

BLACK MAGE GUIDE

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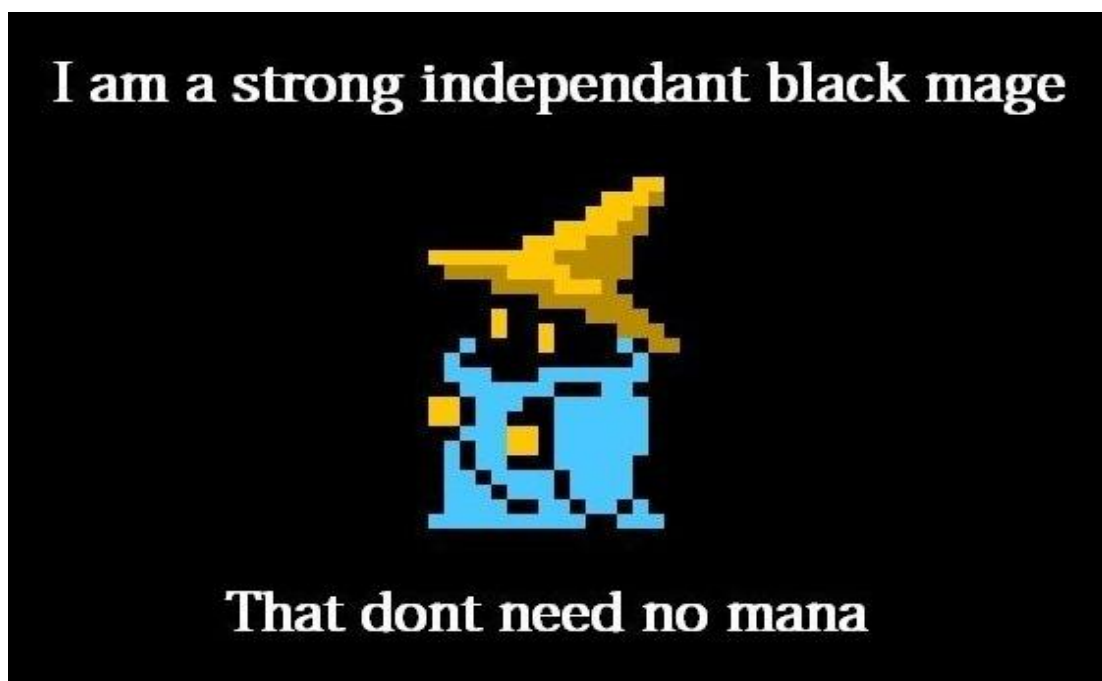
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I. **Introduction!**



So you're ready to join the Order of the Black? It's a fine choice and with a little practice and some patience, you'll be slinging fireballs soon enough. Black Mage has been my main job in Final Fantasy XIV since April of 2014, but I will in no way say I'm the best. I do however have 10+ years experience in MMOs, and I feel I have a good grasp of how the class works. This guide will work to answer any questions you might have about the class, give you a detailed look at each ability and how it translates to the battlefield, and give you tips and pointers to increase your skill level. But first let's take a look at what it means to be a Black Mage and what you bring to your party.

Black Mage is a ranged, magic caster that has very high burst/spike damage while maintaining a safe distance from the enemy. It is one of the hardest hitting job in the game. That comes however

at the cost of longer cast times and immobility. You are essentially a turret. When allowed to stand still, the Black Mage can devastate its target. Your role in a party is to deal high single target magic damage with very high burst damage, while also providing some decent utility. Black Mage is also one of the best multi-target damage dealers in the game. If you like seeing big damage numbers, then this is the class for you. The key to becoming efficient at the job, is learning how to effectively balance casting and movement in order to achieve as much uptime on your target as possible. But don't worry, you'll be given several tools along the way to help with this.

So before we get started let's go over some terms and acronyms related to our job.

A. Terminology

MP - Magic Points: Also frequently referred to as Mana. The resource that we pay to execute our abilities. One of the biggest advantages of Black Mage is that it has an unlimited supply of MP, and we'll talk about that later.

GCD - Global Cooldown: The period of time after using a spell or ability in which it is not possible to use any other spell or ability. This prevents players from using several abilities at once. The global cooldown in FFXIV is 2.5 seconds. Most abilities cause and are affected by the global cooldown, but some are not, as seen below.

oGCD - Off the Global Cooldown: Meaning, abilities that do not trigger nor are affected by the Global Cooldown.

DoT - Damage over time: There are some abilities in the game that after your attack is executed, a status effect will be placed on the enemy, such as poison, which will continue to damage your target for an extended period of time. "Dotting" your target is the process of applying damage over time abilities.

AoE - Area of Effect: Dealing damage to multiple enemies simultaneously in a concentrated area. This is also the term frequently used to indicate telegraphs placed on the ground by the enemy.

Clipping - The act of refreshing a DoT while it is still active on the enemy. You want to try and avoid too much clipping by refreshing the DoT with as little time left as possible. This allows the DoT to reach its maximum potency. For example, an ability might be a total of 400 potency which is spread out over the duration of 30 seconds. Refreshing that DoT with 15 seconds left, now means your initial DoT only had a potency of 200.

