

# A Rock and A Hard Place: A Warden Handbook

*See this here mountain? This is my mountain. All upon it is mine: the trees, the stones, the snow. Everything that makes up this mountain is under my grasp. The mountain belongs to me, and I to it. You have no place here. But now that you've arrived, I can't have you leaving. No sir, the mountain wouldn't want that. In fact, it wants you to stay forever, and I'm going to see to it that its wishes are fulfilled.*

## Nature's Calling: Why be a Warden

While not as sticky as the Fighter or attack drawing as the Paladin, Wardens make very effective Defenders in combat. Much like a barrier reef keeps ships off coasts, Wardens are treacherous if you get close, and once they've got you in their clutches, you might have an easier time escaping quicksand. If any of these strengths appeals to you, perhaps Warden is the right calling for you:

Be the toughest SOB you can be - That's right, no other class can claim to be as hard to take down as a Warden. The ability to save against affects at both the beginning *and* end of their turn, bonuses to their Second Wind, and a whole slew of Utility powers that are designed to keep you standing make you extremely durable. Which is good, since you'll probably have several enemies trying to test you.

Meet a lot of new people - The stickiness of the Warden comes not from your reaction to enemy attacks. While you do get to interrupt attacks of adjacent marks with a swipe of your own, your ability to keep enemies close instead comes from your powers. Through the creation of difficult terrain in bursts, the judicious ability to slow, immobilize and restrain, etc., enemies want to leave, but they simply can't. Ever see anyone escape from a pool of swamp mud while an alligator has their leg? Neither have I.

Feel nature flowing through you - Wardens have the ability to channel the primal forces of nature, transforming themselves in the process. Feel your toes root into the ground, grasping at the legs of your enemies. Sprout wings and soar above your allies. Harden your skin into stone and watch as weapon strikes just slide off you.

**This Handbook will use the following system for ratings:**

**Red** - Garbage, or completely overshadowed by another option.

**Purple** - Situationally useful, but overall pretty meh.

**Black** - OK. You could do worse than pick this.

**Blue** - Good stuff. You probably want this.

**Sky Blue** - You want this. Period.

**Gold** - Why haven't you taken this yet? A defining choice for a build, or even the whole class.

## Power Source and Role: Why you do what you do

You are the Primal Defender, which means you have been chosen by nature as her protector. Among the defender classes, warden is the most pure defender among the group. You're tough, your defenses are good and can spike even higher.

**Battlefield Control** — Now, this is not the same thing as a secondary controller. But when a Warden wades into melee, enemies stop moving. Things tend to end up slowed, immobilized, or restrained quite often under your watch. Your melee strikers will love this: it's a lot easier to get their damage numbers up when their target is stuck in place. Some builds do this in other ways, by sliding their enemies all over the battlefield.

**Damage** — There are some ways to get your damage numbers up, but if that's your highest priority, best look elsewhere (like the fighter, or an actual striker).

**Stickiness** — You have to work harder at this than the fighter or paladin, but you have your ways.

**Survivability** — You do this better than anyone else. Period. More HP, more surges, and things that make you just a tough SOB in general will make sure you're the last man standing.

### Secondary Roles

**Controller** — Stormheart has a bit of this thrown in, and there are a few powers that contribute to this (Tempest Assault, Thunder Ram Assault, et al).

**Leader** — If you're the buffer/debuffer/healer, your party is probably screwed. In a pinch, there's some available.

Striker — You're also not going to be relied upon for damage without some multiclassing, but you can certainly dish some out if you build well.

## Class Features: Tools nature has provided

### Basics

**Hit Points:** You get the highest initial HP in the game, and the highest per level. More than any other defender even.

**Healing Surges:** Standard defender fare here. Earthstrength and Stormheart should have plenty to spare, and Lifespirit and Wildblood should have enough to survive on.

**Proficiencies:** Hide Armor, Military Melee. You won't need anymore than that, but you may desire a bigger weapon.

**Defenses:** Doesn't shore up what will likely be your worst defense (Reflex), but still decent nonetheless.

**Font of Life:** Get rid of Dazed or Stunned or any other save ends condition at the beginning of your turn so you're not affected during your turn? Yes please! If you fail, you still get a second shot at the end of your turn.

**Nature's Wrath:** Mark all adjacent as a Free Action 1/turn. Nice! Unfortunately you only get a punishment swipe against them if they're adjacent. Though if they move away, you can still slide them back to you as a Immediate Reaction as a consolation prize. This is where your powers come in! Keep them close by other means.

**Note:** Nature's Wrath as a class feature also includes the two at-will mark punishment powers, Warden's Grasp and Warden's Fury, but they are written about in the powers section.

### Guardian Might

Here's where you secondary stats come in. This features allows your AC to pull off your secondary stat (either Constitution or Wisdom), plus gives you a significant kicker to your Second Wind. Yes, that Second Wind for you non-dwarves. Even though it takes a standard action, you should be using it every encounter.

**Earthstrength:** This build option keys off Constitution, and allows you to play a pure defender. The kicker to second wind is your Constitution modifier added to your AC for the next round. You might just use your Second Wind proactively for once.

**Lifespirt:** Keying off Wisdom, a Lifespirt gets a touch of Leader thrown in, as you get to grant a surge and a saving throw to an ally when you Second Wind. It certainly won't go to waste. A thing to keep in mind though: some of your leader powers require your ally to be adjacent.

**Stormheart:** If you're looking for a bit of Controller, look no further than this Constitution based option. When you Second Wind, you rearrange your enemies a bit, then slow them for good measure.

**Wildblood:** Another pure defender option, this time off Wisdom. When you Second Wind, your marked foes won't care how much retaliation you can muster, they will attack you and you alone. Attacking anyone else would be basically wasted actions.

## Skills: Getting by

### Class Skills

**Athletics:** Goes off your primary, and can get you around the battlefield easier.

**Dungeoneering:** A Wisdom skill for those of you with that as a secondary. Monster knowledge checks are often useful.

**Endurance:** You may or may not use this often, but when you do, you really don't want a small bonus here. Also, the skill powers this gives you access to are just too good to pass on this.

**Heal:** Another Wisdom skill. If you're a Lifeblood, worth considering, but otherwise skip it.

**Intimidate:** If you can get ahold of a Cincture of the Dragon Spirit, this skill is worth considering. Otherwise don't bother.

**Nature:** See Dungeoneering.

**Perception:** I think we all know why this is Sky Blue. Need I say more? Also, keys off Wisdom.

## non-Class Skills

**Acrobatics:** You won't be the one doing flips around the battlefield at any point.

**Arcana, History, Religion:** Let someone more qualified bother with this.

**Bluff, Diplomacy, Streetwise:** If you're the party face, your party is screwed.

**Insight:** Decent if you can get it, and it goes off Wisdom.

**Stealth, Thievery:** Well, you're not wearing heavy armor, at least. Hide armor still has a penalty, however, until paragon. Leave this to someone else.

## Ability Scores: What you bring to the table

**Strength** — Mandatory. This is your primary stat for all attacks. It gets a stat bump every 4 and 8, no excuses. Though, as Akhorahil points out, you could feasibly start with a 16 or 17 here at level 1, since your zones, as well as Warden's Grasp, don't require attack rolls to be effective.

Recommended Starting Score: 16-18, before racial adjustments

**Constitution** — Secondary stat for **Earthstrength** and **Stormheart**. Tertiary for others, though **Wildblood** may want to make sure this is decent regardless.

Recommended Starting Score: 14-16 for Earthstrength and Stormheart, 12-14 for Lifespirit and Wildblood, before racial adjustments

**Dexterity** — You gotta put something in this or Intelligence, or your Reflex defense will be garbage. I recommend Dexterity, as it also bumps Initiative. If you're an +Int race, this can be your dump stat instead. If you want a mastery feat in Epic that requires Dex, you might think about this early.

Recommended Starting Score: 10-12, before racial adjustments

**Intelligence** — Dump unless you're a +Int race, then dump Dex or Cha instead.

Recommended Starting Score: 8-10, before racial adjustments

**Wisdom** — Secondary stat for **Lifespirit** and **Wildblood**. Tertiary for others who care about their Will Defense, as well as Perception-based skills.

Recommended Starting Score: 14-16 for Lifespirit and Wildblood, 12-14 for Earthstrength and Stormheart, before racial adjustments

**Charisma** — This could very easily be a dump stat. If you don't care about Wisdom you could feasibly use this for your Will defense, but do so at your own expense.  
Recommended Starting Score: 8-10, before racial adjustments

## Races: What makes you who you are

### PHB

**Dragonborn** — Bonus to Strength (or Constitution, though you're not likely to go that way), good racial traits, and good feat support.

**Dwarf** — They were sky blue before you could get a bonus to strength. Now that they have a bonus to strength, they're still just sky blue. Why? Because they were also changed so that they only second wind as minor once per encounter.

**Eladrin** — If you want a pointy-eared race, try the Elf instead. Ever so slightly redeemed by Eladrin's Challenge and synergy with the greatspear, but if you're looking to defend, Swordmage suits your nature sooo much better.

**Elf** — Bonus to Wisdom, plus a boost to accuracy and speed, and can ignore difficult terrain. That almost makes up for your lack of Strength.

**Half-Elf** — Bonus to both secondary stats. You don't really need the Dilettante, so you might find that Knack for Success is a better choice.

**Halfling** — Your lot in life certainly improved more than the gnome's. While you can now get a boost to a secondary stat, your feat support doesn't really fit the defender role at all.

**Human** — Like every other class, the usefulness of being human is somewhat difficult to judge. You can certainly have a boost to strength, and the extra feat is nothing to laugh at. You don't get a boost to your secondary, so that costs you a point in AC. Wardens don't really benefit as much from the third at-will, so Heroic Effort might catch your eye. The +1 to your NADs and the ability to become immune to Save Ends effects are enough to cross them into the sky blue zone. This immunity doesn't come cheap, mind you. Once I find a link to a sample build demonstrating its use, I will add it here.

**Tiefling** — This race gained the most from the change to having a choice of stats, as they can now get a boost to Constitution. You also have a high amount of fire resistance out of the gate (and fire is the most common damage type I've found), plus a retributive racial power and a bonus to attacks against bloodied foes. The feat support is also top notch.

## PHB2

**Deva** — Boost to Wisdom, boost to accuracy, and necrotic resistance. The Elf still has a leg up on you though.

**Gnome** — It's not your lot in life to be amongst our ranks, I'm sorry.

**Goliath** — Boost to Strength and then your choice of either secondary, perfect! Your racial traits are also awesome.

**Half-Orc** — Boost to Strength (or Constitution, though you're not likely to go that way), and excellent racial traits. You're certainly welcome among our ranks.

**Longtooth Shifter** — Boost to Strength and Wis, plus a boost to damage and regen once you go bloodied. You will do perfectly as a Lifespirit or Wildblood.

**Razorclaw Shifter** — Boost to Wisdom, and bonuses to speed and defenses once bloodied. Not quite as good as the Elf as a Lifespirit or Wildblood, but still good nonetheless.

## PHB3

**Githzerai** — Despite your lack of strength, you get a boost to wisdom, and your racial traits include bonuses to saving throws, defenses, and an add-on to Second Wind. Another candidate for higher secondary than primary for Lifespirit and Wildblood.

**Minotaur** — The minotaur is going to give the other top racial picks a run for their money. They get a boost to Strength, and then a boost to *either* Con or Wis, so you can pick any build without issue. An additional healing surge, and a free swipe every time you're dropped. The charge stuff is only somewhat useful, but is always fun.

**Shardmind** — You can optionally get a bonus to Wisdom, you're a Living Construct, and you resist psychic. Most of your other features (and racial paragon path) are keyed towards a psionic class though, so you're probably better off as a Battlemind.

**Wilden** — I want the Wilden to be better at this task. I really do. However, they're seriously lacking on the racial features side. A Wilden Warden would probably spend most of its time in the Wrath of the Destroyer aspect. They do have boosts to both secondaries, though.

## Other

**Bladeling** — Same stat boosts as the Elf, plus acid resistance and an encounter close burst attack.

**Changeling** — This was the first race published with a variable stat boost, and even with that all three are worthless. So are the racial traits.

**Drow** — Along with Tiefling, the lowly (pun intended) drow got a choice of Wisdom instead of Charisma as a stat choice. Unlike the tiefling, the feat support just isn't there.

**Genasi** — Bonus to Strength makes them blue even though their second stat boost is for a dump stat. Firesoul, Earthsoul, Causticsoul, Cindersoul, and Plaguesoul are all excellent elemental manifestations.

**Gnoll** — Even though you're not as strong, your racial traits tell me that you understand what we're looking for here. You'll make a good Earthstrength or Stormheart.

**Kalashkar** — Bonus to Wisdom, but your secondary is wasted here completely. Dual Soul is mostly irrelevant with Font of Life (it only becomes useful if you have multiple Save Ends conditions affecting you). Bastion of Mental Clarity is very good for a Lifeblood, however.

**Mul** — A lot like dwarves, except they don't get Dwarven Resilience. Still, what they lack in the second winding department, they make up for in the sheer toughness department.

**Revenant** — You're hard to kill, because you're already dead. You also get a bonus to Constitution, and can select the racial features from any race.

**Shadar-Kai** — Gaining a boost to one secondary doesn't elevate this race very far, they don't have a lot of support elsewhere.

**Thri-Kreen** — These mantis-like creatures make better strikers than defenders (which still boggles my mind that the D&D Encounters pre-gen was a Battlemind), but they at least get a boost to strength.

**Warforged** — A prime choice for Earthstrength and Stormheart. Your stats are perfect, and all your racial traits fit perfectly with how the Warden operates.

## MM

**Bugbear** — Bonus to Strength, plus the ability to wield oversize weapons and an encounter damage boost. If this ever gets a MM write-up, look for it to change drastically, but until then go to town.

**Bullywug** — The aura is worthless as written, though swampwalk is situationally useful.

**Duergar** — Same statline as their surface brethren, their lack of decent racial traits is a severe detractor.



Githyanki — The opposite statline to the Githzerai, the racial traits just aren't as good.

**Goblin** — Let your hobgoblin or bugbear friends do this instead.

Hobgoblin — You're pretty tough, we won't turn you away from being an Earthstrength or Stormheart.

**Kenku** — You're squawking up the wrong tree.

Kobold — People actually want to play these things?

**Orc** — Similar to Half-Orcs, but their second stat boost is more appropriate for an Earthstrength or Stormheart. Their racial encounter power can be a lifesaver, though as a Warden, why aren't you using Second Wind instead?

## At-Will Powers: The groundwork

### Class Features:

Note: I'm including Warden's Fury and Warden's Grasp here for posterity.

**Warden's Fury:** This is your primary mark punishment. Weapon vs Fortitude, and the enemy grants CA. Unfortunately, this is an immediate interrupt, not an opportunity action, so once per turn. And unless you have a polearm, they have to be adjacent.

**Warden's Grasp:** This is for those enemies that move away before they attack. Slide 1 and slowed, no attack roll, though it's a reaction, not an interrupt, so you can't prevent the attack. Push them into the waiting hands of your ranger or rogue, or even better into the zone created by your current form.

### At-Will Attack Powers:

With a few exceptions, most Wardens will want Thorn Strike as their first at-will choice, though there's several good options for your second choice (and third, for humans).

Earth Shield Strike (PH2): If you think you need the slight defense boost, now is a good time to Second Wind instead.

**Playful Torment** (D 392): I don't like the Melee 1 instead of Melee Weapon, and I don't think gaining CA for yourself only until the *beginning* of your next turn makes this a good choice at all. I haven't found myself using *Warden's Fury* enough to make a small damage boost that useful either. There's enough ways to get CA without this that it makes it a complete non-starter for me.

**Resilience of Life** (PP): Targeted at Lifespirits, Wildbloods might also find it useful. For an at-will, that's an awful lot of temporary hit points. Kept out of the top tier by the fact that you only dish temp HP to adjacent allies, so you'll want to take your party into consideration when choosing this power.

Strength of Stone (PH2): Unlike Resilience of Life, you get the Temp HP, not your ally. And rest assured, you'll find them more useful than he will. For Earthstrength and Stormheart.

**Tempest Assault** (PP): Stormhearts love this, as the auto-minion death adds to your controller secondary. Combine with **Echoes of Thunder** for better results.

**Thorn Strike** (PH2): First choice for most Wardens, this is a melee 2 attack that brings the target back to you. If you're using a polearm, not so much.

**Warden's Lunge** (D 379): Can be used as a melee basic on a charge, and it marks the target. Except that you can do basically the same thing with a melee basic charge and a free action after the charge to mark all adjacent. There's a corner case where **polearm users** can use it as a charge and not go adjacent (now that it's optional), and still get to mark.

**Weight of Earth** (PH2): For Earthstrength and Stormhearts with Crippling Crush, this becomes **even better**. For everyone else, remember what I said about your powers being your source of stickiness?

## Heroic Tier Attack Powers: Learning your lessons

### Level 1 Encounter

Most of you will go for Roots of Stone, though there's a lot of good options. Lifespirit might favor Warden's Sacrifice.

[Hide](#)

Earth Spikes (PH2): Creates an enemies-only damage zone. Decent, not special.

Gale Strike (PP): Highest damage output at this level, though if you're [Stormheart](#) the battlefield just changed a good bit.

[Grasping Winds](#) (PP): Good way to make sure everyone is close to you right before marking them all.

Hungry Earth (PH2): Burst 1, and accurate. The effect doesn't stack with your forms, however.

[Rending Fury](#) (PP): Roll two attack rolls and use either. It also inflicts a huge penalty to attacks that don't include you, by a huge amount for Wildblood. If someone else is marking the target, you've just created a lose-lose situation.

[Roots of Stone](#) (PP): An enhancement to your stickiness. The damage kicker is just icing for Earthstrength, the 'stay or fall over' on those it hits is enough to make it awesome.

[Stinging Nettles](#) (D 392): I've come down against Blast 2 attacks before. You'll rarely get more than 2 enemies in a Blast 2, and the power is completely wasted against solos.

[Thunder Ram Assault](#) (PH2): Why are you pushing targets away? You want them close. If an Earthstrength can get ahold of a [Controlling Weapon](#) (polearm only) to make the big primary push into a slide, it gets a lot better.

[Tremor Slam](#) (D 383): I see the situation where this is useful often: you mark 2 guys, one walks away to take on your ally. You pound on the remaining guy, and it freezes the guy who walked away in place. Damage kicker is off your primary too instead of a secondary.

[Warden's Sacrifice](#) (PH2): Good damage output, and you turn into a Temp HP turret. If you're a [Lifespirit](#), that's a heck of a lot of Temp HP. If you have a Smart DM, however, this isn't as useful, because it will cause the enemies to go find another target.

Wildblood Frenzy (PP): Multitarget attack, so static damage bonuses abound, especially for [Wildblood](#). Just damage though.

## Level 1 Daily

All the powers here are Polymorph keyword forms. They have a Minor action entry fee, then an Encounter attack while you're in the form. With a few exceptions you'll probably want Form of Winter's Herald.

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**Form of Mountain's Thunder** (PP): If you're multiclassing Barbarian this is an option to get some damage out there. The toughness and defense boost is nothing to sneeze about.

**Form of the Dread Serpent** (PP): Easily outclassed by Mountain's Thunder.

**Form of the Faultless Tracker** (PP): The form is marginally useful, but the attack that goes with it is pretty decent.

**Form of the Fearsome Ram** (PH2): Good attack power, and the form allows you to push people all over the place. If you're of a race that likes to charge, it's **even better**.

