



Strands of Life

By Giltônio Santos

Healers have been a staple of fantasy roleplaying since Gary Gygax rolled his first cleric. The archetypical cleric has evolved over the years, but his basic goals are the same: to keep his friends alive. While warriors hold the front lines and wizards hurl fireballs from the rear, the healer dominates the midfield and provides his allies with vital healing and support.

As a healer, when your allies start dropping and defeat seems imminent, you need the right spells to save the day. Healing and defending is sometimes characterized as a chore better left for NPCs, but knowing how to maximize the efficiency of your healing is a major tactical experience. The spells and suggestions in this article are geared towards players who are excited about the possibility of healing being a choice-driven combat role.

ENHANCE YOUR ROLE: HOW DO DIFFERENT CLASSES HEAL?

If you want to be a dedicated healer, the first thing you should understand is how your role in

combat affects your roleplaying. In fifth edition, all classes that heal do so through magic, with the exception of a single fighter maneuver and two feats. The in-universe workings of magic are intentionally left vague—magic is a blank slate, which gives Game Masters a lot of room to customize! Here are some suggestions:

Bards

The bard weaves healing magic through his performance to soothe and comfort the injured. Bards are the ultimate dilettantes, knowing a little bit about every kind of magical and mundane cure. Most bards know curing spells, possibly learned from clerics they met on the road, and other bards “heal” their allies by inspiring them to push through the pain or soothing them through their music. Song of Rest, while not explicitly magical, is far from mundane.

New Bard Spells

Cantrip (0 level)

Virtue

1st Level

Suppress Pain

2nd Level

Shield of Honor

3rd Level

Warrior’s Blessing

6th Level

Guardian of the Living

Clerics

Clerical magic is powered by their faith in a higher power, making divine healing the most mystical of all healing magic. A cleric who chooses the Life domain is easily the game’s most powerful healer, but she can excel as a healer regardless of her domain choice. Your faith has an effect on how you roleplay healing. For example, a cleric of Life may heal her friends frequently and enthusiastically, but a cleric of Trickery may heal only when she considers it dramatically appropriate.

New Cleric Spells

2nd Level

Halo of Rejuvenation

3rd Level

Warrior’s Blessing

4th Level

Spheres of Recovery

5th Level

Strands of Life

6th Level

Guardian of the Living

Druids

The druids learned long ago that nature is unmatched in its ability to recover from harm. The ancient circles teach druidic initiates to infuse their allies with that same primordial power. Druidic healing powers are about renewal and growth, not dulling pain or bandaging wounds. The Circle of the Land has greater access to spells that allow them to mitigate damage (like *blur* and *mirror image*). The Circle of Life, presented in EN5ider’s *Circles of Power*, is subclass created specifically for a druidic healer.

New Druid Spells

Cantrips (0 level)

Nature’s Ward

1st Level

Regrowth

2nd Level

Halo of Rejuvenation

3rd Level

Life Seed

6th Level

Guardian of the Living

Paladins and Rangers

These classes can be considered “secondary healers,” who have the ability to heal, but often have better options in the midst of combat.

A ranger’s healing talents should relate to his knowledge of the natural

world and his role as a survivalist, staying in the middle ground between a purely non-magical warrior and a druid's complex skillset.

A paladin's spells are generally more useful when cast offensively, but their Lay on Hands ability allows them to keep their allies healthy without spending precious spell slots, putting them one step ahead of the ranger.

New Paladin Spells

1st Level

Suppress Pain

2nd Level

Shield of Honor

3rd Level

Warrior's Blessing

New Ranger Spells

1st Level

Regrowth

3rd Level

Warrior's Blessing

KNOW YOUR METHODS: A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR HEALING MAGIC

Damage Mitigation

Because of their efficiency, damage mitigation spells are a valuable resource. You don't have to cure wounds if there are no wounds to cure! Everything that *reduces* damage instead of restoring it qualifies as damage mitigation, including spells that grant temporary hit points, improve armor class, or give resistance to one or more types of damage.

Spells like *shield of faith*, *aid* and *barkskin* qualify, but the bards' Cutting Words and Combat Inspiration abilities are even more efficient, since they don't consume spell slots.

Gradual Healing

While the initial hit point recovery of gradual healing spells is not as potent as direct healing, it becomes more efficient if you can keep it active for the duration. This makes heal-over-time spells the best choice when you have time to spare.

