

Assassin:

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Sustain Damage:

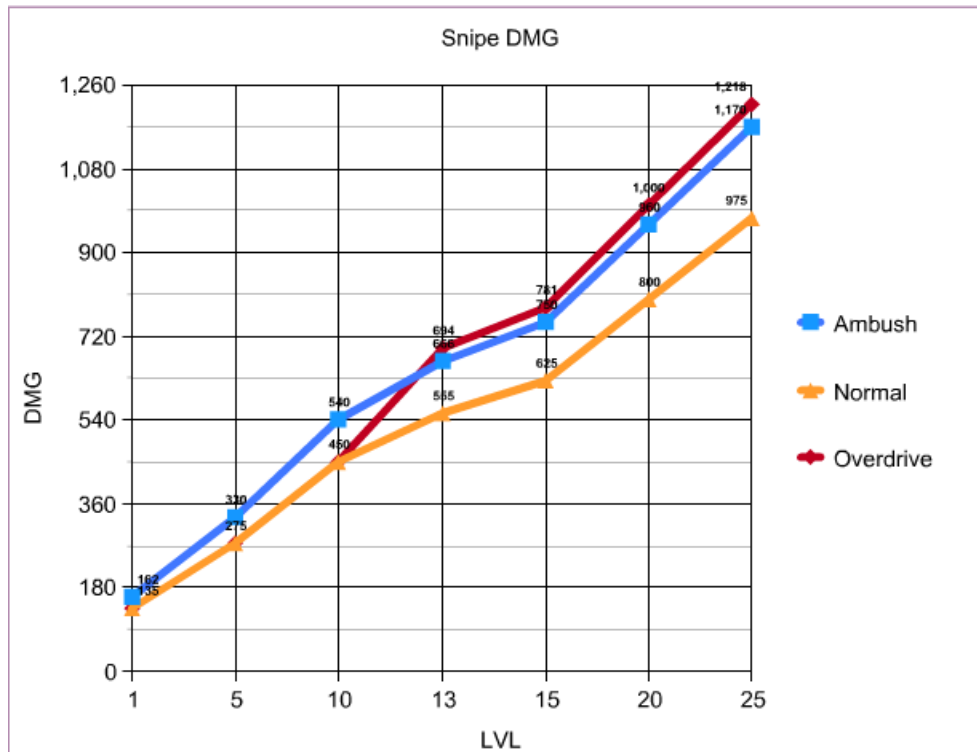


Tier 1:

Psi-Op Rangefinder: This is the best choice in my opinion. With this increased range, Nova can remain in back while still putting out quite a bit of damage. With this talent Nova can also sneak in an extra AA on a running target before casting Snipe.

Path of the Wizard: At level 25, this will give Nova 860 energy (+120) and 10.20 regen (+4.8). With the cost of Nova spells, even with Overdrive, this talent doesn't provide enough benefits to justify taking it over the other choices.

Ambush Snipe: This talent becomes essentially useless after level 13 if you choose Overdrive. If you do not choose Overdrive, this graph will show the damage of a **Cloak Snipe** vs. a **Snipe**



From here you can see that by the time the damage from Ambush becomes useful, around 15, Overdrive outscales it.

Tazer Rounds: This talent is a reasonable choice, the utility can come in handy for some situations. Pinning Shot will reduce most heroes move speed to 3.08. This means that over a 3 second period, a hero will move at most 10.23 units by running. With Tazer Rounds, a hero will move 9.24 units. So, without Tazer Rounds, a hero will go 11% further by running. This might not seem like much, but that distance could be the range for an ally to heal or shield the hero and preventing a man advantage, or that distance could mean the enemy being in range to cancel a capture.

Tier 1 main points: Assassin and Sustain: Rangefinder.

Tier 2:

FN92 Sniper Rifle: This talent is simply outclassed by the other choices. It can be used defensively to keep as far away during your AA, but if you are worried about surviving, the extra 1 range will not go as far as 15% lifesteal.

Vampiric Assault: This talent should be chosen for 2 reasons, you are afraid of AoE damage or you are on a skirmish team. In a fight, Nova will have to attack 7 times to heal the total of 1 AA. Here is a table of Lifesteal for each level:

LVL	4	5	7	9	11	13	15	17	19	20
HP	13	14.5	17	20	23	25	28	31	33	36

The scaling in damage for this ability is pretty awful, but when ATK speed is taken into account, Here is a table of Lifesteal per second assuming you are AA the entire time:

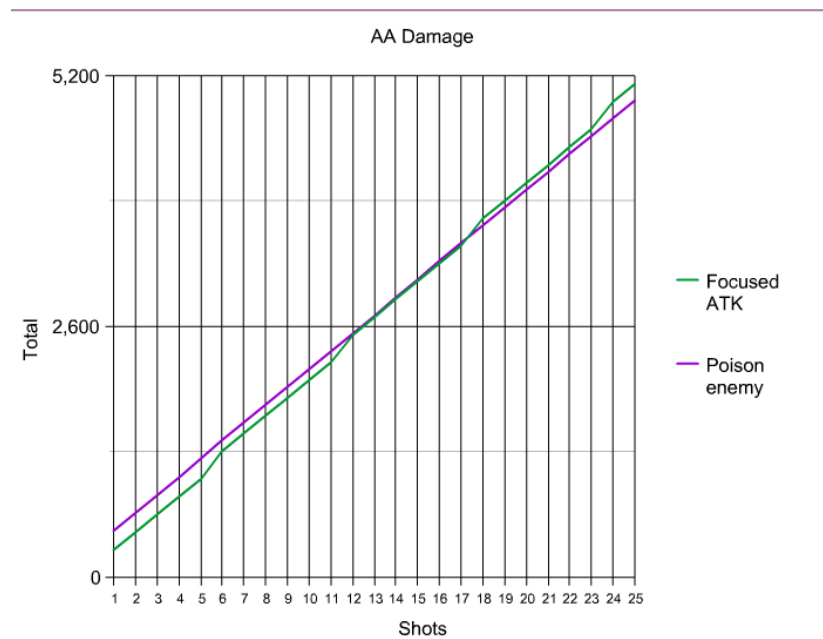
LVL	4	5	7	9	11	13	15	17	19	20
HP	12	14	18	23.3	30	38.8	50.7	68	95	115.5

This shows that Nova's lifesteal becomes much more useful late in the game.

Focused Attack: In my opinion, this is the best choice for Tier 2. In lane, this is a great poking tool. For objective stalls, it is usually up when you go for a hit. Best of all, there is only a 5 second CD. With a low CD this gives Nova some extra power while her abilities are on down.

Poison Enemy: This talent is for an extra little assassin power. I prefer to play Nova as an assassin so I like to build for maximum burst, but I think this is overkill. With Triple Tap, Nova single target damage is huge, but her sustain damage is not too great.

If we think of a scenario where there is a 30 second fight at level 15 (your team is defending a dragon knight or skull golem) and Nova is able to get 25 shots off over that period.



From this graph you can see that there is almost no difference over sustained fight, so it appears that Poison has an advantage in burst, and it does. At level 15 a Snipe Triple Tap

combo from Nova can hit for 3775, and at least for 1925. With that damage, is it really necessary for 300 extra damage that is dealt over time? If you want burst, yes.

Tier 2 Main Points: Assassin: Poison Enemy Sustain Damage: Focused Attacks

Tier 3:

Battle Momentum: The clear choice for this tier. Nova is an ability hero gifted with an extremely fast attack speed. In a fight, this won't be a game changer, it's power comes from in between fights. The cooldown on Triple Tap and Precision Strike is 100 sec and 60 sec respectively. If Nova attacks a merc camp 20 times (which she easily will) after she uses her ult, that is 10 seconds off your ult. Having Triple Tap or Precision Strike up 10 seconds late is absolutely game changing.

Digital Shrapnel: For this talent, the damage is just too low. And using a decoy for damage isn't effective. Decoy has so much utility that it doesn't need damage, especially so little. To get the most out of this damage you would need to place it in a group of enemies and hope they get hit. If you use your decoy to start a fight, you might be able to get a few enemy abilities wasted on it. If you hold on to it, you can block skill shots, I don't know the number of Stitches hooks I have blocked with decoy.

Explosive Round: The damage is decent, snipe hits hard and 50% late in the game is around 400 damage. The problem isn't the damage, it is the Area. Melee range is 1-1.25, that means to get hit with the splash, the enemy has to be about the size of Tassadar away. Good teams spread apart to avoid aoe, you won't get teamfight damage from this.

Tier 3 Main Points: Take Battle Momentum

Tier 4:

Triple Tap: My favorite, it is strong, targeted, and looks sick. There is the potential for it to be body blocked, although I don't see too many people running to take the damage. At level 10, 1 shot does 410 damage, there isn't a hero that can happily take that. At 20, 1 shot does 925 damage, that is 1/3 of Stitches health. Taking all 3 shots at level 20 will deal 2775 damage. Fear this ability.

Precision Strike: Just as viable as Triple Tap, but has a specific playstyle. Triple Tap is flexible; it can be used to assassinate, in teamfights, stop objectives safely, initiate, disengage, and more. Precision Strike is for teamfights, it is flexible in teamfights but only good in teamfights. The area is large and the damage is powerful, combined with a global range, this is a trump card. It does more damage than Triple Tap if it hits 2 or more, just 2 or more. If you are on a team that stays grouped, this is a strong ult that will be off CD very often. The drawback is that you need a team. Without Triple Tap you lose 40% of your single target damage output, and your ability to be an effective assassin.