CD - Cooldown: The time it takes before you can use a particular ability again. To use an ability "On Cooldown," is saying to use it every time it's available.

Rotation - Your rotation is simply a specific order of skills and abilities used to maximize your damage output. There are 3 different rotations you'll have to learn in order to be the most efficient at your job; opener, single target (ST) rotation, and AoE rotation.

Astral Fire - A special status effect that increases the potency and MP cost of your Fire spells. At the same time, it lowers the potency and MP cost of Blizzard spells.

Umbral Ice - A special status effect that increases the speed at which MP is recovered. At the same time, it lowers the potency and MP cost of Fire spells.

Utility - An ability or spell that directly benefits any person(s) in your party.

Proc - A term used to indicate an ability or trait that is triggered under particular circumstances. For example, the Thaumaturge's Fire spell has a 40% chance to "proc" a free, instant cast Fire III.

Hardcasting - Manually casting any spell or ability that you normally would want to cast instantly.

Stack - You and your party grouping together on a single location. The exact opposite of spreading out. There is also Effect Stacking, which refers to how an effect increments upon application. For example, Black Mage can have a total of 3 Astral Fire stacks, and Monk can have a total of 3 stacks of Greased Lightning.

Uptime - The measurement of time spent attacking your target. The opposite of downtime.

Tick - Refers to a standard period of time the server will use to time events or abilities in. In Final Fantasy XIV, a tick is 3 seconds. For example, a White Mage's Regen will apply a 150 potency heal to its target every server tick, or every 3 seconds. DoTs also run off of the server's tick. A DoT that lasts for 18 seconds will tick no more than 6 times.

II. Attributes & Races

In FFXIV, there are several attributes that directly affect your character's performance in battle. There are 5 primary attributes, and several more secondary stats. Your starting attributes will be determined solely by the race and subrace you select when creating a character. Throughout the game you'll be able to increase your attributes by leveling, gear, weapons, food, materia, potions, and party bonuses.

A. Primary Attributes

Intelligence is a Black Mage's primary stat. This directly affects how much damage you do from each spell. Any gear or weapons you purchase should have Intelligence on it. Here is a list of the 5 Primary Attributes:

Strength (Str) - Affects physical melee damage.

Dexterity (Dex) - Affects physical ranged damage and melee damage dealt by rogues and ninjas.

Vitality (Vit) - Affects maximum HP, and damage dealt by tanks.

Intelligence (Int) - Affects attack magic potency when role is Tank or DPS.

Mind (Mnd) - Affects healing magic potency. Also affects attack magic potency when role is Healer.

B. Which Race is best for Black Mage?

In all honesty, it doesn't really matter which race you decide to go with. A few points here and there in certain attributes will not have a detrimental effect on your performance. You could potentially be spending hundreds of hours with this character, so you should go with the race you find most appealing. However, if you are into the min/maxing of an MMO, there are certain subraces that work slightly better with Black Mage. Taking Intelligence into account, here is a table of Races and Subraces. **Note: You can change your race at anytime by purchasing a Fantasia from the [Final Fantasy XIV: Mog Station](#).**

Table - II.C

RACE	SUBRACE	STR	DEX	VIT	INT	MND
Roegadyn	Sea Wolves	22	19	23	18	21
Roegadyn	Hellsguard	20	18	23	20	22
Hyur	Highlander	23	20	22	18	20
Hyur	Midlander	22	19	20	23	19
Elezen	Wildwood	20	23	19	22	19
Elezen	Duskwight	20	20	19	23	21
Mi'Qote	Seekers of the Sun	21	23	20	19	19
Mi'Qote	Keepers of the Moon	19	22	18	21	23
Lalafell	Plainsfolk	19	23	19	22	20
Lalafell	Dunesfolk	19	21	18	22	23
Au Ra	Xaela	23	20	22	20	18
Au Ra	Raen	19	22	19	20	23

D. Secondary Stats

Secondary stats are stats that will increase your damage output, though a lot less so than primary attributes. All secondary stats are weighed directly against your primary stat. For Black Mage, our primary stat is Intelligence. Secondary stats will scale with Intelligence. The more Intelligence you have, the stronger your secondary stats become. One of the unique things about Black Mage is, all secondary stats are beneficial to us and are weighted fairly evenly, and this is mainly due to our unlimited pool of MP. Here are the secondary stats used by BLM:

Spell Speed (SS) - Affects both the casting and recast timers for spells. The higher the value, the shorter the timers. Also affects a spell's damage over time or healing over time potency.

Spell Speed shortens your global cooldown. This is the most important secondary stat for Black Mage. We have such long cast times, and being able to shorten them with spell speed really allows a little more freedom with movement, and makes it easier to keep our timers active.

Every other class in the game is hindered by having too much attack speed. Because the faster they execute their abilities, the faster they run out of TP/MP. Since Black Mage has unlimited MP, you can never have too much Spell Speed.

Critical Hit - Affects the amount of physical and magical damage dealt, as well as HP restored. The higher the value, the higher the frequency with which your hits will be critical/higher the potency of critical hits.