**Form of the Laughing Killer** (PP): Granting CA against adjacent enemies is decent, but it doesn't give you the ability to keep them adjacent. Your ranged allies probably have ways of getting CA without your help.

**Form of the Relentless Panther** (PH2): The form makes you more mobile, and the attack is decent, but not special.

**Form of the Swamp Hunter** (PP): The form is decent, if situational. The attack can be 3[W], hard to find at level 1.

**Form of the Walking Conflagration** (D 383): Your marks gain fire vulnerability (or partially negates fire resistance), and the attack dazes.

**Form of the Willow Sentinel** (PH2): Now non-dwarves can negate forced movement. The encounter is an interrupt that causes a penalty to the triggering attack roll, hit or miss.

**Form of Winter's Herald** (PH2): Difficult terrain in burst 2, so your marks are probably not shifting away. And it travels with you. That's pretty awesome. The attack immobilizes in burst 1. That's pretty awesome too. Oh, you gain cold resistance too. I'm loathe to give an attack power **gold**, but this comes close.

## Level 3 Encounter

Earthstrength will probably want Rough Strike, and Lifespirit will likely choose Strongskin Clash, but other builds have several good choices.

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**Breath of Chaos** (D 383): Close Blast 2? You'll be lucky to get two guys in the zone. The damage against marked foes doesn't really make up for the lack of Strength. The move + insubstantial makes it a decent choice. Mark the BBEG, hit him with this, then walk around behind him.

**Burst of Earth's Fury** (PH2): Clost Burst 1, anything hit can't shift. If you have Sudden Roots, they aren't going anywhere.

**Earthgrasp Strike** (PH2): It's not a lot different from a 2[W] attack that prones, except the second half is delayed until they stand up again. Unless you're an **Earthstrength**, in which case you can go find another target, because the melee striker's already licking his lips.

**Guardian Shock Wave** (PP): Creates a prone zone around the target, and that's decent, but I want more here.

**Predatory Guardian** (PH2): You get to use the Battlemind's Blurred Step once per encounter, except at a more reasonable distance. Burst of Earth's Fury prevents them from shifting. Go for that instead.

**Pressing Attack** (PP): So you move, then attack. But without the +1 from charging. At least it's decent damage, or this would be red. For **Wildbloods** though, the distance moved will eventually be considerably higher than you could charge, so until you swap it out at level 13 or 17, it's decent.

**Rough Strike** (PP): **Earthstrength + Crippling Crush** makes this 2[W] + Str + 2xCon. Oh, and they're slowed, which makes this good for everyone else too.

**Storm Throw** (D 379): I originally thought that you needed a ranged weapon, and was shown my mistake. You can throw your Mordenkrad if you really want to. Useful if you really really want a ranged attack power, but you're better off just buying a throwing hammer, javelin, or some other heavy thrown weapon, because this power isn't special.

**Strongskin Clash** (PP): Burst 1 attack that grants a bit of resistance to allies within. Unless you're a **Lifespirit**, in which case your allies will love you.

**Thundering Strike** (PH2): A standard attack that dazes. Well, and deafens, but no one cares about that really.

**Violent Bolt** (PP): A power where the kicker for having a certain build actually makes it worse. Someone else is given a choice between prone and damage. The kicker piles on more damage to both options, so no non-minion is going to choose prone over a few HP worth of damage.

## Level 5 Daily

Other powers were better options until Boiling Cloud showed up and knocked most of them down a notch.

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**Boiling Cloud** (D 383): This power is very reminiscent of the daily forms you get at other levels, but without the Polymorph keyword, so they stack. The ally-friendly zone does damage, grants concealment, and can be expended to do a fairly accurate and damaging attack that is both close blast 3 and close burst 1. I'm hesitant to rate a power gold, but this one comes close.

**Clutching Mire** (PP): A fairly controllable blast that slows and can create a sustainable zone that slows. Unlike boiling cloud, though it requires a minor action to keep around, but you don't have a lot of uses for your minor, so it could be worse. Since it slows, though, the initial attack can do a lot of damage with **Crippling Crush**, so that's something.

**Earth-Shaking Rend** (PP): This is exactly like Clutching Mire except that it prones instead of slows.

**Hail of Thorns** (PH2): Another close blast 3 attack that slows, except this one adds poison damage. And doesn't persist.

**Lifebind Attack** (PP): Hit or miss, the penalty inflicted by your mark for not including you in an attack just became much bigger. Good damage too.

**Rampant Forest** (PP): If you're facing a lot of enemies, that can be an awful lot of difficult terrain. If you're facing one big guy, that's still a lot. Decent damage, and it's somewhat accurate.

Storm Strike (PH2): Yet another close blast 3, this one slides the targets hit or miss. It's hard not to find situations where this could be useful.

[Thunder Step](#) (PH2): Teleport, make an accurate swipe, then daze hit or miss. Very flashy. If you have [Echoes of Thunder](#), even better.

[Wellspring Strike](#) (PP): If you're a Lifespirit, you'll probably love the secondary leader ability this grants.

[Winter's Grip](#) (PH2): It's a lot like Clutching Mire, except that it's cold damage. If you or someone in your party is [into that sort of thing](#), the damaging zone can be a pretty good source of extra damage.

## Level 7 Encounter

Guardian's Pounce is a no-brainer for Wildblood, and a good option for everyone else too. Earthstrength will go for that or Mountain Hammer. Lifespirit wardens will likely want Sheltering Storm. Stormheart are the only ones who would consider Winter's Claws, though I would probably still take Guardian's Pounce.

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Angry Spirits (PP): Close burst 2, enemies only, targets will. But it's only damage.

Earth Gift (PH2): A decent 2[W] swipe, with some surgeless healing tacked on if you hit.

[Forge of Fire and Smoke](#) (D 383): So, a decently damaging power that grants the blast area concealment. This is a trap, as it's likely your enemies and not your allies that get to take advantage of that fact.

[Guardian's Pounce](#) (PP): A solo or an elite walks over to an ally with intent to smash, you walk over and impose a hefty penalty to all that enemy's attacks that round. If you're a [Wildblood](#), you don't even need to be close.

[Limbs of a Tree Spider](#) (D 379): A small amount of damage to two creatures within three squares. Boring.

Mountain Hammer (PH2): Somewhat accurate, decent damage, and impose a -2 to hit. For the [Earthstrength](#) the penalty becomes huge.

Mountain's Stature (PP): For most wardens, this is Thorn Strike vs 2 targets (I find pulling to you more useful than proning). For [Earthstrength polearm users](#), this is a significant upgrade.

[Sheltering Storm](#) (PP): Ally-friendly close burst 1, and an effect that seriously raises your defender capital for a round. If you're a [Lifespirt](#), you'll love this.

[Stalker's Positioning](#) (PH2): Reposition a couple enemies with a slight damage kicker for Wildblood. There are much better options for rearranging the board.

[Thorn Burst](#) (PH2): Accurate strike, and a damage splash (that doesn't autohit).

[Winter's Claws](#) (PP): If you're a Stormheart, it becomes [pretty decent](#), as the target has to attack you or will cause some damage to his allies. Add in Lasting Frost and watch hilarity ensue.

## Level 9 Daily

Back to the polymorph forms. This time we have another clear winner, in Form of the Oak Sentinel.

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Form of Paradise's Bounty (PP): The burst healing this form grants is pretty decent, as you do go through a lot of surges. The attack power also dazes and slows. Not special, but not bad.

Form of the Flame Snake (PP): This form is all about fire damage. Since fire resistance is fairly common, this one just isn't as useful as it could be.

Form of the Frenzied Wolverine (PH2): If you are a dwarf, [stay away](#), but everyone else will love second winding as a minor that encounter (or twice that encounter, starting at level 10).

[Form of the Hunting Shark](#) (PP): The form is only partially useful if there's no water on the battlefield, and the damage kicker on the attack if they're bloodied doesn't really add to your ability to defend.



[Form of the Oak Sentinel](#) (PH2): Wow, where to begin? You gain reach, and enemies who hit you take damage. The attack is an interrupt that triggers when an enemy targets an ally that does 2[W] and then forces the triggering attack to target you instead.

[Form of the Sirocco](#) (PP): Untyped resistance, boosts to mobility, and an attack that blinds make for a solid option.

[Form of the Stalwart Mastadon](#) (PP): Good for those wardens that like moving enemies around the battlefield.

[Form of the Stone Sentinel](#) (PH2): A huge boost to durability, which is enough to make it blue. Nothing else to look at though.

[Form of the Storm Eagle](#) (PH2): I would feel better about this power if it didn't say that you "must land at the end of the action", which I interpret to mean that you can't use an action to attack after flying up to where the bad guy is hovering. Which leaves charge actions and the attack power granted by the form against that guy.

Form of the Vengeful Storm (D 383): The flight just isn't as useful as it could be due to the altitude limit, but the enemy sliding can be fun. The attack is just decent.

## Paragon Tier Attack Powers: Making a name for yourself

### Level 13 Encounter

At 13th level, you've reached the first level where you have to drop a lower level power and replace it with a new one. The winner here is Stormhowler's Strike, though Lifespirit can also take a look at Healing Harvest.

[Hide](#)

[Creeper's Grasp](#) (PH2): The only thing keeping this from being red is the fact that it targets Reflex. It's otherwise completely outclassed by Drown in Mud.

Drown in Mud (D 383): Immobilizes in Close Burst 1, and makes that a zone of difficult terrain. Having [Crippling Crush](#) adds some damage on for good measure.

Erupting Vines (PP): A good number of people just got immobilized for a round, though only one took damage.

[Healing Harvest](#) (PP): Largely for Wisdom wardens, you turn a target into a HP piñata for a round. [Lifespirt](#) also plant a large target on his chest.

[Icy Shards](#) (PH2): An average damage power that slows, and does minor damage to those adjacent.

[Mark of Talons](#) (PP): A decent mobility power for Wildbloods, everyone else can look elsewhere.

Ponderous Strike (PH2): The target isn't going anywhere, and if you're [Earthstrength](#), that applies to misses too. Good damage though.

Rumbling Doom (PP): This power is begging you to kite away. Works with Echoes of Thunder. Damage is pretty decent if you're [Stormheart](#).

Sacrificial Strike (PP): A good amount of Temp HP, and decent damage, but if you're going for secondary leader stuff Healing Harvest is better.

[Stalactite Hook](#) (D 379): A heavily upgraded Thorn Strike. But you should still have Thorn Strike, so stick with that, and find something else that fits a different niche.

[Stormhowler's Strike](#) (PP): They're not going anywhere. Literally. They can try, but you teleport them back to where they started. You don't even need to be nearby if you don't want to be.

[Swarming Fey](#) (D 392): Burst power, but it doesn't encourage your enemies to stay near you at all.

Sunburst Strike (PH2): Lowest damage potential at this level, but it blinds, so that's worth something.

## Level 15 Daily

The power of choice for all here is Form of the Crushing Mountain, which has a rather powerful method of keeping enemies close.

[Hide](#)

Form of Summer Fire (PH2): Gain fire resistance and a damage boost. You also get an area damage attack. Passable, but you might find the fire damage not as effective somewhat often.

[Form of the Avalanche Unleashed](#) (PP): The resistance is small for this level, but not bad. Having an attack that stuns is pretty awesome though.

Form of the Charging Bear (PH2): Another power with resistance, but the attack power on this one just isn't special.

[Form of the Crushing Mountain](#) (PP): Not only can adjacent allies not shift, but it costs 1 extra square of movement to leave. Not difficult terrain, so if you have a power that plops down difficult terrain in a burst it becomes 3 squares of movement to become unadjacent to you, provoking OAs to do so. If you have Sudden Roots, you slow, so they don't actually have enough movement to leave. Nasty, yes? Oh, you also get a boost to AC. The accompanying attack power pulls enemies in burst 3 to a square adjacent on a hit. Crushing Mountain is right.

Form of the Hunting Tiger (PP): The addition of being able to shift towards your mark if he attacks an ally is neat, but the rest of this form is not special at all.

Form of the Magma Brute (D 383): You explode upon impact for the rest of the encounter, and there's a good amount of damage being added to everything. The attack power is fairly decent. Probably the highest damage output at this level, but just a slow/immobilize on the attack for status effects. Also, as Nausicaa pointed out, autodamage detracts from being a defender, as it causes enemies to not attack you.

[Form of the Rowan Sentinel](#) (PH2): Marking at range gets easier, and you get reach. The resistance is conditional, but attack power dazes hit or miss.

Form of the Sand Sentinel (PP): This is a form which one would consider switching to a different form once the Temp HP are gone, which probably makes it something you want to consider not taking.

[Form of the Stonecrusher](#) (PH2): The ability to reduce forced movement is pretty nice. The attack power immobilizes, which is really nice.

[Form of the Windstorm's Wrath](#) (PP): Protect your allies by creating a windstorm that prevents damage. You also get to rearrange the battlefield once.

## Level 17 Encounter

Warden's Lure will probably lure everybody in, though Eager Vine Strike could make a case for Earthstrength, and Wildblood might prefer Leap of the Relentless Hunter.

[Hide](#)

Call Forth the Harvest (PH2): The secondary attack is the one that slows, so no synergy with Crippling Crush. It does mark a medium sized burst though.

Eager Vine Strike (PH2): It immobilizes, which is good, but its [Earthstrength](#) kicker is what makes it shine.

[Earth Hold's Rebuke](#) (PH2): Just damage, but you can spend a surge. There's not many situations where this is an ideal choice.

[Flames of Life](#) (PP): It targets two creatures, but the amount of hit points it grants is marginal. Only made baseline by Lifespirit.

[Leap of the Relentless Hunter](#) (PP): The reaction is to the movement required to get into a square adjacent to an ally, so this could prevent an attack. You run them down, then if you hit you can pull them back away from your ally, preferably placing yourself between the target and your ally, so if he continues his movement it provokes and OA. [Wildblood](#) makes this extremely accurate. A lot to like here.

[Razorleaf Cut](#) (PH2): A power that's better against elites, and best against solos. Your allies can take a sigh of relief for a round.

[Reckless Ram Assault](#) (D 379): Unless you have Acrobat Boots, don't bother. Some of the 3[W] powers have much better kickers.

[Rough Advantage](#) (PP): Earthstrength + Crippling Crush get the highest direct damage output from this level here (3[W] + Str + 2xCon), but Eager Vine Strike has a higher potential damage output.

[Thunderhead Strike](#) (D 383): Hey, I remember that power back when it was called Earthgrasp Strike. This new version is not an improvement.

[Warden's Lure](#) (PP): Wow, that's a big burst. You pull them adjacent without an attack roll, then make an attack. Combine with Form of Crushing Mountain or Form of the Magma Brute for some fun.

**Windy Assault** (PP): Only pulls marked enemies, and not all the way to you. The attack is only against one enemy also. Granting combat advantage saves it from being red.

## Level 19 Daily

No obvious choices here really. People looking for forms can go back to level 15 without regrets, and others can choose from several good options.

[Hide](#)

**Blizzard Strike** (PH2): The target can potentially get more and more stuck, but the chances are slim. It also auto-slows in burst 3, and does good damage.

**Creeping Brambles** (PP): The attack and the effect are mostly unrelated, but both are decent. The zone can be sustained and moved, so it's rather good.

**Dire Beast Assault** (PH2): Not of a power level I'd expect for a Daily 19.

**Drown in Blood** (D 383): It dazes, but the chances of getting the splash damage are rather rare.

**Howl of Wrath** (PP): If you hit, you've immobilized the entire battlefield. If you miss, you've slowed the entire battlefield.

**Land Shark Charge** (D 379): I don't like the "you *must* charge" part. If you gotta charge, or you like opening battle with a charge, this has a lot of things going on.

**Lightning Barrage** (PH2): Close burst 1 auto-daze. Excellent if you have a move-reducing zone.

**Sparking Strike** (PP): Use this on a frontliner in a smallish room and lay down a power that moves everyone into the zone, then watch all the minions die.

**Thundering Bolts** (PH2): Worth it if you have [Echoes of Thunder](#). Auto-prone is not as good as auto-daze.

**Warding Smash** (PP): Can be used in place of Warden's Fury, but is otherwise not really worth a look

# Epic Tier Powers: Channeling nature's heart

## Level 23 Encounter

This level has a few good choices, especially for polearm users with Guardian's Wrath and Sky's Reach. Wildbloods can go for Startling Savagery, and Earthstrength will like Darkforest Vines. The rest of you can peruse the wares, or pick up a good lower level power.

[Hide](#)

**Darkforest Vines** (PP): We like restrained, though it's too bad that it's no longer one of the status effects targeted by Crippling Crush thanks to the word immobilized being removed from Restrained's discription. Oddly enough, the adjacent enemies get the extra damage from CC.

**Desert Winds** (PP): The controller-style zone that blocks line of sight, but probably largely outclassed by what an actual controller can do at this level. Still, it blinds, does a small amount of damage, and is a weapon attack vs reflex, so it's not all bad.

**Guardian's Wrath** (PH2): Good damage, and you get a OA swipe on it if it ignores your mark. **Awesome** for polearm users who don't need to be adjacent. Remember, Warden's Fury is an Immediate, and this is an OA, so you get to do both.

**Nature's Ally** (PH2): The two-roll thing is kind of frustrating, though you can pull someone all the way to you, and slow him for good measure. An upgraded Thorn Strike, though it's kinda lackluster for this level.

**Primal Rebuke** (PP): Use this at the start of combat, and watch all the enemy melee combatants look like a bird flying into a sliding glass door. Unfortunately, this would have been much better when enemies had smaller arms.

**Sky's Reach** (PP): Huge range, and a lot of forced movement against *two* enemies (and a prone if you have **Polearm Momentum**).

**Snowy Grasp** (PP): Locks down everyone you marked, and then some. I don't see your marks moving too far though unless you kite away, so don't look for the Stormheart kicker to go off too often.

**Startling Savagery** (PH2): The kicker is a huge step up from the base power, which just dazes. That should be a huge bonus to attack rolls for you **Wildbloods**.

**Whirlwind Assault** (PH2): Why is this power epic? I see stuff like this in heroic-tier!

**Wicked Flames** (D 383): I like the flavor of this, you actually explode into a fireball zone that burns and slides people around. Unfortunately, that's all you can do while it's active, and you effectively lose your next turn.

## Level 25 Daily

Form of the Entangling Spider and Form of the Night Hunter stick out here the most, the former for its extreme stickiness, and the latter for its flight ability.

[Hide](#)

Form of Earth's Beneficence (PP): This form really doesn't help you too much. Sure, they can't move you, but you probably can't keep them nearby.

**Form of the Autumn Reaper** (PH2): If you're maximizing damage, all your attacks just got your primary stat added onto them, and you got reach. That's pretty much it.

Form of the Blood Wolf (PH2): If you're looking for damage, look elsewhere. Sure, the attack power is 5[W], but Autumn Reaper does more overall.

**Form of the Displacer Beast** (PH2): Not much to this. Autumn Reaper weakens, and everything else about it is better.

**Form of the Entangling Spider** (PH2): The ultimate in stickiness (pun intended). Remember, the 3 square radius applies above you too, if your DM is inclined to throw you into 3D combat. If they don't come to you, go to them with your new spider legs.

**Form of the Jungle Lord** (PH2): If sliding enemies is your thing, this adds onto all of them, even if they don't slide at all. You also get a climb speed, which may be able to get you up to flying enemies.

**Form of the Night Hunter** (PP): If they don't want to come to you, fly to them. At the epic level, that's pretty huge.

Form of the Seething Sandstorm (D 383): You get a toughness boost and a grab attack, but once you've spent your attack, there's not much there.

