

Ardent Admiration

An Analysis of Ardent Abilities



Why play an Ardent?

The ardent is a leader by birth. Warlords study tactics and strategy, clerics are trained in seminaries, bards must constantly hone and refine their art. Ardents simply *believe* -- in a cause, in their allies, or in themselves -- and that belief warps reality around them. Their psionics are fueled by the emotions of those around them, but their power fundamentally arises from certainty. An ardent knows his victory is pre-ordained, and allies, foes, and the world itself change to make this true.

Mechanically, the ardent is a melee leader with a versatile selection of powers. Its at-wills are augmentable, which essentially means that all the ardent's encounter powers are rechargeable. Combined with the versatile power selection (the class has at-will powers that can enable movement and attacks by your allies, reposition enemies, buff, debuff, and heal), this means the ardent always has the right tools for the encounter. When non-psionic classes choose encounter powers, they need to balance the need to cover different scenarios against the possible need to provide the same effect more than once, running the risk of having unused encounter powers at the end of the fight. The ardent, conversely, can safely try to cover as many bases as possible, with augmentation covering any need for repeats.

This handbook and hybrids: This handbook is written assuming you are not using a hybrid ardent. While I hope that players with hybrids will find this guide useful, it's very difficult to give any meaningful guidance for only half a character: ardent|bards are a very different beast from ardent|battleminds. People wanting to pursue hybrids should consult the [Miscibility Table](#) maintained by *Mommy was an Orc*.

The following color-coding is used in this handbook:

Red: A very bad choice.

Purple: Situationally useful, but usually a bad option.

Black: A reasonable choice, useful without being the best.

Blue: A good choice.

Sky Blue: Head and shoulders above the alternatives.

Gold: No other choice possible, usually reserved for feat taxes and the like.

Abbreviations

AC: Armor Class

DSCS: Dark Sun Campaign Setting

EPG: Eberron'Player Guide

FRPG: Forgotten Realms Player Guide

HoFK: Heroes of the Forgotten Kingdoms

HoFL: Heroes of the Fallen Lands

HoFW: Heroes of the Feywild

HoS: Heroes of Shadow

MBA: melee basic attack

NAD: Non-Armor Class Defense

RAW: rules as written

PHB: Player's Handbook

PHB2: Player's Handbook 2

PHB3: Player's Handbook 3

PsP: Psionic Power

THP: temporary hit points

Class features and builds

Mantles

Mantle of Clarity: Insight and especially Perception are among the most important skills in the game, so bonuses to them are always great. The Wis-modifier bonus to defenses against opportunity attacks is amazing, and you and your allies don't need to rely on the DM to make use of the incredible mobility it facilitates. The defense bonus to Ardent Surge is nice, though it's difficult to make great use of Ardent Alacrity. Choose this mantle when you're aiming to support the strikers in the party.

Mantle of Elation: The fixed bonuses to Diplomacy and Intimidation and the Con-modifier bonus to opportunity attack damage are all of varying usefulness, depending on your DM. Ardent Outrage can be an encounter-turner, especially if you have a rogue in your party, and the bonus to attack rolls with Ardent Surge is solid. If you're primarily needed to support defenders, this is the mantle of choice.

Mantle of Impulsiveness: Again, the bonuses to Intimidation and Endurance are dependent on the nature of your campaign. Ardent Eruption gives a fairly small bonus to damage, and the fact that it's triggered by you being bloodied and ends on the start of your next turn means that it might not serve any benefit at all. The mantle essentially grants mobility: allies targeted by opportunity attacks get a bonus to damage on their next attack roll (discouraging monsters from taking them), and Ardent Surge boosts the target's speed. Practically speaking, though, the defensive bonuses from the Mantle of Clarity serve the same role but better. However, the Mantle of Impulsiveness does have some good feats, especially the amazing epic-tier Instinctive Surge.

The PHB3 organizes ardent builds around your choice of Mantle. However, no power riders depend directly on your choice of Mantle; instead, they depend directly on either your Con and Wis modifiers. This means the important build choice is actually whether you choose Con or Wis as your secondary stat. Even more, the Mantles don't depend very strongly on its associated secondary stat. The Mantle of Clarity in particular is still good even with a Wis modifier of +2. Even if you choose Con as your secondary stat, you might give serious thought to choosing the Mantle of Clarity.

Which secondary stat?

Con gives you extra Fort, extra HP, and extra healing surges, and there are a number of ways to get boosts to both Cha and Con.

Dex boosts your Reflex and initiative, as well as your AC in light armour. However, despite the fact that Psionic Power suggests this as a secondary for impulsive ardens, there is nothing that keys off Dex -- no class features, no powers, no paragon paths, not even the Mantle of Impulsiveness itself. You can make this work, by choosing powers with no secondary stat riders or riders that work even with low modifiers, but it really should not be your first option. If you do decide to make Dex your secondary, choose either Con or Wis as your tertiary and make sure it starts with at least a 14.

Wis gives you bonuses to some nice skills. It doesn't help your defenses at all, sadly. With the advent of Dark Sun and Psionic Power, though, there are finally epic destinies and paragon paths to suit Wis ardens. Unfortunately, there's only one race that gives boosts to both Wis and Cha, and it's a bit harder to find epic destinies that will benefit both. The Battlewise feats means that Wis ardens are likely to have the best initiative modifiers.

Contrary to what the PHB3 says, there's no straightforward logic as to which sorts of powers depend on which stat. Con is the more frequent rider for boosting damage, while Wis is the more frequent rider for boosting defenses, but this is not a hard and fast rule. However, as of PHB3 only one third of all ardent powers even have a secondary-stat rider, and many of these are good even with small secondary stat modifiers. This means that you have a lot of leeway in making your decision.

Survivability

Chain mail and no shield proficiency is not great, especially for a class that needs to be near the front line. Con ardens have it slightly better, but the extra HP will not help much with the recent damage boosts for monsters, and if you need to use powers to access your surges you've done your job wrong. Realistically, expect to spend at least two to three feats boosting defense -- the Wingman sample build in this guide spends eight!

However, those feats don't necessarily have to be armor-related. With Psionic Power, the ardent now has many feats that give large benefits to allies in the mantle triggered on the ardent taking damage or spending surges. These realistically serve as a discouragement against targeting the ardent -- in a twisted Obi-Wan moment, striking the ardent down will only make his allies more powerful.

Practically speaking, the way in which you go about boosting your defense depends in large part on your choice of weapon (and of course, vice versa):

Weapon Choice

One-handed vs two-handed weapons: As will be discussed more below in Feats, damage is generally a lower priority for ardens than accuracy and defense. With the exception of polearms (because of Hafted Defense), ardens will normally be better off with a one-handed weapon and picking up shield proficiency.

Polearms: Reach keeps you further from the front line, and since many powers specify "adjacent to you or the target" reach also makes it easier to buff allies. Hafted Defense is a good defensive feat with no stat prerequisites. Polearm ardens should definitely drop a feat to acquire Greatspear proficiency for the +3 proficiency bonus.

Light blades: They might not fit the intended flavor of ardens, but this should probably be your default choice for one-handed weapons. The rapier no longer requires a weapon proficiency feat, and Light Blade Expertise gives a nice damage bonus.

Heavy blades: While it's not a bad choice, Heavy Blade Expertise doesn't really stand up to Light Blade Expertise. Still, there

are some nice superior heavy blades, and if you're going to go with Master at Arms you lose nothing by going with heavy instead of light blades. Sadly, your stats are all in the wrong place to meet heavy blade feat prerequisites.

Hammers: Con ardent will not find it difficult to meet the stat prerequisites for hammer feats, and there are some very good hammer feats. Given how much you'll be relying on at-will powers with no miss effects, it's worth choosing hammers just for Hammer Rhythm.

Axes, flails, maces: The feat support is not as good as hammers, and you'll find it harder to meet feat prerequisites. However, the axe does tend to do a lot of damage, and as of Dark Sun there are flail and mace weapons with a +3 proficiency bonus.

Clubs, picks: No great feats, lower damage, and +2 proficiency bonus. You're better off with something else.

Defense Boosting Approaches

This isn't necessarily a comprehensive list, but I've tried to enumerate the basic approaches you can take, and rated them by how they synergize with weapon choice. Especially for the scale/plate mail approach, don't feel obligated to pick up all the feats listed.

Scale/plate mail: A starting Str and Con of 13 will get you scale proficiency in heroic, and plate proficiency and specialization in epic (3 feats, +3 AC) and works for all weapon choices. It's clearly the best option for **non-polearm two-handed weapons**. **Polearm users** will want to pick up Hafted Defense (4 feats, +4 AC/+1 Reflex), and **one-handed weapon users** can pick up light and heavy shield proficiency (5 feats, +5 AC/+2 Reflex -- or go crazy and add shield specialization in too, for 6 feats, +5 AC/+3 Reflex). If you can arrange to have a starting Dex of at least 13 (which will probably be quite difficult), you should seriously contemplate picking up scale specialization instead of plate proficiency (saving you one feat and costing you one AC, but giving you much desired mobility). All told, this is probably the most straightforward option, but it can be taxing for **Wis ardent**s.

Shield and chainmail: With a starting Strength of 13, you can get light shield proficiency in heroic and heavy shield proficiency in epic (2 feats, +2 AC/Reflex). For best effect, try to start with a Dex of 14, which will let you get shield specialization (3 feats, +3 AC/Reflex) or chainmail specialization (3 feats, +3 AC/+2 Reflex). An approach for **one-handed weapon users** only, obviously. Compared to the scale/plate approach, it lets you spread your starting attributes more evenly across your NADs, and doesn't require Con, making it more friendly to **Wis ardent**s.

Chainmail only: Start with 14 Dex and pick up chainmail specialization in paragon (1 feat, +1 AC). This is only really an option for **polearm wielders**, since they can also throw in Hafted Defense (2 feats, +2 AC/+1 Reflex). It leaves you quite fragile, but reach can help.

Two weapons: Start with 13 Dex, get Two-Weapon Fighting and Defense in heroic, and then pick up chainmail specialization by epic (3 feats, +2 AC/+1 Reflex). You don't have any real reason to wield **two weapons**, so the only excuse for doing so is to pick up a proficiency in a defensive weapon (4 feats, +3 AC/+1 Reflex). Feat intensive, and almost certainly a gimmick approach.

Powers and feats: You can also increase your defenses indirectly, by using powers like Unsteadying Rebuke or Prescient Strike and second wind/healing surge optimization feats to discourage monsters from targeting you in the first place. It's difficult to quantify exactly how effective this can be, but it's certainly a big factor. This is really something to combine with the above approaches.

Ability Scores

Strength: Armor and shield proficiencies require this. A starting score of 13 post-racial is ideal to pick up scale and light shield proficiency in heroic, and then upgrade to plate or heavy shield proficiency in epic. Polearm wielders might start with 12 post-racial, and then upgrade to scale in paragon. (Starting score 12-13 post-racial)

Constitution: Your best choice for a secondary stat. Even Wis ardent will probably want at least 12 or 13 to pick up scale

proficiency in heroic or paragon, and possibly 14 to improve riders on the occasional Con-rider power. (Starting score 12-16 post-racial)

Dexterity: Some points in here to improve Reflex and Initiative won't hurt. Polearm wielders might be tempted to boost it to qualify for Polearm Momentum, but it's probably not wise. (Starting score 10-12 post-racial)

Intelligence: No need for it, no feats that use it as prerequisite, and Dexterity is objectively better for boosting Reflex. The default dump stat. (Starting score 8-10 post-racial)

Wisdom: The other secondary stat. Con ardens will still want some points here to boost the occasional Wis rider, and a minimum of 14 if they have chosen to be an enlightened Con ardent. However, euphoric Con ardens can realistically dump this stat entirely. (Starting score 10-16 post-racial).

Charisma: Your attack stat must be high. As mentioned in the build section above, secondary stat riders aren't a huge factor. Seriously consider a pre-racial 18 in Charisma. (Starting score 18-20 post-racial).

Races

Races from the Monster Manual are not included in this guide; if a race from Dragon is not mentioned, it should be assumed it is not a good choice.

Boost to Primary & Secondary Stats

Deva (+2 Wis, +2 Int/Cha; PHB2/Dragon 386): Memory of a Thousand Lifetimes is great stuff. Deva have far more feat support than Kalashtar, but the downside is that little of it is directly aimed at psionics. The fact that Wis/Cha was retro-fitted, and the lack of a corresponding NAD boost, is less than ideal.

Dragonborn (+2 Cha, +2 Con/Str; PHB/HoFK): Con ardens will benefit from Draconic Heritage, and anything that helps boost accuracy (in this case, Dragonborn Fury) is a big boon for a leader. Dragon Breath isn't a really that great, and keys off your secondary. A much better option is Dragonfear as of Dragon 388, which provides a big debuff to enemies in a massive close burst, and combines very well with Stygian Adept.

Half-elf (+2 Cha/Wis, +2 Con; PHB/HoFK): Never a bad choice for any class, half-elves make fantastic ardens. Dilettante will be your preferred choice, since it helps with a psionic class' reduced power list and the ardent's lack of a decent MBA, but Knack for Success is a solid option for any leader.

Hamadryad (+2 Wis, +2 Cha/Int; HoFW): Tree Mind is great, Hamadryad Aspects, and the few racial feats are actually useful.

Kalashtar (+2 Cha, +2 Wis; EPG): Bastion of Mental Clarity is a nice leader-ish power, and Dual Soul is great defensively. They might not have the best feat support of any race, but the feats they do get tend to be very well suited to psionic classes (and will likely only improve).

Satyr (+2 Cha, +2 Con/Dex; HoFW): The sliding control from Lure of Enchantment is a nice bonus. Really, the biggest problem that satyrs face is that they're not tieflings or half-elves.

Tiefling (+2 Cha, +2 Con/Int; PHB/HoFK): You get resistance to fire and an accuracy boost against bloodied foes, and infernal wrath encourages monster to leave you be. The feat support for tieflings is excellent, much of it geared towards improving your accuracy or debuffing enemies.

Boost to Primary Stat

Changeling (+2 Cha, +2 Dex/Int; EPG): The worst feat support of any player race in the game. The secondary stats aren't of much use, other than a boost to Reflex. You can always do better.

Drow (+2 Cha/Wis, +2 Dex; FRPG/HoFK): Darkfire is a nice addition to a leader's arsenal. Unfortunately, the race doesn't have much going for it otherwise.

Eladrin (+2 Cha/Dex, +2 Int: PHB/HoFL): Fey step is a nice mobility boost, and Eladrin Soldier is objectively better than taking Weapon Proficiency (Greataxe). However, the feat support beyond that is really poor, and the boost to your dump stat is a waste. Both Shardminds and Tieflings make better +Cha/Int choices.

