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## Pathfinder kingmaker paladin build guide

T.E. "RPGBOT" Kamstra June 5, 2021The Paladin is a divine-powered martial class. Similar to the Fighter, the Paladin makes an effective Defender and Striker, but the Paladin's other options also allow them to serve as a Face and as a Healer, though you'll need to take traits to get missing class skills to serve as a Face, and a Paladin can't match the healing capacity of a full caster like a Cleric.Despite a fairly narrow set of roles, the Paladin's natural survivability and self-sufficiency make it an excellent choice for single-character campaigns.We support a limited subset of Pathfinder's rules content. If you would like help with Pathfinder options not covered here, please email me and I may be able to provide additional assistance.RPGBOT uses the color coding scheme which has become common among Pathfinder build handbooks. Also note that many colored items are also links to the Paizo SRD.Red: Bad, useless options, or options which are extremely situational. Nearly never useful.Orange: OK options, or useful options that only apply in rare circumstances. Useful sometimes.Green: Good options. Useful often.Blue: Fantastic options, often essential to the function of your character. Useful very frequently.Hit Points: d10 hit points is standard for martial classes.Base Attack Bonus: Full BAB.Saves: Paladins have the best saves in the game without making any specific efforts to improve them. Good Fortitude and Will saves, and Divine Grace adds an enormous bonus that stacks with nearly everything else.Proficiencies: Heavy armor, shields, and martial weapons.Skills: 2+ skill ranks and a very sparse skill list.Aura of Good (Ex): Almost never matters.Detect Evil (Sp): Not always important, but I have seen plenty of Paladins walk into social situations with this running so that they know who they can trust, and who needs a good smiting.Smite Evil (Sp): A fantastic offensive option.Divine Grace (Su): One of the Paladin's best abilities, this adds a huge bonus to your saving throws.Lay on Hands (Su): An excellent healing mechanic. 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Useful very frequently. Hit Points: d10 hit points is standard for martial classes. Base Attack Bonus: Full BAB. Saves: Paladins have the best saves in the game without making any specific efforts to improve them. Good Fortitude and Will saves, and Divine Grace adds an enormous bonus that stacks with nearly everything else. Proficiencies: Heavy armor, shields, and martial weapons. Skills: 2+ skill ranks and a very sparse skill list. Aura of Good (Ex): Almost never matters. Detect Evil (Sp): Not always important, but I have seen plenty of Paladins walk into social situations with this running so that they know who they can trust, and who needs a good smiting. Smite Evil (Sp): A fantastic offensive option. Divine Grace (Su): One of the Paladin's best abilities, this adds a huge bonus to your saving throws. Lay on Hands (Su): An excellent healing mechanic. Mercies allow you to remove harmful conditions, and you can use it on yourself as a swift action so that you don't have to cut into your full attack. Aura of Courage (Su): Situational. Divine Health (Ex): Diseases become more common at high levels, which can make this very useful. Mercy (Su): Mercies offer the ability to heal conditions which normally require a Cleric. However, remember that your paladin spells can often handle the same conditions. Base Fatigued: Fatigued is one of the least problematic conditions in the game for everyone except barbarians. Shaken: Frustrating, and effects which cause you to be shaken can have fairly long durations. Aura of Courage should improve your party's saves against these effects, but it doesn't work for Intimidate and it's not 100% effective. Sickened: Effects which cause Sickened tend to have fairly short durations, but there are annoying exceptions and being Sickened for a long time can be a significant debuff. 6th-level Dazed: Effects which cause Dazed it tend to have very short durations, but losing a turn always hurts. Of course, if you're spending your Standard action to remove Dazed, you're probably losing the same amount of actions by spending your turn healing the target. Diseased: Diseases can be annoying to deal with, and some have horrifying secondary effects like Blinding Sickness. Paladins also can't cast Remove Curse. Exhausted: Go take a nap. Frightened: Potions of Remove Fear cost 50 gp. Go buy one. Nauseated: Effects which cause nauseated tend to have very short durations, though exceptions like Stinking Cloud exist. Poisoned: Poison will very rarely kill your party, but sometimes it gets scary. 12th-level Blinded: Being blind sucks, and it's often permanent. Deafened: Being deaf is annoying at worst. Paralyzed: A paralyzed character is just waiting for a coup de grace. Stunned: Being stunned makes you extremely vulnerable to attack. Channel Positive Energy (Su): Paladins aren't great at channeling energy, but if you need to heal more than two people in the party it's more efficient than use Lay on Hands on each of them. If you insist on using Channel Energy, see my Practical Guide to Channel Energy. Spells: Paladins are 1/2 casters, and get very few spells per day from a limited spell list. However, their spell selection complements their other abilities really well. They get almost no utility options, but they get spells which help them serve as healers, strikers, and defenders. See the "Spells" section, below, for some notable spells. Divine Bond (Sp): Both options are fantastic. The ability to enhance your weapon can solve a lot of problems, including DR, but a mount is an essential part of any mounted combat build. For help with the Paladin's Mount, see my Practical Guide to Animal Companions. Spells: Paladins only go up to 4th-level spells, but what little spellcasting they get can be very effective is used carefully. Paladins cast spells at a caster level 3 lower than their class level, which seriously handicaps their spells, so consider the Magical Knack trait to boost your