

KMBR's Hades Beginners Tips and Strategies

Note 1: A lot of this is opinion. Treat it as just that. If you feel strongly about something in a different way than I do, go your route. The important thing is that you have fun. Hades is also extremely well balanced, so everything is viable. This is just what worked for me on my roughly 400 wins at up to 32 heat.

Note 2: There will be minor spoilers in this document. Namely, what characters are in the game and what their keepsakes do.

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What should I use my Darkness on?

The very first thing you should get is Greater Reflex. Dashes are super important in Hades for three reasons. 1. They give invulnerability frames. Not being able to be hit is important, as some things will require that you use the i-frames to survive, as there's no other way to stay safe. (Note: If you're attacking during your dash, you lose the i-frames, so if you're trying to dodge, then stop attacking). 2. Mobility. Sometimes you need to jump across lava or dodge an area of effect attack that requires distance. An extra dash makes a huge difference for these moments. 3. Your boons. Dash boons can be very powerful. Athena's Divine Dash gives you i-frames back when you're attacking too, as you'll also be deflecting, which is very good for beginners and almost any build. But having an extra dash to get those boon powers out is very useful.

The second thing you should spend your Darkness on is Chthonic Vitality. A 3hp heal per room makes a big difference. At the start of the game that's 6% of your HP per room. Every little bit helps.

After this, you should save your Darkness until you have the option to buy Stubborn Defiance. This costs 600 Darkness, and note: this is NOT Death Defiance. You will not have access to Stubborn Defiance at the start of the game, but it will be available after a small handful of runs. This is a much better Defiance for everyone that's new to the game. You only want Death Defiance when you have two or three Death Defiances and are only dying to the final boss (or sometimes the Elysium bosses). Otherwise, Stubborn Defiance is mathematically better by leaps and bounds.

After that, it's your preference. I personally saved to get more starting HP and starting Obols, but those aren't available until you unlock more mirror options with keys. Of note, you can reset any Darkness you put into the Mirror of Night by spending one key. You get every single

Darkness you spent back, at zero loss. This option becomes available at the same time Stubborn Defiance does, so if you're willing to spend a key, you can spend as much Darkness as you want in the Mirror until you unlock that Stubborn Defiance.

What should I spend my Nectar on?

This one is very much personal preference to playstyle. There are some strong early options though, so I'll list them out by category.

Health/Healing/Sustainability:

Giving your first Nectar to Skelly is a good choice. This gives you an extra Death Defiance, and at the max rank, you'll revive with 100HP. 100 free HP is never bad, and it can even be effectively higher in certain scenarios.

Giving a Nectar to Dusa is also very solid. This allows you to heal up by destroying urns in rooms. This will definitely slow down your runs (though not your combat), but it's a good way to ensure you have as much HP as possible when you start each fight.

Achilles is a good defensive bonus too. You take less damage from the front, but take half that much more from the back. (Ex: 10% less damage from frontal attacks but 5% more damage from back attacks.) Still a decent damage reduction.

The ! Room Person in Elysium is a very good person to get the keepsake from too. This gives you a shield when you're hit, stopping you from being hit twice in a row. Note: it has a cooldown but is still strong.

Honorable Mention: The keepsake from the ! Person in Asphodel is one of the best keepsakes for surviving boss fights, but it's only active at all during a boss fight. Hard to recommend to a beginner, but if you're getting to the end boss with ease, this may be the keepsake for you.

Utility

A good starting keepsake is from Hypnos. This keepsake just gives you Obols at the start of your run, which is nice because then you can switch it out for something useful after Tartarus. And the Obol amount (when maxed) is enough to be a Centaur Heart, a boon, a pomegranate, or really anything. A free upgrade is never bad.

A second good keepsake is Charon's. This makes Well of Charon items last for a LOT longer. Essentially a whole Biome. Want enemies to drop HP for the entirety of Elysium? Buy a single Eye of Lamia. This also works well with Stubborn Defiance, as you can buy something to buff that from the Wells too.

Honorable Mention: Hermes' keepsake. This gives you movement speed and dodge chance. This could also be in sustainability instead of utility, but due to the movement speed, I put it here. Dodge chance is ridiculously strong in this game. You can dodge anything, including AoEs, and if you dodge, you don't take any damage. What's the downside? Well, with this keepsake you have to keep it on your whole run to really get use out of it, and you earn your dodge chance by clearing rooms super fast. If you can't clear rooms in the given timer, this keepsake does nothing for you.

Damage

If you're here for tips, damage shouldn't be your concern, as it will come with your builds. However, if your playstyle really gravitates toward doing more damage, read on:

A good starting keepsake is from the ! Person in Tartarus. This gives you +% damage on your attack, special, and cast, as long as you don't have a boon for that ability yet. And the damage is...ridiculous and stronger than most boons in general. And once again, you can always switch it out after Tartarus! Making that whole section just a bit easier.

Nyx's keepsake also increases both your backstab damage and first hit damage. Not great, but not bad. It can be used the whole run no matter what boons you have though, which makes it more useful overall than the above.

Honorable Mention: Thanatos' keepsake. This gives you a damage buff on all of your damage...every time you beat a room without getting hit. If you can do that? Great! Lots of free damage. Also, if you remove this keepsake you lose any damage bonus you've accumulated through the run with it.