Halfling (+2 Cha, +2 Dex/Con: PHB/HoFL): Small size is a nuisance for a weapon-based class, but dealing damage is a lower priority for ardens. What halflings offer is good mobility and defense, both of which are great assets.

Humans (+2 to any, PHB/HoFL): Sadly, the extra at-will loses the augmentable keyword, but this is still a huge boon for a class with a reduced number of powers; you will probably prefer to take this over Heroic Effort, though it is also a respectable choice. The extra feat is also nice, and human feat support is great.

Gnome (+2 Cha/Dex, +2 Int: PHB2/Dragon 387): Fade Away and Reactive Stealth both want Stealth, which you don't get as a trained skill, and Small size hurts your weapon choices. Nothing very good in the way of feats, with the possible exception of Fade Ally. For insult to injury, you get to boost your dump stat.

Pixie (+2 Cha, +2 Dex/Int: HoFW): Problem: Ardent need to be adjacent to allies a lot of the time to make things work. Solution: Fly over them, or heck, be in their space.

Revenant (+2 Cha/Con, +2 Dex; Dragon 376)/Dragon 397: Dark Reaping is a reasonable damage boost, but Unnatural Vitality is the key feature here, with the ability to take a standard action before your first death saving throw to get you back on your feet. What really makes this race appealing is the Unnatural Mantle feat. The choice of past life is a hard one, but I'd suggest either Human or Githzerai as having the best feat support. Half-elf with Half-Elf Soul might seem tempting, but frankly you'd probably be better off just with a half-elf. Pity you can't get the Con boost.

Shade (+2 Cha, +2 Dex/Int; HoS): Con ardens might not wince too much at losing a surge, but basically this is a race geared towards stealth, which is really not your strength. The racial utilities don't hold much appeal, as ardent utilities are generally solid, but there might be something here that turns out to be vital to a build concept.

Shardmind (+2 Cha/Wis, +2 Int: PHB3): Living construct is a nice boost, and resistance to psychic is great. Shard Swarm gives you mobility and accuracy and there are good feat support for it. Sadly, many feats for Shardminds depend on either Int (which you don't need) or Wis (which you don't get a boost for), but feat support for shardminds and psionic classes is only likely to improve.

Vryloka (+2 Cha, +2 Str/Dex: HoS): The penalty to your surge value when bloodied might be inconvenient, as there are reasons for you to hold off on using your second wind. Lifeblood is good in theory, but in practice a leader is going to find it tricky to trigger it. Still, necrotic resistance is nice, and the level 16 utility Vryloka Bloodbond is definitely worth looking at.

Boost to Secondary Stat Only

Dwarf (+2 Con, +2 Str/Wis: PHB/HoFL): Whether you choose Wis or Con as your secondary, the other stat boost will help you with feat prerequisites, so a big win. With Wind of Sympathy, minor action second winds have also become much more appealing. Combined with good feats, and we can chalk up the ardent as yet another class in which the dwarf excels.

Goliath (+2 Con/Wis, +2 Str: PHB2/Dragon 397): Your choice of secondary, the bonus to Str helps with armor feat prerequisites, and Stone's Endurance further improves defenses. Unfortunately, this is pretty much all it has to offer.

Elf (+2 Wis, +2 Dex/Int; PHB): Elven accuracy is very nice, and Wild Step will improve your mobility, but the weapon proficiency is a waste.

Genasi (+2 Str/Con, +2 Int; FRPG/Dragon 397): While the new Con option is nice, Genasi have better things to do than be ardent.

Githzerai (+2 Wis, +2 Dex/Int ; PHB3): Defended Mind and Iron Mind are solid defensive abilities, and Shifting Fortunes is a nice mobility boost. The +2 bonus to Initiative will also help a class with no real reason to boost Dex. There are some great feats for githzerai. If you're going to build a Wis ardent, a githzerai is one of your best alternatives.

Half-Orc (+2 Con/Str, +2 Dex; PHB2/HoFK): Furious Assault will help with the low [W] damage of ardent powers, and Swift Charge will help you close to melee range. The feat support is pretty much useless, though.

Longtooth Shifter (+2 Wis, +2 Str; PHB2): Regeneration is nice, but this is a race meant for defenders or strikers, not for a leader. The boost to Str helps with armor proficiencies, but that's not really enough to rescue this race.

Minotaur (+2 Con/Wis, +2 Str; PHB3): The good news is that you get to boost your choice of secondary stat. The bad news is that you will almost never be charging except with very particular builds.

Mul (+2 Con, +2 Str/Wis; DSCS): Your choice of a boost to both secondaries, or a boost to the best secondary plus help meeting minimum Str prerequisites for feats. You get to choose between access to human or dwarf feats, so great feat support out of the box, plus some good feats of their own. An extra healing surge and the ability to end effects on you once per encounter is just icing.

Razorclaw Shifter (+2 Wis, +2 Dex; PHB2): An extra light shield when you get bloodied, plus more mobility makes for a solid power. The feat support won't do anything for ardens. Elves are the superior choice.

Shadar-Kai (+2 Int/Wis, +2 Dex; Dragon 372/Dragon 397): Shadar-kai just don't bring anything to the table. Teleporting is nice, but a Wis boost only just isn't that nice, especially since you could just go Eladrin. The bonus to death saving throws and saving throws against unconsciousness is nice, though.

Thri-kreen (+2 Wis/Str, +2 Dex; DSCS): Dex isn't a big help, Thri-kreen Claws can't use your primary stat, not much feat support, and none of it very useful.

Warforged (+2 Con, +2 Str/Int; PHB3/Dragon 397): Extremely sturdy, and that bonus to Str will only improve that. You will be able to make nonstop use of Warforged Tactics. The only thing keeping warforged from a blue rating is the suspicion that they will never have any good support for psionic classes.

Wilden (+2 Wis, +2 Con/Dex; PHB3): You'll appreciate the chance to boost Reflex, and either Wrath of the Destroyer or Pursuit of the Hunter can be of use to you. There are quite a few feats which are of good use to any leader, and there's hints that the wilden might become one of the designated psionic races, meaning better feat support in the future.

Feats

In general, when choosing feats as an ardent you should prioritize in the following order:

1) Improving accuracy. This is important for any class, but the leader is often the catalyst in the enemy-killing reaction. Once you hit, it is easier for the rest of your party to hit, and so an accuracy boost to you is an accuracy boost for the party.

2) Improving defenses. If you die, the party will lack healing, and this is the beginning of a TPK. Ideally, you don't even want to get hit -- any healing that goes towards you is healing that isn't going to the rest of the party.

3) Improving the healing/buffing/debuffing of your powers.

4) Improving mobility. Positioning is key in many ardent powers. You can't do your job until you're in the right place.

5) Improving damage. While it's true that doing damage is everyone's job, and dead is the best status effect, the primary weapon

of a leader is the rest of the party. +3 to your damage is not going to end the fight as quickly as keeping your barbarian on his feet with an extra +1 to hit.

I've chosen to group class and general feats together, and organize them by the above priorities, subdivided by tier. All class feats are rated, but only general feats black or greater. Racial feats are rated separately afterwards. Only feats that would be rated black or higher are mentioned.

Accuracy Feats

Expertise: There are now several feats that provide a scaling +1/2/3 to hit. You need one of them, but which one is a matter of your build. Your default choice should probably be Master-at-Arms (HoFL), but other obvious choices for forced-movement specialists are Bludgeon Expertise (HoFL, for the bonus to forced movement) or Flail Expertise (MME, to prone instead of slide). In general, any of the Expertise feats introduced in Essentials are worth considering if they match up with the weapon you've chose to specialize in.

Heroic

Impending Victory (PHB3): Since most of your powers are at-wills, this is a great accuracy boost.

Melee Training (PHB3): You will be on the front line a lot, so you'll likely have a lot of chances to make opportunity attacks.

Polearm Flanker (PHB3): Gets the important accuracy boost from combat advantage without having to give up reach.

Psionic Reflexes (PsP): For most ardens, their opportunity attacks will be so poor that this bonus is irrelevant. However, if you've done what it takes to get a useful opportunity attack, this feat is extremely appealing just for the passive benefit alone.

Vicious Advantage (PHB3): Handy if your party deals out slowed or immobilized often. **Even better** if you hand out the effects yourself, so Psionic Binders and certain builds of Stygian Adepts will love this.

Weapon Proficiency (PHB): If you can upgrade your proficiency bonus by getting a superior weapon, do it! This is mostly for polearm wielders, who should get the Greatspear as soon as they can.

Paragon

Psionic Defiling (DSCS): Reroll attack or damage with your daily powers. Yes, it does damage to your allies, but at least you're a leader and in good position to repair the damage. Unfortunately, almost every other feat based around defiling requires an arcane power.

Psychic Wail (PsP): Finish with one target and this feat lets you soften up the next target. Sadly, there's just too many conditions that need to be met for this feat to be worthwhile.

Epic

Blind-Fight (PHB): On one hand, situational. On the other hand, when it comes up, you'll be awfully glad you had this feat.

Defense Feats

Heroic

Armor Proficiency (Scale) (PHB): You should definitely pick this up as soon as possible, ideally in the Heroic tier.

Armor Proficiency (Plate) (PHB): While you shouldn't bump your Strength high enough to get this right away, if you pick up scale proficiency in Heroic, then you'll qualify for this in Epic. One-handed weapon users should pick up heavy shield proficiency first (to get the extra Reflex), but definitely consider upgrading if you've got the extra feat slot.

Hafted Defense (PHB3): Verging on necessity for polearm users.

Improved Defenses (HoFL): Your one-stop replacement for Paragon and Robust Defenses. You can reasonably put off getting this until paragon, but do get it.

Psionic Fortune (PsP): +1 to saving throws for most of the encounter, with the option to boost it when things are really critical. This is my favorite of the Augment feats. The decision as to whether to take this or Resilient Focus comes down to how power point-intensive your build is.

Psionic Toughness (PsP): It's a weaker version of Toughness, though it does stack. However, the real appeal here is the chance to increase the healing with second wind, which ardens have compelling reason to use every encounter.

Resilient Focus (HoFL): A flat-out +2 bonus to all saving throws is a great deal. If you've got power points to burn you should take Psionic Fortune instead, though.

Shield Proficiency (Light) (PHB): Bonus to AC and your weakest NAD. If you're a one-handed weapon user, pick this up as soon as you can.

Shield Proficiency (Heavy) (PHB): Again, if you picked up light shield proficiency in Heroic, you can and should get this in Epic.

Slave to None (Dragon 390, req: Escaped Slave theme): A saving throw bonus for some of the worst conditions for you.

Superior Fortitude (HoFL): Con ardens should be able to get this, and should give it serious thought (though only after Superior Will). Ongoing damage is a major hit-point drain.

Superior Reflex (HoFL): You probably don't qualify for this, and it's not that great a benefit regardless. If you do qualify for this, and you've picked up Superior Will and Superior Fortitude, obviously retrain Improved Defenses into this.

Superior Will (HoFL): You qualify for this; take it. Yes, it doesn't stack with Improved Defenses, but the selling point here is not the increased defenses so much as the ability to mitigate the effects of two of the worst possible status effects.

Unfailing Vigor (PHB3): Anything that keeps the leader up and able to heal needs to be given consideration. If your DM runs tough encounters, or the rest of your party isn't good at healing, consider taking this in the heroic tier to retrain it away later on.

Paragon

Armor Specialization (Scale) (PHB): Mobility and AC. Great if you can get it, but the Dex prerequisites put it out of the reach of most ardens.

Combat Anticipation (PHB): Your need to be near if not adjacent to allies means you'll likely in the clump that gets targeted by AOE powers.

Fated Survival (Dragon 381): If you don't have any other way to boost your saving throws, consider this. You need to stay in the fight, and can't rely on anyone else to help you with healing.

Prescient Dodge (PsP): +2 to defenses until your first turn is obviously a bit situational. The augmented part of the feat seems nice, but if you're hitting with unaugmented at-wills there's a very good chance you don't have any power points left to exploit it.

Threefold Fortitude/Reflex/Will (PsP): Doesn't stack with Paragon Defenses, and since it's hard to predict how and when you'll be attacked, the augment is problematic.

Epic

Epic Reflex/Fortitude/Will (PHB2) You'll certainly want Epic Reflex, and Wis ardens will probably want Epic Fortitude as well. Epic Will is probably unnecessary.

Power Feats

Heroic

Beguiling Torment (PsP): 1 power point for a one square slide might not seem much, but with a character designed to use this feat, it's a huge deal. Even without going to extremes, being put out of reach badly messes with dazed enemies.

Bloodied Enmity (Mantle of Impulsiveness feat, PsP): In the heroic tier, this feat basically says: if an enemy bloodies you, he turns you into a ranger/warlock for a turn. The virtue is not in the damage, it's in dissuading the enemy from hitting you in the first place. Sadly, it doesn't scale, and by paragon you'll want something else.

Bolstering Mantle (ardent feat, PHB3): Being able to hand out extra saving throws is always a good thing. This feat can be a bit weak in isolation, but combined with other powers that boost your second wind it can become very useful.

Clarified Instincts (Mantle of Clarity feat, PHB3): This can be a game-breaking bonus out of combat.

Elated Emotions (Mantle of Elation feat, PHB3): Just like Clarified Instincts, this is an obscene bonus for skill challenges.

Deft Eruption (Mantle of Impulsiveness feat, PsP): If you've decided to go with Mantle of Impulsiveness, this feat is practically mandatory. You need to squeeze every drop out of ardent eruption to make it worthwhile.

Heartening Surge (ardent feat, PHB3): An extra +1 to your Mantle-related Ardent Surge bonus is a bit weak. The main problem is that you'll almost always have a better option. Note that it doesn't work with the **Mantle of Impulsiveness** at all.

Mantle of Understanding (ardent feat, PsP): If you make a saving throw, everybody else will have a bonus towards their next. Sadly, the "until start of your next turn" means it's very difficult to stack this with granted saving throws, but it is nonetheless valuable.

Mark of Healing (EPG): Granting extra saving throws with every healing power is something you need to think very carefully about before you turn it down.

Martyr's Surge (ardent feat, PsP): A major boost to Ardent Surge when you're bloodied is perfect. Not only is it extra healing when you very likely need it most, it's yet another way to persuade your DM to leave you alone.

Outraged Vengeance (Mantle of Elation feat, PsP): In the very same book that introduces the Mantle of Impulsiveness, we have the argument for taking Mantle of Elation instead. In the heroic tier, this feat gives Ardent Outrage all the benefits of Ardent Eruption in addition to its usual benefits. Even beyond heroic, +2 to hit and +2 to damage is a much better deal than +4 or +6 to damage.