caster level. Aura of Resolve (Su): Charm effects are very rare. Aura of Justice (Su): Fantastic, but remember that allies must still use a swift action to activate Smite Evil. Aura of Faith (Su): Fantastic for combating evil-aligned outsiders, and saves you the trouble of casting Bless Weapon. Aura of Righteousness (Su): DR 5/evil will protect you from everything except enemy divine spellcasters and evil outsiders like demons. Holy Champion (Su): Good, but not great. The Banishment effect forcibly ends your Smite even if it fails, and you can't choose to forego the effect. Personally I would rather outright kill the outsider so that it can't come back. Paladin abilities look similar to any other melee martial character, but Divine Grace drastically reduces the need for Dexterity and Wisdom to fix bad saves. Str: Paladins are almost exclusively melee characters, so Strength is essential. Dex: In heavy armor and with Divine Grace, Dexterity isn't particularly important. Take 12 at most, but you can survive with less. Con: Essential for hit points, but Fortitude saves shouldn't be a problem. Int: The Paladin's skill list is better than the Fighters, but 2+ skill ranks offer you very limited options. Wis: With Divine Grace and good Will saves you can easily dump Wisdom to 8 without any problems. Cha: Fuels the Paladin's spells and abilities. 25 Point Buy 20 Point Buy 15 Point Buy Elite Array Str: 16 Dex: 12 Con: 14 Int: 10 Wis: 8 Cha: 16 Str: 16 Dex: 12 Con: 14 Int: 10 Wis: 8 Cha: 14 Str: 14 Dex: 12 Con: 14 Int: 10 Wis: 8 Cha: 14 Str: 15 Dex: 12 Con: 13 Int: 10 Wis: 8 Cha: 14 Bonuses to Strength of Charisma are nice, and medium size is nice if you plan to play a Defender so that you can be enlarged. Dwarf: The Charisma penalty is annoying, but the Dwarf's other racial traits still make it a viable option. The bonuses to Constitution and Wisdom offset most of the lost bonus from Divine Grace, and the Dwarf's other abilities complement the Paladin's natural durability very well. Unfortunately the Dwarf favored class bonus adds to Concentration, which is nearly worthless for Paladins. Elf: Nothing useful for the Paladin, and bonuses to two of the Paladin's least important abilities. Gnome: Bonuses to Constitution and Charisma are enough to offset the penalty to Strength, making the Gnome a solid choice for small Paladins. This can be helpful for mounted combat builds because you can fit into spaces which are too small for horses. The Gnome favored class bonus improves the healing/damage provided by Lay on Hands. Half-Elf: The flexible ability bonus is nice, and the Half-Elf has some nice alternate racial features which can work well for the Paladin. The Half-Elf's favored class bonus expands the area of the Paladin's auras. Considering the Paladin has 5 auras (not counting Aura of Good), this can be a fantastic buff. Half-Orc: Flexible ability bonus and some nice racial abilities which complement the Paladin well. Unfortunately, the Half-Orc favored class bonus is awful, so take the Human favored class bonus instead. Halfling: A little less effective than the Gnome because the Dexterity bonus isn't as helpful. Human: Always a good option, and the Human favored class bonus adds energy resistance to one type of energy. Pick up a few points in the four basic energy types (acid, cold, electricity, fire), but don't worry about sonic.

Remember that this resistance stacks with magical energy resistance such as the Resist Energy spell. Axe to Grind (Combat): Paladins spend a lot of time in melee by themselves, so this can pay off frequently if you don't have any other melee allies. Deft Dodger (Combat): Reflex saves are your worst save, though they'll still be fantastic thanks to Divine Grace. Birthmark (Faith): Charm and compulsion effects are scary, but you have Divine Grace and good Will saves. The free holy symbol is neat, but not really necessary. Omen (Faith): Intimidate is one of your missing Face skills. On top of the usual +1 bonus and free class skill, you also get to Demoralize once per day as a swift action. Magical Knack (Magic): +2 caster level adds hours to your buffs. Nearly every Paladin should take this. Dangerously Curious (Magic): A weird choice for a Paladin, but you have the Charisma to use UMD, and it's still the best skill in the game. Unscathed (Magic): If you're human, this is a close contender with Magical Knack. The human favored class bonus is an easy way to get a few points of energy resistance in every type, and this can pay up to quintuple its effectiveness if you pick up 1 point of resistance to all 5 energy damage types. Even if you skip sonic damage you're still getting 8 levels worth of favored class bonus out of one trait. Normally I don't worry about sonic damage, but I think you can spare one point to get 3 points of resistance, especially for the smug satisfaction of telling people that you've got sonic damage resistance. Bully (Social): Omen is better. Fast Talker (Social): Bluff is one of your missing Face skills, though as a Paladin you may have moral objections to lying. Influence (Social): Pick up whichever missing Face skill you didn't already get. Seeker (Social): The most rolled skill in game. Unpredictable (Social): Bluff is one of your missing Face skills, though as a Paladin you may have moral objections to lying. Brute (Half-Orc Racial): Omen is better. Diplomacy (Cha): Essential for any Face. Handle Animal (Cha): Helpful for training and handling your mount, but you likely won't need to maximize it. Heal (Wis): A helpful supplement to magical healing, but Paladins typically dump Wisdom, so they won't be as effective as someone with a decent Wisdom score. Knowledge (nobility) (Int): Situational, and very dependent on your campaign. Knowledge (religion) (Int): One of the most important Knowledge skills in the game. Ride (Dex): Useful if you take the Mount option of Divine Bond, but otherwise useless. Sense Motive (Wis): Helpful for any Face. Spellcraft (Int): Situational, and Paladins aren't particularly suited to do anything with the information which they could gain. Paladins fight much like a fighter with a similar

