KINETIC VANGUARD

FIGHTER · MARTIAL ARCHETYPE · HOMEBREW · v5.5

A mental-stat striker that channels elemental and telekinetic force through disciplined psionic projection.

Created by NixNinja in collaboration with AI assistants.

DESIGN NOTES

Kinetic Vanguard is built around three deliberate tensions: resource versus impact, power versus survivability, and identity versus flexibility. Psi Points keep you honest turn to turn — you cannot do everything every fight. Overload lets you spend health for power, which means the most dramatic moments cost something real. Your primary Discipline locks in your identity while the Psionic Arsenal gives you a situational toolkit drawn from universal psionic techniques.

The subclass rewards players who think one turn ahead. Knowing when to Overload, when to hold Psi for Deflection Screen, and when to go Desperate is more interesting than any individual feature. The Blood Tax scales with your Proficiency Bonus — the pain you accept grows with you.

CLIFF NOTES

Mental-stat Fighter.	Your attack rolls, damage, and save DCs all run off Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma. Pick one at 3rd and never look back.
Short-rest resource.	Psi Points = half Fighter level, rounded up (max 10). They refuel on a short rest — enough for meaningful choices without feeling stingy.
Manifested Strike is your weapon.	Replace a weapon attack with a 60 ft magical attack that adds your Psionic Ability modifier to damage always, plus your Proficiency Bonus once per turn. Scales with Fighter level. Your discipline riders attach to hits with this.
Overload is your throttle.	Declare before the roll, take psychic self-damage, step up the die and hit harder. Blood Tax at Tier 1 equals your Proficiency Bonus (flat). Tier 2 from 11th. A miss still costs you.
Your Discipline is your identity.	Cryo locks things down, Pyro burns them out, Psychokinesis controls the field. Five features across eighteen levels. Your 3rd-level rider fires once per turn for free — you're never naked.
Psionic Arsenal is your toolkit.	At 10th, choose one entry-tier universal technique. At 20th, choose one high-tier technique. These are discipline-agnostic tools — mobility, defense, disruption — swappable on level-up at no cost.
Desperate Overload is your emergency valve.	Out of Psi and the fight isn't done? Bleed for it. 1d8 per Psi owed, straight from your HP pool.

HOW TO PLAY THIS SUBCLASS

On your turn, the core loop is simple: when you attack with Manifested Strike, your first hit each turn triggers your discipline's base rider for free. Want to stack more riders? Spend Psi. Want more power on top of that? Declare Overload before you roll — you take the Blood Tax in psychic self-damage, your die steps up, and the hit lands harder. Overloading the discipline feature as well costs a second Blood Tax. That's the throttle: every escalation costs you.

Your Discipline defines your identity across five features. The Psionic Arsenal gives you one entry-tier technique at 10th and one high-tier technique at 20th — universal tools any Kinetic Vanguard can reach for regardless of discipline. Desperate Overload is a last-resort valve when you're out of Psi and the fight isn't over.

01 OVERLOAD TIER SYSTEM

Overload is a deliberate escalation that trades hit points for power. It is declared before making a Manifested Strike attack roll. Two tiers exist, both gated by character level. Tier 2 inherits all Tier 1 bonuses — it does not replace them.

The Blood Tax

Tier 1 Overload (3rd level): Increase the Manifested Strike damage die by one step. Add your Proficiency Bonus to damage. You take psychic self-damage equal to your **Proficiency Bonus** (flat).

Tier 2 Overload (11th level): Increase the Manifested Strike damage die by two steps. Add your Proficiency Bonus to damage. You take **2d6 psychic damage, plus 1d6 per Psi Point spent on the Overloaded feature** (minimum 3d6 total).

Recovery Suppression: Until the end of ***your*** next two turns: you cannot regain hit points, cannot use Second Wind, and cannot spend Hit Dice. Each additional Overload declaration in the same turn extends this window by one turn — two Overloads in one turn means suppression lasts three turns total. Overloads declared on later turns reset the timer from that point rather than stacking further.