Restful Healing (PHB2): The rating assumes that your DM lets you take multiple short rests to regain encounter healing powers. Otherwise, **give this a pass**. Strictly speaking worse than the Mark of Hospitality, but if you're going to choose a Mark, it really should be the Mark of Healing.

Surging Mantle (ardent feat, PsP): A 2 square Mantle radius increase is a small improvement in your usefulness when you're out of power points. This feat **gets nicer** if you have something else mantle-related that triggers at 0 power points, like the kalashtar's Gestalt Anchor.

Wind of Sympathy (ardent feat, PsP): You use second wind, and someone else gets to do the same as a free action. Even with nothing else going on, that's hit points and a defense bonus to you and another character, which means you're being a leader even when you're taking care of yourself. And that represents a bare minimum, as the ardent has lots of feats that go amazingly well with this. This feat is a leader's dream, and I really don't think any ardent should go without it.

World Serpent's Grasp (HotFK): While unlikely to be of much use to ardens by default, if you plan to make heavy use of Wave of Fatigue or go with the Psionic Binder path, this gives those powers **much better control**.

Paragon

Alacrity of Fortune (Mantle of Clarity feat, PHB3): An extra shift isn't quite as nice as the accuracy boost of Elation of Fortune, but neither is it anything to sneeze at.

Bolstering Wind (ardent feat, PsP): Surgeless healing to everyone in your mantle when you use your second wind. Despite the fact that it's got a Wis modifier, this is good in the hands of any ardent. Plus it stacks with Wind of Sympathy and Bolstering Mantle.

Critical Reserve (ardent feat, PHB3): The maths say that you will not be making critical hits often enough for this to pay off.

Elation of Fortune (Mantle of Elation feat, PHB3): Every boost to your allies accuracy is you doing your job right. If you've chosen a build that can hand out saves frequently, this is **even better**.

Implacable Wrath (Mantle of Elation feat, PsP): Ardent Outrage now pushes enemies one square. On one hand, that gets you some breathing room when you've just been bloodied, but possibly not enough.

Improved Ardent Surge (ardent feat, PHB3): Just about every ardent should pick this up at some point.

Instinctive Advance (Mantle of Impulsiveness feat, PsP): This gives Ardent Eruption some of the benefit of Ardent Alacrity. Importantly, this feat guarantees that you can get some use out of it, which by default is not true.

Lingering Swiftfess (Mantle of Clarity feat, PsP): Double the movement provided by Ardent Alacrity. Mantle of Clarity is all about mobility bonuses, so this is definitely appealing.

Mantle of Caution (ardent feat, PsP): Everyone within your mantle gets +2 to all NADs all the time while you are bloodied. That's a fantastic boost, and yet more encouragement to have monsters leave you alone.

Psionic Rush (PsP): Reducing augment costs help you stay at full power longer. The only problem is that there's just too much competition for feats that will provide more substantial benefits on a more regular basis.

Psychic Lock (PHB): With Psionic Power, the ardent now has a decent selection of psychic powers. If you're going to be using any of them, grab this.

Rising Hopes (Mantle of Clarity feat, PsP): Give a dying ally all their actions back, instead of them losing their move to standing up. It might seem boring, but this is an extremely solid benefit.

Suppressive Surge (ardent feat, PsP): Deny enemies healing when you use ardent surge. The problem is that there aren't that many monsters that can heal.

Violent Joy (Mantle of Elation feat, PsP): Extended critical range when you heal a bloodied ally until the end of your next turn. Practically speaking, that's going to cover between one and four attacks. You're very rarely going to see benefits from this, though when the stars are right your allies will love it.

Widened Mantle (ardent feat, PHB3): This isn't really necessary, unless you've got a lot of ranged attackers in your party. It becomes much nicer when you've built up the effects of your mantle, so take care of that first.

Epic

Boundless Enthusiasm (PsP): While still not a very good feat, this is better than the paragon-tier Critical Reserve, since it puts no conditions on the power you need to be using, and grants two power point instead of one. If you have taken Critical Reserve, you

probably want to retrain it with this.

Close the Gap (Mantle of Impulsiveness feat, PsP): A small amount of battlefield rearrangement at the beginning of an encounter. It's nothing to sneeze at.

Critical Understanding (Mantle of Clarity, PsP): If an ally is bloodied when you use ardent surge on them -- and they almost always will be -- they get a huge boost to their defences.

Epic Alacrity (Mantle of Clarity feat, PHB3): With Lingering Swiftsness, this is no longer quite as appealing. For most characters, Epic Alacrity will only grant an extra square of shift (or none!) over Lingering Swiftsness, and the increased move with Lingering Swiftsness means even more mobility. Only consider this if your party has many characters with high base movement.

Endangering Outrage (Mantle of Elation feat, PHB3): As long as your Constitution modifier is high, this is great.

Infectious Euphoria (Mantle of Elation feat, PsP): A good amount of THP to any ally adjacent to the target of ardent surge. It's a good feat, except for that positioning requirement.

Instinctive Surge (Mantle of Impulsiveness feat, PsP): Immediate reaction healing? This is the best reason to make an impetuous ardent.

Victorious Soul (ardent feat, PsP): When you score a critical hit, allies get a big boost to melee attack damage. Whether this is worthwhile comes down to whether you have an **extended crit range**.

Mobility Feats

Heroic

Defensive Mobility (PHB): This gives euphoric ardents a bit of the Mantle of Clarity. If your party tends to spread out, this can help you when you need to move from one engagement to another.

Heavy Armor Agility (HoFL): Just about every ardent will be able to get this. Redundant if you have Scale Specialization, but few ardents can spare the Dex.

Mantle of Readiness (ardent feat, PHB3): Extra speed in the first round is rarely as important as your initiative modifiers.

Psionic Celerity (PsP): The passive benefit is **big** if you have Forward-Thinking Cut, but otherwise unimpressive. Spending one power point to get an extra two move when you need it is situational.

Paragon

Fleet-Footed (PHB): It's not sexy, but it does its job. Especially worth considering to offset the heavy armour penalties.

Epic

Long Step (PHB): Again, not sexy, but a solid benefit.

Damage Feats

Heroic

Weapon Focus (PHB): If you absolutely want to increase damage, then this is a sensible way to go about it. Odds are you've got better things to be doing, though.

Weapon Proficiency (PHB): There are some superior weapon upgrades that represent big damage increases.

Paragon

Hammer Rhythm (PHB): Con modifier damage on misses is a big boost for anyone who can meet the prerequisites for this feat.

Other Feats

Heroic

Autohypnosis (PsP): Arcana isn't a class skill, and normally Int is your dump skill. Con ardent will never look at this feat, but Wis ardent -- especially tieflings, who can afford to make Dex their dump stat -- might think the extra healing surge is worth it.

Battlewise (HoFK): Pretty much useless, unless you're a **Wis ardent**, in which case it verges on must-have. You need every edge you can get to stay competitive with Con ardent!

Improved Initiative (PHB): The best time to buff your allies is before there's any chance that healing will be needed. However, leaders can still do their job even with a more reactive approach, and so you should only pick this up if you've got nothing else to choose.

Psionic Initiative (PsP): It doesn't stack with Improved Initiative, most of the time it is inferior to it, and you can spend one power point to get an increased bonus that may be rendered useless by your roll.

Psionic Skill (PsP): Because the augment gives a power bonus and not a feat bonus, the trick here is that it stacks with Skill Focus when augmented, giving you a +6 bonus. However, since the passive bonus is a feat bonus less than Skill Focus, and you need two feats to make this better than Skill Focus alone, you really need to care about a skill to make this worthwhile.

Racial Feats

Changeling

Fluid Anatomy (EPG): It's a situational feat, but if you're a changeling you've probably got spare feat slots anyway.

Deva

Ascendant Lineage (PHB2): If your racial feature is re-roll, you want to make sure it's a useful re-roll.

Resurgent Memory (Dragon 388): The shift with Memories of a Thousand Lifetimes seems a bit situational -- especially with an attack reroll, where you can't shift away. Still, it's entirely useful, and it gives a benefit to failing the roll. The dependence of the THP on Int/Wis means **Con ardent need not apply**.

Dragonborn

Bolstering Breath (PHB): Buff your allies with a minor action.

Dragon's Rejuvenation (Dragon 388): You want to be spending your second wind often with Bolstering Mantle, and so it's nice to get Dragonfear back when you do.

Dragon's Terror (Dragon 388): Daze one enemy in addition to the normal dragonfear debuff.

Infectious Wrath (Dragon 388) is great, especially with the Mantle of Elation. You're already handing out benefits to allies when you get bloodied, and now you can hand them a +1 to hit as well.

Io's Roar (PsP): If you can actually hit with dragonbreath, then your big supply of psychic powers makes this great. Sadly, this is a big "if".

Dwarf

Dwarven Durability (PHB): With Bolstering Mantle you've got a reason to spend surges as often as possible, so the more surges the better.

Unstoppable Drive (Dragon 388): A free shift adds even more benefit to your Second Wind for more Bolstering Mantle goodness. You want to be moving in closer to the enemy, so the condition on the added shift, while a bit situational, is at least not harmful to you. Bit less useful if you're a polearm wielder.

Eladrin

Eladrin Soldier (PHB): This is the best way to get proficiency with the greatspear.

Ubiquitous Step (PsP): Fey Step is one of the best features of eladrin, so anything that lets it recharge is worth thinking about.

Elf

Elven Precision (PHB): No elf should be without this.

Psionic Accuracy (Dragon 389): Lets you spend one power point to get combat advantage on your Elven Accuracy reroll. It's a bit situational, as you might have had CA already, and you're spending power points on things that aren't your attack powers.

Wild Elf Luck (FRPG): It stacks with Elven Precision, so it helps make the reroll even more certain to connect. The randomness means you probably want to pick this up second, though.

Genasi

Your feat choice for Genasi is mostly going to be related to optimizing your elemental manifestation, as opposed to optimizing as an ardent. I don't have any useful advice to give in relation to this in this guide, I'm afraid.

Githzerai

Allahn's Mindful Relocation (PHB3): Bolstering Mantle gives ardents a reason to be using their second wind often, and this is a big addition to it.

Dakshai's Body-Mind Union (PHB3): A leader having to miss a turn can be death for a party. The chance to deal with stunned, dazed, or dominated right away is fantastic.

Githzerai Blade Master (Dragon 378): Two damage-increasing feats for the price of one, so not a bad deal.

Githzerai Healer (Dragon 378): Another save with every healing power, for some of the most problematic status conditions. The only thing keeping this from being sky blue is that RAW, powers like Energizing Strike would give a saving throw to your enemy as well.

Githzerai Mobility (Dragon 378): This gives euphoric ardens some of the benefits of the mantle of clarity, and it gives enlightened ardens twice their wis modifier for all defenses against opportunity attacks.

Iron Resolve of Zerthadlun (PHB3): Saving throw bonuses are great.

Path to Clarity (ardent feat, PsP): It's Githzerai Healer again, but limited to ardent surge. Take Githzerai Healer first, but think about taking both along with the Mark of Healing.

Peerless Reaction (PHB3): With the huge number of feat benefits an ardent can attach to his second wind, additional ways to trigger it are great things.

Zerth Instincts (PsP): Shift with both your racial powers, and have the opportunity to negate surprise.

Zuoken's Centering (Dragon 378): If you've chosen githzerai as your race, you probably aim to pump Wisdom, and this feat goes a long way towards making up for ignoring Con. The price is having to multiclass monk to get it, but as long as you're happy doing that, this feat is **fantastic**.

Gnome

Armored Warrengard (Dragon 384): The AC bonus is situational, but ardens will almost never be able to pick up Armor Specialization.

Fade Ally (PHB2): There aren't many ways to give invisibility to an ally, so this is a solid option.

Get In Your Head (Dragon 389): The problem with Fade Away is that to get the most of it you needed to be decent at stealth, which was never going to be true for ardens. Now it gives you a teleport as well, and that's much more useful. Retrain to Vanishing Act in epic.

Haunting Sounds (PsP): For one power point, use Ghost Sound to get combat advantage against an enemy, and as long as you have power points left, you can do this at-will. This turns an otherwise purely decorative racial feature into something useful.

Goliath

Half-Elf

Common Cause (Dragon 388): A nice but aggravating feat. Basically, every ally within 10 squares of you gets THP when they spend their second wind, as long as they don't have a racial bonus to Diplomacy. It'll take a bit of bookwork to figure out which of your allies can benefit from this, but odds are that it will be most of them.

Versatile Master (PHB2): Pretty much every half-elf will want this.

Half-Orc

Savage Assault (PHB2): Adds an extra debuff to Savage Assault.

Thirst for Battle (PHB2): Initiative boost and extra healing surge in one packet is just what ardens like to see.

Halfling

Halfling Agility (PHB): If you want your enemy to miss, do your best to make sure that happens.

Lost in the Crowd (PHB): As a melee character, the conditions for the AC bonus will come up a lot.

Rigged Chance (Dragon 381): Making it more likely that second chance will work for you.

Hamadryad

Guardian of the Towering Oak (HoFW): You're going to be the face character in a lot of parties, so get a reroll on some core skills.

Guardian of the Weeping Willow (HoFW): Positioning is important to you, and this feat will let you ignore troublesome forced movement.

Human

Action Surge (PHB): If you're spending an action point, you don't want to miss.

Courageous Mind (Dragon 388) gives two untyped bonuses, one for initiative and one for saving throws. I wouldn't recommend taking this in isolation, since the bonuses are small by themselves. Where this comes into its own is combined with either Improved Initiative or Human Perseverance, where it can push the shared bonus over the top and gives an additional benefit to boot.

Die Hard (Dragon 383): On one hand, if a leader dies, you're headed towards a TPK, and this helps prevent that. On the other hand, if you've got to the point where the conditions of this feat trigger, you might not care about the selfish jerks who make up your party.

Frantic Recovery (Dragon 383): The usefulness of this depends on the extent to which you've been building up Bolstering Mantle.

Human Ingenuity (PsP): Everybody loves spending action points, so getting a power point out of it is great.

Human Perseverance (PHB): Now obsoleted by Resilient Focus.

Stubborn Survivor (FRPG): This is a win-win feat: either you have an action point ready to use, or you have a bonus to saving throws. It stacks with Human Perseverance too.

Kalashtar

Ardent Tsucora Intitiate (Dragon 385): If you're using ardent outrage, you've just been bloodied. If you've just been bloodied, trapping enemies next to you might not be your best plan.