Critical Hit Rate is an amazing stat for Black Mage. Our spells already hit for massive damage, so when our attacks crit, it's a thing of beauty.

Direct Hit Rate (DHR) - Affects the rate at which your physical and magic attacks deal a direct hit, slightly dealing more damage than normal hits. The higher the value, the higher the frequency with which your hits will be direct.

Direct hits do not do as much damage as Critical Hits, but happen more frequently. Because of this, it is a very valuable stat. You can also get a Direct Critical Hit, which is when you Direct Hit and Critical Hit at the same time for massive damage.

Determination (Det) - Affects the amount of damage dealt by both physical and magic attacks, as well as the amount of HP restored by healing spells.

Determination has the lowest stat weight for Black Mage. It is still quite good and does increase our damage, but it is slightly outshined by Spell Speed and Crit.

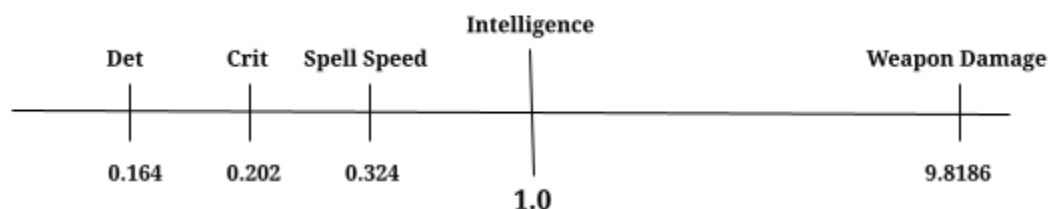
Weapon Damage (WD) - The last stat I want to talk about is weapon damage. This has the absolute biggest effect on your damage output. Weapon damage +1 is equivalent to around 10 points of Intelligence, so your weapon should always be up-to-date with your current level. When choosing where to spend gil and tokens while leveling, your weapon should always be your first priority.

E. Stat Weights

For those new to MMOs, you might be unfamiliar with the term “BiS.” This is an acronym for Best in Slot, which means the best possible gear set that you can wear in current content.

So how do you determine what piece of gear is best in slot? Well, you do that by knowing the stat weights for your class. Stat weights are calculated by algorithms, maths, and some other mumbo jumbo which figure out how much 1 point in a secondary stat is worth compared to your main stat. Stat weights are computed by others much smarter than myself. The Black Mage primary stat is Intelligence, which means it will always be a 1:1 ratio.

The below diagram is for reference use only to demonstrate how to calculate and compare stat weights on gear



So taking a look at the above image, we can see that our main stat is worth 1, and a single Spell Speed is worth 0.324. So this means that 20 Spell Speed is equivalent to 6.48 Intelligence ($20 * 0.324 = 6.48$).

Let's take a look at and compare two pieces of gear:



Valerian Wizard's Robe: ilvl 160

Intelligence - 71

Accuracy - 57

Spell Speed - 40



Sharlayan Philosopher's Coat: ilvl 148

Intelligence - 66

Critical Hit Rate - 36

Spell Speed - 51

Now using our stat weights, let's figure out which chest piece is better:

Valerian Wizard's Robe: $71 \text{ Int} + (40 \text{ SS} * 0.324) = 83.96 \text{ Intelligence}$

Sharlayan Philosopher's Coat: $66 \text{ Int} + (36 \text{ Crit} * 0.202) + (51 \text{ SS} * 0.324) = 89.796 \text{ Intelligence}$

So even though the Valerian Robe is a higher item level and has 5 more Intelligence, the Sharlayan Coat is actually more powerful because of secondaries.

Note: Stat weights can never be concrete. Your stat weights will change depending on your rotation, party composition, movement, what buffs you have active, party buffs, enemy buffs/debuffs, etc. In addition, secondary stat weights will change whenever you gain a point of Intelligence, but stat weights are really meant to give you an average so you can at least get a clear enough picture to see a stat priority and build a BiS.

1. Current Stat Weights as of Patch 4.0

- 1) Weapon Damage = *TBD*
- 2) Intelligence = 1
- 3) Spell Speed = *TBD*
- 4) Critical Hit Rate = *TBD*
- 5) Determination = *TBD*

Dervy is the brains behind the Stat Weights for the FFXIV community. Take a look at his guide and formulas and how he arrived at these numbers. It's a good read. [Dervy Does Theorcrafting](#).

2. Best in Slot as of Patch 4.0

<http://ffxiv.ariyala.com/12SJW>

We don't yet have stat weights for Stormblood, but we do know that Spell Speed is kind for BLM. You want to stack as much SS as possible. Also, the talk amongst the FFXIV community is that Direct Hit is scaling incredibly well right now. So while I cannot confirm this is the current BiS, it's a pretty good starting point. I will update this as necessary.

F. Consumables

The effects on all food and potions are percentage based, having an (X points max) for each stat. For example, an X-Ether "Restores up to 20% of MP (630 points max)." Therefore, using food or potions that are level 60 while you are level 15 is a complete waste of stats and gil, and vice versa. Stick with food and potions that are around your level.