Form of the Shifting Ancestor (PP): It's flexible, but never singularly powerful. Your best hope is that you guess correctly as to what you'll need each turn.

[Form of the World Forger](#) (PP): Fire damage kinda sucks, but you can dish some out when your enemies hit your allies without even having to have them marked.

## Level 27 Encounter

Screaming Wind Strike is the clear favorite, though other powers certainly are good choices as well.

[Hide](#)

Blood of Nature's Foes (PP): Certainly better for Wildblood if they second wind right before or after they use the power, as their marks will follow them all over the place. Beyond that, it's not special.

[Crimson Agony Tide](#) (D 383): I like the mass-blinding, but be careful, it's not ally-friendly.

[Earth Tomb](#) (PH2): This doesn't really have any business being an epic level power. It's very similar to Earthgrasp Strike, which is level 3.

[Glacial Hammer](#) (PP): This restrains in burst 1 on the target. Use when you have extended reach for maximum fun. Your ranger will also love the inflicted vulnerability if you're [Earthstrength](#).

Guardian's Storm (PH2): Thematically more appropriate for Stormheart, the damage kicker is improved for Wildblood. Though since Wildblood are so mobile, they're more likely to force the enemy to trigger. It can be a good amount of damage, but it's just damage.

[Lightning Explosion](#) (PP): Punish those enemies that moved away from you by sustaining the mark and pumping them for a bit of lightning damage. I don't see why the damage itself wasn't the Stormheart kicker instead of a piddly 3 extra damage, but there it is.

[Ravenous Earth](#) (PP): It seems good, but look closer. Enemies that start in the zone aren't affected.



**Sacrificial Assault** (PP): Use when you've got your enemies locked firmly in place for the best effect. Any attack on you gives your allies a serious boost. The damage on the base attack is also the highest at this level.

**Screaming Wind Strike** (PH2): Low damage, but a finite length stun vs. reflex is worth it. It's basically a free round against solos.

**Strengthening Gift** (PP): Again, not really epic enough for this level.

**Weight of the Mountain** (PH2): The primary attack is not much, but the secondary is a close burst 5 that slows (\*cough\*Crippling Crush\*cough\*)

## Level 29 Daily

Take Form of the Imperious Phoenix. Don't even bother looking at the others.

[Hide](#)

**Form of Spring Renewal** (PH2): Outclassed in every way by the elephant in the room.

**Form of the Chimera** (PH2): You might already have Uncanny Dodge, so the form is kind of a waste. The attack power is also not special.

Form of the Erupting Volcano (D 383): You might actually petrify one or two enemies, but you also run the risk of petrifying your allies too.

**Form of the Grim Harvester** (PP): The guaranteed vulnerability from the attack is pretty nice, and you can get a few free basic attacks out of the form. It's dimmed by the company it keeps though.

**Form of the Imperious Phoenix** (PP): Gold doesn't begin to describe the awesomeness of this form. You fly/hover from the form, and the attack power does everything. First you teleport to another group of enemies, and attack everything in burst 3 plus those marked foes you left behind. They all get some damage and a significant amount of ongoing. You also heal up to your bloodied value if it's less than that (so you'll want to wait until it's less), and all effects on you are now gone. Oh, did I mention that it's an immediate interrupt (CB is wrong) weapon attack at +6 *vs reflex*, so it's *extremely* accurate?

Form of the Lightning Lord (D 379): The avenger would *love* this power's isolation ability, but for you it's just ok.

[Form of the Soul Serpent](#) (PH2): The form is pretty decent, though tremorsense does nothing against flyers. The attack dazes as an effect though.

[Form of the Starmetal Warrior](#) (PH2): This form is actually pretty nasty to flying creatures. That's enough to make it sky blue.

[Form of the Thunderstorm](#) (PP): The form makes you mobile, though not upwardly so. The attack power stuns, and that's always useful.

Form of the Unruly Earth (PP): Your mark now slows and slaps a bit target on their chest. The attack holds them down, something pretty nasty against solos.

Form of Verdant Growth (PP): You grant your allies regeneration and you get a resurrection ability, but it doesn't do anything else to make you more durable.

## Utility and Skill Powers: Applying what you know

Note: I will only be including the skill powers for skills on the warden's class-skill list, unless there's something really notable on one of the other skills.

[Level 2](#)

### Utility Powers

[Call Faerie Guardian](#) (D 392): Daily. Here's a new thing to give a warden. It's a summon, neat! Now you can mark at range for an encounter. Note that the power says whenever you use your Nature's Wrath class feature, which also includes Warden's Grasp and Warden's Fury.

[Erupting Font](#) (PP): Encounter. You're gonna make some saves at the beginning of your turn, so when you do you can mark most of the battlefield, if not all. Mass marking is not as useful to you as it is to the paladin though, and the timing of when you get to use this is

beyond your control. If you've selected Form of Mountain's Thunder, your wizard's gonna be jealous.

**Eyes of the Hawk** (PH2): Encounter. Make a perception check at a huge bonus. Good for rooting out those stealthed foes.

**Guardian Thorns** (PP): Encounter. Defend at range. Good when you're wizard is being haunted by a pack of minions.

**Mountain Lion Step** (PH2): Encounter. Move like an elf for a turn.

**Nature's Abundance** (PH2): Daily. Grant allies cover in a good-sized burst for an encounter. If it weren't a Standard, it would probably be higher.

**Triumphant Vigor** (PH2): Daily. Surgeless healing, but you don't get to control when you can use it.

**Warden's Tempest** (PP): Encounter. You get to slide someone unprovoked. It's ok, but be sure to look at **Deadly Draw** if you do select this..

**Warding Touch** (PP): Encounter. For when you really gotta keep your ranger or rogue standing, and don't care if you take some hits.

## Skill Powers

**Bounding Leap** (Athletics): Encounter. How often do you find yourself making a lot of big jumps without a running start? You probably have a fairly decent Athletics bonus already, the times where this will play a factor will be miniscule.

**Deep Shadows** (Dungeoneering): Encounter. Allows you to use Dungeoneering in place of Stealth, so you might actually succeed. Only usable underground though.

**Endure Pain** (Endurance): Daily. Gain damage resistance as an interrupt. You'll find that useful your entire career.

**Exemplar of Valor** (Endurance): Daily. This is up against some stiff competition in the Endurance category.

**Far Sight** (Perception): Encounter. You're not a ranged weapon specialist.

Grit and Spittle (Endurance, D 385): Encounter. It's likely you've already gotten rid of the worst of the effects upon you, so this isn't as worth it to you as it is to other defenders.

Healer's Gift (Heal): Encounter. The Heal skill already has some of the functionality of this power built in, it just requires a roll. There's definitely some uses for this though, they're just a bit less common.

**Inspiring Fortitude** (Endurance): Daily. That's an awful lot of temp HP you just handed out. It also allows you to use your second wind as part of the action. If you're gonna use your second wind, you might as well get something extra out of it. Slightly less good for **dwarves**.

**Mounted Coordination** (Nature): Encounter. Small damage boost for one attack when mounted.

**Nature Sense** (Nature): Daily. Your nature modifier could potentially be rather large, and your initiative modifier probably isn't. The defense bonuses will be much appreciated.

**Ominous Threat** (Intimidate): Encounter. I personally haven't seen a lot of marks from enemies in my experience. Also, you really don't need help marking adjacent enemies.

Otherworldly Lore (Dungeoneering): Encounter. Not useful in every encounter due to the limitation on things that Dungeoneering can determine.

Scrambling Climb (Athletics): Encounter. Useful for getting to the tops of buildings when an artillery mob is up there, but if you have to do that a lot, you should probably smack your DM upside his head.

**Talented Athletics** (Athletics): At-Will. Well, you'll never drown or fall off the mountain, but was that really a problem before?

Level 6

## Utility Powers

**Bear's Endurance** (PH2): Daily. Surgeless healing that triggers when you would go unconscious. You hope you don't need it, but love having it when you do.

**Earthguard** (PH2): Daily Stance. Get a small boost to all defenses for an encounter.

**Fey Congress** (D 392): Daily. A sustain minor zone of concealment is pretty subpar. You can't even move it around.

**Returning the Gift** (PP): Daily. Typically the person is targetting you because they don't need it themselves or it's more useful to you. I'm sure you'll find a way to use this once per day though.

**Sea Stride** (PH2): At-Will. Do you swim often enough to need this?

**Soothing Wind** (PP): Daily. Second wind as a minor, and get extra HP. Not as useful if you're a dwarf.

**Treacherous Ice** (PP): Daily Stance. For those encounters where you can't use Form of Winter's Herald.

**Wilding Strength** (PP): Daily. Add 1d6 to all attack rolls and damage rolls until the end of your next turn. Good for those of you going for striker multiclass.

**Windborne Step** (PH2): Encounter. Shift 2 across difficult terrain. Decent.

**Wrathful Mastery** (PP): Daily. I misinterpreted this the first time, and reading it more carefully, it's pretty awful. I can see corner cases where it could be useful (which makes it purple, not red), but in the end, the cost outweighs the benefit.

## Skill Powers

**Delay Poison** (Heal): Encounter. Granting a save would be more useful, as poison in this edition just doesn't have a bite.

**Demoralize Foe** (Intimidate): Encounter. Just like rattling, but only 1/encounter and only vs attacks on you. You want to encourage them to attack you, not others.

**Everybody Move** (Intimidate): Encounter. An auto-push, but as I've said previously, pushing isn't really your thing.

**Eyes of the Deep Delver** (Dungeoneering): Encounter. Useful against fighting invisible creatures, though it doesn't help you if you're blinded.

**Guided Shot** (Perception): Encounter. Useful for helping the striker get that last little bonus to make sure he hits, but uses your immediate action for the round, which could go towards something more defensive.

**Internal Reserves** (Endurance): Daily. Good for when you really need to pass that saving throw.

**Kord's Force** (Athletics): At-Will. Most of the instances where a straight Strength check is appropriate, I as a DM allow Athletics checks anyway, because the recommended DCs assume that some of the PCs get the bonus from being trained. If your DM is making you use straight Strength checks a lot, this is a big boost.

**Mighty Sprint** (Athletics): Encounter. The shortlegged among you will love this, and the ignoring difficult terrain makes it good for all of you.

**Natural Terrain Understanding** (Nature, D 385): Encounter. You get to rearrange the battlefield and provide a defense bonus.

**Path of the Bounding Stag** (Nature): Encounter. Mighty Sprint is strictly better.

Physician's Care (Heal): Encounter. Has some niche uses, but like Healer's Gift, the Heal skill itself has part of this built in.

**Practiced Rider** (Nature): At-Will. If you're considering this, you're probably a mounted combat person anyway.

**Stonecunning** (Dungeoneering): Encounter. Considering how much more useful Perception is, this seems like a waste.

Sudden Leap (Athletics): Encounter. You don't have access to Acrobatics, so this might be a good alternative to Tumble.

**Swift Recovery** (Heal): Encounter. Granting someone else their second wind with only a minor action on your part without a roll is a serious upgrade from what being trained in Heal can do.

Third Wind (Endurance): Daily. Just like Second Wind, except it doesn't get all the extra add-ons that you get otherwise.

**Trapfinding** (Perception): Encounter. Also requires training in Thievery. Leave this to someone else.

**Try the Stick** (Intimidate): Encounter. I'm a fan of skill-swap abilities. Becomes **much better** with Cincture of the Dragon Spirit.

Walk It Off (Endurance): Encounter. You already get to do this. Gives you a second save at the start of your turn if you have two effects though.

Warning of Peril (Perception): Daily. Since it's only useful in combat, it's rather limited. It also doesn't apply to active perception checks.

Level 10

## Utility Powers

**Bond of Shared Pain** (PP): Encounter. Take damage for an ally. You have quite a few to spare, after all.

**Earthstride** (PH2): Encounter. Teleport your Con Mod, Earth 2 Terrian-style (or into mid-air, if that's your thing). One of the coolest powers nobody takes. More useful later in your career when you're more likely to deal with high cliffs and flying creatures.

Elemental Warding (PP): Encounter. Grant you and adjacent allies your choice of resistances. Only for a turn though. I might like this better if was a daily that lasted the whole encounter.

**Entangling Shield** (D 379): Daily. Gain a boost to a defense as an interrupt. Since you will likely know in advance whether this will cause the attack to miss, it pretty much guarantees the target will be immobilized for his troubles.

Guardian's Attack (PP): Daily. You get to use one of your polymorph form attack powers twice. The quality of this varies based on form. **Better** if you have Form of the Oak Sentinel, as its attack form is worth having twice.

Returning Strength (PH2): Daily. Get surge + Str. It's more useful after you've burned through your Second Wind. If only you could regain the use of your Second Wind.

**Shared Font of Life** (PP): Encounter. You won't be using Font of Life every round, sometimes it's very useful to let someone else use it.

**Shield of Stone** (PH2): Daily. Get an ally out of the way, and toughen them up. Can also be used to make them a second defender for a round. Very versatile.

**Spiritual Rejuvenation** (PP): Daily. For **dwarves**, don't bother looking elsewhere, getting two uses of second wind in an encounter is just too good. For the rest of you, this is your first option for getting second wind multiple times, so you should start thinking about how you can reduce it to something other than a standard.

**Sylvan Trickery** (D 392): Daily. A good safety line for you or an ally, as the teleport alone can get the target out of danger.

**Warding Vines** (PH2): Daily. Give allies in a zone damage resistance for an encounter. A nice boost, however with so many good options at this level it will probably just get lost in the crowd.

## Skill Powers

**Focused Sight** (Perception): Encounter. Using this in itself provokes, so this is more useful for ranged combatants.

**Incredible Stride** (Athletics): Daily. A much higher speed for a single encounter per day.

**Perfect Sight** (Perception): Encounter. A lesser version of Eyes of the Deep Delver, though you're more likely to be trained in Perception.

**Reactive Surge** (Endurance): Encounter. For some reason, the Endurance skill powers are head and shoulders above the rest. This one is no exception. Unless you like being bloodied, this will come in useful every encounter.

**Snap Out of It** (Intimidate): Encounter. Allows you to grant a save against the nastiest of status effects.

**Spot the Path** (Nature): Encounter. Everyone can ignore difficult terrain. Use at the beginning of combat so your allies can get in place.

**Spot Weakness** (Perception): Encounter. A damage boost against a single foe. It's a pretty sizable bonus, but it's only for you, and only for a brief period.

**Steeled Against It** (Endurance): Daily. An excellent way to get resistance against the foe that does multiple damage types in the same hit. It also increases the resistance if you already have that type. Also scales with level.

**Strength Against Strength** (Athletics): Encounter. This one rocks. When you miss a foe, you can make an Athletics check to knock him on his back anyway. It gives you an incentive to keep your Athletics bonus sky-high.

**Time Out** (Heal): Encounter. You can give an ally their second wind back. Convince your allies to take this so they can use it on you instead.



Trap Sense (Dungeoneering): Encounter. This is fun, but isn't going to come into play very often.

[Uncanny Instincts](#) (Perception): Daily. You and one ally get to go early in combat, guaranteed.

[Level](#) 16

## Utility Powers

[Cleansing Earth](#) (PH2): Encounter. This almost guarantees that the effect will go away as soon as its received, and having it as an encounter is awesome. I'm not typically a fan of things that give you saves because you just get so many, but the bonus on this one makes it head and shoulders better than the rest. Since it's an Immediate Reaction, there's some question as to whether you can use it against status effects that prevent you from being able to use Immediates, which might take away from its utility, but even with that it's still an awesome choice at this level.

[Fortress of Stone](#) (PP): Encounter. Useful for when you really need to protect your wizard.

[Invigorating Presence](#) (PP): Daily. A lot of temp HP, but the level 1 skill power Inspiring Fortitude hands out more. Still, this is just a minor, and you get them also.

Masking Fog (PP): Daily. The sustain on this is misleading. It will eventually dissipate even if you use the sustain, and it's just concealment.

Monkey's Grip (PH2): At-Will. You get a climb speed, but it takes a minor to activate and it's half your speed. You might have better luck with just using Athletics.

Primal Leap (PH2): Encounter. If you need this often, the rest of your party is kinda screwed.

Sun Fire Guardian (PP): Encounter. It should cause a lot of hits to miss if you do it right, but the blindness goes away once they're done attacking, so you don't get to capitalize on all the other fun things that blindness grants.

Verdant Life (PH2): Daily. Use second wind instead. Though this can be useful in a pinch if you've already used your second wind.

[Vine Poultice](#) (D 379): Daily. If you're going for leader secondary, this is worth a look.

**Warden's Refusal** (PP): Encounter. I consider this an upgraded Warden's Grasp. The trigger is the movement, not the attack, so once they're flanking an ally you can rip them away and prevent an attack.

## Skill Powers

**Diehard** (Endurance): Daily. You can opt to go dazed instead of unconscious. Basically, it keeps you alive long enough to second wind.

Miraculous Treatment (Heal): Daily. Surgeless healing, but it requires a standard action, and it's only a daily.

Nightshade Draught (Nature, D 385): Daily. Stay standing when you're dying, but the cost is huge.

Practiced Mental Defense (Dungeoneering, D 385): Daily. Dazed is certainly better than dominated or stunned.

### Hide

**A Scattering of Ashes** (PP): Encounter. Enemies are granted concealment by the ash, so it's not that good.

Channeled Vitality (PP): Daily. Your temp HP will probably vanish pretty quickly, so don't count on that 2[W] for too long. Its stock **improves** if you can gain a more reliable way of keeping your THP high (such as a Cincture of Vivacity + Second Wind Optimization).

**Debilitating Ward** (PP): Encounter. This can be pretty devastating if you time it right.

**Eagle's Wings** (PH2): Daily. You've been waiting for something like this.

**Panacea** (PH2): Daily. If you're facing a lot of debuffers, this is very fortuitous.

**Primal Cascade** (D 379): Encounter. This should be a much lower level power.

**Renewal** (PH2): Daily. You get some healing, plus get an encounter power back. Remember, most of your guardian form attack powers count as encounter powers.

Strength from Death (PP): Encounter. It's a fairly small amount of hit points, and it uses an immediate action. It's also hard to control when you can get it.

[Wellspring of Life](#) (PH2): Daily. Getting a regeneration value of 12+ is fairly significant.

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## Feats: Nature's Tricks

### Heroic Tier Feats

[Class](#)

Courage of the Lone Stag (D 379): This is extremely conditional, though really nice when you can manage it. **Better** if you go for a lot of area attacks.

**Crippling Crush** (PP): If you wield a hammer (because, seriously, who wields maces?) and have a high Con then you want this. I know Wardens don't care as much about damage, but since you're going to be slowing or immobilizing A LOT, that's a LOT of damage to throw out there. Combine with Sudden Roots for maximum effect.

**Crushing Earthstrength** (PH2): If you can work it right, it can be quite a bit of damage, but it is just for a turn. If you happen to have **second wind as a minor**, it's stock improves since you get two turns of benefit out of it without spending an action point.

**Crushing Guardian** (D 379): They certainly like the crushing theme with Warden feats. Anyway, by higher levels you'll be in guardian form more often than not, so don't take this until you have enough forms to maintain one in over 50% of your battles each day. Hammers only. Well, maces too, but again, why bother?

**Dancing Leaves** (D 392): A nice boost to a subpar power. It will make you start looking at how you can increase the distance of your teleports.

**Deft Guardian** (D 379): Shift 1 when you enter your dailies? It's not worth terribly much when druids get to shift 1 when they turn back into their humanoid forms, being able to do so on a daily is worth even less.

**Earthstrength Resilience** (PP): A damage resistance buff to your second wind that scales with level. Since Earthstrength wardens are the ones most likely to second wind when they're likely to take a bunch of hits, this will not go to waste.