Dual Mind Reserves (Dragon 385): You probably won't be using Augment 1 options very often, as they're very situational, which means a single extra power point is nothing fantastic. On the other hand, it's a power recharge.

Gestalt Anchor (ardent feat, PsP): Initiative check bonuses are always great, and the defensive boost when you're out of power points just makes this better.

Quori Desperation (EPG): A chance to heal yourself before you go unconscious is a great way to make sure the party doesn't lose its leader.

Quori Shield (EPG): Psychic is a common damage type, so resistance to it is great.

Longtooth Shifter

Psychic Feast (Dragon 389): Regeneration 4/6/8 when shifted, as long as you hit on the last turn.

Minotaur

Honor's Path (Dragon 385): Your opportunity attacks aren't likely to be very good, so turning them into a buff instead is handy.

Rampaging Thought (Dragon 389): Regardless of your build, it keys off your secondary stat. You get a bonus of your secondary stat against opportunity attacks when you charge. So basically, you use Forward-Thinking Cut, and if you've got the Mantle of Elation you temporarily act like you've got the Mantle of Clarity, and if you've got the Mantle of Clarity you're untouchable. The rating reflects the fact that you need Forward-Thinking Cut to really make use of this power, but if you have it, **this feat is great**.

Vicious Ferocity (PHB3): Your at-wills are much more useful than your MBAs. With Focusing Strike, you can give yourself a death saving throw before you go unconscious.

Mul

Bred for Battle (DSCS): An initiative boost, a speed boost, and an accuracy boost all in one feat. Sure, the speed and accuracy boost are limited to first round and can be negated by surprise, but the initiative bonus is a racial bonus so it will stack with almost anything.

Humanity's Heir (DSCS): +2 to one skill is take it or leave it, but +1 to one NAD is extremely nice.

Inexhaustible Resources (DSCS): For many classes, choosing to take THP instead of healing would be a strange decision, but ardens have lots of reasons to use their second wind. While this doesn't spend a healing surge (and so doesn't trigger feats that require that), if you want to use your second wind-triggered feats but don't actually need the hit points, this guarantees some benefit to you.

Legacy of Stone (DSCS): Saving throw bonuses and reduced forced movement are solid bonuses, though Humanity's Heir is more generally useful.

Mul's Stamina (DSCS): Yet another healing surge, which is great for ardens and the "spend a healing surge, allies benefit" approach. Best of two on Endurance checks is nice as well.

Pixie

Teeny Target (HoFW): Do your job from an ally's front pocket and get cover for doing so!

Razorclaw Shifter

Revenant

Ghostly Vitality (Dragon 376): Take a full turn when you get knocked down to 0, plus insubstantial to give yourself added protection.

Unnatural Mantle (Dragon 389): Your allies don't fall down until they fail a death saving throw. This feat alone makes Revenants a reasonable choice for an ardent.

Unnatural Stamina (Dragon 376): More healing surges, and a boatload of resistance whenever you spend a healing surge makes for great synergy with Bolstering Mantle.

Shadar-kai

Darkening Mind (Dragon 389): You'll probably only have move 5, so this gives you an encounter teleport which will move you at least that much. In addition, you are now insubstantial during your next turn means half-damage from any opportunity attacks,

so it's effectively two turns of boosted mobility. It's not quite as good for Mantle of Clarity, since you're less bothered by opportunity attacks to begin with, but the teleport boost makes this feat in its own right.

Ghostly Rejuvenation (Dragon Annual 2009): Heal an ally and he becomes insubstantial until the end of his next turn. That's a solid benefit.

Shardmind

Buffeting Shard Swarm (Dragon 387): A nice built of battle rearrangement.

Clarifying Presence (PHB3): Dazed and stunned are two of the worst status effects your allies can be under, and you could be granting a lot of saving throws. Your party will love it if you take this feat.

Healing Fragments (PHB3): Good in its own right, and a fantastic addition to Bolstering Mantle.

Mineral Resistance (Dragon 387): Not overwhelming, but a source of THP is never bad.

Psionic Rejuvenation (PHB3): You probably won't be using Augment 1 options very often, as they're very situational, which means a single extra power point is nothing fantastic. On the other hand, it's a power recharge.

Razor Shard Swarm (Dragon 387): This make shard swarm into a respectable close burst attack.

Refracting Mantle (ardent feat, PsP): All allies in your mantle get combat advantage for a turn when you use shard swarm.

Rejuvenating Shard Swarm (PHB3): A way to heal yourself without using powers that can heal other.

Shard Link (PsP): Ardents can have problems supporting ranged characters, and this feat helps. Since you'll be in close, you'll often be flanking. This feat lets you share the resulting combat advantage with ranged characters.

Telepathic Bulwark (Dragon 387): Handing out resistance to your allies is never going to go wrong.

We Were Once One (Dragon 387): This stacks with Bolstering Mantle, so now you can grant two saving throws with every healing surge.

Thri-kreen

Sturdy Plating (DSCS): Resist 2 all when bloodied isn't much, but it can be enough.

Tiefling

Hellfire Blood (PHB): Ardents don't have many fear powers, and fewer fire powers at all. But with a flaming weapon to give all your powers the fire keyword, or if you're using a Stygian Adept build focused on fear powers, this becomes **invaluable**.

Imperious Majesty (Dragon 381): Swap your lousy Dex modifier to use Cha for initiative, plus a potentially huge penalty to hit on one enemy. Now you can use Dex as your dump stat, and the tiefling Int bonus will help deal with your weak Reflex. This is a great feat for tiefling ardents.

Warforged

Psiforged Resolve (Dragon 389): This gives you the choice, when bloodied, of using your Warforged Resolve to either regain 3 + half level HP, or 1 power point. Since 1 PP augments for the ardent are extremely situational, the magic level for this feat is level 13, when you starting having an odd number of PPs, and this feat therefore represents an extra augmented power use.

Warforged Tactics (EPG): An accuracy boost with the same conditions as the majority of your powers? Yes please.

Wilden

Aspect of the Cultivator (PHB3): A handy choice for any Wilden leader.

Burden of Rejuvenation (PHB3): Surgeless healing is always popular. This is a bit situational, but extremely nice when you can pull it off.

Bloodline Feats

This section is still under construction, and at this point covers only the bloodlines presented in Psionic Power.

Elan (PsP): Sadly, the Elan bloodline is based around your dump stat. There's a couple feats that are kind of nice, but they're in paragon or epic, and it's just not easy to justify the feat investment. However, the Elan paragon path, Psionic Incarnate, is very good. If you want to go with that, then pick up Elan Heritage.

Foulborn (PsP): This is an amazing bloodline for ardens. All of the feats are great defensively, and fit perfectly into the "bloody me and suffer" ardent Catch-22. **Stygian Adepts** are particularly suited to the Foulborn bloodline, as they will love the epic feat Bloodied Horror.

A note on "upgrades": In describing powers, I will often use the term "upgrade" to compare a higher-level power to a lower-level power. Unless specifically mentioned in the power description, this should not be taken to mean that the higher-level power is automatically better, or that they fill the exact same role. Instead, it means that the powers fill sufficiently similar roles that you should have at most one of them. As an example, while I describe Rewarding Strike as an upgrade on Energizing Strike, Wis ardens will prefer to stick with Energizing Strike. However, even a Con ardent will want to pick one of Rewarding Strike or Energizing Strike, and not have both.

Non-ardent powers: With the advent of skill powers and themes, classes can now select powers from outside their class list. Skill powers that are reasonable choices -- ratings of a least black, keying off a skill that it is easy for ardens to be trained in -- are listed with the rest of the class power skills. However, theme powers are not rated here, mostly to keep the list manageable. Instead, good choices will be discussed in the individual theme ratings later in the guide.

Heroic Tier Ardent Disciplines

Level 1 At-Will Disciplines

Demoralizing Strike (PHB3): The fear keyword is handy, and the unaugmented version is a solid power. However, the Augment 2 version is what really sells this power -- a close burst power that hands out a potentially enormous penalty to all defenses (though be aware that it targets your allies as well as your enemies). Demoralizing Strike is a power you might keep throughout your career.

Energizing Strike (PHB3): The THP are Cha modifier- *and* level-based, so this is useful to all ardens and can at higher levels give a massive number of THP. The healing surge from the Augment 2 can be used by any ally, including yourself and dying or unconscious team members, just like Ardent Surge. The Augment 2 is therefore very good at low levels, but at higher levels will find itself displaced by other options. That might mean this gets displaced at higher levels, but alternatively it could be a low-PP-usage (using it unaugmented or Augment 1) option that you'll keep throughout your career. Along with Focusing Strike, this is a great option for racial at-wills. Note that the character builder lists the unaugmented Energizing Strike as having the Healing keyword, but this is an error. That means unaugmented Energizing Strike does *not* work with the Mark of Healing.

Focusing Strike (PHB3): The ardent joins the elite ranks of the leaders that can grant saving throws at-will, which previously only the cleric and the shaman could do. This is probably the power that Humans should choose for their racial at-will.

Impetuous Ruin (PsP): Shutting down opportunity attacks is a big mobility increase to your allies. However, the really nice part of this power is the Aug 2, which dazes.

Intent Laid Bare (Dragon 395): Never choose this power just to use as an MBA: unaugmented as an OA it does nothing, so you've given up an augmentable at-will choice to save a feat. However, killing enemy mobility and bumping your defenses makes it a solid choice for secondary defenders. The bonus telepathy is largely irrelevant, but is useful for in-combat Intimidate specialists. Note that a clarification in the Rules Compendium means that taking this power as a bonus racial at-will means the power keeps its augmentable keyword, so even though you can't augment it the power counts as "unaugmented."

Ire Strike (PHB3): The ardent's ability to grant attacks is probably what has earned it the reputation as the "psionic warlord." No bonus to the attack roll, so you need allies with a good MBA, but the vulnerability is nice.

Karmic Bond (PsP): In principle, this gives monsters a choice between not attacking or taking extra damage. In practice, your Con modifier will need to be quite high for this to be a credible threat, and the requirement that someone needs to hit the monster after it hits an ally to trigger the extra damage is another way out.

Part the Fog (PsP): The unaugmented version is strictly worse than Demoralizing Strike. The Augment 1 can be nice for shutting down some lurkers, but the Augment 2 is disappointing: no increase in range, number of targets, or damage over the unaugmented version, just a reroll on a miss, which means it's not even ideal for crit-fishing.

Psionic Shield (PHB3): Boosting one ally's defense just tends to mean someone else will get attacked instead, and the defense bonus isn't even very good. **A little better** if your party has one character that reliably takes the majority of attacks.

Wave of Fatigue (PsP): Unaugmented deals out slow, Augment 1 guts the target's opportunity attacks, and Augment 2 kills enemy damage while adjacent to you, but slows them to make it hard for them to leave.

Level 1 Daily Disciplines

Adrenaline Strike (PHB3): Solo monsters often have powers to punish the party for grouping around them. Unless your DM throws a lot of solo encounters at you, though, you won't see much, if any, use out of this.

Battle Flow (PsP): Someone gets to shift when the target moves (save ends). That's a pretty weak effect, even for level 1.

Battleborn Acuity (PHB3): A solid bonus to attack and damage rolls for level 1, and a sustain effect gives you something to do with your minor actions.

Foretaste of Death (PsP): Grants combat advantage, can't gain it, and can't flank. All ended by a save, but then it takes 10 psychic damage. It's a shame that it's only 1[W], but everything but the damage is part of an Effect line, so the nasty status effects are guaranteed.

Implanted Suggestion (PHB3): Dazed is a great status effect, and the attacks granted by the suggestion are also extremely nice.

Lingering Fury (PsP): Even with Wis ardens, you're better off with Battleborn Acuity. While Lingering Fury is centered on the target instead of you, which is slightly more positioning-friendly, Battleborn Acuity will be much easier to sustain.

Mental Turmoil (PHB3): The important thing with this is that you get a save ends penalty to attack rolls whether you hit or miss, which is a great way to shut down a hard-hitting monster. The temporary hit points are a nice bonus.

Recursive Emotions (PsP): Ongoing 5 damage (save ends). Every time target tries to save out of it, one enemy takes Wis or Con modifier damage, and one ally regains the same number of hit points. Damage and healing all in one is very appealing. The rating assumes that you interpret "makes a saving throw" as I've just described. If your DM interprets this as an aftereffect (that is, the additional damage and healing happens only when the target succeeds on the saving throw), then this power loses the

potential for massive amounts of damage and healing, and becomes a **bad choice**.

Wormhole Plunge (PHB3): You can teleport the enemy up, which means it takes falling damage. If you could sustain the zone, then this would be an excellent power. As it is, the power is just a convoluted way of delivering damage, with some poor battlefield rearrangement.

Level 2 Utility Disciplines

Bend Space (PHB3): The reach extension might have situational use. The range bonus to ranged powers seems impressive, but the problem is that the range on Bend Space is pretty short. For most encounters, if you're in range of the ally to be able to use Bend Space on him, he won't need the range boost.

Close Wounds (PsP): It's a small amount of THP, but the fact that you can deliver it on an encounter instead of daily basis makes it more appealing than Mind Over Matter.

Dimension Swap (PHB3): These sort of position-swapping powers are always solid. Either swap with someone squishier than you if they're getting beat on, or when you get mobbed let them chew on the defender for a while.

Dull Pain (PsP): Damage reduction is good, as is a saving throw bonus. The only problem is that Wis ardens are rarely going to be pushing their Wis modifiers incredibly high. If you can manage to do that, this is **better**. Most ardens will find the level 10 utility Reactive Resistance to be the better choice, though, so retrain this out around that point.

Healing Bond (PsP): Out-of-turn healing is always good for economy of action reasons if nothing else, and the fact that it's surgeless is even better. Unfortunately, you can't take immediate actions on your own turn, so this power can't be triggered by ardent surge or Wind of Sympathy.

Mind Over Matter (PHB3): This is a respectable amount of temporary hit points. The problem is that a Con ardent will probably get more mileage out of Wellspring of Vigor, and even Wis ardens will probably prefer the encounter power Close Wounds.

Psionic Charge (PsP): You need to hold actions to get the initiative order right in order to reliably use this power. It's probably not worth it, **unless you have a barbarian** or other charge-optimized character in your party.

Psionic Conduit (PHB3): Absolutely useless unless there are other psionic characters in the party. Even then, throwing away your "encounter powers" to let someone else use theirs is a big gamble.

Sympathetic Agony (Dragon 395): Half damage for an ally, defense bonuses for you and for him, and the ability to take a save-ends effect on to yourself -- which dissipates it entirely if you're already subject to the same effect, or lets the party take advantage of any saving bonuses you might have. All this as encounter, too.