Tier 4 Main Points: Assassins: Triple Tap Sustained Damage: Precision Strike

Triple Tap: 410-1230 to a target, 1230 total damage

Precision Strike: 650 to a target, 650-1300-1950-2600-3250 total damage

Tier 5:

Advanced Cloaking Suit: The regen is nice, but you won't be using it too much when you move this fast. This combined with your mount will give you a 75% boost to speed. Seems amazing right? not really. Assuming that it stacks multiplicatively with speed, you are only going 20% faster mounted.

Spell Shield: Spell Shields in Heroes are not that great, they do not block CC. If you get stunned as Nova, reduced damage usually won't keep you alive long enough to matter.

Holo Drone: Honestly, I don't understand this ability, I couldn't reliably estimate the damage it would do. Assuming a few things, at max damage, this could do 1712 damage. Again, my basis for this is me guessing the damage ratios and assume the behavior is such to maximize the damage.

Overdrive: Lets look at some numbers real quick.

At level 13, Snipe does 694 (+141)

Pinning Shot does 355 (+71)

Triple Tap does 636(+127) per hit, 1909 (+382) total

Precision Strike does 944(+189) per person

Tier 5 main points: Choose Overdrive.

Tier 6:

Wounding Shot: This talent's value is hard to determine. The range on Pinning Shot is not huge so this is not a good talent to choose if you want your team to destroy someone. In most cases, Blood for Blood or Rewind is a better option. The power in this talent lies in catches. At level 16, a combo of Overdrive → Wounding Shot → (Poison) → AA → Snipe → AA will deal 2063 (2266) damage, and you still have Triple Tap available.

Blood for Blood: This talent is for those who want to play Nova as an AA carry. It's offensive power will match Wounding Shot when the enemy has about 2350 max health, however that is only single target and in a teamfight Wounding Shot will do more damage and my best estimate for efficiency will be at 3325 max health. It isn't bad at all, but assassins don't jump on tanks against squishy targets, this talent is nowhere near the 2 alternatives. If you want an escape and to feel safer in teamfights, this is a good choice.

Rewind: Rewind does an absurd amount of damage if it is used well. It is not easy to use well at all, but with it a Nova can sneak in another 825 damage into a combo. This will also allow Nova to Pinning Shot 3 seconds after the first one expires, making this a chasing tool as well. I think that the flexibility of this talent puts it far above the other choices.

Tier 6 main points: This tier comes down to what you need at the time, some games Blood for Blood will be the best and some Rewind. However, Rewind can be used much more flexibly. Assassin: Rewind Sustained Damage: Usually Rewind but Blood for Blood can work well

Tier 7:

Tier 7 for Nova is all good, each has it's own strength and this far into a game, there is no right choice for everything. This choice should be made based on your team's goals.

Fury of the Storm: This is good only if you are playing a sustain damage Nova, otherwise do not choose this ability.

Bolt of the Storm: This is for survivability. For those who have played LoL, you know how strong flash is; but if you have MOBA positioning skills, you know that you don't need this ability to survive. That being said, if the enemy has an Illidan, Kerrigan, or Zeratul, having a flash will save you if they jump on you during a teamfight, at least long enough to have your team help out.

Fast Reload: First, if you are ahead and need to close a game choose this talent. You can burst someone down, finish them off, finish someone else off, finish someone else off, finish another person off, and get a penta. If you do not have a strong lead, this is a risky choice. All tier 7s are strong regardless of Hero and the power spike will be across both teams so remember that. If you chose this ability and your team engages a bad team fight, they are down a level 20, this talent is useless until you start to win the fight, and it cannot help to turn it in your favor. This is a strong talent, and usually I think it is the best choice, but you have to understand that it is a double-edge sword and play accordingly.

Precision Barrage: This talent will give Nova a new possible role. This, combined with a few other talents will allow Nova to be a strong split pusher (more in-depth in role section).

Precision strike is always a versatile teamfight tool, it can be used to zone, deal damage, execute, disengage, etc. This talent used in a teamfight capacity will simply give you another tool. If you place the barrages in the right places you can zone for twice as long, do twice as much damage, disengage better. Overall, this doesn't bring anything new to the table, you just get more cards to play.

Tier 7 main points: Assassin: Fast Reload/Bolt of the Storm
Sustain Damage: Precision Barrage/Bolt of the Storm

Roles:

I know of 2 roles Nova can play; Assassin and Sustained Damage.

Assassin:

I choose my Tier 2 talent based on how long I think the game will last. The longer the game goes the better Focused Attack becomes.