**Elemental Boon** (D 383): Gain a bonus to saving throws made at the beginning of your turn, but only against stuff with an elemental keyword. Not at the end of your turn, and not against the stuff you really want to shrug off, like Stunned or Dazed (unless it's coupled with elemental damage, but that's very rare).

**Font of Chaos** (D 383): I'm not really a fan of chaos. The benefit of this feat is not good enough to make the chaos tolerable.

**Impaling Thrust** (PP): Heavy Blade or Spear. Since you don't care about crits, converting them into normal hits is not terrible. Unfortunately, since this is uncontrolled and conditional, it's not that great.

**Lifespirt Vigor** (PP): Now you grant two allies saving throws when you second wind. As you go up in level, effects become more prevalent, so this gets more useful.

**Revitalizing Font of Life** (PH2): Conditional, but can save your butt if you've become a status effect christmas tree.

**Roiling Storm** (D 383): Give up your Stormheart second wind effect to shift yourself instead. I like the addition, but giving up the enemy slide is not worth it.

**Starshine Mantle** (D 392): Requires Fey Origin racial trait. A small defense boost when you second wind, which might be good for non-Earthstrength wardens.

**Storm's Lightning** (D 383): If you have some way to mark large areas (say through Erupting Font) this becomes **awesome**.

**Stormheart Push** (PP): I'm really not a fan of wardens pushing their marks away, so this doesn't seem like an upgrade at all.

**Sudden Roots** (PH2): This feat could very easily be **sky blue** or **gold** depending on how often your DM provokes OAs. I have not gotten a terrible amount of usage out of it, but I find that having it means you're less likely to use it, and not having it will make you wish you did. It synergizes quite well with Crippling Crush.

**Swaying Branches** (D 392): This gives Warden's Fury some real bite. A slide 1 can go a long way towards cancelling the target's attacks, and the proning part opens up a lot of other options. You have to give up the damage, but that's ok.

**Wildblood Cunning** (PH2): This is what Roiling Storm should have been. It's even better for Wildblood than it would be for Stormheart, since you can shift to a place where your marks can't get to you and then watch them attack other people in vain.

**Wildblood Fury** (PP): A sizable damage boost against marked enemies when you second wind. I prefer the kiting strategy that Wildblood Cunning offers myself, though taken in conjunction they're still decent. Second wind, shift well out of reach, then move back in next round to get the bonuses.

## General

**Against All Odds** (D 364): Even Earthstrength and Stormheart should be able to qualify for this without reaching. Since you should be striving to meet the trigger without the feat anyway, this just piles some gravy on for your efforts.

**Armor Finesse** (HotFL): The check penalty for Hide Armor is -1, so this isn't that useful. Be sure to swap out for Armor Specialization (Hide) at paragon, and subsequently Second Skin at epic.

**Battering Shield** (PH3): If you're going for maximizing enemy forced movement, this will be very useful.

**Battlewise** (HotFK): You Wisdom boys got a nice boost in quickness in this one.

Courageous Example (D 377): You're the master of saving throws, so this should help out your allies with theirs.

**Deadly Draw** (PH3): You'll be pulling or sliding enemies adjacent to you *a lot*. Now you get combat advantage when you do.

**Disciple of Justice** (HotFL): Your second wind can heal your allies instead, and you still get the defense bonuses, plus whatever else your second wind gives you. If you can second wind multiple times in an encounter, that can become hilarious.

**Disciple of Stone** (HotFL): Temporary hit points are never wasted on you, and you'll get them often, as the trigger will happen a lot.

Durable (PHB): Con wardens will have plenty of surges, but **Wisdom** wardens may want to grab this to make up for it.

Echoes of Thunder (PH2): **Stormheart** will love this, because it will trigger quite a bit.

**Fey Companions** (D 392): I'm not sure why it boosts Streetwise, as its not something you'll be good at at all. The rest of it is certainly not worth a feat slot. Take Wasteland Wanderer instead.

**Focused Mind** (PH3): A huge bonus to saves against some of the nastiest status effects.

**Great Fortitude** (HotFL): You want Superior Fortitude instead.

**Hafted Defense** (PH3): Your polearm also counts as a light shield now. Well, not really, but you get the picture.

**Headsman's Chop** (PH3): You'll probably have plenty of opportunities to use this, but it's just damage. Pair with Swaying Branches for best effect.

**Improved Defenses** (HotFL): Has made other feats obsolete, you'll **definitely want** by paragon.

**Improved Initiative** (PHB): Something useful for all characters, because monsters often have high initiative modifiers.

**Iron Will** (HotFL): Some of you will qualify for Superior Will, so if you do, take that instead. If not, you're probably better off with Improved Defenses.

**Lightning Reflexes** (HotFL): You almost certainly won't qualify for Superior Reflexes, so you're stuck with this option. If Improved Defenses doesn't do enough for you, this will help a smidge.

**Opportunity Sidestep** (PH3): Better when combined with other feats, such as Sudden Roots.

**Oncoming Storm** (PH2): Considering that one of the better at-wills has both of the requisite keywords, you can technically keep the bonus up as long as you keep hitting. Or, start out the combat with a lightning spray from your Dragonborn breath weapon, and get the bonus on two attacks. Obviously better at low-to-mid heroic where you'll be using at-wills a lot, but later you'll have to work a bit harder to keep it going. Only a couple powers have both keywords (after level 1, there's Rumbling Doom at 13), but an awful lot have one or the other, and for you Stormhearts you're looking for those anyway.

**Polearm Flanker** (PH3): If you're using a polearm, you'll want to grab this at some point, as it eliminates one of the polearm's major drawbacks.

**Resilient Focus** (HotFL): A +2 to all saves, no prerequisites. Nice.

**Shield Finesse** (HotFL): Since you'll be using a heavy shield, you can drop that -2 to Athletics checks from having it. Still, there are higher priorities.

**Skill Power** (PH3): For the cost of a feat, you get a free utility power. Pick up an extra Endurance power, as they're all awesome.

**Superior Fortitude/Will** (HotFL): These feats are otherwise identical to Great Fortitude/Iron Will, except the Fortitude one gives resistance to ongoing damage and the Will one gives you the ability to make saves vs dazed and stunned at the beginning of your turn. I'd still take Improved Defenses first though, as you're more likely to want to patch up all your NADs. If you're inclined to, though, dump Improved Defense and take a feat for each NAD.

**Terrain Advantage** (HotFK): If you use a Form that creates difficult terrain, this means that ALL your attacks are with combat advantage.

**Timely Respite** (PH2): As if you didn't have enough chances to make saving throws, this feat grants one when you second wind as well.

**Toughness** (PHB): Every character should take this by paragon.

**Vicious Advantage** (PH3): Since you do so much slowing and immobilizing, why wouldn't you want this?

**Wasteland Wanderer** (HotFK): A boost to two oft-used skills that you want to be good at, and a boost to initiative to boot. Nice.

**Weapon Expertise** (PH2): As of Heroes of the Fallen Lands, you should immediately remove this from your character sheet, in favor of one of the following:

**Axe/Bludgeon/Heavy Blade/Spear Expertise** (HotFL): If you have one of these weapons, then good on you. The Axe feat gives you a lesser form of brutal, Bludgeon increases your forced movement, Heavy Blade gives you an AC boost vs OAs, and Spear gives you a damage boost on charge attacks. In addition, the paragon bump kicks in at 11, instead of 15.

**Master at Arms** (HotFL): If you're a polearm user that isn't a spear, you should think about this one (for the time being, at least).

**Staff Expertise** (HotFL): If you need to use an weapliment, this is the only new expertise feat that applies to both so far. For you multiclass druids/shamans.

**Weapon Focus** (PHB): You'll probably want to pick this up by paragon, but if you don't, it's not a great loss.

**Weapon Proficiency** (PHB): Do you really need a superior weapon? If you have a racial weapon feat, go with that instead, they're almost universally better.

**Wilderness Skirmisher** (HotFK): Remember, your Close Burst zones of difficult terrain (such as from your Forms) don't include your square, so this isn't as good as it could be at first glance.

**Wintertouched** (PHB): One of the key components to frostcheese, which is a viable option for wardens. Not useful until paragon though when you can take Lasting Frost.

**World Serpent's Grasp** (HotFK): You'll likely be making more than a few hits on creatures that are slowed or immobilized, now you can knock them on their backs.

## Racial

Note: This includes all race-specific warden feats, as well as any racial feats open to all that I deem notable.

## Deva

**Battle Intuition** (D 374): Pull even more stuff off being tied to Dexterity. Wardens approve.

## Dragonborn



**Dragonborn Vengeance** (D 379): A +1 to a very minor attack you get once per encounter against marked foes? Come back when you can use dragon breath much more often.

**Hurl Breath** (PHR Dragonborn): Turn your dragon breath into a ranged burst. Only really useful if you take Primal Breath.

**Primal Breath** (PP): Mark all targets of your dragon breath, hit or miss. Combine with **Hurl Breath** to mark at range.

### Drow

**Spider's Swiftess** (PP): Speed increases are hard to come by, and this one becomes even better when you're in a guardian form.

**Unseelie Blight** (D 392): You already have darkvision, so you ignore dim or no light already. Also, this overlaps a bit with Darkfire.

### Dwarf

**Cast Iron Font** (D 379): How often are you making saving throws against poison to find this useful?

**Dodge Giants** (PHB): This actually becomes more useful in paragon. Don't bother until then.

**Dwarven Weapon Training** (PHB): Get proficiency with the Craghammer and Mordenkrad, and a damage bonus. A step up from Weapon Proficiency.

**Forgeborn Heritage** (D 383): Bloodline. Gain a modicum of resistance to 4 elements, and a damage kicker encounter power. You also don't have a beard, so if you're ok with that it's pretty decent.

**Gold Dwarf Pride** (FRPG): Gain a bonus if you've been knocked out and stood back up. The idea is not to have that happen.

**Resilience of Stone** (MP2): Second Wind as interrupt when you take damage from an attack. Requires you to multiclass martial, but if you were going there anyway...

**Shield the Fallen** (FRPG): Help out your dying ally. One of those feats you hope you never have to use.

**Spirits of Stone** (PP): The bonus is just to your next attack roll, not a fixed duration, or this would be a lot better.

## Eladrin

**Eladrin Soldier** (PHB): You get proficiency with the greatspear and a damage bonus to boot. This is part of the reason to even bother with Eladrin.

Eladrin Swordmage Advance (AP): Requires multiclass swordmage. If you were looking to make a Feycharger, you should probably not have started with Warden.

**Eladrin's Challenge** (MP2): Requires multiclass fighter. For an otherwise non-ideal race, the spear feats are pretty awesome.

**Feral Fey Step** (PP): Use fey step again when you're first bloodied. That can be useful in so many ways.

**Moon Elf Resilience** (FRPG): Spend a surge when you teleport out of combat. It's a little tricky to get to work consistently, but if you combine it with Feral Fey Step it will happen exactly when it's most useful.

## Elf

**Elven Guardian** (D 379): Bonus when you use Elven Accuracy while in guardian form. This feat's only saving grace is that it still stacks with Wild Elf Luck and Elven Precision.

**Elven Precision** (PHB): A flat bonus to your Elven Accuracy rerolls. Take Wild Elf Luck first.

**Elven Sidestep** (MP2): Requires multiclass fighter. Marked foes don't get OAs from the first square you move from. Works for wardens thanks to the generic mark.

Eyes of the Spirits (PP): This is not the same thing as ignoring concealment, it's just the penalty to attacks.

**Sylvan Fury** (D 392): As Nature's Fury includes both the act of marking, and the act of defending the mark, you get a free shift once a round, and then whenever you use your mark punishment. Look for this to get an errata at some point, but in the meantime, take it and love it.

Opportunistic Accuracy (MP): Requires multiclass fighter. Makes Elven Accuracy Reliable. Probably better than the feats that grant bonuses.

Wild Elf Luck (FRPG): The better of the feats that grant a bonus to Elven Accuracy. Still barely useful.

## Genasi

**Buffetting Winds** (D 383): Only useful for Con windsoul wardens, but when you use your racial encounter power (which is flight, by the way), you've completely rearranged the battlefield. Allows you to slide everyone in a manner that prevents OAs during your flight, which is an added bonus.

**Earth Cage** (D 383): Add slowed to your encounter racial power. Since that's not a weapon attack, it doesn't get all the benefits your other slowing attacks do.

**Elemental Might** (D 379): Small damage boost triggered by using your racial power against marked foes. Just not enough of a boost to make it worth it.

**Go with the Flow** (D 383): Let me get this straight. You're trying to get encourage me to not use one of the coolest racial mobility powers in the game for a free shift 1 when I mark a large group? Sounds like a trap.

**Storm Manifested** (D 383): Stormsoul genasi get a better version of the Stormheart's second wind benefit when they use their racial power.

Untamed Fire (D 383): The racial power's not that great, and this just adds damage. Meh.

## Githzerai

Alhahn's Mindful Relocation (PH3): You'll get more out of this than most Gith, so it's not bad.

Dakshai's Body-Mind Union (PH3): You get more chances than most to make saves than anyone else, so getting more might be too much. At least you get a sizable bonus with this one.

**Githzerai Blade Master** (D 378): You were probably going to take bastard sword or fullblade proficiency anyway since you'll have the dexterity to take the heavy blade feats in paragon and epic, so take this instead and free up the feat slot you were going to use for weapon focus too.

Marked Fortunes (D 378): You get to mark two groups of enemies once per encounter. It's just not necessary though, you don't have a problem making sure people are marked.

**Marked With Iron** (D 378): Now we're getting somewhere. Add a great benefit to an awesome racial power.

## Gnome

Gnome Weapon Training (MP 2): Why this one requires you to be martial is beyond me. You don't get proficiencies out of it, though if you plan on using any kind of hammer or pick, take this instead of Weapon Focus if you were planning on taking that.

## Goliath

**Dutiful Servant** (DSCS): Warlords, leaders, bards, and ardens who grant attacks will love you to death if you have this. If there are no leaders in the party that do this, it's completely worthless.

Goliath Greatweapon Prowess (PH2): At least it doesn't require you to be martial. Still no proficiencies, but if you're going to take Weapon Focus for a two-handed military weapon, take this instead. If you're using a two-handed weapon, you were probably going to take Weapon Focus anyway.

Goliath Resolve (D 386): It's just +1 to all defenses when you second wind, which is decent at heroic level.

**Guard of Stone** (D 379): So when you increase your durability, it cranks the penalty from your mark way up. That's awesome!

**Markings of the Elements** (PP): Your Stone's Endurance resistance becomes a you-pick variable type, and increased by 5 when you do so. That's pretty useful in a lot of situations.

Markings of the Predator (PP): Better suited for the barbarian, as you won't be doing as much bloodying.

**Stone's Wrath** (DSCS): This is pretty situational, and the damage bonus is pretty piddly.

## Half-Elf

Dilettante's Mark (D 379): The quality of this feat is handcuffed to **Versatile Master**. Since it doesn't specify that your dilettante power has to be melee, this is a good way to get a ranged marking power, something the warden is otherwise lacking.

**Group Defense** (DP): Requires multiclass paladin. Even better than increasing the penalty from your mark, because the defense bonus still applies when the enemy is using a multitarget attack that includes you.

**Half-Elf Spirit Speaker** (PP): Hand out a bonus to defenses to your entire team when you're bloodied. Parties love half-elves among their ranks.

## Half-Orc

**Half-Orc Vengeance** (D 379): This is a feat bonus, so it's made all but obsolete by paragon, and isn't that great in heroic.

## Halfling

**Lost in the Crowd** (PHB): Partially makes up for the fact that you're a halfling.

**Nimble Dodge** (MP2): Requires martial multiclass. DMs hate your Second Chance power even more now.

**Primal Halfling Counterattack** (PP): I'm not a fan of damage bonuses, but this one is pretty sizable, which should help make up for the fact that your weapon is puny.

**Talenta Weapon Training** (EPG): Gain proficiency with all three talenta weapons, and a damage bonus to boot.

## Human

**Action Surge** (PHB): They can't seem to come up with a good way to flavor humans beyond giving them crazy stuff when they spend an action point. Here's the top of the pile. Useful for when you really need to stick that daily, do it with an action point.

**Die Hard** (D 383): When you have two failed death saving throws, you don't die on a 5+ and stand back up on a 10+. Please refrain from the yippee ki yaying.

**Don't Count Me Out** (D 383): When you're bloodied, you get a bonus to saving throws against a set of nasty effects. A good boost when you'd need it most.

**Frantic Recovery** (D 383): Second wind as a minor when you action point. If you have enough action points (because some things generate more for you), this could be every encounter.

**Human Perseverance** (PHB): A key part of how humans can become immune to save ends effects.

**Shared Perseverance** (DP): Requires cleric multiclass. Lifespirit will be giving out saving throws to allies, and this adds a bonus onto it.

**Stubborn Survivor** (FRPG): Yet another bonus to saving throws.

**Wrath of the Forester** (D 379): Get a second use of Nature's Wrath when you action point. Useful for having multiple groups of marks, but not always easy to pull off in practice.

## Minotaur

**Bloodied Ferocity** (PH3): You get a free attack when you go bloodied, so it will happen every encounter. But you grant CA for your effort, which for me is a pretty big hit.

**Opportunity Gore** (D 369): You might take this instead of Sudden Roots if you're so inclined. You get to use Goring Charge as an opportunity attack. It also effectively makes goring charge an at-will for opportunity attacks and doesn't require it to be part of a charge. So effectively your OAs now knock prone. Combine with Sudden Roots and Opportunity Sidestep to effectively lock down an enemy. OAs then prone, slow, and you shift 1 square away.

## Mul

**Humanity's Heir** (DSCS): A small boost to one of your NADs makes this something to look at, but you'll likely have much better choices.

**Invigorating Toughness** (DSCS): I don't find the cost to be worth it. You're giving up a feat slot to be able to get 9-13 THP instead of being able to end some nasty conditions 1/encounter. If this was an "in addition to" feat, I'd be more kind, to be sure.

**Legacy of Stone** (DSCS): I've always thought that the ability to save vs. prone was better than the reduction of forced movement. The save bonus vs. poison also won't be that useful.

**Mul's Stamina** (DSCS): This is more like it. Remember, if someone in the party has Comrade's Succor, having more surges than you'll ever use is not a problem. And Endurance is a skill that you really don't want to fail.

## Revenant

**Marked for Death** (D 376): Hand out lots of damage when you using dark reaping. **Pretty sweet** if you have the ability to mass mark.

## Shardmind

## Shifter

**Sturdy Shifter** (EPG): This is a nice ability for any class, and it certainly won't go to waste for wardens.

[Longtooth Fury](#) (MP2): Longtooth only. Better than Longtooth Vengeance, but this one requires you to be multiclassed fighter. Whether the two stack to give you a +5 is interpretive.

[Longtooth Spirit Shifter](#) (PP): Longtooth only. You love having regeneration, and now you'll love it even more. Remember, the damage bonus still happens even when you become unbloodied.

[Longtooth Vengeance](#) (D 379): Longtooth only. Since you don't really have a problem marking, this almost makes it the equivalent of a flat +1 to damage when bloodied (which a shifter will want to be as much as possible).

[Razorclaw Mark](#) (MP2): Razorclaw only. If you were multiclassed fighter anyway, this one is almost as good as the Mark of Warding. Unlike that feat, though, this one is usable in other settings.

[Razorclaw Spirit Shifter](#) (PP): Razorclaw only. This one doesn't look as useful until you realize it can cancel multiattacks.