I got my keepsake I want, now what do I spend Nectar on?

Get every keepsake by gifting someone once. You can check this in your codex by seeing if they have the first heart with a bow in it. Note: Hades will not reward you with a gift.

After that, I very strongly recommend you try to max out gifting Sisyphus then Skelly.

What should I buy with my Gemstones and Diamonds?

You'd think that this would be a purely cosmetic question, but it's not. The absolute first thing you should buy is the Fated List of Prophecies. This is essentially in-game mini-achievements that will reward you with Darkness, Gemstones, Titan's Blood, Ambrosia, etc. for completing them. You also need this at some point to progress the story. Get this as soon as possible.

Next, get the updated Codex. This lists all boons in the game and tells you exactly what they do and how you unlock them, You can even check it during a Boon screen when you're determining which boon to pick! Very useful. Also, as far as I remember now that you have the updated codex, gemstones are purely cosmetic.

After this, you want to spend your Diamonds on the fishing rod. Catching a fish can give you up to 150 Gemstones. Going into a Gemstone room will give you 5. 1 Fish = 30 Gemstone rooms. Start fishing.

Next, I suggest you spend diamonds to upgrade the House Contractor and get the Vanquisher's Keep so bosses drop gemstones. Then, save all Diamonds for when you'll need them for story reasons. This will be "contracts" in your work orders, and you'll need over 10 total diamonds. If you do not mind postponing story progression, then using diamonds on non-contract work orders is also very helpful for your runs.

Once you see the lyre available in the bedroom, get that for some fun. Note: this takes a long time to appear.

What you really want to spend all of your metacurrency on at this point is everything in the first section that helps you with your runs. More Obols, healing chambers, etc.

Finally, once that section is maxed, start working on the Lounge, as the Lounge does have some story connections, so it's important to focus.

What should I spend my Titan's Blood on?

There are two answers to this question. Answer #1 is "whatever you want because all aspects are good and you should play what's fun."

Answer #2 is "these specific things because it will unlock other things in the game much faster." You're never locked out of doing anything by spending Titan's Blood on what you want, but if you want to get to all of your abilities as soon as possible, there is an optimal path. I will explain this path below. There will be *slight* spoilers below of what types of weapons there are other than the sword and who to talk to in order to unlock stuff.

Step 1: Have all 6 base weapons unlocked.

Step 2: Spend Titan's Blood to unlock 5 unique aspects. Does not matter which weapon(s).

Step 3: Get to the final boss. (Note: It doesn't matter if you win or lose to them.)

Step 4: Talk to Achilles each run until he tells you something about the Spear.

Step 5: When available, unlock the 4th aspect of the spear.

Now, these steps can be in any order. Start with whichever weapon you prefer. Eventually, you will want to do all of these.

Step 6: Max out the Zagreus Aspect for the Stygian Blade. Then talk to Skelly and Nyx each run until Nyx mentions the Blade.

OR

Step 6: Spend a total of 5 Titan's Blood on the shield. Then talk to Chaos as often as possible, until they mention the Shield. (Note: They may mention the shield multiple times. Keep talking to them if you're not seeing results.)

OR

Step 6: Spend a total of 5 Titan's Blood on the Bow. Then talk to Artemis until she mentions the Bow. Just like above, this may take multiple times of her mentioning the bow.

OR

Step 6: Spend a total of 5 Titan's Blood on the Rail. Then talk to Zeus until he mentions the rail.

OR

Step 6: Spend a total of 5 Titan's Blood on the Fists. Then talk to Asterius until he mentions the fists. Note: You *may* have to do this with him in the mini-boss room and not with Theseus.

What's a good build for <this weapon>?

I probably have some ideas, but just ask me this one on Discord. I'd want to know some more information about weapon ranks, playstyle, available keepsakes, etc. Or check my advanced guide for ratings on legendary boons, duo boons, companions, and weapon aspects.

Of note:

- This does not hold true as you get better at the game, but at the start: health > level 1 to level 2 pomegranate > coins > poms after the boons you want to upgrade are at level 2.
- Athena dash is always good.
- Once you've unlocked Privilege Status and Boiling/Abyssal Blood in your mirror, start using them.
- Extra dashes from Hermes and dodge chance are always good. Along with attack/special/cast speed buff (depending on where you get your damage from). You can only get two Hermes boons per run, so take them where you can. (Exception: sometimes the final shop will sell you a third.)

- You can only get two Daedalus Hammers per run, so take them when you can. Hammer upgrades that increase damage to armor are universally good. (Exception: The final shop has an item that increases the total number of Hammer boons to three.)
- For Calls, Poseidon has the best single-target damage in the game, and it keeps you invulnerable while you're using it. Dionysus has the best AOE damage in the game, but you are not invulnerable, and Athena has the best other utility with "I don't want my Call to do damage, I just want to use my attack while being unable to take damage"

I'm having trouble making a build I already know I love.

Builds are very doable to force later in the game, but early on it's mostly RNG. You have to just make the best out of the options in front of you. However, as you progress, forcing builds requires 2 things: A near maxed-out Mirror of Night and every keepsake from the Olympian Gods. Once you have those two, force the build by using the one or two keepsakes you need to force your boons for it in Tartarus and Asphodel. Then use Fated Persuasion from the Mirror of Night if you need to help ensure the build you'll love.