Each Overload declaration is its own Blood Tax. If you Overload a Manifested Strike and also Overload a discipline feature triggered by that same hit, you pay the Blood Tax twice — once for each declaration.

⚠ Declare before the roll. A miss still costs you HP and suppresses recovery.

⚠ Self-damage bypasses Temporary Hit Points and cannot be reduced by any means.

Die step order: **1d4 → 1d6 → 1d8 → 1d10 → 1d12 → 1d20**

Fighter Level	MS Die	Overload Tier 1	Tier 1 Blood Tax	Overload Tier 2
3–6	1d4	1d6 + PB	Flat PB (2)	—
7–10	1d6	1d8 + PB	Flat PB (3–4)	—
11–14	1d8	1d10 + PB	Flat PB (4)	1d12 + PB
15–18	1d10	1d12 + PB	Flat PB (5)	1d20 + PB
19–20	1d12	1d20 + PB	Flat PB (6)	2d20kh + PB

2d20kh (Tier 2, levels 19–20): Roll two d20s for damage and use the higher result. On a critical hit, roll an additional damage die as normal.

Standalone Overload (non-Manifested Strike features): Every Overload declaration is its own Blood Tax, paid at the moment of activation — whether on a Manifested Strike, a discipline feature, or a standalone feature such as Deflection Screen or Hover. The base suppression window is two turns. Each additional Overload declared in the same turn extends that window by one turn (two Overloads in one turn = three turns of suppression). Overloads on subsequent turns restart the timer from that turn.

02 CORE FEATURES

Psionic Discipline — *3rd Level · Passive*

Choose one of the following as your Psionic Ability: Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma. You use your Psionic Ability for Manifested Strike attack and damage rolls, saving throw DCs, and all subclass features that reference your Psionic Ability.

Save DC = 8 + Proficiency Bonus + Psionic Ability modifier

Psi Reservoir — *3rd Level · Short/Long Rest*

Your Psi Points equal half your Fighter level, rounded up. You regain all expended Psi Points on a short or long rest.

Fighter Level	Proficiency Bonus	Psi Points
3–4	+2	2
5–6	+3	3
7–8	+3	4
9–10	+4	5
11–12	+4	6
13–14	+5	7
15–16	+5	8
17–18	+6	9
19–20	+6	10

Telepathy — *3rd Level · Passive*

You can communicate telepathically with any creature you can see within 60 feet, provided it understands at least one language. This does not grant mind reading.

Empathic Sense: You perceive surface emotions within your Telepathy range (60 feet). You gain advantage on Wisdom (Insight) checks against any creature within that range.

Manifested Strike — *3rd Level · Attack Action*

When you take the Attack action, you may replace one of your weapon attacks with a magical ranged weapon attack (range 60 feet) formed from psionic force. Your Discipline changes the damage type (which is always magical). Add your Psionic Ability modifier to all Manifested Strike damage. Once per turn, you also add your Proficiency Bonus to one Manifested Strike damage roll. Not a physical weapon (does not qualify for Divine Smite or Infusions). The damage die scales with Fighter level per the table in Section 01.

Overload — *3rd Level · Before Attack Roll*

Declare that you are Overloading before making a Manifested Strike attack roll. See Overload Tier System (Section 01) for full rules.

Psionic Instinct — *3rd Level · Once per Turn*

Once per turn, when you hit with Manifested Strike, you may activate your Discipline's 3rd-level Base feature (Glacial Spike, Ember Lance, or Telekinetic Shove) for 0 Psi. This free activation does not inherit the Overload tier from the Manifested Strike. Additional activations on the same turn cost Psi as normal.

Desperate Overload — *3rd Level · When Psi = 0*

Running on Blood: When you use a feature that requires Psi Points and lack sufficient points, you may still activate it. Spend as much Psi as you have; for each remaining Psi you cannot pay, you take 1d8 psychic self-damage. This self-damage follows all Blood Tax rules — it bypasses Temporary Hit Points and cannot be reduced by any means. Recovery suppression applies as normal.

Flat Cost: Desperate Overload self-damage is always 1d8 per Psi owed, regardless of your Overload tier.