In previous editions, spells like *lesser vigor* used to fill this niche, but the fifth-edition core rules are seriously lacking in options for healing over time. This article presents a slew of new gradual healing spells to help to fill that niche.

Direct Healing

This is your basic role as a healer: answering direct damage with direct healing. There are many flavors of direct hit point recovery, but *cure wounds* is your bread and butter. Other spells, like *healing words*—which can recover hit points from range—trade numerical efficiency for utility. While gradual healing requires patience and damage mitigation requires planning (and a little luck), direct healing solves problems immediately. Be wary when preparing these spells, though, because dealing damage is usually a more effective use of your action than healing it.

Direct healing is your most powerful resource, but keep in mind that others are more cost-effective, if you have time to set them up.

The Healer Feat

If you intend to go into the healing role full time, you should consider choosing the *Healer* feat as soon as possible. Healing 1d6 + 4 + level once to each ally every short rest is a powerful resource, saving you important spell slots.

EXPAND YOUR ARSENAL: NEW HEALING SPELLS.

Droplets of Invigoration

4rd-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

You create two beads of positive energy that speed toward two creatures within range. Each creature regains a number of hit points equal to 3d6 + your spellcasting ability modifier. This spell has no effect on undead or constructs.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the healing increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 4th.

Guardian of the Living

6th-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 reaction, which you take when you or a creature within 30 feet of you takes damage

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

A creature of your choice that you can see within range and that took damage during this turn regains hit points equal to 5d8 + your spellcasting ability modifier. This spell has no effect on undead or constructs.

Halo of Rejuvenation

2nd-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 20 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

A small circle of blue light appears over the head of a creature of your choice within range and lasts for the duration. When the *halo of rejuvenation* first appears, that creature regains a number of hit points equal to 1d6 + your spellcasting ability modifier. As a secondary effect, the target regains an additional 1d6 hit points at the end of each of its turns. As a bonus action, you can move the *halo of rejuvenation* to another creature, which must be within 20 feet of the first target. If you do so, the secondary effect moves to the new target. This spell has no effect on undead or constructs.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, the initial healing increases by 1d6 for each slot level above 1st.

Life Seed

3rd-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You create a seed of positive energy that buries into the ground at a point within range, and blossoms into a 10-foot radius sphere of golden energy. On the start of their turn, each creature within the sphere regains a number of hit points equal to 1d6 + your spellcasting ability modifier. This spell has no effect on undead or constructs.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 4th level or higher, you create an additional seed for each slot level above 3rd. A creature cannot benefit from this spell more than once per turn.

Nature's Ward

Abjuration cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: 1 round

You imbue a creature with protection against natural forces. Until the end of your next turn, the willing target you touch has resistance to cold, fire, and lightning damage.

Regrowth

1st-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You infuse a creature with natural magic, increasing its ability to recover from wounds. For the duration, in the beginning of each of its turns, the creature regains 1d4 hit points.

This spell has no effect on undead or constructs.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the healing increases by 1d4 for each slot level above 1st.

Shield of Honor

2nd-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: 1 hour

You trace a sigil on an adjacent creature's body, creating the glowing outline of a shield that protects them from injury. The creature gains 10 temporary hit points for the duration.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 3rd level or higher, the number of temporary hit points gained increases by 5 for each slot level above 2nd.

Suppress Pain

1st-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

You dull the pain of a creature's wounds and help it tolerate further punishment. The creature regains 1d6 hit points and also gains temporary hit points equal to your spellcasting ability modifier. This spell has no effect on undead or constructs.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the healing increases by 1d6 and the number of temporary hit points increase by 1 for each slot level above 1st.

Strands of Life

5th-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 100 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

You create a thread of positive energy connecting three creatures of your choice that you can see within range, none of which can be more than 30 feet from the first creature. Each creature connected by the strand of energy heals 7d8 hit points + your spellcasting ability modifier.

At Higher Levels. When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 6th level or higher, you create an additional strand. When you use a spell slot of 8th level or higher, you create two additional strands.

Virtue

Abjuration cantrip

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

Your touch fills the heart of an ally with valor. The target gains 2 temporary hit points for the duration.

The number of temporary hit points gained increases by 2 when you reach 5th level (4), 11th level (6), and 17th level (8).

Warrior's Blessing

3rd-level abjuration (ritual)

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

For the duration, the willing creature you touch has resistance to one damage type of your choice: bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing.

Author - Giltônio Santos

Editor - James Haeck

Artists - Jen Tracy

Layout - Justin Buell