1. Food - Food in FFXIV is a great way to get a little extra boost on Secondary Stats. There are dozens of choices and combinations. You can use food to boost up your crit, determination, direct hit, or spell speed. Also, all battle food comes with a vitality boost, so you'll get a little extra HP. Food can get expensive though, so I recommend saving your best stuff for raiding and progression.

Food isn't really needed doing your daily dungeons and other activities, but every piece of food, regardless of level or stats, comes with a 3% experience boost. So while you are leveling, I highly recommend having food active at all times. You can buy the cheapest food you can find from the Market Board or NPC Vendors, and every little bit of bonus experience helps while leveling.



2. Potions - There are a wide variety of potions in FFXIV. There are potions for recovering HP and MP, antidotes for curing poison, blind, silence, paralysis, etc. There are also offensive potions that can apply those same effects to the enemy. Finally, there are potions which boost our Primary Attributes for a short length of time. Many of these potions will go unused during your playtime in FFXIV, but there are two potions utilized most by Black Mage, and they are: Ethers for MP recovery, and Potions of Intelligence to boost your damage. In each case, there are several tiers for those potions.

Table II.F.3

Levels: 1-14	<u>Ether - Restores up to 35% of MP (120 points max)</u> Potion of Intelligence - Intelligence +20% (Max 15)
Levels: 15-29	<u>Hi-Ether - Restores up to 35% of MP (240 points max)</u> Hi-Potion of Intelligence - Intelligence +20% (Max 34)
Levels: 30-44	<u>Mega-Ether - Restores up to 30% of MP (510 points max)</u> Mega-Potion of Intelligence - Intelligence +20% (Max 61)
Levels: 45-59	<u>X-Ether - Restores up to 25% of MP (790 points max)</u> X-Potion of Intelligence - Intelligence +20% (Max 84)
Level 60	<u>Max-Ether - Restores up to 20% of MP (1700 points max)</u> Draconian Potion of Intelligence - Intelligence +20% (Max 105) Max-Potion of Intelligence - Intelligence +20% (Max 127)

	Supramax-Potion of Intelligence - <i>Intelligence + 20% (Max 154)</i>
Level 70	Infusion of Intelligence - <i>Intelligence + 10% (Max 137) for 30s</i>

Note: All potions are the High-Quality (HQ) version. Therefore, percentages will be reduced if the item is Normal Quality (NQ). The recast time for HQ is 4m30s, and 5m for NQ.

Much like food, potions are mainly used to push harder, current content during raid progression. You'll rarely use potions during dungeon runs and normal day-to-day activities, but they can give your party that little extra boost needed to beat a DPS check on a difficult fight. Of course if you have the Gil and/or ability to craft your own food and potions, feel free to use them as often as you'd like.

III. Abilities

A. Becoming a Black Mage

The Black Mage "Job" is a specialization of the class Thaumaturge. You can unlock the Black Mage "Soul Crystal" by achieving level 30 Thaumaturge, and completing all of your class quests. The Thaumaturge guild is located in Ul'dah - Steps of Nald (7,12). You can begin by speaking with the Guild Receptionist, Yayake.

Anytime you are learning a new class in FFXIV, I highly recommend that you take the time to really study and learn what each ability does as you unlock them. More times than not, when a player is using an ability incorrectly it's not because they want to troll, but because they don't fully understand how it works. Read your tooltips, practice on a training dummy, and experiment in dungeons. So let's go over all of our abilities and how they work.

B. Class Actions



Blizzard - Lv1: Deals ice damage with potency of 180. **Additional Effect:** Grants [Umbral Ice](#) for 13s or removes Astral Fire.

This is your first attack spell. You'll use it as a filler spell later on.



Fire - Lv2: Deals fire damage with potency of 180. **Additional Effect:** Grants Astral Fire for 13s or removes Umbral Ice. **Additional Trait - [Firestarter](#) - Lv42:** 40% chance next Fire III will cost no MP and have no cast time.

This will be your primary attack spell all the way to level 60.



Transpose - Lv4: Swaps all Astral Fire stacks with a single Umbral Ice, or all Umbral Ice stacks with a single Astral Fire. **Cooldown:** 12s.

Your primary use of this ability will be to recover mana by quickly switching from Astral Fire to Umbral Ice. There is another very specific use for this ability, but we'll talk about that later.



Thunder - Lv6: Deals lightning damage with potency of 30. **Additional Effect:** Lightning damage over time with a potency of 40 for 18s. **Additional Trait - Thundercloud - Lv28:** 10% chance after each tick that the next Thunder spell of any grade will add its full damage over time amount to its initial damage, have no cast time, and cost no MP.

Thunder is your only Damage Over Time spell. You want to try and keep this on your target(s) at all times.



Sleep - Lv10: Puts target to sleep for 30s. Cancels auto-attack upon execution.

Best used for crowd control during solo play or in emergencies. There is not much use for this in a party because at higher item levels, enemies can't be slept.