Manifested Strike is free: Manifested Strike itself does not require Psi and is not affected by Desperate Overload. You can always attack — you just can't power your riders without paying in blood.

⚠ A 4 Psi capstone at 0 Psi costs 4d8 (~18) self-damage — use it to close out a fight, not to open one.

Vanguard Training — *3rd Level · Passive*

You gain proficiency in one of the following skills of your choice: Arcana, Insight, Intimidation, Investigation, Perception, or Persuasion. You also add your Psionic Ability modifier to checks using that skill.

Cross-Discipline Training — *10th Level · Passive*

You have studied universal psionic techniques beyond your primary Discipline. Choose one entry-tier feature from the Psionic Arsenal (Section 05).

Borrowed features use your primary Discipline's damage type (and ignore resistance to it, if the original has a piercing effect). The borrowed feature can be Overloaded normally.

Swapping: You may replace your borrowed feature whenever you gain a Fighter level, choosing again from the Psionic Arsenal entry-tier pool. There is no Psi cost to swap.

Discipline Mastery — *18th Level · Passive*

The 3rd-level Base feature of your primary Discipline no longer costs Psi Points to activate and can be activated once per turn without using Psionic Instinct (additional activations cost Psi as normal). (Glacial Spike, Ember Lance, or Telekinetic Shove — whichever belongs to your chosen Discipline.)

Psionic Extra Attack — *11th Level · Once per Turn*

Once per turn, when you make a bonus action attack granted by a feat or feature (such as Polearm Master or Two-Weapon Fighting), you may replace that attack with a Manifested Strike.

Cross-Discipline Training II — *20th Level · Passive*

Your psionic training extends into deeper territory. Choose one high-tier feature from the Psionic Arsenal (Section 05).

Borrowed features use your primary Discipline's damage type (and ignore resistance to it, if the original has a piercing effect). The borrowed feature can be Overloaded normally. You cannot hold the same feature across CDT and CDT II.

Swapping: You may replace your borrowed feature whenever you gain a Fighter level, choosing again from the Psionic Arsenal high-tier pool. There is no Psi cost to swap.

At 20th level a Vanguard holds two Arsenal features — one entry-tier tool and one high-tier pick. The primary discipline remains dominant through Overload, Mastery, and its full five-feature progression.

Psionic Apex — *20th Level · Passive*

Your psionic mastery reaches its zenith. You gain the following benefits:

Psychic Resistance: You are resistant to psychic damage. Overload self-damage still applies as normal.

Overload Mastery: Once per short rest, when you declare an Overload, you may choose to take no Blood Tax. The Overload effect — die step, bonus PB, recovery suppression — still applies normally. You have learned to push past your threshold without tearing yourself apart.

Mental Fortitude: You have advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

03 SUBCLASS FEATURE TABLE

Level	Feature
3rd	Psionic Discipline, Psi Reservoir, Telepathy, Manifested Strike, Overload, Psionic Instinct, Desperate Overload, Vanguard Training, Discipline 3rd Feature
7th	Discipline 7th Feature
10th	Discipline 10th Feature, Cross-Discipline Training (1 entry-tier Arsenal pick)
11th	Psionic Extra Attack
15th	Discipline 15th Feature
18th	Discipline 18th Feature, Discipline Mastery
20th	Cross-Discipline Training II (1 high-tier Arsenal pick), Psionic Apex

04 DISCIPLINES

Choose one Discipline at 3rd level. Your Discipline changes your Manifested Strike's damage type and grants features at 3rd, 7th, 10th, 15th, and 18th level.

Discipline I

CRYOKINESIS

[Escalating Lockdown] · Cold damage

Identity: *A control discipline that builds pressure methodically — speed reduction becomes restraint becomes stun, tightening the vice each round until nothing moves.*

Glacial Spike — *3rd · 1 Psi · On Manifested Strike Hit*

Base: The target's speed is reduced by 5 ft until the end of your next turn (no save). This reduction cannot reduce a target's speed below 10 ft cumulatively from all Glacial Spike effects. The target must then make a Con save; on a failure, speed is reduced by an additional 5 ft.