Wellspring of Vigor (PHB3): Regenerating THP first thing on a defender frees up a lot of healing for the rest of the party.

Level 2 Skill Powers

Inspiring Fortitude (Endurance, PHB3): Not fantastic in its own right, this changes completely if you're a non-dwarf Con ardent with **Wind of Sympathy**.

Level 3 At-Will Disciplines

Cloud Mind (PSP): This power might seem underwhelming, but what it has is utility. Unlike most other ardent at-wills, each of the different augment level fills an appreciably different role. Unaugmented gives an ally a shift, Augment 1 gives one ally combat advantage, and Augment 2 gives allies concealment from the target. Mobility, accuracy, and defence all in one power. This isn't a power that you'll build an ardent around, but it's one of the best choices for filling out your power selection.

Distracting Strike (PHB3): Don't be tempted to mark things yourself, as you don't have mark punishment (and at level 3, you probably don't have the required durability either). There aren't that many monster that mark, so the Augment 1 is useless. The mark punishment of paladins and swordmages means they don't benefit from this, but if you have fighters, wardens, or battleminds in your party **Distracting Strike comes into its own**.

Guarded Strike (PsP): In the hands of a defender, this would be a great power for creating stickiness. You're not a defender, though, and by default an ardent can't really exploit the stuck monster. With the right tools -- good defenses, a reach weapon, and/or a good opportunity attack -- you can make something of this.

Impatient Strike (PHB3): The unaugmented power is okay, but outshone by the level 1 at-wills. The augmented 2 version is a much more solid power. As PaulO pointed out, this power is hugely better in the hands of an ardent with a **reach weapon**, since then the shift doesn't have to end adjacent to the target so it can be used to disengage from one enemy.

Prescient Strike (PHB3): The attack roll required for the interrupt is unfortunate, but luckily it's against Will, which gives it good odds of connecting. The net result is a very substantial debuff.

Unnerving Shove (PHB3): Especially later in the game, this power can deliver an obscene amount of forced movement. This is a great way to break the enemy's battle line. The Augmented 2 version isn't quite as stellar, as positioning things to get the combat advantage will be tricky.

Unsteadying Rebuke (PsP): An out-of-turn at-will automatically deserves a close look, and this power is a decent one even once you realize that as a reaction this power can't prevent the triggering attack. The meat is in the Augment 2, which gives you an extra attack and some great battlefield rearrangement. Even the Augment 1 and unaugmented versions can be used to set up flanking for allies, and deny other enemies flanking on you. The last bit (and the fact that you don't have much need for immediate actions otherwise) that makes it worth trading your standard for this immediate if you're looking for a battlefield rearrangement power.

Withered Technique (PsP): Also known as "How to make your DM hate you." Ignore the Augment 1, because it's useless -- luckily, this means you can ignore the stat rider on the power. Both the unaugmented and Augment 2 powers let you trivialize the most dangerous powers a creature can have, as well as minor or move action attacks. Definitely one of the better anti-elite/solo tools in the ardent repertoire.

Level 5 Daily Disciplines

Decelerating Slash (PsP): Slowed (save ends), and on a hit that can upgrade to immobilized. In addition, whenever the target fails a saving throw, one ally can shift. Even if the enemy makes a saving throw right away, this power has the saving grace of being one of the most damaging ardent powers at this level.

Empowered Arsenal (PHB3): The damage bonus is substantial, and the effect can be sustained with a minor. You might not encounter many insubstantial enemies, but they are really aggravating when they do show up.

Enlightening Pulse (PHB3): Whenever an ally damages an enemy within the zone, somebody gets to make a saving throw with a Wis modifier bonus. This can utterly negate enemy controllers.

Fate Exchange (PHB3): Battlefield rearrangement, granted attacks, healing, and saving throws -- everything a leader can do in a single power. If you have a good melee basic attack, **there is no reason at all to take anything else**.

Invitation to Defeat (PsP): A huge radius pull, weakening enemy you can pull all the way to adjacent. On top of that, you get a sustainable weakening and extra damage zone. This is a great power, but make sure you combine it with an action point to use one of your close burst powers like Augment 2 Demoralizing Strike.

Meteoric Charge (PsP): This power begs to be used as a fight-opener: you charge in using this power, and all your allies charge in behind you with massive bonuses. Unfortunately, they need to start within five squares of you to get the bonuses, which means if they can get them, you don't really need to charge in.

Persistent Veil (PHB3): One enemy gets -5 to hit (save ends on hit, or til end of your next turn), followed by -2 to hit (save ends), all makes for a reliable way to make one enemy a non-factor in a battle. The penalty to Perception checks makes this power

better if you have a character in the party who relies on Stealth in battle.

Spectre of Doubt (PsP): Ongoing damage, and whenever the target fails to save out of it, you get a chance to daze (save ends) another enemy. With a few poor rolls on the DM's part, this power can quickly shut down an entire encounter.

Level 6 Utility Disciplines

Battle Link (PHB3): Making two allies effectively immune to flanking isn't bad, but it's not anywhere near as handy as other utility disciplines at this level.

Body Adjustment (PHB3): On one hand, it will usually grant less THP than Mind Over Matter; on the other hand, it's an encounter power. The randomness makes it a bit unreliable.

Escalating Fury (PsP): This power continues with the theme of "hit the ardent, the rest of the party grows stronger).

Evade Attack (PHB3): The interrupt happens before the damage, so basically this means once per encounter you can save an ally from being hit by an opportunity attack. This in turn means that until an opportunity attack connects, no one in your party has to worry about them, which means a major mobility boost for everyone. While it is still good for a **Wis ardent with Mantle of Clarity**, it duplicates your mantle effect somewhat.

Mend Wounds (PHB3): Surgeless healing is always popular, even if not on par with what the cleric can deliver. Still, why heal more once per day when you can prevent damage outright once an encounter?

Opportunity Seized (PsP): Rerolling an opportunity attack is all right. Where **this power stands out** is if you have the Mantle of Elation, or if the person re-rolling is a fighter, or ideally both.

Painful Revelations (Dragon 395): For an encounter, take damage to force enemies to grant combat advantage (save ends). The problem is that parties that can most benefit from CA probably already have lots of (non-damaging) ways to obtain it.

Rapid Calculation (PsP): The ardent version of the warlord's Reorient the Axis, but not quite as impressive. Less of a shift, and though you give +2 to all defenses until the first action, this power is a daily.

Shared Momentum (PsP): One ally moves or shifts, another ally gets to shift. Flanking ahoy!

Thought Shield (PHB3): A little bit of resistance and a saving throw bonus would be great if it wasn't for the tiny range of this power. To get good mileage out of it, you'll basically be begging for the party to be pounded by close or area attacks.

Level 6 Skill Powers

Swift Recovery (Heal; PHB3): Unless you're in a party full of dwarves, taking second winds is always inconvenient. This helps the party tap that resource, and is a nice complement to Ardent Surge.

Level 7 At-Will Disciplines

Accelerated Maneuvers (PsP): A straightforward mobility-granting power.

Clarifying Impact (Dragon 395): This is just too situational a power to see much use. If your DM loves giving his enemies cover or having low-light encounters, then you might see a need for this, but losing a power to cover what will usually be a corner case is just hard to swallow. Much as with Intent Laid Bare, don't choose this power just because it counts as an MBA: it offers no real augmentation to an OA, and if you don't need everything else the power has to offer, you're better off sticking with Melee Training.

Courageous Strike (PHB3): An upgrade on Psionic Shield. Most of the time a +2 to AC is better than +1 to all defenses, and the Augment 1 is strictly better. The complexity in comparison comes from the fact that Psionic Shield benefits one ally, while

Courageous Strike debuffs one enemy, which is the difference between figuring out which ally is going to take the brunt of enemy attacks, and which enemy is going to do the most damage. However, the Augment 2 is what really makes this power, providing a huge bonus to AC within a burst 1 zone, as well as damaging and granting ally attacks.

Fatal Attraction (PsP): Both the unaugmented and Augment 2 versions of this power are inferior versions of other powers you'd have access to by this point. However, the point of this power is the Augment 1, which gives the ardent a mark and mark punishment. If you're intent on making a **secondary-defender ardent**, this power is a must-have.

Forward-Thinking Cut (PHB3): The unaugmented and Augment 1 versions of this power are sub-par considered alone, but Augment 2 is the huge part of this power, as it lets two other allies make charges, with a Con bonus to damage rolls. Where Forward-Thinking Cut really shines is as a fight-opener: if the enemy is out of melee range, Augment 2 lets you charge in and let two allies charge in as well. The black rating reflects the fact that the unaugmented and Augment 1 are poor, but if you're okay with only using this as an Augment 2 encounter power, it's **fantastic**.

Mindlink Strike (PHB3): An upgrade on Ire Strike. The unaugmented version is usually weaker, since a shift isn't likely to be as useful as the vulnerability. However, the Augment 1 will come up much more often and is a substantial damage bonus for your defender. The Augment 2 is nice, but remember that you can only take one opportunity action per turn, so no giving fighters multiple attacks with this power.

Rewarding Strike (PHB3): An upgrade on Energizing Strike. The unaugmented version gives a small amount of surgeless healing instead of THP (and saving throws with the Mark of Healing), but the healing on the Augment 2 version is vastly superior -- theoretically, every person in the party could heal off a single use of Rewarding Strike. You lose the ability to heal allies who cannot attack, but for that you can always fall back on Ardent Surge. The only downside is that the unaugmented version's rider depends on Con instead of Cha, so this is a **weaker choice for Wis Ardents**.

Stolen Strength (PsP): With the new enhanced monster damage guidelines of MM3, damage reduction is much more appealing. Still, you're probably better off boosting the defences of your ally (so they take no damage at all) -- especially since this power doesn't help with status effects.

Trailblazing Assault (PsP): Another charge-oriented power. The unaugmented version is even less inspiring than FTC, but the Augment 1 combines healing with the charge, and the Augment 2 throws some attack enabling into the mix. Despite the name, it's not a great fight-opener, as you rarely need healing at the beginning of a fight. While I can't recommend it as a primary power, the fact that the higher augments combine some leader functions means it can be a decent third at-will to round out your power selection.

Unhinging Strike (PHB3): Poor damage, and odds are that most of the time you'd be better off giving attacks to your own party members. The real use of this power is in forcing a monster to disrespect its mark.

Level 9 Daily Disciplines

Agony Field (PHB3): The porcupine approach to personal defense: hit me, and suffer. However, it does abysmal damage, and doesn't fill any real leader function.

Cerebral Worm (PsP): On a hit, the targets a choice: take damage or lose accuracy. That's solid, but if you miss the power isn't very impressive.

Dulled Reflexes (PHB3): Assuming a base move of 5-6, the enemy is going to get two to three attacks before the real penalties hit. By that point, the encounter should be mostly over. The slowing effects are the main thing that will show up in the fight, but it's not a ranged party, and you're not the sort of character who should be off by himself, which means the slowing won't do much of anything.

Emotional Wellspring (PsP): Allies get THP or a saving throw with bonus every time they hit the target. Once the enemy saves out of the ongoing damage you lose the effect, though, so make sure the initiative order is in your favour.

Feast of Despair (PHB3): A permanent lowering of defenses, and even if you're the only psionic character in the party, the extra power points are fantastic.

Feast of Plenty (PHB3): No debuff on the enemy, and positioning yourself so that more than you and one other get the THP is going to be tricky. In the end, this is mostly a defensive power for yourself.

Passage of Swords (PHB3): Attacks Fort, dazed (save ends) on hit, forced movement, and you grant a number of attacks, each with a hefty damage bonus. This is a top-class choice.

Spatial Anomaly (PsP): Teleport the enemy, two granted attacks, and possibly THP to your allies. It's okay, but Passage of Sword is tough competition.

Spur the Battle (PsP): Allies adjacent to you can shift or move. That's not going to be many people, and it's a weak benefit regardless.

Level 10 Utility Disciplines

Force of Will (PsP): +2 to all defences for a turn to everyone in burst 3 is a great encounter power. The need to make a saving throw to trigger this power is a little irritating, but pair this with Mantle of Understanding to make your DM regret putting you in a situation where you need to make saving throws.

Fostered Talent (PsP): Someone succeeds on a skill check, and everyone gets bonuses to skill checks. How useful this is depends entirely on how skill checks are used in your campaign.

From the Brink (PHB3): Surgeless recovery from dying, including getting over the irritating prone status. If your defender goes down, this is the best way to bring him back up again. And it's a minor!

Incite Bravery (PHB3): Sadly, you can only incite bravery in people very close to you. The bonuses aren't huge, and you're just not going to help that many of your allies. If your initiative is high, you might reliably be able to use this in the first turn, which makes it **a little better**.

Reactive Resistance (PHB3): Decent damage reduction against any attack is always going to be appreciated.

Psychic Boon (PsP): At level 10, this power essentially does the same thing as Energizing Strike, and Energizing Strike will pass it up from this point forward. The good news is that this doesn't require that you hit, but you've got better choices at this level.

Tower of Iron Will (PHB3): A minor action gets you a burst 3 zone, in which allies get resist to a common attack type, a bonus to all defenses, and saving throws at the beginning of their turn against dominating and stunning effects, plus you can sustain it as a minor. This is a fantastic power.

Unshakeable Bond (Dragon 395): Once per day, one single enemy can't get cover or concealment from you and you alone. There are too many better options at this level to even think about this.

Vital Summons (PsP): When an ally is bloodied or dying, you can teleport another ally adjacent to the one in trouble. The question really boils down to: is there anything really productive they can do?

Level 10 Skill Powers

Noble Sacrifice (Diplomacy, PHB3): Prevent a bloodied ally from getting killed before you have a chance to heal him.

Prescient Defense (Insight, PHB3): Someone hits you, so you raise your defenses. If your DM gives the information you need to judge whether the +2 will keep the attack from hitting you, this becomes **very good**.

Time Out (Heal, PHB3): Give an ally their second wind back. This gets much more mileage out of the party's healing.

Paragon Tier Ardent Disciplines

Level 13 At-Will Disciplines

Conflicted Emotions (PsP): Generally the problem is getting enemies to cluster, so the unaugmented version is not going to be all that useful. The Augment 1 penalizes the target for being near allies -- except for the very real possibility that it starts adjacent to you. A similar problem arises with the Augment 4.

Confusing Strike (PHB3): The unaugmented version gives a mark-level penalty to attack rolls, and the Augment 1 drops Will as well. But the meat of this is in the Augment 4, which dazes all adjacent enemies you can see, and creates a zone where anything takes a -2 to hit.

