleonora's Poleblade	Great Omenkiller Cleaver
Spiked Club	Chainlink Flail
Great Stars	Cross Naginata
Mohgwyn's Sacred Spear	Vulgar Militia Saw
Grave Scythe	Hoslow's Petal Whip
Star Fist	Bloodhound Claws
Dragon Communion Seal	Morning Star

Recommended Ash of War

Blood Blade	Bloody Slash
Blood Tax	Seppuku

Recommended Spells

Swarm of Flies

Bloodflame Talons

Pros

- High Percentage-based Damage
- Exceptional stunlock Potential

Cons

- Weak Raw Damage
- Some Enemies are Immune to Blood Loss
- Lacks Versatility

Description

Arcane builds tend to focus on maximizing the Blood Loss effect and inflicting it as often as possible, making faster weapons with multi-hits ideal. Dual-Wielding the same weapon type and using their paired attacks is even better. Since Blood Loss deals percentage-based damage, even enemies with massive health pools will quickly succumb to it. The Occult affinity is perfect for weapons with innate Blood Loss, because Arcane increases your build-up rate and becomes your main damage stat. While the Blood Affinity has more Blood Loss buildup, Occult is still recommended because it produces higher overall damage and better Arcane scaling.

The Lord of Blood's Exultation is the strongest Talisman to use for this build. It raises attack power by 20% for 20 seconds when any Blood Loss occurs in the vicinity. Similarly, the White Mask headgear has a passive effect that increases attack power by 10% for 20 seconds under the same conditions. Both of these stack for a total 30% damage increase every time Blood Loss is inflicted.

Seppuku is the strongest Blood Loss Ash of War in the game. Using Seppuku inflicts Blood Loss on yourself, dealing 10% of your maximum HP, but infuses your weapon with extra Blood Loss buildup for 60 seconds. Seppuku's self-applied Blood Loss also triggers both damage increases from the aforementioned talisman and headgear.

For early game use, defeat Nerijus in Limgrave for his unique Dagger, Reduvia. This weapon's Skill, Reduvia Blood Blade, can inflict Blood Loss from a safe distance. Another great early weapon is Eleonora's Poleblade, found on the Altus Plateau. Its skill, Bloodblade Dance, deals heavy damage and builds up Blood Loss extremely quickly. Special weapons like these cannot take advantage of Seppuku, but they still have excellent Blood Loss buildup without it. For endgame use, the Rivers of Blood is a fantastic Katana owing to its infamous Skill, Corpse Piler, which can cause Blood Loss in mere moments and deal massive damage to any enemy that can bleed.