Tier 1 Overload: On a failed Con save, speed becomes 0 instead (ignores the 10 ft floor). On a successful save, the guaranteed 5 ft still applies and the target cannot Dash or gain bonus movement until the end of your next turn.

Tier 2 Overload: On a failed Con save, the target becomes Restrained until the end of your next turn instead of having its speed reduced to 0 (ignores the 10 ft floor).

Frozen Ground — *7th · 2 Psi · Concentration, up to 1 minute*

Base: Create a 15-ft radius area of icy difficult terrain centered on a point within 60 ft. Creatures that enter or start their turn in the area must make a Con save or fall Prone.

Tier 1 Overload: Expand the radius to 25 ft.

Tier 2 Overload: On a failed save, the target is Restrained instead of Prone (until the start of your next turn).

Cold Supremacy — *10th · Passive*

Resistance: You gain resistance to cold damage.

Bonus Damage: Once per Attack action, when you hit a creature, you may deal bonus cold damage equal to your Proficiency Bonus.

Piercing Cold: Your cold damage from subclass features ignores resistance.

Ribbon: You can chill, freeze, or preserve objects and small quantities of liquid by touch at will. You are comfortable in extreme cold environments.

Overload (declare when making the Attack action): Before you roll your first attack in the Attack action, you may declare an Overload and pay the Blood Tax.

Tier 1 Overload: The Bonus Damage applies to all hits during the Attack action, not just one.

Tier 2 Overload: Each target of the Bonus Damage must make a Con save or have their speed reduced by 10 ft until the end of your next turn. Stacks with Glacial Spike's lockdown chain.

Frost Cage — *15th · 3 Psi · On Manifested Strike Hit · Once per Turn*

Base: The target must make a Con save or become Restrained until the end of your next turn.

Tier 1 Overload: Instead of Restrained, the target becomes Stunned until the end of your next turn.

Tier 2 Overload: On a failed save, the target also takes cold damage equal to your Psionic Ability modifier at the start of each of its turns while Stunned.

Arctic Tempest — *18th · 4 Psi*

Base: Up to 3 creatures within 60 ft take 8d10 cold damage (Con save for half) and are Restrained on a failed save.

Tier 1 Overload: +2d10 damage. Targets that fail their save gain vulnerability to cold damage until the end of your next turn. Vulnerability takes effect after this ability's damage is applied.

Tier 2 Overload: On a failed save, targets become Stunned until the end of your next turn instead of Restrained.

Discipline II

PYROKINESIS

[Compounding Pressure] · Fire damage

Identity: *A sustained pressure discipline that rewards relentless aggression — burning targets, erupting kills, and spreading fire compound into an attrition machine that grows deadlier the longer combat runs.*

Ember Lance — *3rd · 1 Psi · On Manifested Strike Hit*

Base: The target takes fire damage equal to your Proficiency Bonus immediately on hit and at the start of its next turn. If the target dies while still burning from this feature's second instance of damage, creatures within 10 ft take fire damage equal to your Proficiency Bonus (no save).

Tier 1 Overload: The fire damage from both burn instances doubles.

Tier 2 Overload: The target becomes vulnerable to fire damage until the end of your next turn. Vulnerability takes effect when this attack's damage is resolved. If the target already has vulnerability to fire damage, this has no effect.

Blazing Step — *7th · 2 Psi · Bonus Action*

Base: Teleport up to 15 ft. Creatures adjacent to your arrival point must make a Dex save or take fire damage equal to your Psionic Ability modifier.

Tier 1 Overload: Teleport up to 30 ft instead.

Tier 2 Overload: Creatures that fail the save are also pushed 10 ft away from your arrival point.

Flare — *10th · 2 Psi · On Manifested Strike Hit · Once per Turn*

Base: Detonate a burst of fire around the target. All creatures within 10 ft of the target (excluding the target) take Manifested Strike die fire damage (Dex save for half).

Bonus Damage: Once per turn, when you hit a creature with Manifested Strike, you may deal bonus fire damage equal to your Proficiency Bonus.

Piercing Flame: Your fire damage from subclass features ignores resistance.