Essence Conduit (PsP): The unaugmented version is worse than Energizing Strike, but the Augment 1 is better than Energizing Strike's Augment 2, and Essence Conduit's Augment 4 is surge-plus healing, and can benefit from Psychic Lock. **Wis ardent**s hate it for the Con modifier dependency.

Field of Alacrity (PHB3): Unaugmented turns all allies adjacent to the target into kobolds, and they can shift as minor -- which is not that impressive. Augment 1 ends prone on everyone with 5 squares of you, which is situational. And the Augment 4 lets someone take a move as a free action, which is distinctly underwhelming for this level.

Hope's Audacity (PHB3): Extended crit ranges for everyone! Unfortunately, to make use of this, you're going to have to use Hope's Audacity almost every turn.

Invert Defeat (PsP): The unaugmented version is strange, but it's actually better than simple resistance: if the attack does enough damage to actually bring your ally below 0, this power will immediately bring them back to their feet. The Augment 1 lets you hand out a good number of THP, and the Augment 4 lets you give a smaller amount of THP but do it a whole bunch of times -- and that on top of doing great damage. This is one of the best Wis-based powers ardent's have.

Revelatory Strike (PHB3): An upgrade to Focusing Strike and Psionic Shield, all in a single power. The Augment 4 version is amazing, giving a saving throw with bonus or a Wis modifier bonus to all defenses in zone burst 2.

Stack the Odds (PsP): Positioning kills this power. Normally in a fight you don't want a cluster of adjacent allies: it means you're not flanking and you're making it easier for enemies to catch you in bursts or blasts. The Augment 4 affects both allies and enemies, so it's a little better, but still, there's better choices.

Victorious Urging (PHB3): The unaugmented version is uninspiring, as a +2 bonus to accuracy for a single ally against a single enemy isn't going to get as much mileage as a -2 to defenses to that same enemy. The Augment 4 version is much better, giving everyone the accuracy bonus, possibly against multiple enemies, but without a good unaugmented or Augment 1 version, you probably want to give this a pass.

Level 15 Daily Disciplines

Aggressive Accompaniment (PsP): One of your allies makes an attack: you teleport over, soften the enemy up, grant your ally combat advantage, and give him extra damage. If you're lucky, the enemy ends up dazed as well. This is a great tool for dealing with nasty controllers or artillery.

Bloody Resurgence (PsP): As the name implies, you use this power when bloodied, where you get to do decent damage to enemies and grant surge-plus healing to an ally. That's respectable, but not inspiring.

Coordinated Effort (PsP): You grant a basic attack, a charge, a shift, let one ally fly, and another spend a healing surge. All as a minor action. This is a huge amount of enabling packed into one tiny package. Hopefully you have a five-character party, though, or something is going to go to waste.

Extermination Urge (PHB3): Dominated and dazed are great status effects, and the vulnerability can be huge.

Imminent Demise (PHB3): A hefty amount of ongoing damage that affects every enemy next to you which the can't save against - this is a guaranteed tool for ending fights sooner.

Mountainfall Strike (PHB3): Immobilized and slow are weak status effects, especially considering you could be taking Extermination Urge at the very same level. If your party has a way to force enemies to clump, to spread the immobilization, this power is **much better**. For Psionic Binders, it's **invaluable**.

Treachery's Seed (PsP): Whenever the target makes an attack, you can spend an immediate reaction to make an MBA against whoever you want. No save, no time limit: these are good things. The DM making sure the target is never adjacent to any of his allies: this is the inevitable bad thing. Given that it triggers off making an attack, it's not even useful for forcing mark disrespect.

Unchecked Aggression (PHB3): The zone is small and not mobile, but the July 2010 errata makes it sustainable, which improves it.

Vigorous Offensive (PHB3): Attack up to four enemies, and each time you attack (not hit), an ally within 5 gets THP. You might not get surrounded very often, but that's why this is a daily!

Level 16 Utility Disciplines

Bountiful Life (PHB3): THP to every ally within 10 every time you earn hit points is pretty pointless, unless **you have a way to get regeneration**.

Common Cause (PsP): An ally spends a healing surge, and every ally within 5 squares of him gets 10+Cha mod THP. Again, as an immediate reaction, you can't use this power in your own turn, so it can't trigger off surges you grant. Also, this is a ranged power, so it will trigger opportunity attacks on you. Daily usage makes it a little more limited yet. It's not bad, but other powers stand out more.

Detach Mind (PsP): Shut down a save ends condition for one turn, then give the target a bonus to save against the effect. Note that the power stipulates that the target can't make a saving throw at the end of their next turn, but that says nothing about granted saving throws. All round, this is a very solid power.

Disbelieve Danger (PsP): Make an ally insubstantial as an immediate interrupt. There is absolutely no downside to this.

Fortunate Recovery (PHB3): The odds are pretty high that if one person in the party needs to make a saving throw, quite a few do, so a bonus to saving throws that follows on you making a saving throw is likely to be useful quite often. This stacks with Mantle of Understanding, which makes this power appealing even for Wis ardent.

Mental Rejuvenation (PHB3): This is great surgeless healing. Either two healing surges worth of healing to one target, or one healing surge to everyone within 5 makes this a healing power that would stand out even in the cleric's power list.

Re-Form Mind (PHB3): Train somebody in an arbitrary skill. This is a very nice out-of-combat power, but its usefulness entirely depends on how your party deals with out-of-combat situations.

Resilient Bond (PsP): You and an ally get regeneration 5, as long as you stay within 5 squares. That's easy to arrange.

Uncanny Awareness (PHB3): Rearranging the battlefield at the start of combat is nice, but there's better powers. The Augment 4 version of the lv. 17 at-will Diamond Defense Assault is markedly better.

Level 16 Skill Powers

Diehard (Endurance, PHB3): In the hands of a leader, this power effectively means "choose not to die."

Insightful Riposte (Insight, PHB3): Accuracy is always key, and this is a chance to put the occasional near miss over the edge.

Level 17 At-Will Disciplines

Blinding Clarity (PsP): This is a very clear upgrade for Impetuous Ruin. The unaugmented version of Blinding Clarity is the Augment 1 of Impetuous Ruin, so Blinding Clarity wins in that respect. The Augment 1 penalizes all out-of-turn actions. Unfortunately, the Augment 4 makes the enemy blinded instead of dazed -- which means the enemy gets a full complement of actions, and can still make immediate attacks. If you can burn the power points to always use Impetuous Ruin at Augment 2, stick with it. If you're looking for a power that you will **mostly use unaugmented** or at Augment 1, Blinding Clarity should be your choice.

Diamond Defense Assault (PHB3): An upgrade on Distracting Strike. The unaugmented version doesn't give you the opportunity to mark the enemy yourself, but that's a bad idea regardless. The Augment 1 version gives anyone a weak version of the fighter's Combat Challenge, and since the attack is a free action, it will stack with a defender's mark punishment. The Augment 4 sets up a nice protective zone. Once again, with a fighter, battlemind, or warden in your party, this power is **an even better choice**.

Emotional Flood (PsP): A nice two-for-one at-will that both pushes and gives THP to an adjacent ally. The Augment 1 gives the THP to all adjacent allies and pushes further; the Augment 4 loses the push but can deliver obscene numbers of THP. The Augment 4 might be tricky to get best use out of, though, and the lower augments don't stand out except for the mixed effect.

Illuminating Strike (PHB3): Radiant damage, and you hand out resistance, either to all damage, or (Augment 1) a greater amount against necrotic, radiant, or psychic. The Augment 4 is one of your better damage dealing powers, doing 2[W] in burst one, but you can still only give resistance to one character. A solid choice for Wis ardent, even better if you're pulling a **Radiant Mafia party**.

Probability Flux (PsP): This is a power based around denying the enemy critical hits. By definition, these are rare and unpredictable, so to get any use out of it you need to be spamming it all the time. This in turn means the vast majority of the time you are doing nothing useful at all.

Temporal Strike (PHB3): Insubstantial against opportunity attacks is good with the Mantle of Elation or Mantle of Impulsiveness, but **a lot less useful** with a Wis ardent who has the Mantle of Clarity. The Augment 1 is very situational, but the Augment 4 is a hefty defensive boost.

Terrifying Deluge (PHB3): The unaugmented version is poor: you can shift the target one square after an ally hits it. The Augment 4 version is a big step up, being able to slide every enemy in burst 2 that you hit with the attack, and then you can slide them again whenever an ally hits them. This power takes a step up **if you have boosted your forced movement**.

Violent Surge (PsP): This is *the* focus fire at-will. Both the unaugmented version and the Augment 4 boil down to a damage boost to all attacks against the target. The Augment 1 is poor. Even if your Con modifier means that this would in theory be doing more damage, all the bonus damage is now riding on your to-hit roll. That makes you feel strikerish when you hit, but it screws the whole party if you miss. So while you should always give the Augment 1 a miss, this is the power you break out when there is an enemy that needs to go down.

Level 19 Daily Disciplines

Chains of Affinity (PHB3): Decent damage, but it's a small, immovable zone, and the punitive damage is small for the level.

Clarified Pain (PsP): Good ongoing damage, and every time the target tries to save an ally gets an accuracy boost. It's a solid benefit while it lasts, but there's a 50% chance this will end doing little more than an encounter power would.

Corridor of Pain (PsP): Restrained is a solid status effect, though it requires a hit to get. The Effect lets you teleport the enemy adjacent to an ally whenever the target takes damage, so use this to lock down would-be ranged attackers.

Deflecting Disk (PHB3): Good damage for ardent powers, and you get a mini-spirit companion. +2 to all defenses is non-trivial, and doubling that bonus to save an ally is a reasonable gain for ending the effect.

Mind Rend (PsP): A sustainable zone that dazes enemies that end their turn within it is magnificent control. The fact that the initial burst slows makes it easier to trap enemies in it, and the nature of dazed makes it hard for them to get out.

Reactive Jaunt Strike (PsP): The ardent's only stance power! Sadly, it seems to be made for hybrids rather than pure ardens. If you've got a **worthwhile MBA**, then you might want to take a closer look at this, but otherwise the mobility the power grants is distinctly underwhelming.

Shared Vigor (PHB3): The amount of extra healing isn't large, and random to boot. However, [Customer Service rulings](#) suggest that the Mark of Healing applies to all healing granted by the zone, which takes this over the top. If you don't have the Mark of Healing, it's still a decent power, but other choices at the level are much more substantial.

Temporal Acceleration (PHB3): Slowed and can't shift is just a weak status effect for this level. The zone can help with your defender's stickiness, but they probably don't need the help, and you'll need a way to draw enemies into the zone.

Vitality Transfer (PHB3): Attacks Fortitude, decent damage, surgeless healing to the whole party, and one of only two Reliable-keyword powers the ardent has.

Epic Tier Ardent Disciplines

level 22 Utility Disciplines

Awakened Id (PsP): In my experience, when an ally is bloodied he wants healing, not a bonus to Endurance and Athletics checks.

Borrowed Time (PHB3): Not even the warlord can give another character an entire turn's worth of actions. However, it isn't actually a turn. That means some disadvantages: the target can't spend action points and doesn't make saving throws. On the other hand, he doesn't take ongoing damage, the target gets an extra "turn" to take advantage of "until start/end of next turn" effects, and Borrowed Time bypasses the dazed condition (which specifies you can only take one action on your turn). While it's a bit ambiguous, because Borrowed Time gives a single free action (which can be used to generate a standard, move, and minor action), even with the July 2010 errata any or all of the three actions can be used to attack (unless of course another free-action granted attack has already happened.)

Empathic Recovery (PsP): It's a given that people are going to miss with encounter powers, and this way someone benefits from it. If this was an encounter power I'd be happier with it, but as a daily it's a lot harder to make sure you'll make the best use of it.

Expedite Healing (PsP): Surgeless, out-of-turn healing on a dying ally, who also gets to stand up and shift. This pretty much obsoletes the level 10 utility *From The Brink*, so retrain that out if you're taking this.

Guided Opportunity (PHB3): A bonus to hit and damage on opportunity attacks makes your defender very happy.

Insensate Mind (PHB3): At least 11 resistance to all damage; not sexy but useful.

Rapid Recovery (PHB3): Regeneration to every ally next to you, sustain minor. Another excellent surgeless healing power.

Sudden Reinforcements (PsP): Combat advantage and a teleport is okay, but really not on par for this level.

Level 23 At-Will Disciplines

Concerted Effort (PsP): The unaugmented and Augment 1 are pretty bad. It's a big boost to hit, but on a very limited selection of attacks, and allies have to be adjacent to you, which is a positioning problem. The Augment 6 grants basic attacks with a bonus to hit -- but it's up against Revelatory Slash, which grants at-wills and allows focus-firing. An ardent with a big Con modifier and a party with good basic attacks will think about this; everyone else should give it a pass.

Flood of Madness (PHB3): Intended as an upgrade to Unhinging Strike, it's actually an inferior version of it. The unaugmented versions are identical, and Flood of Madness' Augment 2 version is only useful if you can spread a lot of combat advantage around (for example, after Ardent Outrage has triggered). The problem is the fully Augmented Version: while Flood of Madness'

Augment 6 can theoretically hit a lot more than Unhinging Strike's Augment 2 version, in reality it will be rare that a single enemy is adjacent to more than two of its allies. Effectively, you'll get the same benefit out of Augment 6 Flood of Madness as the Augment 2 Unhinging Strike, but for 3 times the power point cost. Stick to Unhinging Strike.

Perception Shift (PHB3): Probably intended as an upgrade to Confusing Strike. Being able to choose the defense the monster is targeting is usually at least as good as the -2 to hit that Confusing Strike grants -- unless, of course, the monster is already targeting the best defense. Just like with Flood of Madness, the Augment 6 of Perception Shift and the Augment 2 of Confusing Strike are pretty comparable -- except Perception Shift gets an extra [W] of damage instead of the dazed effect of Confused Strike, which is not a fair trade. The only thing helping Perception Shift is that it's an attack against Will instead of AC.

Revealing Strike (PHB3): Intended as an upgrade on Demoralizing Strike, but it suffers in comparison. The unaugmented versions are the same, but the augments in Revealing Strike are all single-target, and focus on cancelling out defensive bonuses of monsters from invisibility or concealment rather than actually lowering defenses. The given rating assumes you're a Con ardent, but for Wis ardens **this power can be better than Demoralizing Strike**.

Revelatory Slash (PHB3): Intended as an upgrade on Mindlink Strike, and (finally!) it's a good improvement. The unaugmented version results in the enemy granting combat advantage if the enabled ally hits it, which is always a big benefit. The Augment 2 has easy conditions to meet, and hands out the dazed effect. The Augment 6 looks weak until you realize that it's enabling at-wills, and not just melee basic attacks.