[Razorclaw Swiftess](#) (D 379): Razorclaw only. Allows you to shift when you use Nature's Wrath. This can certainly be useful, but most of the time you can accomplish what you need with your actual move action.

## Tiefling

[Diabolic Soul](#) (D 381): You replace Infernal Wrath with a guardian form-like polymorph power. It's actually pretty decent for you, even if it doesn't stack with your other guardian forms.

[Hellfire Blood](#) (PHB): If you have a flaming weapon, this will give a +1 bonus to every attack. Otherwise, don't bother.

[Rites of Spirits' Blood](#) (PP): Double your attack bonuses from Bloodhunt and Infernal Wrath. You should really still be a paladin instead though.

## Warforged

[Immutability](#) (EPG): This requires the below, and due to that is taken down a notch. Also, you already get quite a few save opportunities, spending a feat to get more is a bit much.

[Improved Warforged Resolve](#) (EPG): Temp HP is hard to come by for wardens, so getting extra is very worthwhile.

**Warforged Tactics** (EPG): Untyped bonuses to attack rolls for something that's likely to happen often are pure win.

## Wilden

## Dragonmarks

Note: A lot of campaigns don't have access to Dragonmarks, so if you do, count yourself rather lucky. Typically when you select one of these (very powerful) feats, it's the focal point of your build, so it can change the ratings for a lot of other powers and feats fairly drastically.

**Mark of Finding** (EPG): If you can get consistent combat advantage on a foe (hint: Frostcheese), this will ensure that your mark never gets away. Literally, as you can follow him all over the map.

**Mark of Storm** (EPG): Stormheart will be sliding people all over the place with most of their attacks.

**Mark of Warding** (EPG): The only feat that causes all marks to become a -3 penalty all the time. It also boosts your defense boosting powers by 1. That's pure win.

## Misc

**Thug Novice** (D 381): I'm not a fan of powerswap feats, but the encounter power this one gives you is pretty good. Your rogue will love you to death.

**Thug Specialist** (D 381): Would you give up a feat and one of your guardian forms for this? I wouldn't, but the power isn't bad.

**Thug Expert** (D 381): The power this grants is not necessarily an upgrade over what you already have access to.

# Paragon Tier Feats

## Class



**Arcing Throw** (PP): Thrown weapon? What the heck?

**Earth's Punishment** (D 379): Earthstrength only. Your marks now deal damage like a paladin's when they are adjacent. Oh, you also still get your Immediate Interrupt swipe too.

**Earthstrength Defenses** (PP): Earthstrength only. Now your NADs get the same huge bump as your AC when you second wind.

**Earthstrength Resolve** (PH2): Earthstrength only. Even if they do decide to go after your friends, you get temp HP as a consolation prize, then get a swipe anyway.

Enhanced Font of Life (PH2): One part of being immune to save ends effects, **made better** if you can get multiple saves when you use Font of Life.

Font of Vengeance (D 379): Wow, that's a serious set of conditions to wade through.

**Forceful Smash** (PP): You're not optimizing for crits, so don't bother.

**Gusting Rebuke** (D 383): It's a push, and a fairly sizable one. Use your Warden's Fury instead.

**Lifespirt Healing** (PP): Lifespirt only. Since you're a Lifespirt, you've already committed to secondary healer, so this doubles the effect.

**Maneuvering Attack** (PP): This only gives you combat advantage, but if you use a polearm, it's bound to trigger fairly often.

Quickening Font (D 379): You don't get to control when it triggers, so it can't be counted on.

Stormheart Thunder (PP): Stormheart only. If you've maximized your thunder powers, adding thunder vulnerability to a group of enemies can prove rather nasty.

**Vengeful Grasp** (D 379): Again with the pushing. I don't really find this to be an upgrade.

Wellspring of Life (PP): An ally or two might get a bonus, but other than that it's pretty lackluster.

**Wildblood Retribution** (PP): Wildblood only. The punishment this triggers is kind of weird so read it carefully. I recommend using this with a polearm so that you're more likely to be able to reach the targets without too much effort.

**Wildblood Speed** (PH2): I may submit for a clarification on this one. There's two interpretations: first, since it's a free action that triggers off making the attack, you can still use it with Warden's Fury; second, the free action has to happen after the trigger, in which case you can't combine it. If the first is true, this feat becomes **gold**, but I'm rating based on the second.

## General

**Armor Specialization (Hide)** (PHB): Swap out for Second Skin in Epic, but for now, it's a free bump to AC, and makes you as agile as if you were wearing Leather Armor.

**Deadly Axe** (PHB): You're probably not using an axe, and if you are, it's probably already high crit.

**Eyes in the Back of Your Head** (PH3): You'll probably be flanked often, since you like to keep enemies adjacent. This will help with that. Overlaps with Uncanny Dodge, but this one doesn't have a Wisdom requirement.

**Great Fortitude/Iron Will/Lightning Reflexes** (PHB): Shoring up your NADs is always useful, but they don't stack with Paragon Defenses.

**Hammer Rhythm** (PHB): You now have a miss effect on all attacks, even melee basics.

**Heavy Blade Opportunity** (PHB): Your at-wills aren't as much of an upgrade over your melee basics as they are for other classes, but if you use a heavy blade and have Sudden Roots, you can combine the two.

Improved Second Wind (PHB): Another part of second wind optimization.

**Lasting Frost** (PHB): The lynchpin of the frostcheese combo, this is what causes the large amounts of damage. See post #13 for the frostcheese package.

**Paragon Defenses** (PH2): Now obsolete, take Improved Defenses instead. It's a higher boost, and doesn't require swapping out.

**Polearm Gamble** (PHB): You gain limited threatening reach (which for some of you won't be useful when you're in your guardian forms) at the cost of granting combat advantage.

**Psychic Lock** (PHB): Included for posterity, as it's possible to have all your attacks do psychic damage. Your foes gain a penalty to attacks as long as you keep hitting.

**Shield Mastery** (PH3): If you're defense minded, this is a fair boost to your fortitude defense, which should already be pretty high.

**Shield Specialization (Heavy)** (PHB): This feat is completely subsumed by feats you're going to want to take anyway (Armor Specialization [Hide] and Improved Defenses). If you have the feat to spend on shields, go with Encouraging Shield (for those of you multiclassed fighter) or Shield Mastery instead.

**Solid Sound** (PHB): Triggers when Echoes of Thunder would, the defense bonus can't be applied to AC though.

**Uncanny Dodge** (PHB): For most enemies, this cuts out the 'advantage' in Combat Advantage. If they get a damage kicker for CA, that still happens. Needs a decent amount of wisdom to use though. The rest of you will just have to 'settle' for Eyes in the Back of Your Head. Or you could take both, but there's a lot of overlap.

## Racial

### Dragonborn

**Draconic Arrogance** (MP): Requires multiclass fighter. If you go out of your way to knock people around, this is a good way to pile on some extra damage.

### Dwarf

**Dwarven Durability** (PHB): It should be a crime for you dwarves to not take this feat.

**Dwarven Recovery** (MP2): Requires martial multiclass. If you're multiclassing martial anyway, this is a decent option.

### Eladrin

**Fey Charge** (MP): Requires multiclass fighter. Wardens are not optimal feychargers in any sense, but if you like the flavor of it, here's where it starts.

### Githzerai

**Energy Transference** (D 378): Iron Mind is already an Interrupt, so now you're adding resistance to the triggering damage type on to it. You might just use it even if the defense bonus won't cause it to miss now.

### Goliath

**Legacy of War** (D 386): This is a significant boost to your encounter racial power.

**Unyielding Stone** (PH2): This is probably going to be a lot of temp HP, in addition to the damage resistance you already have.

### Half-Elf

**Versatile Master** (PH2): This is likely why you're a half-elf, after all.

### Human

**Action Recovery** (PHB): Humans seem to be all about action point optimization, and this is one of the reasons. Only black because you'll probably have already gotten a chance to save against at least one of the conditions affecting you.

**Pain Doesn't Hurt** (D 383): Saving throw bonuses, on the other hand, are awesome, and humans get them aplenty. This is just when you're bloodied, though, and only against ongoing damage.

**Persistent Threat** (D 383): You still get dazed, it just tends to go away when your turn starts. This eliminates the downside of being dazed before your turn starts.

### Minotaur

### Shifter

**Beasthide Shifting** (PH2): Now you ignore some of the damage on top of healing it back. Just a little bit though.

### Thri-Kreen

**Sturdy Plating** (DSCS): Resist 2 is pretty small at paragon, but if you're doing your job, that will probably add up over time.

## **Epic Tier Feats**

### Class

**Dazing Fury** (D 379): Dazing is a good upgrade. It's a good thing you can use Warden's Fury twice a round now.

**Earthstrength Might** (PP): If you're a dwarf or have another way to second wind as a minor/free/immediate (because by epic a number of ways exist), this is a **no-brainer**. This could be somewhere in the 3-5 extra attacks range in an encounter.

**Enduring Font** (PH2): Your Font of Life just got better. It's among stiff competition though.

**Far-Reaching Grasp** (PP): Warden's Grasp is a mediocre class, this doesn't do much for it. This doesn't really have any business being an epic feat.

**Inspirational Survival** (D 387): This would be much better at the paragon tier, where it wouldn't compete for so many awesome feats, but the bonuses it gives out would certainly be useful in epic.

**Limitless Wrath** (D 379): This would be of limited value in heroic, but it's an epic feat.

**Mountain's Wrath** (D 383): This is almost completely outclassed by Strength Through Challenge. It is difficult to get enough people marked in burst 1 to beat out a flat resist 5 all.

**Rapid Wild Defense** (D 387): One of the few epic feats that improves how you do your duties as a defender. I'm torn on this one between gold and sky blue, but if it makes you not feel bad about using your Warden's Grasp, I'll err on the side of gold. Slide the solo within your reach on their first attack, then hit them with Warden's Fury on their second.

**Tangling Grasp** (PP): I like this better as a paragon feat, but by epic the enemy likely has enough reach to not care. Still, there's situational value in it.

## General

**Axe/Bludgeon/Heavy Blade/Pick/Spear Mastery** (PHB): There are definitely higher priorities, and these are notoriously hard to qualify for. Still, it's there if you want them. See [this thread](#) for an analysis of these vs. Weapon Focus. Stock improves **somewhat** if you have a high crit weapon or other things that trigger on a crit.

**Epic Fortitude/Reflexes/Will** (PH2): This is a substantial untyped bonus to one NAD, but it's a feat, and there's a lot of competition here. Fit one or two in when you can.

**Epic Recovery** (MP): Requires martial multiclass. This, plus Armor of Enduring Health, means three second winds per encounter, guaranteed.

**Primal Resurgence** (PH2): Regaining dailies is difficult, but this should be a surefire way of getting it.

**Robust Defenses** (PH2): Made obsolete by Improved Defenses.

**Second Skin** (PP): Retrain Armor Specialization (Hide) into this at level 21. Requires some Con, so some of you may be left holding the bag on this one.

**Strength Through Challenge** (D 387): You'll want to pick this up as soon as possible. You shouldn't have any trouble getting this to be in effect, unless you're fighting solos.

**Superior Initiative** (PH3): If you took Improved Initiative, swap it out for this as soon as you can.

**Surprise Mark** (D 387): Wardens aren't known for their high initiative modifiers, so getting your mark out early can be useful, especially if you're known for rolling at dwarf speed fairly consistently.

## Racial

### Dwarf

**Stoneheart Warrior** (MP): Requires martial multiclass. You already had the easiest time using your second wind, so this may not be necessary. Still, it's there.

### Githzerai

**Adamantine Mind** (PH3): I find myself using Iron Mind quite often on my Githzerai characters, so boosting the bonus it gives is just cake.

**Peerless Reaction** (PH3): A good alternative to the above feat. I wouldn't take both though.

### Goliath

**Ancient Stone** (PH2): Extend your damage resistance by an extra round.

### Minotaur

**Mythic Senses** (PH3): If you're a Wildblood or Lifespirit, your Perception bonus is probably considerably higher than your initiative bonus. Take instead of Superior Initiative if you're so inclined.

**Uncanny Scent** (PH3): I'm not sure whose idea it was for cows to get a scent ability (I would have given it to shifters myself), but they did, so have at thee. Detect invisible creatures and ignore concealment by smelling them.

**Vicious Stomp** (PH3): If you took Opportunity Gore, this is **mandatory**. If not, well, maybe you should go back in time and smack yourself for not taking it. Or just retrain for it.

### Mul

**Inexhaustible Resources** (DSCS): You should have a pretty sizable surge value at this point, so you'll be starting every encounter with the same tactic: run up to the nastiest group of guys in the room, punch them in the nose, mark, then second wind. I'm not sure how this would stack with things like the Cloak of the Walking Wounded though.

## Themes: A defining characteristic

### Dark Sun

**Gladiator** (DSCS): A few wardens find themselves fighting for their lives in the arena, and lessons learned there are invaluable outside of the arena as well. This is a good choice for wardens going for pure, raw defender.

### Powers

**Disrupting Advance** (Feature): The theme is worth taking for this power alone even if you don't bother with any other powers or feats. With Crippling Crush, the primary-target's damage gets boosted by your Con-mod as well, and you slow a group of enemies.

**Go with the Flow** (Lvl 2 Util): The target doesn't have to be marked, and they don't need to start adjacent to you. If any enemy goes after your back line, you can haunt them down and make your presence known.

**Perceive Weakness** (Lvl 10 Util): A reliable boost to attack and damage that you get against a monster who misses (which is likely to happen at least once an encounter).

### Feats

**Brutish Disruption** (Heroic): The push from Disrupting Advance becomes very large. A fair enhancement for an encounter power.

**Disrupting Shove** (Heroic): Prone is definitely preferable to a much larger push.

**Thrill of the Kill** (Paragon): Wardens would rather use their second wind to actually second wind, and already get plenty of saving throws. Why expend it to make a saving throw?

**Keep Them Close** (Epic): It's too bad this comes so late, because this would be awesome in paragon level. In Epic, those big-nasties will have other ways to get away from you, so this doesn't do as much. Still pretty decent, but there are certainly better options. However, if you combine with World Serpent's Grasp, then this feat becomes **Mandatory**.

### Paragon Paths

**Gladiator Champion** (Gladiator theme or fighter): The Whirlwind of Destruction level 16 ability is awesome. Moreso for wardens than even fighters, because fighters already get an attack when an adjacent enemy shifts. Even if you're not using a theme in your campaign, this is well worth multiclassing to fighter to pick up. The feature alone is just that good.

**Primal Guardian**: Wardens who tend to focus on manifesting the primal forces of nature should look at this theme. It fits well with how wardens work, especially Stormheart, as the Thunder keyword is prevalent.

### Powers

**Mark of Thunder** (Feature): You don't need the marking capability, but until the end of your next turn, you punish like a paladin. And it scales with level. Short duration though.

**Armor of the Land** (Lvl 3 Enc): Holy crap, an encounter polymorph! Since you can only be affected by one polymorph at a time though, this can't get any higher than dark blue, as you can't be in one of your daily polymorph powers. Still, if for some reason you're not in your form, this is a good option. Unfortunately, the level **13** and **23** versions don't scale quite as nicely as they could. The associated power is an interrupt, so you'll have to hope you get the chance to use it.

**Storm of Debris** (Lvl 5 Daily): A daily form power at level 5 is more useful! Nothing to make you sticky, but the damage + mark aura is pretty good. Oh, and the attack slows, in case you're looking for that kind of thing. Oh, it's also Thunder (hint, hint). Plus, you become a sonic vortex of minion killing in a 5x5 square. The gem of this theme, for sure.

**Lifting Winds** (Lvl 6 Util): I love how the flight on this one can be either you or your ally. The distance starts out low, but scales as you level up.



**Armor of the Living Dunes** (Lvl 7 Enc): Another encounter polymorph. The form isn't as useful, but doesn't suffer the lack of scaling from Armor of the Land. The associated power is a standard action this time, and it's definitely something you'll use, as it's blast 3 that pushes and blinds.

**Of Wood and Stone** (Lvl 9 Daily): Another daily form, this one grants protection to adjacent allies, and also prevents them from being dragged away from you. The **19** and **29** versions don't scale as well as they could though. The associated attack is decent, as it weakens in burst 1.

**Balm of the Guardian** (Lvl 10 Util): A daily self-heal, that also grants your allies in burst 2 THP. Oh, it also makes all enemies in that burst vulnerable to thunder, **if you have the ability to capitalize**.

### Feats

**Guardian's Mark** (Heroic): Great for non-defenders who want to mark, but we wardens already have a pretty easy time marking. Still, this is a good way for **polearm users** to mark at reach.

**Mark of Elements** (Heroic): I don't know too many monsters that have resistance to thunder, but being able to hit what they're vulnerable to isn't bad when that pops up. If you're specializing in an element type, you probably already have the ability to do this as needed.

**Persisting Thunder** (Heroic): The mark from Mark of Thunder becomes save ends. Which might make it a shorter mark, or a round or two longer.

**Demanding Spirits** (Paragon): Considering you already have Warden's Grasp, which slows, this is kinda redundant. At least it pulls 3 though, which gives you a choice: slide 1 and slow, or pull 3.

### Paragon Paths

**Guardian of the Land**: The entire path is built around the ability to create a blast 3 zone. The other powers and features move around the zone, mark everyone in it, damage all those in it, allow you to teleport into it, etc. Unfortunately, the zone can be easily negated by someone using *arcane defiling*, so for most encounters it will be great, and occasionally it will be a complete waste.

**Voice for the Ravaged** (Shaman or primal guardian theme): I love the thematic elements of this class. Unfortunately, it's definitely geared more towards the shaman than the warden, as the features and powers tend towards the back-line leader.

## FR Themes

**Dead Rat Deserter** (NCG): Remember, you can only have one polymorph effect in place at a time, and your daily powers are polymorphs.

**Harper Agent** (NCG): The item you get is an extremely versatile item, and all three of the uses are excellent. All of the utility powers are excellent also. Doesn't do much for your defender role, but does make you tougher if you think you need it.

**Heir of Delzoun** (NCG): Dwarf only. This is basically a racial extension to the already tough dwarves. Scaling poison resistance and an additional healing surge. I really like the level 6 and 10 powers, since you've most likely got the healing surges to spare.

**Pack Outcast** (NCG): Like the Dead Rat Deserter, the polymorph is mostly useless, but the Perma-CA redeems it somewhat. The daily regeneration power at level 6 is also something to think about.

**Uthgardt Barbarian** (NCG): The encounter No-OA aura is awesome, but the level 5 and 10 benefits are just skill bonuses. The utility powers are just baseline.

## Other Themes

**Guardian** (D 399): Wowser! It's like this was written for you! A serious contender for a gold rating amongst the other themes, there's nothing here to not like (except for the porn star face on the goliath in the article). It actually allows you to swap places with allies to take hits for them. Better than your mark punishment, especially if the ally you're swapping with is your squishie healer. The level 6 allows you to just end surprise (for yourself only) and the level 10 utility is similar to the level 1 power, except you get to spend a healing surge instead. Fantastic!

**Iron Wolf Warrior** (D 400): More of a striker path, if that's your focus then have a look. Boost a charge and get a free hit when you go to 0 HP. If you're tanking though, you'll hope to never see that free attack.

**Mercenary** (D 399): If you like proning, give this one a look. The defense boost at level 10 is nice, and some of the utility powers are designed to help you be pretty tough too.

# Paragon Paths: Your aspect of nature

## Warden

Bloodwrath Guardian (PH2): This paragon path doesn't really do a whole lot to help you out as a defender, and its damage isn't special either. The form does grant threatening reach, though, which is very hard to find otherwise. The action point power requires a bit of wisdom, but if you like threatening reach, you're probably wielding a polearm anyway, so you should have a bit of that already.