Blizzard II - Lv12: Deals ice damage with a potency of 50 to all nearby enemies. **Additional Effect:** Bind for 8s. **Additional Effect:** Grants Umbral Ice for 13s or removes Astral Fire.

This is your first AoE spell. This spell does not target an enemy however, but rather originates from the caster. So you have to place yourself directly in the center of the action in order to get the full effect of this ability, which can sometimes prove troublesome. So be careful and watch your feet.



Scathe - Lv15: Deals unaspected damage with a potency of 100. **Additional Effect:** 20% chance potency will double.

This ability is an instant cast as opposed to the 2.5s cast time of Fire; which allows you to cast this while moving. This is the first tool you are given which helps manage movement in a fight. It's potency is quite low, so I recommend only using it as a last resort. A general rule of thumb is, if you have to move longer than a single GCD and have no other cooldowns available, go ahead and Scathe. If your movement only requires a quick sidestep, do not waste your GCD on Scathe.



Fire II - Lv18: Deals fire damage with a potency of 80 to target and all enemies near it. **Additional Effect:** Grants Astral Fire for 13s or removes Umbral Ice.

Similar to Fire, this will be your primary AoE attack spell when 3 or more targets are grouped together.



Thunder II - Lv26: Deals lightning damage with potency of 30 to target and all enemies nearby it. **Additional Effect:** Lightning damage over time with a potency of 30 for 12s.

This is an AoE Damage over time spell. You'll use this in place of Thunder when you have multiple enemies grouped together.



Manaward - Lv30: Creates a barrier that nullifies damage totalling up to 30% of maximum HP. **Buff Duration:** 20s. **Cooldown:** 120s.

This is your first and only defensive buff. If you are low on health, you can use this for incoming damage to help you survive. But it can also be used as an offensive buff by using this when targeted by an AoE, allowing you to stand still and continue casting.



Fire III - Lv34: Deals fire damage with a potency of 240. **Additional effect:** Grants full stack of Astral Fire for 13s and removes Umbral Ice.

*One mistake I see quite often from aspiring Black Mages is the misunderstanding and misuse of this spell. This spell costs a lot of mana with a cast time one second longer than Fire. Its primary purpose is to give you all your Astral Fire stacks in one GCD. **Do Not Spam This Ability!!** Use Fire III once to get all of your Astral Fire stacks, then switch to Fire or Fire II to deal damage to your target(s). You will use this for Firestarter procs though.*



Aetherial Manipulation - Lv50: Rush to a target party member's side. Unable to cast if bound. **Cooldown:** 30s.

Here is another movement tool. It will teleport you (sort of) to a party member of your choosing. You can use this to quickly dodge an attack, or stack with your party to soak damage, maximizing uptime on your target.

C. Job Actions



Convert - Lv30: Sacrifices 20% of maximum HP to restore 30% of MP. Cannot be executed when current HP is lower than 20%. **Cooldown:** 180s.

This can be used as an emergency if you make a mistake and are left with no MP, but mostly you'll want to use this as an offensive buff which will allow you to cast more Fires while your other damage buffs are up.



Freeze - Lv35: Covers a designated area in ice, dealing ice damage with a potency of 100 to all enemies in range. **Additional Effect:** Bind for 15s. **Additional Effect:** Grants Umbral Ice for 13s or removes Astral Fire.

This is better than Blizzard II for two reasons. First, it is more potent than Blizzard II. And second, you can cast this at range. Using Blizzard II or Freeze at level Cap though is very situational. The easiest way to explain it is, you'll use it in AoE situations where you must keep Umbral Ice III active when transitioning into the next encounter. I will explain this in more detail in the final section of this guide.



Blizzard III - Lv40: Deals ice damage with a potency of 240. **Additional effect:** Grants full stack of Umbral Ice for 13s and removes Astral Fire.

Has the same effect as Fire III, and this is where BLM will really start to feel intuitive. You can now rotate between Astral Fire and Umbral Ice in one Global Cooldown.



Thunder III - Lv45: Deals lightning damage with potency of 70. **Additional Effect:** Lightning damage over time with a potency of 40 for 24s.

This upgrades your Thunder spell. It lasts 6 seconds longer than Thunder and has a 40 potency increase on its initial hit.



Flare - Lv50: Deals fire damage to a target and enemies near it with a potency of 260 for the first enemy, 15% less for the second, 30% less for the third, 45% less for the fourth, 60% less for the fifth, and 70% less for all remaining enemies. **Additional effect:** Grants Astral Fire III for 13s and removes Umbral Ice.

This ability is a hard hitting AoE but costs 100% of your remaining MP so you will want to use this when your MP is almost gone. After you cast Flare, you have to Transpose immediately after to start recovering MP. The time it takes for you to transpose and then get back into Astral Fire III is extensive, so this ability should not be used on a single target unless you have Convert or an Ether available. It also has a 4s cast time so it works well in conjunction with Swiftcast and Triplecast.



Ley Lines - Lv52: Connects naturally occurring ley lines to create a circle of power which, while standing within it, reduces spell cast time and recast time, and auto-attack delay by 15%. **Buff Duration:** 30s. **Cooldown:** 90s.

