

Psionics and the Mystic

Welcome to Unearthed Arcana, a monthly workshop where D&D R&D shows off a variety of new and interesting pieces of RPG design for use at your gaming table.

You can think of the material presented in this series as similar to the first wave of the fifth edition playtest. These game mechanics are in draft form, usable in your campaign but not fully tempered by playtests and design iterations. They are highly volatile and might be unstable; if you use them, be ready to rule on any issues that come up. They're written in pencil, not ink.

The material presented in Unearthed Arcana will range from mechanics that we expect one day to publish in a supplement to house rules from our home campaigns that we want to share, from core system options to material designed for specific campaign settings. Once it's out there, you can expect us to check in with you to see how it's working out and what we can do to improve it.

Introduction

This month, Unearthed Arcana goes big with a look at the first draft of psionics rules for fifth edition D&D. This article provides a quick overview of how psionics works and presents a new class—the mystic. Similar to how the cleric represents a wide variety of divine magic users, the mystic encapsulates a variety of characters who wield psionic power.

Using the options presented in this article, you can play a mystic to 5th level, following one of two psionic orders and training in that order's unique disciplines. Following the Order of the Awakened allows you to create a mystic who manipulates the minds and awareness of other creatures, and who can tap into unseen psionic power both in and out of combat. Following the Order of the Immortal allows you to create a mystic who focuses psionic power in combat, similar to the battlemind or psychic warrior of previous editions. Other options for the mystic will appear as the playtest progresses and we gain valuable feedback about the class's mechanics in play.

As usual, you can expect a survey asking for feedback on these draft rules in about a month or so. At this point, we're not necessarily tied to any of these options. This effort is merely a first draft to

gauge where we should start and what kind of approach to psionics in fifth edition will work best. Read on and enjoy.

Psionics

The following rules cover the basics of psionic power, its application, and its relationship to magic.

What is Psionics?

Psionics is a source of power that originates from within a creature's mind, allowing it to augment its physical abilities and affect the minds of other creatures. Psionic abilities are called **disciplines**, since each one consists of a set of specific, rigid mental exercises needed to place a creature in the correct mindset to wield psionic power.

A creature wielding psionic power focuses its concentration on a discipline, and in doing so, manifests a minor psionic effect. Once a creature has concentrated on a discipline, it can then tap into its reservoir of inner energy to create even greater effects. The basics of a discipline are always within a mystic's grasp, but the energies needed to create more potent effects tap into a limited reservoir of power.

Otherworldly Power

Not every D&D world features psionic power to the same extent. Psionics indirectly originates from the Far Realm, a dimension outside the bounds of the known multiverse. The Far Realm has its own alien laws of physics and magic. When its influence extends to a world, the Far Realm invariably spawns horrific monsters and madness as it bends reality to its own rules.

As the laws of reality twist and turn, individual minds can be awakened to the cosmic underpinnings that dictate the form and nature of reality. The tumult caused by the Far Realm creates echoes that can disturb and awaken minds that would otherwise slumber. Such awakened creatures look upon the world in the same way that creatures existing in three dimensions might look upon a two-dimensional realm. They see possibilities, options, and connections that are unfathomable to those with a more limited view of reality.

In worlds that are relatively stable and hew close to the archetypal D&D setting presented in the core rulebooks, psionics is rare—or might not exist at all. The cosmic bindings that define the multiverse are strong in such places, making it unlikely that an individual mind can perceive the possibilities offered by psionics. Mystics in such worlds might be so scarce that an active mystic never meets another living practitioner of the psionic arts. Characters might unlock their psionic potential by pure random chance, and ancient tomes, journals, and other accounts of mystics might serve as the only guide to mastering this form of power.

Psionics is more common in worlds where the bounds of reality have been twisted and warped to stray far from the baseline D&D setting. The realm of Athas in the Dark Sun campaign setting is the iconic example of a world where psionics is common. The gods are absent, magic has been twisted into an ecological scourge, and the common threads that bind many worlds of D&D have been sundered. By contrast, the world of Eberron is a setting where the bounds of reality have been tested but not fully broken. Psionics is not as pervasive in Eberron as in Athas, but the influence of the otherworldly realm of Xoriat makes it a known and studied art.