Ribbon: You can ignite or extinguish small fires by thought at will (candle, campfire, torch). You are comfortable in extreme heat environments.

Tier 1 Overload: The original target must make a Con save or be Blinded until the end of your next turn.

Tier 2 Overload: The burst radius increases to 15 ft and includes the original target.

Spreading Flames — *15th · Passive · Once per Turn*

Base: Once per turn, when you reduce a creature to 0 HP with Manifested Strike, fire erupts from the body. All creatures within 15 ft must make a Dex save or take 2 Manifested Strike dice of fire damage (half on success). This eruption cannot trigger itself.

Tier 1 Effect: If the killing blow was a Tier 1 Overloaded Pyrokinesis feature (Ember Lance or Flare), the eruption's damage ignores fire resistance.

Tier 2 Effect: If the killing blow was a Tier 2 Overloaded Pyrokinesis feature, creatures that fail the save also gain the Burning condition, taking your Proficiency Bonus fire damage at the start of their next turn.

The tier is inherited from the Pyrokinesis feature used on the killing blow — no additional cost.

Firestorm — *18th · 4 Psi*

Base: Call down a cataclysmic firestorm in a 15-ft radius centered on a point within 60 ft. All creatures in the area take 8d10 fire damage (Dex save for half).

Tier 1 Overload: +2d10 damage.

Tier 2 Overload: Creatures that fail their save are ignited, taking your Proficiency Bonus fire damage at the start of their next turn. Each creature within 5 ft of an ignited target also takes your Proficiency Bonus fire damage (no save).

Discipline III

PSYCHOKINESIS

[Tactical Space Control] · Force damage

Identity: *A repositioning specialist that dictates where enemies stand — controlling entry points, collapsing formations, and punishing poor positioning. Force is the least-resisted damage type in the game, and every inch of displacement is leverage.*

Telekinetic Shove — *3rd · 0–1 Psi · On Manifested Strike Hit · Once per Turn*

Base: When you hit a creature with Manifested Strike, you may attempt to push that target 5 ft in any horizontal direction (Str save negates). This requires no action. When activated as your Psionic Instinct free trigger, this costs 0 Psi. If triggered outside Psionic Instinct (such as when borrowed via CDT by another discipline), it costs 1 Psi.

Tier 1 Overload: The push distance increases to 10 ft on this hit.

Tier 2 Overload: The push distance increases to 15 ft and the target is knocked Prone on a failed save.

Implosion — *7th · 2 Psi · On Manifested Strike Hit · Once per Turn*

Base: Release a telekinetic implosion centered on the target. All creatures within 15 ft of the target (including the target) must make a Strength saving throw or be pulled 15 ft directly toward the target's position and knocked Prone. You choose the pulling direction; creatures cannot be pulled into occupied spaces.

Tier 1 Overload: The pull distance increases to 30 ft.

Tier 2 Overload: Creatures that fail the save also take force damage equal to your Psionic Ability modifier from the impact.

Implosion and Telekinetic Shove both trigger on the same hit — use Shove to position a target, then Implosion on a subsequent hit to collapse others into it.

Hover — *10th · 2 Psi · Bonus Action · Concentration*

Resistance Bypass: Your force damage from subclass features ignores resistance.

Bonus Damage: Once per turn, when you hit a creature with Manifested Strike, you may deal bonus force damage equal to your Proficiency Bonus.

Base: Spend 2 Psi and activate a hover speed equal to your walking speed. This hover keeps you no more than 1 foot off the ground — it ignores ground-based effects such as difficult terrain and prone-causing surfaces but grants no elevation advantage in melee.

Minor Telekinesis: You gain minor telekinesis at will: manipulate, lift, or move unattended objects up to 10 pounds within 30 feet, as if using Mage Hand (invisible). This does not require concentration.

Overload (Bonus Damage — declare when making the Attack action):

Tier 1 Overload: The Bonus Damage applies to all hits during the Attack action, not just one.

Tier 2 Overload: Each target of the Bonus Damage must make a Str save or be pushed 5 ft in any horizontal direction. Stacks with Telekinetic Shove's displacement.