**Breach Warden** (D 383): You get a variable damage type that you select each time you take an extended rest, so hopefully you'll have some idea of what damage type would be optimal for the day. The level 16 ability grants vulnerability to that damage type when you second wind, which should help on the times where you chose the non-optimal type. The level 12 utility is an encounter(?) stance that should start dumping out a lot of damage. The level 20 daily form pulls enemies closer and slows without using actions, which in itself is pretty awesome.

Child of the North Wind (PP): This paragon path is better if you can do a lot of damage or have multiattacks, because the non-action point features are based on killing or critting. The encounter attack power pushes, which I'm also not thrilled with. The utility and daily, though, are rather powerful, and the form power included with the daily is a huge burst.

**Earth Shaker** (PP): Those who follow this path love getting their enemies on their backs. I enjoy the flavor of this path, and Earthstrength will probably be drawn to it for that alone. While the whole path emphasizes attacking Fortitude, it does give a bonus when you do so, and also alters your at-wills to target it instead of AC, so in this case it's good. The encounter is a large burst that can go through walls, and the utility movement is cool just to think about. The form grants a burrow speed and a huge boost to your HP you get when you spend a surge. A lot to love about this path.

**Emerald Guardian** (PP): This features of this path are very leader-like, so they're useful but not special. The daily form turns you large, and makes you an HP turret. There's a lot of focus in here on preventing necrotic, which is extremely situational. The utility and form power make the path what it is, as the former can collapse zones among other effects, and the latter stuns.

**First Hunter** (PP): You have no business bothering with ranged weapons, as you won't get support outside of the paragon path for them. This path is more useful if you're multiclassing into warden. I'm confused by how this path even made it into print.

Guardian of Two Worlds (D 379): The level 11 AP feature grants you a second use of your form powers, which can be good depending on the form. You probably don't need the feature to add slowing adjacent enemies onto your guardian forms, and you get so many saves that the level 16 feature might be overkill. The utility gives out saves to your allies, but only once a day. The daily form is rather poor, but the power that it comes with is a high damage interrupt, and can be regained if you use an action point, so that makes up for the lackluster form itself.

**Horned Champion** (PH2): Wildbloods who enjoy mobility will love this paragon path. The level 11 feature is identical to Sudden Roots, so it frees up a feat slot. Action point attacks gain a good amount of accuracy, and you get to spend a healing surge whenever you use your guardian form attack powers. The utility power and daily form will have you moving all over the board, and the form attack power stuns, so you'll want to make sure you use it on an action point action.

**Icewrought Sentinel** (PP): This is a serious contender for the best paragon path a warden could take. If you're going for frostcheese, you'll be hard-pressed to find something to match what this one gives you. The action point power causes you to explode in cold damage, and then gives you a bonus to attack rolls with cold powers, which should be all your attack powers if you're wielding a frost weapon. In the same vein, at level 16, thanks to that frost weapon every attack that hits now slides its target 2 squares. The level 20 guardian form power is a much better version of Winter's Herald. The weak point of the path is the cold resistance it grants is situational, and that's about it.

**Radiant Serpent** (PP): Drawing its inspiration from the couatl, this path has a lot going for it if you deal with radiant damage often. On top of radiant resistance, the level 11 feature also gives a bonus to saves to stay mobile, plus gives a damage bonus when you do take radiant damage. The action point feature gives you flight, insubstantial *and* phasing. At paragon, the flight alone is good enough. The utility power grants you the equivalent to Lay on Hands to every ally whose square you can move through that turn. The attack powers encourage kiting on your part, and provide you the ensured mobility to do so.

**Scion of the All-Spirit** (D 386): The level 20 daily form power is the major draw to this paragon path, but unfortunately the path features are pretty lacking. Way too much about this paragon path is extremely situational, and that's not what you want in a paragon path.

**Storm Sentinel** (PH2): The level 11 feature isn't worth much due to its being tied to crits, but the other features allow you to heal yourself on APs, and then increase their potency to boot. The utility power grants flight, but not a fly speed; you have to land at the end, so you can't make an attack while flying. The level 20 daily form power turns you into a lightning damage turret, and doesn't give you an attack power to go with it. Thunder Smash works with Echoes of Thunder, at least.

**Tribal Champion** (PP): I'm really not a fan of the mechanics this paragon path was built around. The second wind kicker has different levels of effect depending on which type of action you used to second wind. The action point feature gives you the form effect of any of your forms for a round, which makes this part extremely difficult to judge. The level 11 encounter gains a 19-20 crit range if you have fewer HP than your target (a criterion which would tick me off as a DM personally; the best the player would hope to get was a yes or no to whether they achieve it, and the whole exchange would potentially slow down the

game). It all just seems somewhat metagamey. The daily form is very defensible and has good damage for this level. Be sure to take some large weapon-attack burst/blast powers to maximize the level 12 utility.

**Verdant Lord** (PH2): Action points increase your reach for a whole round, which is not special. Since the better forms create their own difficult terrain, the level 11 feature is also not good for most. You also get a flat damage bonus to melee attacks against marked enemies, which is not on par with other paths that grant a secondary modifier to damage on all attacks. The encounter power is inferior to others at that level. The utility creates a 7x7 movable zone of difficult terrain, which is pretty awesome. The daily form gives you reach and dishes out HP to your allies at the beginning of your turn, but in general is not up to the quality of a level 20 power (I would say that Winter's Herald and Oak Sentinel would be better options than this form).

## Racial

**Adroit Explorer** (Human, PH2): Much in the same way that humans are basically good at every class, this paragon path is also an appropriate selection for every class. Everything about this class is a win for humanity. Wardens in particular will love the damage resistance gained when you use an action point and the level 12 utility that allows you both reroll a failed saving throw with a large bonus plus spend a healing surge.

**Argentum Alliance** (Dragonborn, D 385): Everything about this paragon path is perfect for what you do. If you're one of our scaly brothers and sisters, this is probably the path for you. The action point bonus is a huge generic multimark, which is fantastic. Your dragon breath also adds the slowed condition onto it. The attacks both restrain, and the utility allows you to move to a prone or unconscious ally and protect him.

**Avenging Haunt** (Revenant, D 376): You're already dead, and this makes you more of a ghost than a zombie. I'd love to see the Unkillable feature in action, as it makes your negative bloodied the new zero. The level 12 utility is an awesome thing to have in paragon, as the number of flying creatures ramps way up to an annoying level. The weak point of the path is the level 20 daily, which goes against the nature of a defender, but if you work it right you present them with an awfully nasty Catch 22.

**Beastblooded Minotaur** (Minotaur, D 369): The level 20 daily is very not special, but even with that you still might consider it. The level 16 ability is a permanent +1 reach and +2 speed, which is pretty huge. You also get two attacks when you action point, though one has to be a charge (but since you're a minotaur, you're probably not complaining). Getting a free swipe when you're first bloodied is pretty good too.

**Blooded Champion** (Minotaur, PH3): I find the level 11 feature kind of a waste, personally. Goring charge just isn't that great. The level 20 daily is an upgraded version of goring

charge, so again not that exciting. The rest of the path would come in rather useful, though. I particularly like the level 16 feature that allows you to stay standing once you hit 0 HP until you fail a death save.

**Bloodfury Savage** (Half-Orc, PH2): The attack powers are all about damage, but aren't awful. You also gain damage resistance when you go bloodied, and a huge bonus to saving throws for an entire encounter. Nothing about this path will go to waste.

**Champion of the Labyrinth** (Minotaur, D 385): The defense and saving throw boosts will not go to waste, and the attack powers are pretty awesome.

**Dwarven Defender** (Dwarf, Fighter, MP): Three of the components of this path are about increasing the defenses of either you or your allies (or both). You also get to negate all but the longest of forced movement.

**Earthheart Defender** (Dwarf, Fighter or Paladin, FRPG): This came out before the PH2, and I'm inclined to believe that if it were released later the prerequisites would include that as one of the classes you can be from. Thematically the warden is more appropriate than either fighter or paladin, after all. You get more saving throws (bordering on overkill) and some of the features are about attack bonuses. Gaining tremorsense (essentially) is pretty awesome though.

**Firstborn of Moradin** (Dwarf, PH2): This is probably the dwarf-only path to go for if you're so inclined. You gain the ability make saving throws to turn critical hits into normal hits, which is brilliant. Some of the other features are very reminiscent of the Earthheart Defender (tremorsense) but with better development.

**Goliath Juggernaut** (Goliath, D 386): You'll want to be a con-based warden, but you already knew that. It's no Stoneblessed, but nothing about it will go to waste. You get extra hit points, you can grant attack bonuses, your resistances can be pushed through the roof for an encounter, and the level 20 daily is a good isolating attack. The level 11 power is similar to the Half-Orc's Furious Assault, though I'm a little confused why it has a range of Melee 1 when reach is such a big part of the game starting at paragon level.

**Half-Giant Thug** (Goliath, DSCS): You're probably not the urban type, and that's what this path is aiming you at thematically. Fortunately, the bonuses to Intimidate and Streetwise are an extra level 11 feature, so it's all good. The rest of the path is pretty good though. It really plays on the size and toughness of the Goliath/Half-Giant, and if that's who you are, that's probably right up your alley.

**Inner Dragon** (Dragonborn, Fighter, MP): If you like being bloodied, you'll love this paragon path. The features are just ok, and the level 20 daily is worthless if you're into polearms.

**Moonstalker** (Shifter, PH2): Aimed at the wisdom-based among you, you like knocking them over and tearing them apart while they're on the ground. You even give your allies bonuses against prone targets. The extra damage is outclassed by the likes of the Pit Fighter, but if you'd rather not go for that level of cheese this is a pretty good option.

**Mul Battle Slave** (Mul, DSCS): A strong reason why Muls are the new hotness for wardens, everything about this path is win. Bonuses to saves, bonuses to attacks, attacks that mark and slow, and a daily permamark. It also gives all your encounter attack powers Reliable.

**Nature's Avatar** (Wilden, PH3): The path is basically an augment of the wilden's single (and lackluster) racial feature, the aspect of nature. Considering you probably will settle into a single aspect, having the ability to change doesn't really do much for most of you. The ability to add dazed or restrained onto an at-will is only average, as it can only augment at-wills. Generally, I find everything about the wilden sub-par, and this only reinforces that.

**Rrathmal** (Githzerai, PH3): The level 11 encounter power is the low point of this racial path, as it requires a standard action and only affects at-wills. As a defender, your allies want you to go first, so being able to roll twice for initiative is huge. And you can auto-end daze, restrained, slowed or immobilized. The utility power is perfect for any defender. Pretty awesome racial path, assuming you can use Reserve Maneuver to get swap out the encounter power.

**Scion of Arkhosia** (Dragonborn, PH2): Your dragon heritage manifests into wings, and you gain flight. The overland flight is not something that will come into play often, so your level 16 feature is kind of wasted. In fact, the rest of the path is about either flight or dragon breath damage/type, so it doesn't really have much to offer.

**Scion of Leng** (Minotaur, D 389): The level 16 ability is the biggest draw of this path, but the encounter power (which should be called Minotaur Bowling) is counterproductive towards being a defender.

**Steelsky Liberator** (Dragonborn, genasi, half-orc, or human, FRPG): Unless you're fighting dragons often, there are definitely better options.

**Stoneblessed** (Goliath, PH2): Wow, threatening reach as an encounter power. It also increases your reach permanently, so you can have threatening reach 3 if you wield a polearm. Combine with guardian forms that increase reach to get it to 4 squares. Since you'll do a lot of slowing/immobilizing, your DM is gonna hate you. Having recently faced an opponent with threatening reach 4 that grabbed, I certainly wanted to throw my dice at the DM in anger.

**Storvakal** (Githzerai, D 378): I love the fluff of the level 12 utility on this path: when a projectile flies past your ear, you teleport yourself and it to a place where it's aimed at one

of your enemies. Just picturing that in my head makes me smile. The level 11 encounter will completely rearrange a battlefield, including allies.

**Thri-Kreen Predator** (Thri-Kreen, DSCS): Of all racial features to focus on, this paragon path seems to jump all over not needing a running start to jump, which is extremely situational. The attack powers are pretty nice, but they use natural attacks and not weapons.

**Treeborn** (Wilden, D 388): Good synergy for you Lifespirit and Wildblood, nothing here will go to waste. The features are decent, but the powers don't really stand out.

**Twilight Guardian** (Elf, PH2): Ignore difficult terrain on all moves, not just shifts. That was awesome until they came out with other types of terrain, such as challenging terrain. The attacks also restrain. The utility power is kind of a waste.

**Warforged Juggernaut** (Warforged, EPG): I hope you like charging. You'll be doing it every encounter, as you get to daze. I never thought warforged needed to get tougher, but this path makes them so. If warforged were the diesel truck of the D&D races, this path is like the grill guard, off-road tires, and roll bar you add-on to make sure nothing ever takes you down or stops you.

## Multiclass

**Bear Warrior** (Barbarian, PH2): Unless you're going for full-on barbarian multiclass, the rage add-ons just aren't that great. Full barbarians are likely to be able to use those multiple times per day, and you're stuck with just once (well, twice when you get to level 20). Your guardian forms can make the Mauling Bear effect more likely to trigger than barbarians though, so that's a plus. Bestial Vigor is the high point of this path.

**Chromatic Bane** (Any divine class, D 378): The variable resistance is nice, and ability to end daze or stun on an ally is awesome. The rest is just average, as you're likely not fighting dragons every encounter.

**Combat Veteran** (Warlord, PHB): Good for constitution wardens, it can increase the healing you receive by a good bit.

**Draeven Marauder** (Fighter, D 365): You get the coveted 19-20 crit range with spears, which are already an optimal weapon choice (go for longspear or greatspear, which have reach). That alone is enough to make this dark blue. The rest of the paragon path is just decent.

**Dread Reaper** (Fighter, MP): Only applicable if you're wielding a two-handed weapon, you get the ability to affect your mark at range.



**Dreadnought** (Fighter, MP): Four of the six items from this paragon path give you damage resistance for a round. You also can burn HP to end an effect. Above average, but I like a bit of diversity in paragon paths.

**Earthfast Brigadier** (Warlord, MP): Probably better for the con-based warden than the class it was designed for, there's nothing not to like here. A second wind boost for you *and* your allies, saving throws on your action points for you *and* your allies, damage bonuses for your allies against an enemy who misses you, and the attack powers require a shield and do extra damage if you're wielding an axe or hammer. A prime choice for Earthstrength wardens who can boost their defenses way up. One of my personal favorites. Since there's no boosts to Inspiring Word in the path, I recommend one of the multiclass feats that gives an action point boost from Martial Power 2 to qualify for the paragon path.

**Giantslayer** (Fighter or ranger, MP): You'll be fighting a lot of things larger than you, so this is not as conditional as it sounds. When you are fighting large foes, it's awesome, and when you're not it's blah, so that it averages out to black.

**Glorious Myrmidon** (Fighter, trained in Athletics, MP2): You won't be wearing heavy armor, so the level 11 feature is a waste. The rest of it is nothing special.

**Hammer of Moradin** (Cleric or paladin, must worship Moradin, DP): A flat untyped bonus to all attacks with hammers is awesome. Adding daze to attacks with action points is also awesome. The bonus to defenses vs fear effects doesn't trigger very much, but that's the only drawback to this paragon path.

**Iron Vanguard** (Fighter, PHB): You get real HP, not temp HP, when you kill someone, and you can spend an action point to get an action as an interrupt when you would die. Were you to use that to, say, second wind and shoot your defenses way up, that feature is priceless. Any attacks that push or prone also deal extra damage, so you can optimize it to make that happen most of the time. For con-based wardens.

**Kensei** (Fighter, PHB): This is how 4e implemented samurai, and fortunately they didn't require a specific type of weapon. You can burn an action point to make sure your daily hits instead of getting an extra action, and you also get a flat untyped attack and damage bonus with a single choice of weapon. The attacks are nothing special, and the utility is outclassed by newer paragon paths due to it only being a daily.

**Knight Protector** (Fighter, MP): The level 11 feature allows you to slide your ally as an interrupt, a serious upgrade over Warden's Grasp. You also have to option to hand out defense bonuses instead of making opportunity attacks, something you might consider if you didn't take Sudden Roots. I love the mechanics of Protector's Strike, as it dazes if the

target attacked one your allies. Unfortunately, other paragon paths here daze unconditionally.

**Kulkor Arms Master** (Fighter, MP2): Requires Kulkor Battlearm Student feat. This paragon path has an errata target on it a mile wide, with good reason. If you can knock prone consistently, you get a free attack. It's a good thing that Flails now knock prone consistently. If you'd rather use an axe or hammer, it's got even more goodies. Reroll attacks, and use your second wind as a free action when you go bloodied.

**Pit Fighter** (Fighter, PH2): No longer the path for multiclassing into as of the May 2010 errata, the level 16 ability is mostly wasted on you. The rest is not bad, though.

**Polearm Master** (Fighter, MP): If you're wielding a reach weapon, you'll want to take a long look at this paragon path. All your forced movement powers just got an extra square of movement, and you get to make immediate interrupt and opportunity attacks at melee 2. Win.

**Scale-Breaker** (Fighter, D 369): Even more geared towards fighting dragons than Chromatic Bane. Saved by the fact that the stuff that takes down flying creatures doesn't require them to be a dragon.

**Stonefire Rager** (Barbarian, PP): Better for the warden than the barbarian (the level 12 utility requires you to not be raging). The fire-damage isn't great, but the amount of it sure is. You also get the ability to save vs. critical hit, which is just awesome.

**Underchasm Darkwatcher** (Warden and warlock, East Rift regional background, D 379): Warden and warlock is an interesting combination. I appreciate the fluff of it, but the powers are so lackluster that I just don't feel inspired in any way. Perhaps if someone could come up with a decent build for it, I would change my tune.

**Warhound of Bane** (Fighter, MP2): For wisdom-based wardens. Despite the "of Bane" in the name, it doesn't require any sort of deity-specific worship. Extra ways to heal is always good, though there are definitely better options.

**White Raven** (Warlord, MP2): You have more reason to have your allies nearby, but the boosts to healing are rather lost on you. You even get the means to make sure that happens.

**Winter Fury** (Barbarian, PP): You may want to multiclass into Barbarian just to pick up this paragon path, as it's arguably better for wardens than the class it was intended for. Bonuses to both attack and damage against immobilized foes, and auto immobilize w/splash when you action point. At level 16, those of you with frostcheese can dump your cold weapons, because you get that feature built in. The immobilization theme continues with the attack powers. The utility has limited usefulness (literally, in this case).

## Misc

**Gatekeeper Mystagogue** (Primal class, member of the Gatekeepers, EPG): If you fight a lot of aberrant creatures, then **wow**, otherwise don't bother. All of the features are extremely situational, and comparable attack powers can be found elsewhere.

**Primal Mapper** (Primal power source, D 382): You can allow your allies to ignore difficult terrain close to you, and you ignore it at all times. You're extremely mobile, but the attack powers aren't really that special. The mobility boost is most helpful for the slower amongst you, especially **dwarves**, who will get the most use out of it. The free action attacks at level 11 and 20 can't be used in the same round anymore though.