Disciplines

A psionic discipline is a rigid set of mental exercises. A mystic must devote concentration to a discipline to use it. Psionics is powerful enough that concentration alone can create psionic effects, though such effects are subtle or limited.

Once a mystic learns a discipline, the character knows that discipline until he or she chooses to purge it. A discipline requires exhaustive study and constant practice to maintain its use. A mystic masters only a few disciplines at a time.

Disciplines have no level. Their effect is instead determined by the psionic energy devoted to them.

Psi Points

A mystic has an internal reservoir of energy that can be devoted to the disciplines he or she knows, allowing those disciplines to create more powerful effects. This energy is represented by **psi points**. Each discipline describes additional optional effects a mystic can create with that discipline by spending psi points.

A mystic's psi points cannot be reduced below 0. A mystic's psi point total returns to its maximum after the character finishes a long rest.

Psionics and Magic

Psionics and magic are two distinct forces. In general, an effect that alters or affects a spell has no effect on a psionic effect. There is one important exception to this rule. A psionic effect that reproduces a spell is treated as magic. A psionic effect reproduces a spell when it allows a psionic creature or character to cast a spell. In this case, psionic energy taps into magic and manipulates it to cast the spell.

For example, the mind flayer as presented in the *Monster Manual* has the Innate Spellcasting (Psionics) feature. This feature allows the mind flayer to cast a set of spells using psionic energy. These spells can be countered with *dispel magic* and similar effects.

Using a Discipline

When a mystic uses a discipline, the same basic rules are followed, regardless of the mystic's level or the discipline's effects.

Activation and Concentration

A mystic activates a discipline as a bonus action. Once a discipline is activated, it remains active as long as the mystic maintains concentration on it.

Concentrating on a discipline uses the same rules as concentrating on a spell. Among other things, this means that a mystic can maintain concentration only on one discipline at a time, and that any effect that causes a mystic to lose concentration causes the discipline to end. Ending concentration on a discipline immediately ends all the discipline's effects, unless the discipline's description says otherwise.

Once a discipline is active, it remains active as long as a mystic can maintain concentration on the discipline. Certain disciplines have effects that can occur before combat starts, so it's important for those disciplines to be active beforehand.

Spending Psi Points

Each discipline features options that can create additional effects if a mystic spends an indicated number of psi points. (A discipline option that has an asterisk to indicate the number of psi points that must

be spent on it can be used with a varying number of psi points, as indicated in the option's text.) Each option notes specific information about its effect, including the action required to use it (if any), its range, and other details. If an option does not state that it is used as an action, a bonus action, or a reaction, using it requires no action.

The maximum number of psi points a mystic can spend on a single discipline option is based on class level. A mystic's skill increases both the total amount of energy the character can channel and determines how much power can be manipulated at once. As a result, a lower-level mystic might not be able to use all the options available for a specific discipline.

Components

Disciplines do not require the components that many spells require. Using a discipline requires no spoken words, gestures, or materials. The power of psionics comes entirely from within the mind.

Duration

Each option for a discipline specifies how long its effect lasts. If an option does not specify a duration, its effect lasts until the mystic no longer concentrates on the discipline.

Targets and Areas of Effect

Psionic disciplines use the same rules as magic spells for determining targets and areas of effect. See chapter 10, "Spellcasting," of the *Player's Handbook*.

Saving Throws and Attack Rolls

If a discipline requires a saving throw, it specifies the type of save and the results of a successful or failed saving throw. Some disciplines require the mystic to make an attack roll to determine whether the discipline's effect hits the intended target. See "Psionic Ability," below, for more information.

Combining Psionic Effects

The effects of different psionic disciplines add together while the durations of those disciplines overlap. Likewise, different options from a single psionic discipline combine if they are active at the same time. However, a specific option from a psionic

discipline does not combine with itself if that option is used multiple times. Instead, the most potent effect—usually dependent on how many psi points were used to create the effect—applies while the durations of the effects overlap.

Psionics and magic are separate effects, and therefore their benefits and drawbacks overlap. A psionic effect that reproduces a spell is an exception to this rule (see "Psionics and Magic," above, and "Combining Magical Effects" in chapter 10, "Spellcasting," of the *Player's Handbook*).

Mystic

A mystic draws upon the power of psionics—the energy of the mind—to create powerful effects.