This is just a standard offensive buff. Use it whenever it's available.



Sharpcast - Lv54: Ensures the next Scathe, Fire, or Thunder spell cast will, for the first hit, trigger Scathe's additional effect, Firestarter, or Thundercloud respectively. **Buff Duration:** 15s. **Cooldown:** 60s.

*This is another tool that can help you with movement. By casting Sharpcast before a Fire or Thunder spell, it ensures a proc. Also can be used to quickly DoT multiple targets by triggering a Thundercloud proc. **Please don't ever use this with Scathe. The Twelve will frown upon you.***



Enochian - Lv56: Increases magic damage dealt by 5%. Also allows the casting of Blizzard IV and Fire IV. **Additional Trait - Enhanced Enochian - Lv70:** Grants Polyglot if Enochian is maintained for 30s. Can only be executed while under the effect of Astral Fire or Umbral Ice. Effect is canceled if Astral Fire or Umbral Ice end. **Cooldown:** 30s.

When you first unlock Enochian, you won't have access to Blizzard IV or Fire IV right away, so this is just a standard 5% damage buff. Maintain this at all times. The damage increase is 10% at level 70.



Blizzard IV - Lv58: Deals ice damage with a potency of 260. Can only be executed while under the effect of both Enochian and Umbral Ice. **Additional Effect:** Grants 3 Umbral Hearts. **Umbral Heart Bonus:** Nullifies Astral Fire's MP cost increase for Fire spells. **Additional Trait - [Enhanced Umbral Heart](#) - Lv68 :** Reduces MP cost for Flare by one-third and completely removes all Umbral Hearts.

After casting Blizzard III, you'll use this spell to give you 3 Umbral Hearts, which will allow you to cast more Fire Spells during Astral Fire because of the reduced MP cost.



Fire IV - Lv60: Deals fire damage with a potency of 260. Can only be executed while under the effect of both Enochian and Astral Fire.

This spell now becomes your primary attack spell. One thing to keep in mind though is, this spell does not refresh Astral Fire, so you'll need to throw in another Fire spell every 2-3 Fire IVs.



Between the Lines - Lv62: Move instantly to Ley Lines drawn by you. Cannot be executed while bound. **Cooldown:** 3s.

If you have to move out of your Ley Lines for any reason, this ability will teleport you back.



Thunder IV - Lv64: Deals lightning damage with potency of 50 to target and all enemies nearby it. **Additional Effect:** Lightning damage over time with a potency of 30 for 18s.

This upgrades your Thunder II spell. It lasts 6 seconds longer than Thunder II and has a 20 potency increase on its initial hit.



Triplecast - Lv66: The next three spells will require no cast time. **Buff Duration:** 15s. **Cooldown:** 60s.

Great for movement and maintaining uptime.



Foul - Lv70: Deals unaspected damage to a target and enemies near it with a potency of 650 for the first enemy, 10% less for the second, 20% less for the third, 30% less for the fourth, 40% less for the fifth, and 50% less for all remaining enemies. Can only be executed while under the effect of Polyglot. Polyglot effect ends upon use.

This is the mother of all spells. With a massive 650 potency, it doesn't get much better than this. In order to use this spell, you must maintain Enochian for 30s to gain the effect of Polyglot. Use it whenever it's available.

D. Traits

Traits are passive abilities. Once you unlock them, they will add their effects automatically.



Enhanced Intelligence - Lv20: Increases intelligence by 8.



Magick and Mend - Lv20: Increases base action damage and HP restoration by 10% and allows for the stacking of a second Astral Fire or Umbral Ice.



Thundercloud - Lv28: Grants a 10% chance that after each damage over time tick inflicted by Thunder or Thunder III (3% for Thunder II or Thunder IV), the next Thunder, Thunder II, Thunder III, or Thunder IV will add its full damage over time amount to its initial damage, have no cast time, and cost no MP. **Proc Duration:** 12s.



Enhanced Intelligence II - Lv40: Increases intelligence by 16.



Magick and Mend II - Lv40: Increases base action damage and HP restoration by 30% and allows for the stacking of a third Astral Fire or Umbral Ice.



Firestarter - Lv42: Grants a 40% chance that after casting Fire, your next Fire III will require no MP and have no casting time. **Proc Duration:** 12s.



Thunder Mastery - Lv45: Upgrades Thunder to Thunder III.



Enhanced Intelligence III - Lv60: Increases intelligence by 24.



Thunder Mastery II - Lv64: Upgrades Thunder II to Thunder IV.



Enhanced Umbral Heart - Lv68: Reduces MP required to cast Flare by one-third while under the effect of Umbral Heart. Casting Flare completely removes the Umbral Heart Status.



Enhanced Enochian - Lv70: Grants the effect of Polyglot upon maintaining Enochian for 30 seconds. Also improves Enochian's magic damage increase to 10%.

E. Role Actions

Role Actions are a new addition to FFXIV in the Stormblood expansion. You will no longer be required to level additional classes to gain access to useful abilities. Your role as a BLM is defined

as a caster DPS, so you will have access to 10 Caster Role Abilities. You'll be able to select 3 role actions by level 32, a fourth at level 40, and finally a fifth at level 48, for a total of five.