Talents:

http://www.heroesfire.com/hots/talent-calculator/nova#hX_f

Tier 1: I think that this is the best choice in tier 1 for any role, the range is so valuable. I didn't choose Ambush Snipe because at level 13, I choose Overdrive and it becomes useless for burst.

Tier 2: I chose Poison Enemy, but I think that it is interchangeable with Focused Attack. On the Pirate map for example, teams generally fight briefly often and Poison won't be up for every fight unlike Focused Attack. Also, if the enemy team has a lot of escapes, I would pick Focused Attack. Poison Enemy is by no means a nuke and is very controllable, a good amount of champions can prevent the damage if the ally escaped you.

Tier 3: I chose Battle Momentum for this because of Rewind. Together the abilities can have a pinning shot with only a 1.25 second if you stay on target. Same thing with Snipe.

Tier 4: Assassins are meant for single target damage and Triple Tap can deal a lot of that. If you want to play Nova as an assassin, you must take this ability, it does more damage than Precision Strike and is much more accurate.

Tier 5: This ability is extremely important on Nova, I will show you in the Rotation section how essential it is.

Tier 6: I chose Rewind because of the flexibility it offers and the combos that it opens up. This has great synergy with Battle Momentum.

Tier 7: As an assassin, your job is to kill the squishies, if you do your job well this talent will allow you to maintain a dominant presence the entire fight. It will also make catches have no cost.

Rotations:

This section is to teach you how to burst quickly and leave. These are what I think are the most fluid combos that Nova can do without over committing.

I will usually choose Focused Attack and anything past level 4 will proc one of them, for the damage if Poison was chosen instead look under that heading or in the hard brackets.

Format: Ability → Ability → Ability (level required)

(Damage_{LEVEL}, Damage_{LEVEL}) [Poison Damage_{LEVEL}, Poison Damage_{LEVEL}]

Rotation 1: Snipe → AA → Pinning Shot → AA chase (1)

(383₁, 703₅, 1103₁₀, 1503₁₅)

Rotation 2: Pinning Shot → AA chase → Snipe (1)

(443₁, 799₅, 1244₁₀, 1689₁₅)

Rotation 3: Snipe → AA → AA → AA (1)

(315₁, 563₅, 873₁₀, 1183₁₅)

Rotation 4: AA → Pinning Shot → [Poison Enemy] → AA → AA → Snipe (4)

(666₄, 1173₁₀, 1596₁₅) [803₄, 1553₁₀, 2178₁₅]

Rotation 5: AA → Pinning Shot → Snipe → [Poison Enemy] → AA → Triple Tap (10)

(2262₁₀, 3135₁₅, 4008₂₀) [2642₁₀, 3717₁₅, 4792₂₀]

Rotation 6: Overdrive → Snipe → Triple Tap (13)

(2603₁₃, 2938₁₅, 3775₂₀, 4613₂₅)

Rotation 7: AA → [Poison Enemy] → Overdrive → Pinning Shot → Snipe → Triple Tap (16)

(3820₁₆, 4636₂₀, 5652₂₅) [4443₁₆, 5419₂₀, 6639₂₅]

Rotation 8: Pinning Shot → Blood for Blood → [Poison Enemy] → AA → Overdrive → Snipe → Triple Tap (16)

(4216₁₆, 5108₂₀, 6223₂₅) [4838₁₆, 5892₂₀, 7210₂₅]

Rotation 9: [Poison Enemy] → Pinning Shot → Snipe → AA → Rewind → AA Until Snipe is up → Overdrive → Snipe → Pinning Shot → Triple Tap (16)

(5403₁₆, 6537₂₀, 7955₂₅) [6026₁₆, 7322₂₀, 8942₂₅]

Rotation 10: Overdrive → Snipe → Rewind → AA → AA → Snipe (16)

(2138₁₆, 2578₂₀, 3128₂₅)

Rotation 11: Overdrive → Snipe → Rewind → AA → AA → Snipe → Flash → Pinning Shot → [Poison Enemy] → AA → AA → Triple Tap (20)

(6247₂₀, 7585₂₅) [6916₂₀, 8434₂₅]

For damage at any level go to this [Spreadsheet](#) and follow the instructions

Playstyle:

I believe that Assassins do not need kills in Heroes. Your goal is to push out enemy heroes and use that man advantage to take objectives. With that in mind, this build is aimed at searching for fights where you can get in range to combo a squishy target without suiciding. If you ever attack someone 1v1, do not chase. Nova is built around her burst and without it she has very little damage, plus she has a long range kill move that does insane damage.

Later in the game you want to avoid throwing away your burst. To do that, try to be with your team at the start of fights and poke from a range or be somewhere the enemy can't see you and wait for an opening. When you use a combo, leave immediately afterwards and get behind a tank. If you do this then the enemy will have to dive into you which will expose their squishies and give you a second chance to attack.