**Son of Mercy** (Defender role, D 370): There's an awful lot of overlap with the mechanics this paragon path provides for mark augmentation. It actually functions like a hybrid of the avenger's Oath of Enmity and the warden's Nature's Wrath. You can designate a single foe as your augmented mark, and when that guy dies, you regain the ability to do so. You can also mass mark + augment in burst 1 once per encounter. I just find too much overlap. The augmented mark does extra damage and slows. The extra damage is decent, but the slow isn't that useful by paragon level as an awful lot of your attacks will already do that. The encounter power can be used as an interrupt when an adjacent marked enemy attacks an ally, but you have to use that instead of Warden's Fury. The path's usefulness improves for **wisdom-based wardens** who want an alternative to Crippling Crush for secondary stat damage.

## **Epic Destinies: Becoming one with nature**

### Epic Destinies

**Ceaseless Guardian** (D 387): Probably my top choice for an ED, the Irrepressible Defense feature alone is a huge draw for wardens.

**Champion of Prophecy** (EPG): Has the ideal stat bumps for Wildblood and Lifespirit, but the other features are just mediocre. If you're used to long days, the level 26 utility can be a pretty significant bonus in your last encounter.

**Chosen** (FRPG): This is essentially Demigod, but with a deity-specific level 26 utility for each deity. Some are slightly better than others. Forge of Creation (Moradin) is probably the most suited for our needs.

**Demigod** (PHB): Formerly the epic destiny against which all others are judged, this has been altered to be just awesome as compared to broken like it was before.

**Destined Scion** (HotFK): Aimed less at defenders than it's Essentials brother, Indomitable Champion, you will certainly not go wrong with this choice. Bumps to two stats, a good accuracy boost, a daily auto-hit, and a daily stand-up from dying are all very useful.

**Eternal Defender** (Fighter, MP): Bonus to your primary stat, plus wield large weapons and get your reach extended. One of my favorites.

**Eternal Seeker** (PHB): This doesn't provide any stat bumps, but if you're looking for picking up powers from other classes, it's quite versatile in that regard. Hurricane of Blades would be a good pickup with it.

**Fang of the World Serpent** (Any primal class, PP): If you're going multi-class barbarian, take a long look at this one, as it can significantly increase your damage output.

**Fury of the Wild** (Any primal class, PP): Stat bump to your primary, but the other features are pretty mediocre.

**Glorious Spirit** (Any primal class, PH2): No stat bumps, but you get a pretty good striker feature against one foe per combat.

**Harbinger of Doom** (PH2): The ant-teleport power is pretty awesome, and you'll probably end up with a lot of temp HP, but the other features are decent, at best.

**Honored Ancestor** (Any primal class, PP): This could make a decent paragon path, but it doesn't feel very epic.

**Indomitable Champion** (HotFL): The new gold standard in epic destinies, this has replaced Demigod as the ED you take when nothing else fits, especially for defenders. Stat bumps to any two stats, a large hit point boost and a bump to your defenses, plus excellent stay-alive ability. Not exciting, but it's very, very solid.

**Mythic Spirit** (Any primal class, PP): A good stat bump, and the rest of the features help both you and your allies become harder to kill. Lifespirit will love it, and everyone else might like it too.

**Perfect Guardian** (Warden, PP): The Perfect Mark ability is extremely vague; it could either be really awesome or a complete waste of a feature. I'm willing to give it the benefit of the doubt and say if you mark someone who you already have marked, that guy gets the -5. Since you have a lot of abilities that knock prone, Beast Strike should trigger somewhat

often, and the Perfect Guardian's Pounce ability is a pretty decent boost to your defender ability.

**Primal Avatar** (Any primal class, PH2): Instead of a stat bump, you get a +1 boost to all rolls that go off one stat, and it can be changed every extended rest. I don't know why you'd choose anything other than Str, though. The ability to turn into a spirit is pretty cool flavorwise, but make sure you're already in your guardian form before you use it.

**Reborn Champion** (D 365): You can do so much better.

**Reincarnate Champion** (Any primal class, PP): Some of the racial encounter powers are pretty awesome, and this gives you two from other races. Some favorites are the ability to use second wind as a minor from dwarves, Iron Mind from githzerai, and Stone's Endurance from goliaths.

**Star-Favored Champion** (Any martial class, MP2): For Stormheart and Earthstrength, due to the Con bump. The immortality feature means you'll have to run out of surges or go to negative bloodied to die, and that's no small feat for the class with the most HP and a crapton of surges.

**Storm Sovereign** (D 372): Most appropriate for Stormheart (obviously). If you really like lightning and thunder, this is probably the ED for you. Otherwise its just too specialized.

**Undying Warrior** (Fighter, MP): You're hoping to not die at all, so most of this ED is wasted on dealing with death. The level 24 feature is decent. For you black knights out there who like to bite their legs off.

**Unyielding Sentinel** (D 388): The stat bumps are awesome for you Earthstrength and Stormheart, and still decent for the rest of you. The weak point of this ED is the level 30 feature, but the rest of the ED is like the Danica to your Cadderly, or the Pikel to your Ivan. You get to roll all saving throws twice, and ignore ongoing damage, forced movement and auras for one encounter per day.

**World Tree Guardian** (Any primal class, PP): This should make you really tough. Attacks give you damage resistance, and eventually you get full on regeneration. The utility power is a nice controller-style ability.

## Equipment

## Weapon Types:

**Axe** — The two-handed choices here are typically high crit, but beyond that there's nothing you can't get from the hammer. Military choices are greataxe and battleaxe, superior choice is the execution axe. Works with Headsman's Chop.

**Flail** — Not very accurate, lacking good superior choices, and limited feat support. You're probably better off with something else.

**Hammer** — Required by both Crippling Crush and Hammer Rhythm. Military choices are maul and warhammer, superior choices are mordenkrad and craghammer. Beggings some commitment to constitution.

**Heavy Blade** — They're accurate, and can have top-notch damage. Feat support is also excellent. Works with Headsman's Chop. Military choices are greatsword and longsword, superior choices are fullblade and bastard sword. Beggings some commitment to dexterity.

**Light Blade** — Since Essentials and Martial Power 2, these are a much better option. The rapier is a military weapon instead of a superior one, so you can get your +3/D8 weapon. Light Blade Expertise can make up for the small damage dice, and Deft Blade (if you're multiclassed in, say, rogue) will make your basic attacks more accurate. Requires some commitment to dexterity though.

**Mace** — Can be used by Crippling Crush, but the choices here are so subpar that you're really better off with the hammer.

**Pick** — Even less reason to go here than the mace.

**Polearm** — Reach is the big draw here. All of the items are also in other groups (such as the halberd being in axes, glaive being heavy blades, and longspear/greatspear being spears). The feat support is good, and some of the choices are accurate. Beggings some commitment to wisdom.

**Spear** — You'll want either the longspear, or its superior brother the greatspear. Like the polearm, reach is the big draw. Spear Mastery requires some commitment to dexterity, and Polearm Momentum requires some commitment to wisdom.

## Magic Items

Note: This section is laid out by category. After the name of the item is the level (2+ means it's first available at level and has higher level versions), then source. Items are sorted by level, then alphabetically (the order you would see them in Character Builder).

## Weapon

**Defensive Weapon** (2+, AV): Since you'll be using second wind often, this just piles on some gravy.

**Guardian's Call** (2+, AV2): This enchantment is made just for you, and at that price level it's pretty good.

**Pinning Weapon** (2+, AV): It's pretty good, as it can keep someone basically stuck until they die or knock you away. If you can negate forced movement, it's **awesome**.

**Staggering Weapon** (2+, AV): If you like forcing movement and don't want to use a spear, you'll love this weapon.

**Aura Killer Weapon** (3+, AV2): As a melee weapon class, you'll be affected by auras more than anyone else in your party. This will mitigate that.

**Foe Maker Weapon** (3+, D 381): This item was made for you. The crit range increases against targets marked by you, which is not hard to make sure happens most of the time. You also get a large range mass mark. Unfortunately, it takes a standard action, or this would be rated higher.

**Frost Weapon** (3+, PHB): Two Words: Frostcheese, win. Wait until paragon to pick it up though.

**Guardian's Brand** (3+, AV2): Too bad the properties are fire damage or this would be better.

**Warsoul Weapon** (3+, EPG): Component weapon. Now you get OAs on shifts too.

**Maw of the Guardian** (4+, AV2): How many times can you pile on your Constitution mod to damage rolls?

**Opportunistic Weapon** (4+, AV): It doesn't provide a boost to all OAs, which is why it got black. Vicious weapons are cheaper.

**Vengeful Weapon** (5+, AV): Expensive, but perfect for defenders.

**Weapon of Great Opportunity** (5+, AV2): Expensive, so you probably won't find it worth it, unless you can get 2 or 4 items from the set.

Grasping Weapon (6+, AV): Polearm only, and it doesn't do extra damage on a crit. Used to be a lot better, but now it only pulls one square, regardless of how far you can reach.

[Adamantine Weapon](#) (8+, AV): Get through damage resistance as long as you do untyped damage. That should be most of the time.

[Controlling Weapon](#) (8+, AV): Polearm only. Your pushes and pulls (but not slides) just got better.

[Githyanki Silver Weapon](#) (8+, MotP): The daily banishment effect is a lot of fun. The enemy is taken out of the combat, literally. Oh, you also change the damage type to psychic, which allows you to abuse Psychic Lock. Heavy Blade only though.

[Jolting Guard Weapon](#) (8+, DSCS): Declaw a Big-Nasty for a round. And it takes an Opportunity Action to use, instead of the more crucial Immediate Actions.

[Feyslaughter Weapon](#) (9+, AV): Now your stickiness affects teleporters too.

Withering Weapon (13+, AV): As long as your enemy can't make his saves, his defenses just get worse and worse.

[Chill Wind Weapon](#) (15+, D 386): Heavy blade only. An upgraded frost weapon, this one trades in the daily item power for resistance to fire and ongoing cold damage on crits.

[Hestavar Dueling Blade](#) (18+, D 371): Light blade only, so you might want to look elsewhere. A bonus to attacks on OAs and Immediate attacks rocks though.

[Death Mark Weapon](#) (23+, AV2): When you kill your mark, you get to wander off to your next target. Killstealers are funstealers, though.

Vorpall Weapon (30, PHB): Axe or Heavy Blade only. If you like damage, and you're extremely high level, this is where you'll be looking.

## [Armor](#)

[Veteran's Armor](#) (2+, AV): This is always a solid choice for any character, and is extremely cheap.

[Armor of Cleansing](#) (3+, AV): You probably care more about saves vs status effects than ongoing damage, but the bonus from this certainly won't go to waste.

Bestial Armor (3+, AV): Good if you're into charging, as it gives you a free swipe once per day.



Defensive Armor (3+, PH3): The augmentation is completely wasted, but getting something akin to the Githzerai's Iron Mind 1/day is decent.

[Delver's Armor](#) (3+, PHB): The save bonus is much more useful than the Armor of Cleansing, but only usable 1/day.

Serpentskin Armor (3+, AV): You really want to be behind the dragon, and this will do that.

Sylvan Armor (3+, PHB): The bonus to Athletics is a plus. Even the stealth can be useful, if you're party often gets caught because you're so clumsy.

[Armor of Durability](#) (4+, AV): A prime choice due to the sheer number of healing surges you'll be spending. Stacks with the Cloak of the Walking Wounded, so you regain twice the enhancement bonus when you second wind.

[Battle Harness](#) (4+, DMA 2009): Gives you effectively Quick Draw, including the bonus to initiative.

[Bloodcut Armor](#) (4+, PHB): You do have quite a large number of healing surges, so you won't have problems spending them to gain damage resistance often.

[Lifefont Armor](#) (4+, AV2): This armor is tied directly to your Font of Life class feature, so it's aimed squarely at you. Gain a bonus to all saves using the feature, plus make multiple saves once per day. That is something that will come into play often.

[Deathcut Armor](#) (5+, PHB): Expensive, but it gives multiple resistances and a free swipe when someone hits you.

Shared Suffering Armor (5+, AV): At the expensive price range for its tier, the encounter power is just so much fun.

[Marauder's Armor](#) (7+, AV2): You might take up charging just to get the bonus to AC when you do. If you like charging, this is just awesome.

[Elven Battle Armor](#) (8+, PHB): You'll never have problems moving about the battlefield.

Lifeblood Armor (10+, PHB2): You get to start every combat with temp HP, but if you wait a level you'll get a defense boost.

Trollskin Armor (15+, PHB): At the expensive end, but getting a lot of regeneration is nothing to complain about.

[Great Cat Armor](#) (19+, AV2): This should make you much more mobile.

[Armor of Enduring Health](#) (23+, AV2): This item was created for you. A must-have, for sure.

## Neck

**Amulet of Mental/Physical Resolve** (2+, AV): In the cheap item slot, they both give bonuses to saves against a group of statuses. The Mental version will help with stuff like Dominated, and the Physical version will help keep you mobile.

Amulet of Resolution (2+, AV): Getting to reroll a saving throw once a day just pales in comparison to what you can already do.

**Cloak of Resistance** (2+, PHB): Good for when you know you're going to take some hits. Too bad it's not an immediate interrupt though.

**Cloak of the Walking Wounded** (4+, AV): You gotta wait until you're bloodied to get the effect, but most people don't second wind until they're bloodied anyway. Also, anything that gives a bonus when you spend a healing surge is doubled. A key item to second wind optimization.

**Collar of Recovery** (4+, AV): This one gives a bonus to surges granted by stuff that's not second wind, so you might like this one instead of the above.

**Lucky Charm** (4+, AV2): Universally useful, the power is pretty awesome.

**Amulet of Life** (5+, D 381): Much like the Cloak of the Walking Wounded, this can allow you to spend two surges. This one is limited to once an encounter, but isn't limited to second wind. Expensive though.

**Guardian's Circlets** (8+, D 380): If you roll initiative like I do, give this to the rogue that likes to run out early, let him do his thing, then when they gang up on him, they find they're hitting you instead. Voila, you're in place for making sure you do your defender duties.

**Amulet of False Life** (9+, PHB): That's an awful lot of temp HP you get for free.

Amulet of Vigor (9+, AV2): This actually increases your surge value, but doubling your surge is more valuable when it's more often than once a day. It's trying to be a mix of the Amulet of Life and the Collar of Recovery, and just comes up short.

**Medallion of Death Deferred** (9+, AV): You hope you don't have to use it, but awesome when you do.

**Timeless Locket** (14+, AV2): This is an excellent way to get an extra standard action to use for your second wind when you really need it. The bonus to initiative isn't awful either.

[Cloak of Displacement](#) (15+, AV): The defense bonus may or may not last a while, but the daily power makes you as annoying as a halfling. Expensive though.

## Shield/Arm

Note: There's a very strong case for using a mundane heavy shield if you're going sword and board or hammer and board. A mundane shield still provides its AC/Reflex bonus even if you have a magic item in the Arms slot. So if you wanted to use something like Iron Armbands of Power, you don't have to forego the shield.

[Bracers of Mighty Striking](#) (2+, PHB): Very cheap, and a damage bonus on basic melee attacks, which you'll be making often.

Razor Shield (2+, AV): You get to autohit one of your attackers. This one goes off Con, so it's more useful than some of the others that go off Cha or Dex, but it's only once a day. It's really cheap though.

Shield of Protection (3+, PHB): I'd prefer the power be toned down and not be a standard action. Though if you really need to use it, it's rather awesome for that level.

Counterstrike Guards (4,14, AV): You'll probably be missed fairly often, so it will see use. The level 4 only gives you a free swipe as a daily, the level 14 changes it to an encounter.

[Mountain Shield](#) (4,14, AV): Keeping your buddies in place is decent, but as an encounter power it has a good amount of utility.

[Shield of Eyes](#) (4, AV): Protection against flanking is of more use to you than against OAs, but that's only a daily. The flat bonus against OAs isn't wasted though.

[Shield of Speed and Evasion](#) (4, Dun 156): I'm not sure where it got the name, but what it actually does is not even remotely connected to its name. It doesn't increase your speed or provide you the ability to evade attacks, but it does allow you to regain encounter or daily powers when you take a critical hit. The randomness of it hurts, but hopefully you'll be taking enough hits for that not to matter.

[Bracers of Tactical Blows](#) (6+, AV): If you're scared away by the cheese-level of the Iron Armbands of Power, these are a good substitute. Add extra dice of damage onto all your OAs.

Foe Fending Shield (6+, D 381): You can inflict a save ends mark as an immediate interrupt. It's just ok until [paragon](#), where it allows you to do so at range.

**Iron Armbands of Power** (6+, AV): This is the item that every melee character gravitates towards, and wardens are not immune to that. It's just damage, but by epic tier that's a lot of damage.

**Hammer Shield** (8, AV2): An excellent choice for you hammer-wielders who don't want to go for Iron Armbands. If you pick this up, it will last you for a while. Your defense bonus lasts as long as you keep hitting.

**Storm Shield** (8+, AV): Gain 2 elemental resistances, and deal dual-element damage as a reaction when you're hit. You don't like to give up your immediate actions though, and the resistance comes late in the tier, so by now it's not really blocking as much of the damage as it would have been at a lower level.

**Recoil Shield** (9, AV): Knock your attacker on his butt once an encounter. I love encounter item powers, and this one is pretty good.

**Shield of the Barrier Sentinels** (9+, DMA 2009): A flat bonus to defenses while you're flanked. Keep in mind, these bonuses aren't just in effect against your flankers. The paragon completely negates the bonus from combat advantage, and the epic version goes even further, so that you're actually harder to hit when you're flanked than when you're not.

**Guardian Shield** (10+, PHB): Redirect attacks to you, then gain resistance accordingly. The heroic version is just adjacent, but the paragon and epic versions add to the range. Very expensive though.

**Crowd Killer Shield** (14, D 381): It doesn't eliminate the flank or the combat advantage for being flanked, but it does make it easier to take out your flankers. A good interim shield until you can get the paragon-level Shield of the Barrier Sentinels.

**Vortex Shield** (14, AV2): This shield gives you the ability to defend against area attacks that would otherwise ignore the defender punishment because they include you. Good, but wait a few levels...

**Absorbing Shield** (17, AV2): My warden is looking at this item herself. The power isn't quite as good as the Vortex Shield, but it's usable *at-will*. The trigger won't happen all the time, but being able to defend your allies against area attacks that include you is pretty awesome.

**Trollhide Bracers** (19+, AV): Regeneration is awesome, but this is expensive, and there's better choices.

[Shield of Ultimate Protection](#) (30, AV2): Instead of Reflex and AC, you get the shield bonus to all four defenses. The daily power to increase your defenses by a lot is also pretty huge. But good gods, is it expensive.

## Feet

[Acrobat Boots](#) (2, PHB): Dwarves can ignore this, but everyone else hates having to spend a move action to stand. You might keep these all the way through epic tier.

Boots of Rapid Motion (5, AV2): I consider this a trap, because it takes an immediate action to use, and you want to save them for attacks and not doing something that your class features already mostly do.

Spiked Soles (5, EPG): Component item. Turns a warforged into a dwarf, but requires an immediate action to do, and slows you instead.

Surefoot Boots (5, AV): Stand up as a free action, but it's only a daily.

[Boots of Free Movement](#) (6, AV): Ensure your mobility with these boots.

[Boots of the Fencing Master](#) (7, AV): Easily one of the best feet slot items for any character.

Dwarven Greaves (7, PHB): Requires an immediate action to use, and is only a daily. Still, it's a good effect.

[Boots of Quickness](#) (8+, AV): An untyped bonus to what's likely one of your worst defenses, and it has higher level versions.

Boots of Striding (9, PHB): Some of you [dwarves](#) might like this so you can keep up with enemies and allies. There's also a more expensive version that has a small bonus to jumping, but you'll probably have the Athletics to not need that.

[Earthreaver Stompers](#) (17+, AV): Tremorsense is nice, the daily power isn't very accurate though.