Make sure to select them by importance starting from left to right because if you are level synced in a dungeon, trial, or Palace of the Dead, you will only have access to the role actions up to your synced level. The five you select will be completely up to the player and the type of content you are doing, as well as your party composition. Let's take a look at all 10 Role actions and what they do.



Addle - Lv8: Lowers target's intelligence and mind by 15%. *Buff Duration:* 10s. *Cooldown:* 120s.

This utility can be incredibly beneficial to your party. You can place it on an enemy right before it deals heavy magic damage to your tank and/or party.



Break - Lv12: Deals unsuspected damage with a potency of 50. *Additional Effect:* Heavy +40%. *Buff Duration:* 20s.

This one will be situational and likely not needed in most fights. However if a target's movement speed needs to be slowed for a mechanic, this will definitely come in handy. Although you should have other party members who have similar abilities so I would skip this one.



Drain - Lv16: Deals unsuspected damage with a potency of 80. *Additional Effect:* Absorbs 100% of damage dealt as HP.

Drain will allow you to gain some HP back in a hurry to relieve some pressure on your healers if they have more pressing issues. Great for solo play, but there are much better actions to take in a raid environment so I'd skip this as well.



Diversion - Lv20: Reduces enmity generation. *Buff Duration:* 15s. *Cooldown:* 120s.

This ability makes it easier for your tank to hold hate by reducing the amount of threat you gain. Lucid Dreaming has a similar effect and also an MP Refresh though, so I'd take Lucid over Diversion.



Lucid Dreaming - Lv24: Reduces enmity by half. *Additional Effect:* MP Refresh with a potency of 80. *Buff Duration:* 21s. *Cooldown:* 120s.

Unlike Diversion, this does not reduce the amount of enmity you generate, but cuts your enmity in half. You will continue to gain enmity normally after you use this ability so it is best used once you've already established a decent amount of threat. Using this before your burst would be pointless. This ability also comes with an MP Refresh. This is a far better enmity tool for Black Mage.



Swiftcast - Lv32: Next spell is cast immediately. *Buff Duration:* 10s. *Cooldown:* 60s.

This ability turns your next spell into an instant cast. If you have to move, use Swiftcast + the next ability in your rotation. This should be the first ability you take for Black Mage.



Mana Shift - Lv36: Transfers up to 20% of own MP to target party member. *Cooldown:* 150s.

This is a utility to help your MP using party members. As a Black Mage with unlimited MP, there is no reason not to take this and help your healers and/or Bard out.



Apocatastasis - Lv40: Reduces a party member's magic vulnerability by 20%. *Buff Duration:* 10s. *Cooldown:* 150s.

This is an amazing utility. Cast it on your tank if they are taking heavy magic damage, or if you notice a party member is low on health and AoE damage is incoming, you could throw it on them to help your healers.



Surecast - Lv44: Next spell is cast without interruption. *Additional Effect:* Nullifies Sleep, Stun, knockback, and draw-in effects. *Buff Duration:* 10s. *Cooldown:* 30s.

Surecast is another situational ability. I wouldn't take this in most content. However, if you have an encounter that has a ton of CC effects on you, this could definitely help.



Erase - Lv48: Removes a single damage over time effect from target party member other than self. *Cooldown:* 90s.

Another cool utility that removes a single DoT from a party member. Although, I would skip this in most cases because your healers should be taking care of removing detrimental effects, allowing you to focus on damage output.

As a Black Mage, Swiftcast and Lucid Dreaming are pretty much mandatory. Mana Shift should be next, and I'd look at always taking Addle and Apocatastasis during progression to help mitigate incoming damage to your tank and party. I would look at ignoring Diversion and Erase completely, while plugging in Drain, Surecast, and Break for specific fights that might require these abilities.

IV. Leveling

Now it's time to take all we've learned about what we can do and apply it to the battlefield. On your way to level cap, your rotation will change quite a bit, but the way the class functions will not. The primary mechanic of the Black Mage is to rotate between Astral Fire to deal damage, and Umbral Ice to recover MP; while maintaining your Thunder DoT in between.

A. Thaumaturge - Levels 1-29

During the first 30 levels of Thaumaturge, things will be pretty straightforward and shouldn't be too difficult for you. Your primary attack spell is Fire so you'll want to spend the majority of your time in Astral Fire. **The #1 rule when playing Black Mage is, Always Be Casting!**

1. Astral Fire & Umbral Ice

When you are in a neutral stance, casting a single fire spell will give you one stack of Astral Fire (AF). Casting a single blizzard spell will give you a single stack of Umbral Ice (UI). Astral Fire has a multiplier and each AF stack increases the potency and MP cost of subsequent fire spells. The multiplier for Astral Fire I, II, and III is 1.4, 1.6 and 1.8 respectively. Fire has a base potency of 180, but under the effect of Astral Fire I, the potency becomes 252. After around 5 fire spells or so, you will be extremely low on MP and unable to cast another fire. So you'll use Transpose which will immediately swap your one stack of Astral Fire for one stack of Umbral Ice. Once the Umbral Ice effect is applied, you'll begin regenerating MP on the server's tick. Umbral Ice also has a multiplier but it doesn't affect the potency of Blizzard spells. The multiplier affects how much MP is regenerated each server tick. So the more stacks of Umbral Ice you have, the faster your MP will regen. It doesn't matter how many stacks of Umbral Ice you have, the potency of each Blizzard spell will not change. For now, you'll only be able to get 1 stack in each stance.