Overload (Hover mode):

Tier 1 Overload: Gain a full fly speed equal to your walking speed for the duration instead of hovering.

Tier 2 Overload (requires 11th level): Flight does not provoke opportunity attacks.

Mass Levitation — *15th · 4 Psi · Concentration, up to 1 minute*

Base: Choose up to three Medium or smaller creatures within 60 ft, or one Large creature within 60 ft. Huge or larger creatures are immune. Each target must make a Str save or be lifted 20 ft into the air and Restrained (hovering). At the start of each affected creature's turn, it may repeat the Str save; on a success, it descends safely and the effect ends for that creature. While concentration is maintained, creatures that remain Restrained continue to hover. If concentration ends, all affected creatures fall.

While Levitated: Creatures that remain Restrained by this feature take bonus force damage equal to your Psionic Ability modifier whenever they are hit by your Manifested Strike.

Tier 1 Overload: Creatures that fail the initial Str save must also make a Con save or become Incapacitated for the duration.

Tier 2 Overload: Creatures that fail the initial Str save take force damage equal to your Psionic Ability modifier at the start of each of their turns while levitated.

Telekinetic Slam — *18th · 4 Psi*

Base: Seize a target within 60 ft with overwhelming telekinetic force and slam it. The target takes 8d10 force damage (Str save for half).

Tier 1 Overload: +2d10 damage. On a failed save, the target is also Stunned until the end of your next turn.

Tier 2 Overload: On a failed save: the target cannot take reactions and has disadvantage on its first attack roll until the end of its next turn. If the target is also Stunned (from Tier 1), its speed becomes 0 for one additional round after the Stun ends.

05 PSIONIC ARSENAL

These are universal psionic techniques — not tied to any Discipline. Cross-Discipline Training (10th) grants one entry-tier pick; CDT II (20th) grants one high-tier pick. Swapping is free on level-up. Borrowed features use your primary Discipline's damage type where relevant.

ENTRY TIER — CDT (10TH LEVEL)

Deflection Screen — *Entry Tier · 1 Psi · Reaction · Once per Round*

Base: When you take damage, you may use your reaction and spend 1 Psi to reduce it by 1d10 + your Psionic Ability modifier.

Tier 1 Overload: The reduction increases to 1d10 + Psionic Ability modifier + Proficiency Bonus.

Tier 2 Overload (requires 11th level): The attacker is automatically pushed 5 ft away and their speed is reduced by 10 ft (no save). The attacker then makes a Str save; on a failure, the push becomes 15 ft and they are knocked Prone.

Psionic Step — *Entry Tier · 1 Psi · Bonus Action*

Base: Teleport up to 15 ft to an unoccupied space you can see. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.

Tier 1 Overload: Teleport up to 30 ft instead.

Tier 2 Overload: You may bring one willing creature within 5 ft of you. Both of you appear in the destination space (you) and an adjacent unoccupied space (them).

Thought Spike — *Entry Tier · 1 Psi · On Manifested Strike Miss · Once per Turn*

Base: When you miss a creature with Manifested Strike, the psionic force still grazes its mind. The target takes psychic damage equal to your Psionic Ability modifier (no roll, no save). This damage follows Blood Tax rules — it is magical and cannot be reduced.

Tier 1 Overload: Damage equals your Psionic Ability modifier + Proficiency Bonus.

Tier 2 Overload: The target must make a Wisdom save or have disadvantage on its next attack roll before the end of its next turn.

Thought Spike does not activate on misses caused by Overload (i.e., the miss is still a cost, Thought Spike is a consolation, not a reward for poor rolls).

HIGH TIER — CDT II (20TH LEVEL)

Mind Crush — *High Tier · 3 Psi · On Manifested Strike Hit · Once per Turn*

Base: When you hit a creature with Manifested Strike, you may spend 3 Psi to assault its mind directly. The target must make a Wisdom saving throw or become Incapacitated until the end of your next turn.

Tier 1 Overload: On a failed save, the target also cannot use reactions until the end of your next turn.

Tier 2 Overload: The target is Stunned instead of Incapacitated on a failed save.