Class Features

As a mystic, you gain the following class features.

Hit Points

Hit Dice: 1d8 per mystic level

Hit Points at 1st Level: 8 + your Constitution modifier

Hit Points at Higher Levels: 1d8 (or 5) + your Constitution modifier per mystic level after 1st

Proficiencies

Armor: Light armor, medium armor

Weapons: Simple weapons

Tools: None

Saving Throws: Wisdom

Skills: Choose two skills from Arcana, History, Insight, Medicine, Nature, Perception, and Religion

Equipment

You start with the following equipment, in addition to the equipment granted by your background:

- (a) a spear or (b) a mace
- (a) leather armor or (b) scale mail
- (a) a light crossbow and 20 bolts or (b) any simple weapon
- (a) a scholar's pack or (b) an explorer's pack

The Mystic

Level	Proficiency		Features	Disciplines	Psi	Psi
	Bonus			Known	Points	Maximum
1st	+2		Psionics, Psionic Order, Strength of Mind	1	4	2
2nd	+2			2	6	2
3rd	+2		Psionic Order feature	2	14	3
4th	+2		Ability Score Improvement	2	17	3
5th	+3			3	27	5

Psionics

As a student of psionics, you can master and use psionic disciplines.

Disciplines

At 1st level, you know one discipline of your choice. You choose disciplines from the list included in your chosen order (see below). You learn additional disciplines of your choice at higher levels, as shown in the Disciplines Known column of the Mystic table.

Psi Points

You gain a pool of psi points based on your mystic level. Your psi point total returns to its maximum after you finish a long rest.

Psi Maximum

Though you have access to a potent amount of psionic energy, it takes training and practice to channel that energy. You have a maximum number of psi points you can spend to activate a discipline based on your mystic level, as shown in the Psi Maximum column of the Mystic table.

Using Disciplines

You activate a discipline as a bonus action, and must immediately concentrate on it. If a discipline grants a benefit for concentrating on it, you immediately gain that benefit. You continue to gain that benefit and can use the discipline's optional features as long as you maintain your concentration on the discipline.

While you are concentrating on a discipline, you can spend psi points to augment the discipline's effect. Each discipline details its optional effects and the type of action (if any) required to spend psi points on an option.

You can end all effects of a discipline immediately by ending concentration on the discipline. If you want to end a single effect of a discipline but still maintain

its other effects, you can end a specific effect as a bonus action.

Psionic Ability

Intelligence is your psionic ability for your mystic disciplines. Your intellect determines the strength of the psionic effects you manifest. In addition, you use your Intelligence modifier when setting the saving throw DC for a mystic discipline or when making an attack roll with one.

Discipline save DC = 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier

Discipline attack modifier = your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier

Psionic Order

At 1st level, you choose a psionic order. Each order specializes in a specific type of psionic energy. Your order allows you to choose from its unique disciplines and grants you class features.

(Currently, the two orders available for the mystic are the Order of the Awakened and the Order of the Immortal. Future orders will include the Order of the Knife and the Order of the Invisible Hand.)

Strength of Mind

The power of psionics comes from within, and even the simplest techniques require a deep mastery and understanding of how psionic energy can augment mind and body. This understanding allows you to alter your defenses to better deal with persistent threats.

After completing a short or long rest, choose one ability score. You gain proficiency in saving throws using the chosen ability score. This benefit lasts until you finish your next short or long rest.

Ability Score Improvement

When you reach 4th level, you can increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or you can increase two ability scores of your choice by 1. As normal, you can't increase an ability score above 20 using this feature.

Psionic Orders

Psionics is a mysterious form of power within most game worlds. Secretive cabals study its origins and applications, while always pushing the boundaries of what psionics can achieve.

Each psionic order pursues a specific goal for psionic power. That goal shapes how the members of an order understand psionics and determines the disciplines they master.

Order of the Awakened

Mystics dedicated to the Order of the Awakened seek to unlock the full potential of the mind. By transcending the physical, the awakened hope to attain a perfect state of being—focused on pure intellect and mental energy.

The awakened are skilled at bending minds and unleashing devastating psionic attacks, and are able to read the secrets of the world through psionic energy. Awakened mystics who take to adventuring excel at unraveling mysteries, solving puzzles, and defeating monsters by turning them into unwilling pawns.