Rewarding Smash (PsP): It took a splatbook and waiting until the epic tier, but Wis ardens finally get a healing power comparable to Rewarding Strike for Con ardens. This power requires the ally to be bloodied for the unaugmented and Augment 2, but does not require a hit roll. The Augment 6 does require a hit roll for the healing, but it's an ally adjacent to you, it's surge-plus healing, and enemies are granting combat advantage. This is a good healing power, and the best **Wis ardens** get.

Ruinous Scream (PsP): Deafened is a fairly useless status condition, so the unaugmented is pretty rubbish. With boosts to forced movement, however, the Augment 2 can let you deal damage to quite a few enemies at once, and the Augment 6 combines that with a lot of THP.

Level 25 Daily Disciplines

Blistering Aversion (PHB3): The ardent's sole fire-keyword power. Weak damage, and no ongoing damage or status on a miss. The zone requires enemies to end their turn in it to get the ongoing damage. If your party has a way to make that happen, **this power improves**.

Bountiful Portent (PsP): A huge amount of surgeless healing, essentially a surge's worth to the entire party.

Corona of Battle (PHB3): A huge zone granting regeneration, +2 to hit, and 1d10 extra damage on all attacks to allies within the zone. A great buff.

Intellect Bomb (PHB3): The value of this power comes down to how many targets you can pack into the radius of the secondary attack. You have some control as to when the secondary attack goes off, which helps, but it remains too situational to get a better rating.

Inverted Emotions (PsP): It looks like a decent power, where either the target hits and another enemy takes damage, or it misses and the target grants combat advantage. The problem is that the on-hit effect requires that there be an enemy adjacent to the target, and that's not going to happen if the DM can help it.

Outpouring of Grief (PsP): When an ally gets bloodied, another ally gets a healing surge. Use this quickly on a big bad, and the fight will go much easier.

Revealed Assets (PHB3): This is the power equivalent of shouting, "Leave him alone!" If your party composition leads to one person being ganged up on repeatedly, this power is **a good choice**.

Summons to Doom (PHB3): 4[W] damage to every enemy within 5 is the best ardens get for damage, and it's pretty good. Then the enemy either gets shoved away, or a save-ends penalty to attack rolls, and either way the massive knot of enemies you just created is unlikely to kill you.

Victorious Vision (PsP): Two granted basic attacks, each of which will either hit and daze (and do a tiny amount of extra damage), or miss and do damage and slide anyway.

Level 27 At-Will Disciplines

Dismissive Strike (PHB3): This battlefield rearrangement power is probably intended to upgrade Terrifying Deluge, and it does a great job at it. You don't just slide the enemy, you teleport them five squares. The Augment 2 hits everyone in burst 1, and lets you teleport them next to an adjacent ally -- a bit situational, but good for breaking flanking. The real value in this power is the Augment 6, which creates a burst 1 zone that teleports enemies and allies who enter the zone.

Exhilarating Strike (PHB3): Another upgrade for Mindlink Strike, but with Wis riders instead of Con. It might be better than Mindlink Strike, but it's clearly worse than Revelatory Slash. The unaugmented version is terrible, with less range than Revelatory Slash and no additional effects at all. The Augment 2 gives a Wis modifier bonus to the damage roll, and the enabled ally gets a saving throw. The Augment 6 lets all allies with range make a basic (melee or ranged) attack or charge, with a bonus to the damage roll, and a saving throw if they hit. If you have a party with really good basic attacks, this **can look appealing**, but otherwise even Wis ardens will be happier with Revelatory Slash.

Falling Sky (PsP): Unaugmented is the same as Wave of Fatigue, and the Augment 2 is worse than Wave of Fatigue's Augment 2. The Augment 6 is unimpressive as well; anything that gives monsters a choice of effects ends up being worst of all worlds for you.

Restorative Bastion (PHB3): An upgrade for Focusing Strike, and a solid one. The unaugmented version is similar, but targets Fortitude instead of AC. The Augment 2 is situational, but ongoing damage is common and the +5 is a huge bonus for a saving throw. The Augment 6 is better damage than Focusing Strike's Augment 2, and it gives a saving throw to every ally you can see, rather than allies within 5. Just how good this power is depends on how spread out your party tends to be during a fight.

Tactical Failure (PsP): The unaugmented and Augment 2 both punish the monster for not using basic attacks, and at higher levels, this is a big deal: Orcus is a lot less threatening when you cut out most of his attack list. But the Augment 6, other than the extra damage, is strictly worse than the Augment 2 of Impetuous Ruin. Epic tier is not the place to being party-unfriendly restrictions on status effects! Still, the unaugmented and Augment 2 are good, and this power is a good choice.

Unconscious Attack (PsP): At your command, an enemy (or an ally -- possibly a better use with the proper resistances and a DM that doesn't rule this bag-of-rats) makes an MBA with bonus to hit, and both the target and its target take extra damage if the attack hits. The problem with these sort of powers is always trying to find a monster who can reach his allies, but the Augment 2 solves that. The Augment 6 takes it one step further and makes the enemy charge (though the hit effect does nothing RAW). At this level, monsters have good MBAs, so this is a solid power.

Unnerving Disruption (PHB3): An upgrade for Confusing Strike, and a good one. The unaugmented versions are the same. The Augment 2 version hits all enemies in a burst 1 and gives a Con modifier penalty to attacks targeting Will. The meat of the power is the Augment 6, which hits burst 1, gives a Con modifier penalty to all attack rolls, and weakens, which means that even when enemies do hit they won't do damage. Just to top things off, allies get a damage bonus.

Level 29 Daily Disciplines

Empathic Projection (PHB3): Okay damage, and the push buys you some breathing room. The bonus to hit when you hit and the bonus to defense when you miss aren't huge for this level, and the lack of control will be frustrating.

Explosive Summons (PsP): The power's trigger is confusing: it's an immediate reaction, but you teleport as an interrupt? It's very similar to Summons to Doom, except that it's out-of-turn, doesn't give the enemy a choice between forced movement and anything else, has a bigger push, and pushes on a miss as well. You probably don't want both, but you could reasonably choose either.

Image of Doom (PHB3): As anti-solo powers go, this is okay. Once again, the penalties are useful but not huge, and the forced movement isn't going to be a huge factor.

Lethal Delusion (PsP): This is the sort of power that makes DMs curse -- big debuff to the enemy, and then damage that penalizes the misses it gets as a result of that debuff. The penalty to saving throws makes it more likely the penalties will stick, and the power is reliable so you can keep trying until it lands.

Undeniable Weakness (PHB3): Another power that really just needs a larger area of effect. Weakened isn't a great status, especially not at higher levels when the real problem is status effects. The resistance to all damage is also not going to stand out with epic characters.

Violent Spark (PHB3): Some quality action enabling here -- every ally gets a damage-boosted at-will, and a saving throw if they miss.

Vulnerability Revealed (PsP): Enemies adjacent to you grant combat advantage and take Cha mod extra damage. Problem: enemies will not stay adjacent to you.

Themes

Themes never cost you power points. Even if you choose to take a theme encounter power instead of an augmentable at-will, you will still gain the power points you would normally have gained at that level. However, ardens cannot choose encounter theme attack powers.

The rating of themes does not include an assessment of any paragon paths or epic destinies that theme might enable, as they will be assessed separately in the sections below.

Themes

Alchemist (Dragon 399): This theme is the most viable way to use alchemical items, which can represent a decent amount of versatility.

Animal Master (Dragon 399): Even with scaling defences, the minion is going to die very easily, and you can do nothing with this theme without putting it at risk. The hawk is the best of a bad bunch -- flight makes it easier to keep out of danger, and the Perception bonus is useful. Just be clear, though: you choose this theme because you think animal companions are cool, not because the theme is useful.

Athasian Minstrel (DSCS): The feature power is quite useful for ardens, keeping an enemy close and passive to make it easier to take it down. The only other power of note is the level 10 utility, which will help a great deal with reach and range issues.

Chevalier (Dragon 399): Combine Valiant Charge with Forward-Thinking Cut to make your life easier, and the level 10 feature helps prevent you from being crippled by status effects.

Dune Trader (DSCS): Most of the powers are related to mobility, which is always nice. The feature power is either good mobility for you or lots of shifts granted to allies, and this is an area that ardens can be quite weak. None of the other powers really stand out, though.

Elemental Priest (DSCS): This theme is a huge benefit to the ardent, because it provides the one thing that the ardent has real problems with: boosting allies at a remove from you. Summon elementals near your ranged allies and stand close to your melee friends, and you're almost a reverse shaman. Particularly worth looking at is Elemental Justice. Note that this is an implement-based theme, so make sure that is dealt with.

Explorer (Dragon 399): Lots of mobility here, which doesn't hurt but probably wasn't your primary concern.

Escaped Slave (Dragon 390): A free Cha-based skill training and a defensive slant on the powers makes this a great choice for the ardent. The feature power is a subtle but fun defensive power that ardens can easily use, and the level 2 utility power is extremely useful for a class with limited ranged attack options.

Gladiator (DSCS): Described as defender-role theme, it's actually mostly about damage dealing. For the ardent, the real appeal here are the utility exploits, which are all about getting combat advantage or equivalents against enemies. This is very handy for debuff lockdowns: for example, get combat advantage using Go with the Flow to help land the first Demoralizing Strike on an enemy, which essentially perpetuates the combat advantage. The real gem here is Perceive Weakness, that grants +2 to hit, +1[W] damage, and is effectively reliable.

Guardian (Dragon 399): If you take this theme and Intent Laid Bare, you'll do a decent job as a secondary defender.

Guttersnipe (Dragon 399): The utilities are defensive, which isn't bad, though the feature attack overlaps more than you probably want with Forward-Thinking Cut.

Hospitaler (Dragon 399): Another theme that's great for making a secondary defender -- basically, you are now a miniature swordmage.

Mercenary (Dragon 399): The feature attack is a decent way to add more damage to your build. On one hand, you need the help; on the other hand, you're never going to be good at it, so a theme that plays to your strength might be preferable.

Noble (Dragon 399): The feature is is move-action party mobility, the utilities are all leaderish, the skills synergize with ardens, and a free magic item.

Noble Adept (DSCS): An extra power point is automatically nice. The feature power is fantastic, as is the level 6 utility Enforced Competence. Psionic Sustenance is a great way to recover power points if you have a surge-rich party member, and all of the powers are ranged versus Will, meaning they are great complements to the ardent power set. Once again, it's an implement-based theme, so make sure that this is not an issue for you.

Ordained Priest (Dragon 399): Be more of a leader! A new mini-mantle that tacks with your current one, and a weapon-based attack that doesn't need your ally to be adjacent. A solid addition to any ardent.

Order Adept (Dragon 399): The bonus to Will is nice, but it's an implement path, ardens already have good utilities, and your Arcana score is never going to be remarkable.

Outlaw (Dragon 399): Adding a dazed rider to any at-will attack once per encounter is a good deal, but beyond that this doesn't really complement your core competencies.

Primal Guardian (DSCS): A defender theme, but ardens will have a hard time exploiting it fully. If you're trying to build a secondary-defender ardent, the feature power gives you some mark punishment, which you'll want. Beyond that, the power of note is Balm of the Guardian, which lets you spend a surge and give THP to your allies -- in the case of the ardent, along with all your Bolstering Mantle benefits.

Scholar (Dragon 399): The utility of languages is campaign-dependent, so this theme is as well. It doesn't help that the skills that see synergy with the Scholar are skills you do poorly with.

Seer (Dragon 399): Cast Fortune boils down to, "will you waste your encounter powers/power points?" and that's a great thing to know. The utilities are flavourful and more useful in non-combat situations, but no one has ever regretted re-rolling Perception.

Templar (DSCS): The feature power is a big accuracy boost. All the powers of this path are good, but especially of note are the level 2 utility (surge and saving throw for standing next to an enemy), the level 3 attack (automatically make a saving throw), and the level 10 utility (deals with a whole host of bad status conditions at once). Once again, an implement theme, so be careful to sort that out.

Veiled Alliance (DSCS): The bad news is that it's an implement theme. The good news with this theme is that it's geared towards putting status effects on enemies at range, which is a nice complement to the ardent's usual function. The problem is to make best use of this power, you need to use a lot of minor actions. At early levels, that's not a big problem, but at later levels, where you'll have zones to sustain and minor action healing powers, the competition could get frustrating.

Wasteland Nomad (DSCS): The theme is based around not being adjacent to allies, but this is exactly where the ardent needs to be most of the time. You won't take any of the theme powers, but the feature power is okay even if you are adjacent to an ally.

Wildler (DSCS): If this wasn't an implement theme, it might be a good damage boost. If you're prepared to invest in solving the implement problem, the utility powers are defensive and can really be a help, especially for Wis ardens.

Wizard's Apprentice (Dragon 399): Solve the implement problem, and Color Orb is a good ranged attack to add to your arsenal.

Paragon Paths

When choosing a paragon path, remember that choosing a non-psionic paragon path will lose you 2 power points. That's a fairly steep price, and needs to be approached with caution. To simplify things, I have only rated non-ardent paragon paths with a rating of at least **black**.

Ardent Paragon Paths

Anarchic Adept (PsP): This is a path for those who want to play up the random, wild nature of ardens. The features are good: no secondary stat dependence, the level 11 benefits are random, but always beneficial, and the level 16 feature is fantastic. Not granting combat advantage when dazed is okay, but the real benefit is being able to sustain zones or use ardent surge and not give up your standard when dazed. Sadly, the powers aren't good. Chaos Unbound is flat-out horrible, as it can debuff your allies and buff your enemies as easily as the opposite. Chaos Breach, despite having an Effect line, has no effect if you miss all targets. Anarchic Strike is okay, but if you're taking this path, take it for the features.

Argent Soul (PHB3): Leaders love to heal, right? That's the premise of this path, but it is an enormous boost in that regard, though sadly no surgeless healing is on offer. The extended crit range is a very nice bonus on top of that. The only Con rider on this path comes with the action point feature, which determines the amount of THP that your allies get. Wis ardens can probably give up on this feature without too many tears, and make good use of the rest of the Argent Soul path.

Awakened Visionary (PsP): Don't be confused by the number of marks this path hands out. It's not really a good secondary defender path, as you don't get any help with mark punishment. What this power is about is mobility, giving it to yourself and denying it to the enemy. You can teleport on action points, the level 12 utility is an immensely improved Dimension Swap, and the level 20 attack first swaps you with an ally, then swaps your target with another ally. The level 16 feature will make it very hard for enemies to flank you and easy for you to flank them. It's a solid path by itself for Wis ardens, and an obvious choice for hybrid ardent|defenders. It's less appealing for Con ardens, as the teleports are going to be very short range.