Psychic Shell — *High Tier · 2 Psi · Bonus Action*

Base: You project a psychokinetic barrier around yourself. Gain temporary hit points equal to twice your Psionic Ability modifier + your Proficiency Bonus. These THP are lost when you next take a short or long rest.

Tier 1 Overload: Temporary hit points = twice your Psionic Ability modifier + twice your Proficiency Bonus.

Tier 2 Overload: While you have these temporary hit points, you have resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks.

Psychic Shell can be used proactively — activating it before a fight burns 2 Psi but may save more in avoided damage than Overloading another attack would gain.

Astral Anchor — *High Tier · 2 Psi · Reaction*

Base: When a creature within 60 ft of you attempts to teleport, blink, plane shift, or use any effect that would move it via extradimensional means, you may use your reaction to anchor it psionically. The creature must make a Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the teleportation fails and the action, bonus action, or spell slot used is wasted.

Tier 1 Overload: On a failed save, the creature also takes psychic damage equal to your Psionic Ability modifier + Proficiency Bonus.

Tier 2 Overload: On a failed save, the creature is also Stunned until the end of its next turn from the psychic feedback.

Astral Anchor is a situational pick — devastating against BBEG types with escape abilities or teleporting mages. Its value is table-dependent; swap to Mind Crush or Psychic Shell at the next level-up if the campaign doesn't reward it.

06 DESIGN IDENTITY

Complexity: Advanced
Manages Psi Points, Overload tiers, and concentration. Recommended for players comfortable with resource management. New to 5e? Start with Champion or Battle Master.

Mental-stat Fighter · Short-rest striker/controller hybrid
Voluntary self-destructive nova engine · Blood Tax scales with Proficiency Bonus at Tier 1
Three Discipline identities · Universal Arsenal toolkit · Multiclass-resistant by design · No Psi recovery in combat

07 CHANGELOG

v5.5 — Current

Spreading Flames — once per turn. Was once per action (v5.4). Now once per turn — the simplest and most table-friendly framing. One eruption per turn regardless of how many actions you have.
Psychic Blizzard renamed Arctic Tempest. Mechanics unchanged. The new name better reflects Cryo's identity — a slow, encroaching environmental force rather than a sudden psychic burst.
Kinetic Blast renamed Implosion. Mechanics unchanged. The name now matches the redesigned pull mechanic introduced in v5.0 — an implosion collapses inward, which is exactly what the feature does.

v5.4 — Previous

Spreading Flames — tightened to once per action. Was once per Attack action (v5.3). Now once per action — Action Surge no longer resets the cap. One eruption per turn, full stop.

v5.3 — Previous

Spreading Flames — capped to once per Attack action. Was triggered on every kill with Manifested Strike. Now fires once per Attack action. Action Surge into a multi-kill turn could chain eruptions into runaway AOE — the cap keeps Spreading Flames a powerful payoff without becoming a cleave engine that trivializes weak-enemy encounters.

v5.2 — Previous

Recovery Suppression — extended to two turns, stacking per additional Overload. Was suppressed until the end of your next turn. Now the base window is two turns. Each additional Overload declared in the same turn (e.g. Overloading both the Manifested Strike and a discipline rider) extends suppression by one turn — two Overloads in a single turn means three turns of no healing. Overloads on subsequent turns restart the timer from that point rather than stacking. A single Overload per turn was already enough to make healing a non-issue within the window; the old one-turn window was too narrow to register meaningfully against most Fighter HP pools.

v5.1 — Previous

Glacial Spike — speed floor added. Base reductions from Glacial Spike cannot cumulatively reduce a target's speed below 10 ft. This prevents Cryo from locking out even fast creatures from any movement on Base alone, keeping the lock-down fantasy on Overload where it belongs. The floor is explicitly bypassed by Tier 1 and Tier 2 Overload — Overload is still the route to speed 0 and Restrained.