You choose disciplines from the awakened disciplines list. (Currently, only three disciplines are available for mystics of the Order of the Awakened. New disciplines will be added to this list as the playtest progresses.)

Awakened Disciplines

Discipline	Overview
Conquering Mind	Alter another creature's mind
Intellect Fortress	Defend yourself with psychic counterattacks
Third Eye	Perceive what others cannot

Mind Thrust

At 1st level, you learn a deadly technique for channeling disruptive psychic energy into another creature's mind. As an action, you make a ranged attack against a creature within 120 feet of you. You must be able to perceive the creature, but you do not

need to see it. The target uses its Intelligence score in place of its AC against this attack, and gains no benefit from cover. You do not have disadvantage on your attack roll if a hostile creature is within 5 feet of you.

On a hit, the target takes 1d8 psychic damage. You can increase this damage by spending psi points (up to your psi maximum) before making your attack roll. The attack deals an extra 1d8 psychic damage for each psi point you spend.

Psychic Mind

At 1st level, your mastery of psionic power allows you to tap directly into the minds of others. You can communicate telepathically with any creature you can see within 100 feet of you. You don't need to share a language with a creature for it to understand your telepathic utterances, and the creature understands you even if it lacks a language. You can allow a creature to respond to you telepathically, but it must understand at least one language in order to communicate this way.

Object Reading

At 3rd level, you can focus your mind to read the psionic imprint left on an object. If you hold an object and concentrate on it for 10 minutes, you learn a few basic facts about it. You gain a mental image from the object's point of view, showing the last creature to hold the object, regardless of how long ago it was last handled.

You also learn of any events that have occurred within 20 feet of the object within the past 24 hours. The events you perceive unfold from the object's perspective. You see and hear such events as if you were there, but cannot use other senses.

Additionally, when you use Object Reading on an object, you can choose to embed a psychic sensor within the object. For the next 24 hours, you can use an action to learn the object's location relative to you (its distance and direction) and to look at the object's surroundings from its point of view as if you were there.

Awakened Disciplines

The psionic disciplines you select as a member of the Order of the Awakened allow you to manipulate awareness—your own and other creatures'—to your advantage. (Currently, only three disciplines are

available for mystics of the Order of the Awakened. New disciplines will be added to this list as the playtest progresses.)

Conquering Mind

Psionic Discipline

By channeling psionic power, you gain the ability to control other creatures by substituting your will for their own.

Concentration: While concentrating on this discipline, you have advantage on Charisma checks.

Exacting Query (1): As an action, you target a creature you can see and that you can communicate with using your Psychic Mind feature. The target makes an Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, the target truthfully answers one question of your choice through the telepathic link of your Psychic Mind. On a successful save, the target is unaffected and you cannot use this ability on that creature again until you finish a long rest.

Occluded Mind (3): As an action, you target a creature you can see and that you can communicate with using your Psychic Mind feature. The target makes an Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, the target believes one statement of your choice for the next 5 minutes. The statement can be up to ten words long, and must describe you or a creature or object the target can see. On a successful save, the target is unaffected and you cannot use this ability on that creature again until you finish a long rest.

Broken Will (5): As an action, you target a creature you can see and that you can communicate with using your Psychic Mind feature. The target makes an Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, you choose the target's movement and action on its next turn. On a successful save, the target is unaffected and you cannot use this ability on that creature again until you finish a long rest.

Intellect Fortress

Psionic Discipline

You forge an indomitable wall of psionic energy around your mind—one that allows you to launch reflexive counterattacks against your opponents.

Concentration: While concentrating on this discipline, as a reaction, you can impose disadvantage on a ranged attack or a melee attack made against you if you can see your attacker. If the attack hits you, the

attacker takes psychic damage equal to half your mystic level (rounded up).

Third Eye

Psionic Discipline

This discipline grants you the ability to open a third eye within your mind, allowing you to perceive things that others miss.

Concentration: While concentrating on this discipline, you have blindsight with a radius of 30 feet.

Tremorsense (1): As a bonus action, you gain tremorsense with a radius of 30 feet for 1 minute.

Unwavering Eye (1): As a bonus action, you gain advantage on Wisdom checks for 1 minute.