[Boots of Speed](#) (22, AV): Essentially the epic version of Boots of Striding, the free move action is also nice.

[Zephyr Boots](#) (24, AV): You can fly. At some point that becomes necessary to be able to get into melee.

[Sandals of Avandra](#) (25, AV): Another speed boost, this one also increases your mobility in other ways.

Boots of Teleportation (28, AV): At-will teleportation is decent, but doesn't help you get at certain enemies that are several squares above you. You should have decent mobility via other means already.

## Hand

[Gloves of Piercing](#) (3, PHB): Good through at least paragon tier, the resistance penetration is certainly nice.

[Gauntlets of Blood](#) (4+, AV2): If you're maximizing damage, this is an untyped bonus that you won't want to pass up, as it stacks with the Iron Armbands.

[Parry Gauntlets](#) (5, AV): Wow, because your defenses when you second winded weren't high enough. Excuse me while I go buy these for my warden.

[Strikebacks](#) (10, AV): The bonus to opportunity attacks make these worth it, the encounter counterattack is pretty good too.

Gloves of Ice (11+, AV2): If you're going [frostcheese](#), you'll want these. Their use is much more limited otherwise.

[Gloves of Discontinuity](#) (13, AV2): Things that help you deal with teleporters is always useful, as you can't do it innately.

Gauntlets of Destruction (18, PHB): If you're not using a brutal weapon, this can remedy that.

Lightning Reflex Gloves (19, AV): A bigger bonus than Strikebacks, but the daily power is so extremely situational that it's not worth the upgrade.

[Gloves of Camaraderie](#) (21, AV): Since you can probably get rid of the effect much easier than your ally, you're the type of character this was designed for. Uses an immediate though.

[Foe Caller Gauntlets](#) (22, D 381): Now you too can punish like a swordmage. Only better. Did I mention that it's an encounter power?

## Head

[Helm of Opportunity](#) (4+, AV): Unlike Strikebacks, this is fairly cheap and has higher level versions. Also, good head slot items are hard to find.

**Circlet of Indomitability** (8+, AV): Boosts your Will defense, and has higher level versions. Not bad.

**Coif of Mindiron** (8, AV): Doesn't end all dazed conditions, just those that target Will, or it would be a lot better. Later versions add stunned and dominated.

**Crown of the Goliath Champions** (12, D 386): This is an item that has both a decent property *and* an encounter power. And both are good for us wardens. The encounter power gets better as the day goes on, so if you like spending surges this can get into the double digits in terms of how high the resistance can go.

**Vortex Mask** (12, D 381): For those times when Warden's Grasp just doesn't pull them far enough.

**Crown of Eyes** (16, AV): Flanking? Not on my watch.

**Coif of Focus** (21, AV): Dazed and Stunned are never fun, and the bonus applies to your Font of Life saves too.

## Waist

**Belt of Vigor** (2+, PHB): Very cheap item that increases your surge value. Other items are better at it in the long run, but they're in much more competitive item categories (Amulet of Vigor, for example). This stacks with the Amulet, though, so you can get both. Outclassed for **Con-based wardens**.

**Ironskin Belt** (5+, PHB): Now that you've got your enemies stuck to you, they're going to start swinging. This makes sure it doesn't hurt as much.

**Cincture of the Dragon Spirit** (6, AV): Using Strength instead of Charisma for Intimidate checks makes the skill worth training in.

**Belt of Vim** (8+, AV): An untyped bonus to Fortitude is never a bad thing.

**Belt of Blood** (10, AV): Get this instead of the Belt of Vigor if you're a Con-based warden. Since you'll be using more surges when you're bloodied anyway, this is much better when you need it the most.

**Backbone Belt** (11, AV): If you're Earthstrength, your defenses are nigh-unhittable at this point, and this pushes them further up that mountain.

[Cincture of Vivacity](#) (14, AV): If you're going for second wind optimization, this allows you to use your second wind when you're first bloodied instead of almost dead so you don't have to worry about healing too many hit points.

[Sash of Vitality Ceaseless](#) (14, AV2): For you Wisdom-based second wind optimizers, this can mean an awful lot of extra hit points. The Wisdom-based alternative to the Belt of Blood, just at 4 levels higher.

[Belt of Mountain Endurance](#) (18, D 365): For you Strength-based... oh, that's all of you. Much like the Sash of Vitality Ceaseless and Belt of Blood, but this one goes off your primary stat instead. Though it's more expensive, by a factor of 4. Also, this one doesn't require you to be bloodied.

[Phoenix Sash](#) (18, AV2): Another way to remain standing when you die, the dazing probably won't matter too much anyway.

[Sash of Regeneration](#) (28, AV2): Useless for [Shifters](#), but awesome for everyone else.

## [Ring](#)

Note: Remember, you get two ring slots. It's currently questionable whether you get the benefits from both, such as having two Rings of Personal Gravity reducing your forced movement by two.

[Ring of Giants](#) (13, D 378): The property is triggered off crits, but the daily power knocks them prone.

[Grace Ring of Lightning](#) (14, AV2): A bonus to saves vs some of the nastiest effects, and an encounter power that deals autodamage on a turn where you don't make an attack, which should happen at least once an encounter when you second wind. A bit less useful if you second wind as a minor.

[Grace Ring of Salvation](#) (14, AV2): The same saving throw bonuses as the Lightning version, and a huge bonus to a single save as an encounter.

[Iron Ring of the Dwarf Lords](#) (14, PHB): You non-dwarves get to channel your inner-beardedness to negate forced movement daily.

[Ring of Invigoration](#) (14, DMA 2009): When you fall over, you magically heal a bit. That's an awesome safety net.



**Alliance Band** (15, AV2): When you second wind, your ally gets healing. Since you're gonna do it often, the handing out of HP is pure icing.

Ring of Many Forms (15, AV2): I'd like to say that this applies to all attacks while you're in a guardian form, in which case this would be a **must-have**, but I suspect that it's not.

**Ring of the Dragonborn Emperor** (15, AV): Only useful if you're specializing in burst and blast attacks, but if you are, Iron Armbands are useless to you anyway, so it's a good pickup. The only downside is that there's no epic version, so you can upgrade the item bonus to compete against those granted by epic tier items.

**Ring of Personal Gravity** (16, AV): Forced movement is further reduced for dwarves and non-dwarves alike, plus you can lock down all adjacent enemies without a save. I'll be picking this up as soon as possible.

**Ring of Protection** (17, PHB): A flat bonus to all saving throw, and an interrupt daily bonus to single defense. An oldie but goodie.

**Ring of the Fallen** (18, AV2): Another item for second wind optimization, this also gives you the same bonus to surges spent during short rests. Oh, there's also a group heal daily power.

**Foe Binder Ring** (19, D 381): Now you can defend against area attacks even if you're included in the area.

**Ring of Flight** (20, PHB): You can prone on several attacks, so this can get you up to that flying enemy to get him on the ground.

Ring of Heroic Health (21, AV2): Doesn't help on second winds, so Ring of the Fallen is better.

**Ring of Regeneration** (24, PHB): Your second wind optimization choice from the epic tier. Your surge value goes up, and you get a large regeneration value for an encounter.

**Bloodshard Ring** (26, AV2): It's a trap! The reduction of your maximum hit points reduces your surge value by 1 guaranteed, and can reduce by 2 if you are unlucky. So the property is a wash.

Avandra's Ring (27, AV2): Difficult terrain means nothing, and you can shrug off things that are hurting your mobility with ease. High level though.

Dauntless Champion's Ring (30, AV2): Your endgame second wind optimization item, as it has the highest item bonus to surge value you'll find. Level 30 item, though, so ouch.

[Nullifying Ring](#) (30, AV): Level 30 item, but it has a large bonus to all saving throws, and a large interrupt defense bonus.

## Tattoo

Note: This is an oft-overlooked category, that I've just recently begun to explore. There's some pretty decent finds in here. The mechanics usually go off you taking an action point, or something based on how many surges your character has spent since their last extended rest. The latter is the ideal, of course, for obvious reasons.

[Pierced Heart Tattoo](#) (2+, D 380): I include this largely because it's the cheapest of the tattoos at level 2, and you're gonna be second winding, so getting the damage boost is worth the cheap price if you have the money and a free tattoo slot. If you've also multiclassed barbarian to pick up a rage power, it's [even better](#).

[Long Battle Tattoo](#) (7, AV2): If you're spending 2 surges per second wind, towards the end of the day, this can be a substantial amount of damage (into the double digits). Your daily attack powers aren't your bread and butter though.

[Ironheart Tattoo](#) (8+, AV2): You'll be getting more resistance at the end of the day, which is good because that's likely when you'll need it most. Even low level characters can get resistance 10 or more against the BBEG.

[Strongheart Tattoo](#) (8+, AV2): Something to think about for second wind optimization, this one also works for non-second wind heals.

[Eager Hero's Tattoo](#) (10+, AV2): Start every combat with temporary hit points, and the amount goes up as the day grows long.

## Other

[Battle Standard of the Hungry Blade](#) (9, D 381): If you can spare the standard action, this can be used to enhance whatever form you went into, by adding a black hole effect in burst 3.

# Multiclassing: Hearing other callings

Multiclassing is one of the easiest ways to blend other styles in with your own, so it's only fair that I assess the utility of several classes in regards to the warden. I'll probably come back to this fairly regularly, as I certainly won't get everything on the first pass.

## Avenger

There's not a lot here to offer, but the accuracy offered by the entry feat is really lucrative. Even Con-based wardens can qualify for the entry feat.

### Entry Feats

[Disciple of Divine Wrath](#) (PH2): Easily the better of the two options since Hero of Faith was nerfed, this feat gives you a full two rounds of rerolls.

### Powers

[Bulwark of Defense](#) (PH2): Ignore that save ends effect for a turn if you don't save against it. Since you save at the beginning of your turn, you're effectively immune to one save ends effect.

## Barbarian

The entry feats alone are a big draw for multiclassing barbarian, because Berserker's Fury is a fairly significant bonus for a whole encounter. The rages are also a plus, as they stack with your guardian forms to create a mega-boost for an encounter.

### Entry Feats

[Berserker's Fury](#) (PH2): The feat itself is basically a mini-rage effect, but it still stacks with the rages you could pull from the barbarian class *and* your guardian forms.

## Druid

The beast form interferes directly with your form powers, but there's some other things you can pick up if you're so inclined.

### Entry Feats

**Initiate of the Old Faith** (PH2): The only option, it's decent. You get the beast form power, and a single at-will with the beast keyword as an encounter power. If you need implement proficiency, this gives that too. And the nominal Wisdom requirement should be easily achieved.

### Feats

**Vital Form** (Paragon, PP): Probably the biggest draw of the druid multiclass, so if you have a concept in mind that requires you to go druid, this is a pretty big bonus.

### Fighter

The Pit Fighter is no longer as viable option as they were before, but there's still an awful lot to look at by multiclassing as a fighter.

### Entry Feats

**Battle Acumen** (MP): Requires paragon multiclassing as a fighter. Paragon multiclassing isn't generally recommended, but if you decide to anyway, this is a pretty good consolation prize.

**Battle Awareness** (PHB): You get a swipe against an enemy's shift once per encounter, but it doesn't stop movement.

**Wrathful Warrior** (MP2): Your con-mod is going to be high for some of you, so this could be a decent source of temp HP each encounter when you need it most.

### Feats

**Defensive Resilience** (Heroic, MP): There's so many good choices here, no wonder you've dipped into martial. I find it somewhat irritating, personally, that all these feats require you to be a fighter, as they completely fit the warden, better even than the ultra-generic fighter. Just another piece for the list of second wind optimization.

**Focused Superiority** (Heroic, D 378): Not quite Crippling Crush, but for those of you that are wiser than tough, you might like this better.

**Knock-Back Swing** (Epic, Con 17, MP): I'm of the mind that this should be a paragon-tier feat, thus only getting black. However, sliding on OAs even if you miss is pretty worthwhile.

**Hindering Shield** (Paragon, D 385): Any forced movement now slows as long as you have a shield. Crippling Crush users will want to think about this in paragon.

**Overwhelming Impact** (Epic, MP2): Requires a hammer, check. Triggers when you slow an enemy, check. Turns slow into daze... um, what? A lot of your attacks have moved on to things more powerful than slow, but Sudden Roots (or Horned Champion) means your OAs daze too, and that's pretty scary.

Offensive Resilience (Heroic, MP): The need for dexterity takes away from the fact that you get a bonus to hit. Defensive Resilience is more up your alley, and easier to qualify for.

**Polearm Momentum** (Heroic, MP): It requires some commitment to both Dexterity *and* Wisdom, which is tough, so this would need to be the focus of your build. All long pushes and slides now knock prone, though, so it might be worth building around.

**Slashing Storm** (Epic, MP2): Takes some bookkeeping, but if you hit last turn, all the minions adjacent to you die when they start their turn. That's pretty decent. For you wisdom wardens.

**Striking Resurgence** (Paragon, MP2): If you're not a dwarf, this allows you to get an attack as part your second wind, so you're not losing a round to heal yourself.

**Wary Fighter** (Heroic, D 378): Those of you that are wiser than tough will love the quickness boost this gives you. The stat boosts are also awesome.

## Paladin

Paladins have some pretty awesome utility powers, so this could tempt you.

### Entry Feats

Soldier of Virtue (DP): Easier for some of you to qualify for, due to it only requiring Wisdom.

Soldier of the Faith (PHB): Since you're a strength character, the divine challenge damage will probably be low.

### Powers

**Bless Weapon** (DP): Turn your weapon into a lightsaber for an encounter per day.

**Virtue** (DP): Start every encounter with a large amount of temp HP.

## Shaman

Shamans are probably the best multiclass healers in the game, due to the ability to get it as an encounter instead of a daily with the expense of just one extra feat. Even con-based wardens should be able to get their wisdom high enough to qualify.

### Entry Feats

**Mending Spirit** (PP): This gives you an encounter healing power, but it requires Spirit Talker.

**Spirit Talker** (PH2): This only gives you the ability to summon your spirit, and do some of the minor things that spirits do. A building block for the above feat.

## Tips and Tactics

### Optimization Packages

**Frostcheese** — Since you're a weapon user, this is an extremely viable option unless an errata changes that in the future. The first hit causes cold vulnerability, and that causes you to get combat advantage as long as you keep hitting. The frost weapon makes every attack a gold attack. The gloves and paragon path just pile on more goodies.

- Feat: Wintertouched (Heroic)
- Feat: Lasting Frost (Paragon)
- Item: Frost Weapon (Any)
- Item: Gloves of Ice (Paragon/Epic)
- Paragon Path: Icewrought Sentinel (optional)

**Psychic Lock** — This basically abuses the Psychic Lock feat by using a Githyanki Silver weapon to perpetually decrease an opponent's attack rolls.

- Feat: Psychic Lock (Paragon)

- Item: Githyanki Silver Weapon (Late Heroic and later, heavy blade only)
- Item: Headband of Intellect (Any)

## Second Wind Optimization

If second winding is your thing, it's possible to add an incredible amount of things onto the action, such as extra healing, defense boosts, saving throws, etc. There's a whole thread devoted to it [here](#) where they provide one for toughness and one for healing, but I've also provided a summary of a very vanilla version using some pretty basic options. A build thread has also opened up showing possible builds for SWO [here](#). It's assumed, of course, that you're a dwarf, for obvious reasons.

Heroic Tier:

- [Toughness](#) (Feat): Increasing your max HP is a start. You should take this anyway.
- Durable (Feat): Increase your number of surges, since you'll be going through an awful lot of them.
- Enduring Mountain (Tribal Feat): Additional HP when you spend a surge for any reason.
- [Cloak of the Walking Wounded](#) (Neck Slot Item): Basically a multiplier, as you spend two surges when you second wind while bloodied. Other things that boost healing when you spend a healing surge, such as Enduring Mountain and Armor of Durability, are doubled when this happens.
- Armor of Durability (Armor): Additional HP per surge that scales with the item's level.
- [Belt of Vigor](#) (Waist Slot Item): Very cheap in each tier, and it's a flat bonus to your surge value.

Paragon Tier:

- [Dwarven Durability](#) -or- Improved Second Wind (Feat): The first one is obviously better, but not all of you are going with Constitution. You *can* take both, of course.
- [Ring of the Fallen](#) (Ring): It doesn't add to the surge value, but for con-based wardens it adds a large amount to your second wind, plus the same amount to surges spent during short rests.

Epic Tier:

- [Armor of Enduring Health](#) (Armor): Second wind twice per encounter, that's just... WOW.
- [Ring of Regeneration](#) (Ring): Adds to your surge value, so it's multiplied by the Cloak of the Walking Wounded. Oh, and regeneration too.
- Dauntless Champion's Ring (Ring): If you're willing to pay for a level 30 item to upgrade your +3 from the Ring of Regeneration to a +4 to your surge value, it's there.
- [Epic Recovery](#) (Feat): Requires martial multiclass. Combined with the above Armor of Enduring Health, you're now second winding 3 times an encounter.

Yes, I am a defender apologist. [A Rock and a Hard Place: A Warden Handbook](#)

## Sample Builds

### Build Examples

#### The Icequeen

This build is a basic optimization example, using both the second wind optimization and frostcheese packages. Damage output is good thanks to Crippling Crush, Iron Armbands of Power and Frostcheese, control is good thanks to focusing on slow and immobilize powers with Sudden Roots, and when you second wind, you get 61 HP back and all four of your defenses go up by 7. Incidentally, this is similar to a character I'm currently playing, it works quite well and is rather well-rounded.

[Hide](#)

===== Created Using Wizards of the Coast D&D Character Builder =====

Icequeen, level 12

Dwarf, Warden, Icewrought Sentinel

Build: Earth Warden

Guardian Might: Earthstrength

Background: Narfell (Narfell Benefit)

#### FINAL ABILITY SCORES

Str 20, Con 21, Dex 11, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 9.

#### STARTING ABILITY SCORES

Str 17, Con 16, Dex 10, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8.



AC: 29 Fort: 26 Reflex: 21 Will: 22  
HP: 115 Surges: 14 Surge Value: 29

#### TRAINED SKILLS

Nature +13, Perception +13, Endurance +18, Athletics +13

#### UNTRAINED SKILLS

Acrobatics +3, Arcana +6, Bluff +5, Diplomacy +5, Dungeoneering +10, Heal +8, History +6, Insight +8, Intimidate +5, Religion +6, Stealth +3, Streetwise +5, Thievery +3

#### FEATS

Level 1: Dwarven Weapon Training  
Level 2: Weapon Expertise (Hammer)  
Level 4: Crippling Crush  
Level 6: Sudden Roots  
Level 8: Earthstrength Resilience  
Level 10: Wintertouched  
Level 11: Lasting Frost  
Level 12: Earthstrength Defenses

#### POWERS

Warden at-will 1: Thorn Strike  
Warden at-will 1: Weight of Earth  
Warden encounter 1: Roots of Stone  
Warden daily 1: Form of Winter's Herald  
Warden utility 2: Inspiring Fortitude  
Warden encounter 3: Rough Strike  
Warden daily 5: Boiling Cloud  
Warden utility 6: Treacherous Ice  
Warden encounter 7: Mountain Hammer  
Warden daily 9: Form of the Oak Sentinel  
Warden utility 10: Spiritual Rejuvenation

#### ITEMS

Frost Craghammer +3, Heavy Shield, Cloak of the Walking Wounded +3, Earthhide Armor of Durability +3, Gloves of Ice (paragon tier), Iron Armbands of Power (heroic tier), Belt of Vigor (heroic tier)

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