Catalyst (PsP): The appeal to this no-secondary-stat path is the powers. The level 11 attack power is solid attack enabling, granting three allies a chance to hit with bonuses to damage if something of them miss. The utility and the level 20 daily both give reasonable buffs that the target to expend to turn into healing or damage plus dazing, respectively. The features are a little hit and miss. The action point feature is more good ally enabling, and the chance to train a new skill every extended rest can be useful depending on the campaign. The level 16 feature depends on scoring a critical hit, though, so you need to get an extended crit range to make that worthwhile.

Contemplative Ardent (Dragon 395): The level 11 attack power is nice, as is giving out an attack bonus when you hit zero power points. Telepathy is flavourful, and the action point feature will be inconsistent but on the extremes quite potent. The problem is there's very little to recommend this after level 11.

Incandescent Champion (PsP): Radiant is one of the best damage types, and this path lets you do bonus radiant damage on your staple attacks. Better yet, the action point feature lets you hand out radiant vulnerability. The powers are all solid as well. If your aim is to boost damage output, then this is probably the best ardent path. However, it is extremely Con dependent, so **Wis ardens** need to look elsewhere.

Phrenic Invader (PsP): The point of this path is very simple: increase your defenses by punishing those who attack you. It doesn't

have secondary stats, which is nice. You can use an action point to retaliate against a melee attack with an unaugmented at-will, and at level 16 you get an accuracy boost for all opportunity and immediate attacks. The level 11 attack power is an immediate reaction that lets you daze someone who hit you, and you can't easily be blinded or deafened. Telepathy is flavourful if of unclear usefulness, and the level 20 attack is solid punishment. The utility is underwhelming, though. It's a zone centered on you, but it slows you. Monsters will quickly move out of your attack range, entirely negating the power. The one thing is that you absolutely need a good opportunity attack to make best use of this path.

Psionic Binder (PHB3): Look under Sample Builds to see how this path can be used. Basically, this path becomes effective if combined with World Serpent's Grasp and a party that can really take advantage of prone enemies. It requires a lot of specialization, but it can be a solid paragon path choice.

Siphon (PsP): Learning the lessons from Psionic Binder, we have a path that benefits from enemies that are slowed, dazed, or stunned, and also slows and dazes enemies! Essentially the path revolves around inflicting status effects on enemies and then granting hit points or THP to yourself or allies. The powers are set up in such a way that the conditions are easy to meet. Most of the hit points are derived from your Wis modifier, so this is a heavily Wis-dependent path. For the first time, I get to say, "**Con ardens should look elsewhere.**"

Stygian Adept (PHB3): The ardent doesn't have many fear powers, but the joy of the augmentable class feature is that you only need one. Demoralizing Strike combined with a staggering weapon will give you a single power combining a great debuff with fantastic battlefield shuffling. Fearsome Zone is also a huge bonus, giving enemies a -2 to hit in every zone you have (and you have quite a few). The encounter power doesn't look like much, but if you've increased your forced movement, you can just about eject an enemy from the battlefield with it. All told, this is probably the top choice for any Con ardent who's willing to stick with Demoralizing Strike for the whole game. Sadly, there are a couple of Con riders and they're very nice, so this isn't a good choice for **Wis ardens**.

Talaric Strategist (PHB3): It's not sexy, but this is an extremely solid path. The action point feature is fantastic defense, and the party initiative modifier isn't overwhelming but is nothing to sneer at. The level 20 attack is a highly accurate way to deliver dazed, which is great. The meat of the path, though, is in sliding your party around. If you've got a highly mobile party, this path is a top choice. As an added benefit, the path has no secondary stat riders at all, so it's good for all ardens.

Other Paragon Paths

Caravan Master (dune trader theme; DSCS): Mobility and defense are the theme of this thread. For the ardent, who depends on heavy armour but has a hard time with armour specialization feats, what really stands out is the +1 to speed, which you get to spread to allies as well. Another subtle but important benefit is the ability to make Insight and Perception rolls twice. Also worth noting is the Merchant's Strategy utility, which is one of the rare tools for shedding marks.

Dark Watcher (HoS; requires good or lawful good alignment): This is a very solid choice for leaders looking to be an off-defender. With the nerfed Melee Training, giving up damage for a status effect is a no-brainer, and your other powers are a mix of ally buffing, healing, and some decent stand-ins for mark punishment.

Half-Elf Emissary (half-elf, bard; Arcane Power): In most respects this paragon path is distinctly underwhelming for the ardent. However, with the Skilled Speech features of this path, the Mantle of Elation, and the Elated Instincts feat, you would be handing out obscene skill check bonuses on all Charisma-based skills, and game-breaking ones for Diplomacy and Intimidate. You're giving up quite a bit to achieve this combination, but in the right campaign this can be so potent that the path deserves mention.

Fear Walker (dragonborn with dragonfear; Dragon 388): Another paragon path for those who want to specialize in Demoralizing Strike. This trades away the power points and the general versatility of Fearsome Zone to replace the slide of Stygian Adept with +2 attack/damage. Off-defenders or other characters more interested in DPR than in support should consider this; otherwise you'd probably be best off with Stygian Adept.

Impure Scion (Foulborn Heritage feat; PsP): This is a damage-dealing path, and especially useful in a campaign with lots of aberrations. However, it doesn't really have any compelling synergy with the ardent.

Iron Guardian (battlemind; PHB3): The selling point of this path are the features, which are huge defensive boosts. The utility

power would be amazing if it wasn't a standard action, but you could heal on minor actions. The attacks are all Con-based, of course, so you need to be a Con ardent with a maxed-out secondary stat.

Psionic Incarnate (Elan Heritage feat; PsP): Psychic resistance, no need to breathe, eat, sleep or drink, use action points to regain power points, and resist all when bloodied are all fantastic features. The powers are equally good, but are mostly defensive in nature, and not very leader-ish. This path is the only reason to take Elan Heritage, but it's a compelling reason.

Psionic Scholar (noble adept theme; DSCS): Psychic resistance is nice, as is dazing with action points. The level 11 attack lets you negate resistances, and that's a big deal. Scholar's Analysis is a subtle but handy ability, and both the other powers are good as well. Sadly, no power points.

Quicksilver Demon (battlemind; PsP): This is path geared around mobility, and that's a huge deal for the ardent, where positioning is vital. You'll get enormous shifts with action points, and a big defensive boost against opportunity attacks. At level 16, you can shift three squares and shed the slow status at-will. The utility is a great reaction, punishing forced movement with increased speed. The powers are Con-based, which isn't great, and the level 20 power is an Aspect power, which means you can't achieve its full effect without access to battlemind at-wills. However, both powers have Effect lines that are good enough you could use them even with diminished accuracy and not feel too much a loss.

Rainbringer (elemental priest theme; DSCS): The features of this path are amazing, and the powers are all solid leader abilities. It's a very healing-oriented path, which means it's competing with Argent Soul. What this power offers is surgeless healing and easy THP, and it's competitive with Argent Soul's extended crit range and extra power points.

Resurgent Wilder (wilder theme; DSCS): This path is very close to the Argent Soul path: healing and critical hit oriented. However, here the inclination is much more towards the critical hits. The healing surges on critical hits go to you, which means Bolstering Mantle benefits. You get a hefty extended crit range, and most importantly you can give extended crit ranges to others. A very fun path, bf your dice tend to fail you, look elsewhere. This path has very little to offer with rolls below 18.

Wielder of the Way (wilder theme or battlemind; DSCS): Reduced power point use on action point, extra damage, bonus to saving throws, and added status effects to attacks. These would be okay by itself, but the level 20 power is incredible: dominate a monster and give it your Cha mod as a bonus to attack rolls. Sadly, there's nothing leaderish in this path at all, but if you want to be a more significant presence on the battlefield front line, give this a look.

Epic Destinies

Unlike paragon paths, there's no real reason to stick to psionic classes when choosing epic destinies, as they don't generally hand out power points. However, one thing to remember when choosing destinies is that psionic classes aren't built around encounter powers -- which means **Demigod** isn't a great choice. I've only rated epic destinies that are reasonable choices.

Ardent Destinies

Champion of Prophecy (EPG): You can boost your Con and your Cha, you get bonuses to accuracy, you get to spend more healing surges (and thus hand out more benefits using Bolstering Mantle), and you can refresh your dailies. Con ardens will give this careful though, but **Wis ardens** can't boost both Wis and Cha, so will want likely want to pick one of the other paths.

Cosmic Soul (PsP): The best part of this path is the level 30 feature, and you don't have many ranged or area powers.

Demiurge (PsP): A boost to Cha and one other stat is exactly what you want. The extra action points, and the ability to spend more than one action point in an encounter, is always a great thing. Being able to spend a healing surge when you're bloodied is a big boon, especially with Bolstering Mantle shenanigans. The "immune to attacks of creatures level 20 or less" is flavorful, but not likely to be a real factor, and the utility is only really impressive combined with saving throw bonuses.

Destined Scion (HotFK): Dual stat boosts, gains to accuracy, and a functional do-not-die power make this the more offensive of the two top-tier generic destinies.

Eighth Seal (PsP): Right away: if you are playing in a campaign with **few or no aberrations**, this path is nowhere near as good. Having said that, it's a path with strong defensive features, and can let you spend a lot of healing surges so as to make best use of Bolstering Mantle. The utility is an absolutely amazing leader power. The only real downside to this path is the lack of stat boosts.

Eternal Seeker (PHB): It's always an okay option, but if your DM will let you choose powers from other classes instead of your augmentable at-wills, this is **much better** -- epic tier ardent powers are the weakest of the bunch.

Godmind (PHB3): Lay Bare the Mind would be better if you could deal psychic damage, but hopefully one of your party members can. But you get a huge accuracy boost when you use your second wind, a utility power that refreshes your powers, and this epic destiny grants power points. If only it had a stat bump.

Guardian of the Void (HoS): Functional. There are feats that are better than the level 24 feature, but it's a stat boost, regeneration, and the level 26 utility is pretty solid. This destiny looks a little better if there's more than one person in the party taking it.

Harbinger of Doom (PHB2): Added accuracy, bonus when you miss, more chance to spend surges (and benefit everyone via Bolstering Mantle), and a debuffing zone. It's a solid choice for a leader.

Hordemaster (DSCS): This destiny is worth taking just for the immortality feature, which is the most flavourful in the game. Luckily, it's also a fantastic leader destiny in all other respects: choice of two stat boosts, at-will attack enabling, shift enabling, and a nice healing zone power.

Indomitable Champion (HotFL): The more defensively oriented of the two top-tier generic destinies. This unfortunately puts it in the shadow of Topaz Crusader, but the dual stat boost keeps Indomitable Champion in contention.

Keeper of the Everflow (HoS): Luckily, the best part of this destiny is right up front. Choosing your origin gives you a variety of benefits, all at least okay, some quite good -- but the one that's going to catch people's attention is the Immortal origin, because radiant damage abuse is a big thing. Even without that trick, though, this is a reasonable choice.

Marshal of Letherna (HoS): Eh. If you could move the zone in Clarion of Sorrow, or if it was more ally-friendly, it would be a lot better. As it is, there's nothing in this destiny to pull the eye away from Topaz Crusader or Destined Scion.

Master of Moments (PsP): The Epic Destiny that makes rogues and rangers multiclass psionic, it's not quite as nice for ardents. The ritual-related features aren't that great ("master rituals of any level" at level 26 is pretty pointless), but the real point is the extra actions -- a full turn of actions with an action point, which is amazing, and an extra minor action every turn, with the ability to turn two minors into a move. Those extra minors are the real virtue of the destiny: ardents appreciate the extra mobility from two move actions, or the ease of healing and sustaining zones. The lack of stat boosts hurts the destiny.

Mind Lord of the Order (DSCS): The extra 6 power points is good, but only shows up at level 30, and the attack enabling of the level 26 utility is amazing. The resist 15 psychic is okay, as is the immortality feature, since it basically allows you to heal yourself back up. The stat boosts are of limited use, and then only to Wis ardents. You can work with this destiny, but there's nothing in it that shouts out.

Topaz Crusader (PsP): A boost to Cha (or Con), huge defensive boosts, extra power points, outright immunity to a bunch of status effects are great reasons to choose this destiny. There are few aberration-specific benefits, but the path is solid even if they don't come into play. Sadly, there are no immortality/resurrection features.

Twilight Tribune (HoS): A great capstone feature, a level 24 feature that meshes with Wind of Sympathy... too bad you're boosting the wrong stat.

War Master (PHB3): It's a bit boring, like Argent Soul mashed into Talaric Strategist. However, every one of its features will come into constant play.

Other Destinies

Avangion (any arcane; DSCS): Boost to Cha and Wis, bonus against death saving throws, radiant damage on all attacks, and the

ability to spend healing surges (triggering Bolstering Mantle) whenever you or an ally drops to 0 all make this a fantastic choice for Wis ardens. The utility is great too.

Disincarnate (Deva; Dragon 385): Wis ardens can boost Wis and Cha. Deceptive Veil is of DM-dependent usefulness, but Fate Manipulation is a solid debuff. Bodiless Dreaming and Fate of the Fallen Star are great defensive powers, and Rakshasa Incarnation gives you decent attack enabling. Con ardens **have better choices**.

Draconic Incarnation (any arcane; Dragon 388): Boost to Cha and another stat plus turning into a dragon make this pretty cool. Unfortunately, the capstone power is going to be difficult for you to use, and there isn't anything really leaderish about the path, or anything to match the pure utilitarianism of Destined Scion and crew.

Pyreen (any primal class or theme; DSCS): Boost to Cha and Wis, the ability to bounce back up when you get knocked down to 0, and automatic saving throw granting is great leader material. The utility clinches it, with in-combat healing surge reassignment, saving throw granting, surgeless healing, and defensive boosts all in a sustainable zone.

Multiclassing

Ignoring individual builds, there are two reason for an ardent to multiclass: access to more healing, or access to feats.

The artificer's Healing Infusion is probably the best addition to the ardent's repertoire, with two possible effects based on the ardent's secondary stat. The bard's Majestic Word is close behind, as the slide is always useful and the extra healing is Cha-based. The warlord's Inspiring Word has no additional healing, but multiclassing opens up martial feats, which are extremely useful to the ardent. Getting healing out of multiclassing shaman takes two feats, but the spirit companion could be worth it. The cleric and the rune priest are the worst options, as their healing powers give you no additional benefits at all.

As mentioned above, the feats that the ardent really wants are all martial ones. Multiclassing warlord is generally a good option, as it gives the best of both worlds, but some of the best weapon feats are fighter-specific.