Truesight (5): As a bonus action, you gain truesight with a radius of 30 feet for 1 minute.

Order of the Immortal

The Order of the Immortal strives to achieve physical perfection by augmenting the body's natural strength with psionic power. This order's goal is for its members to achieve immortality by overcoming the effects of aging through rigorous discipline and psionic perfection. To members of this order, psionic energy is a tool to augment, control, and perfect the physical body.

Those immortals who take up the adventuring life are skilled warriors. Their psionic abilities allow them to shrug off injuries and hazards, while focusing their strength and speed in combat.

You choose disciplines from the immortal disciplines list. (Currently, only three disciplines are available for mystics of the Order of the Immortal. New disciplines will be added to this list as the playtest progresses.)

Immortal Disciplines

Discipline	Overview
Celerity	Move and act with unmatched speed
Iron Durability	Boost your defenses
Psionic Weapon	Channel psionic energy into a weapon

Durable Mind

At 1st level, you gain the ability to maintain your focus despite injury. Your concentration on a psionic discipline cannot be ended as a result of taking damage.

Martial Order

At 1st level, you gain proficiency with martial weapons and shields.

Psionic Regeneration

At 3rd level, you learn to use psionic energy to augment and speed up your natural healing abilities. At the end of your turn, if your current hit point total is half or less of your hit point maximum, you regain hit points equal to half your mystic level.

Immortal Disciplines

The psionic disciplines you select as a member of the Order of the Immortal allow you to hone your strength and speed for maximum effectiveness on the battlefield. (Currently, only three disciplines are available for mystics of the Order of the Immortal. New disciplines will be added to this list as the playtest progresses.)

Celerity

Psionic Discipline

You channel psionic power into your body, honing your reflexes and agility to an incredible degree. In your eyes, the world seems to slow down while you continue to move as normal.

Concentration: While concentrating on this discipline, your speed increases by 5 feet and you have advantage on Initiative checks.

Rapid Reaction (1): If you are surprised, you can spend 1 psi point to no longer be surprised.

Seize the Initiative (*): When you roll initiative, you can spend up to 5 psi points, gaining a +2 bonus to your initiative roll for each psi point spent.

Surge of Speed (1): As a bonus action, you can spend 1 psi point to increase your speed by 30 feet until the end of your turn. In addition, you do not provoke opportunity attacks this turn.

Surge of Action (5): As a bonus action, you can spend 5 psi points and gain an additional action this turn.

Iron Durability

Psionic Discipline

This discipline grants you unmatched toughness and resilience on the battlefield.

Concentration: While concentrating on this discipline, you gain a +1 bonus to AC. As an action,

you can spend one Hit Die. You roll the die and add your Constitution modifier to it, then regain hit points equal to the total.

Iron Hide (*): As a reaction when you are attacked, you can spend up to 3 psi points, gaining a +2 bonus to AC for each psi point you spend. You spend these points after learning the attack's result but before applying its effects.

Iron Resistance (5): As an action, you can spend 5 psi points to gain resistance to acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage (your choice). This benefit lasts for 1 hour or until you use this option again.

Psionic Weapon

Psionic Discipline

You channel psionic energy into a weapon you wield (including your unarmed strike), lending devastating power to your attacks.

Concentration: While concentrating on this discipline, you charge one weapon you carry with psionic energy. While you hold the psionic weapon, it becomes a magic weapon with a +1 bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls. If you use this option on a magic weapon, use the weapon's bonuses or the discipline's bonuses, whichever are higher.

Ethereal Weapon (1): Each time you attack with your psionic weapon, you can spend 1 psi point to transform it into pure psionic energy. You do not make your attack roll against the target's AC. Instead, the target makes a Dexterity saving throw against this discipline. On a failed save, the target takes the attack's normal damage and suffers its additional effects. On a successful save, the target takes half damage from the attack but suffers no additional effects that would normally be imposed on a hit.

Lethal Strike (*): Each time you hit with your psionic weapon, you can spend up to 5 psi points to increase your damage. The attack deals an extra 1d10 damage of the same type dealt by the weapon for each psi point you spend.

Augmented Weapon (5): You can strengthen the energy that you have infused into your psionic weapon, increasing its bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls to +3 for 1 minute.