Manifested Strike — Proficiency Bonus to damage once per turn. Was +PB on every MS hit. Now your Psionic Ability modifier still applies to all hits; the Proficiency Bonus applies to one damage roll per turn. Action Surge and multi-attack sequences still benefit, but the per-hit PB stacking on heavy-attack turns is trimmed. Overload and discipline riders are unaffected.

v5.0 — Previous

Blood Tax Tier 1 — flat Proficiency Bonus. Was 1d4 (avg 2.5 at all levels). Now equals your Proficiency Bonus — 2 at level 3, scaling to 6 by level 17. The cost grows with you, creating real tension at every tier without a jarring mechanical cliff between Tier 1 and Tier 2.

Psionic Arsenal — replaces Cross-Discipline Training's discipline borrowing. CDT (10th) and CDT II (20th) now pick from a dedicated pool of universal techniques (Deflection Screen, Psionic Step, Thought Spike / Mind Crush, Psychic Shell, Astral Anchor). You are no longer borrowing another discipline's features with a different coat of paint — you are picking tools built for universal use.

CDT swap tax removed. The 1 Psi permanent cost per swap is gone. Swapping on level-up is free. The Arsenal options are balanced enough that no pick is a clear trap; swap freely.

Telekinetic Shove — cost clarified. 0 Psi when used as Psionic Instinct's free trigger, 1 Psi otherwise. Resolves the prior inconsistency between the feature's stated cost and Psionic Instinct's override. Once-per-turn cap remains.

Kinetic Blast (now Implosion) — pull, not push. Redesigned as a telekinetic implosion: creatures are pulled toward the target rather than scattered away. Psychokinesis now has a push tool (Shove), a pull tool (Blast), and a vertical control tool (Mass Levitation). Displacement has texture.

Mass Levitation — bonus damage rider added. Creatures Restrained by Mass Levitation now take bonus force damage equal to your Psionic Ability modifier when hit by Manifested Strike. Levitating enemies now punishes them for staying in the air, not just for failing the initial save.

Deflection Screen — moved to Arsenal entry tier. No longer exclusive to Psychokinesis's 3rd-level feature list. All disciplines can now reach for it via CDT. Psychokinesis 3rd is now cleanly one feature: Telekinetic Shove.

Ember Lance — kill-trigger eruption added. When a target dies while still burning from Ember Lance's second damage instance, creatures within 10 ft take PB fire damage. Seeds the Spreading Flames fantasy from level 3; makes the Pyro identity feel coherent across the full progression.

Psionic Apex rewritten. Replaced "resistance to psychic + advantage on charmed" with three benefits: Psychic Resistance (kept), Overload Mastery (once per short rest, take no Blood Tax on an Overload), and Mental Fortitude (advantage on charmed and frightened saves). The capstone now directly engages the subclass's central mechanic.

v4.8 — Previous

Telekinetic Shove capped to once per turn. Desperate Overload raised from 1d4 to 1d8 per Psi owed. Psionic Apex added as 20th-level ribbon (resistance + charmed advantage) — replaced in v5.0.

v4.7 — Previous

Discipline Mastery capped (once per turn without Psionic Instinct). Psionic Instinct clarified — no Overload inheritance. Psionic Extra Attack once per turn. Hover Bonus Damage added. CDT swap tax added (removed v5.0).

v4.6 — Previous

Psionic Instinct (3rd, free rider once per turn) and Psionic Extra Attack (11th, bonus action MS replacement) added.

v4.5 — Previous

Tier 2 Overload bonus damage capped to +PB. Recovery Suppression clarified. Pyro Bonus Damage passive added at 10th.

v4.4 — Previous

Full revision incorporating external critique. Psi Reservoir restored to half Fighter level. MS reworked to magical weapon attack. Ember Lance buffed. Borrowing rules clarified.

v4.0–4.3 — Previous

Structural overhaul. Awakenings removed. Psionic Precision removed. No in-combat Psi recovery. Cross-Discipline Training introduced. CDT II at 20th. Firestorm renamed. MS cantrip classification added then revised.

v2.x–v3.x — Archive

Awakenings system, tiered Psi recovery features, Desperate Overload introduction, Blood Tax progressive tuning (1d4+1d4 through 1d4+1d10), Cross-Discipline Training introduced, Discipline Mastery added, Dual-Pathing explored.