Note: While you are in either stance, the multiplier is .7 for any spells of the opposite element. So while in Umbral Ice for example, Fire would have a potency of 126 as opposed to its base of 180.

With one stack of Umbral Ice, it will take 3 ticks for your MP to fill completely, or about 9 seconds. While you are waiting for that, you have a few options; and that all depends on the situation. How many mobs are you fighting and what is the remaining health of each mob? Your Thunder spell has an initial hit potency of 30 plus an additional 40 potency every tick for 18s. As we talked about earlier, that is 6 ticks. So Thunder has a total potency of 270. Blizzard has a potency of 180. So Thunder is better right? Well yes, as long as that mob survives for at least 12s. ($4 \text{ ticks} \times 40 \text{ potency} + 30 \text{ potency} = 190 \text{ potency}$) If the mob dies in less than 12 seconds, the cast would have been better spent on Blizzard. If there are multiple mobs, you can DoT a couple of them keeping that rule in mind. If there is only one, you can cast Thunder first followed by a Blizzard or two. Just keep in mind that as soon as your MP is full, it's time to get back into Astral Fire.

2. Transpose

Transpose has a 12s cooldown, and it will only take roughly 9 seconds for your MP to fill, so Transpose will not be available to switch back into Astral Fire. That is fine. You don't have to wait for it. Casting one Fire will remove Umbral Ice, and casting another will apply your Astral Fire stack. Delaying until Transpose is off cooldown wastes around 3 seconds. If you prefer, you can continue casting blizzard until transpose is off cooldown. Just remember, Always Be Casting!

Just repeat this until all the mobs are dead. Once the battle is over, don't forget to transpose into Umbral Ice so your MP will be full for the next pull.

At level 20, you will learn the trait Magick and Mend, which will give you a second stack of Astral Fire and Umbral Ice; increasing your fire potency to 288 under Astral Fire II. The same rotation and rules still apply here, only I would always follow up Transpose with a Blizzard or Blizzard II before your Thunder spell to give you two stacks of Umbral Ice, which will regenerate your MP slightly faster.

3. Thunder II & Thundercloud Proc

At level 26, you'll have access to Thunder II. This is just an AoE version of your Thunder spell, so you will just use this in place of Thunder whenever multiple enemies are present.

Thundercloud is a trait that becomes available to you at level 28. When Thunder is applied to an enemy, there is a 10% chance that during a tick, it will proc Thundercloud. Thundercloud grants you a free, instant cast thunder spell of your choosing, and takes the entire potency of the DoT and adds that to the initial damage. Thunder, which we just figured has a total potency of 270, would be our initial damage plus continue to tick for an additional 240 potency; totaling 510 potency.

Now that you have Thundercloud, you really need to start thinking about clipping. So for example, you cast Thunder and it procs a TC on the first tick, it's best not to use it right away. At that point your initial Thunder would have only done 70 potency out of its 270 total. Once Thundercloud triggers, you have 12 seconds to use it, so hold on to it as long as possible to make sure your first Thunder is doing maximum damage. The only exception to this is movement. If you have to move and have a TC available, use it.

At level 30, complete your final class quest and unlock Black Mage.

B. Black Mage - Levels 30-55

Once you have obtained and equipped the Black Mage soul crystal, you'll be given a bonus in attributes and have access to job specific skills that will only be available while your soul crystal is equipped. These job skills will be learned after completing job quests. Starting at Level 30, you'll have a job quest available every 5 levels until you hit level 50. After that, you'll have job quests every 2 levels until, with your final job quest being at level 70.

1. Fire III & Blizzard III

At level 34, you will unlock Fire III. Now just because this is a bigger fire spell, doesn't mean it replaces Fire. It's function is to apply all of your Astral Fire stacks with one spell, regardless if you are in Umbral Ice or not. It has a 3.5s cast time, but the MP cost of Fire III is greatly reduced while in Umbral Ice, and the same goes for the inverse. It does however cost a ton of MP while in Astral Fire, so this is **NOT** your primary attack spell. You will cast it once to get all of your stacks, then continue using Fire, only using Fire III again for Firestarter procs, which you'll learn at level 42.

Blizzard III is unlocked at level 40 and serves the same function as Fire III. At this point, Transpose is no longer needed during your rotation. Even though Transpose isn't needed to switch between stances anymore, it still has a great use, which we'll get to momentarily.

2. Astral Fire III & Umbral Ice III

At level 40, you will learn the trait Magick and Mend II, which will allow you to stack a third Astral Fire and Umbral Ice; increasing your fire potency to 324 while in Astral Fire III.

Something very important to understand about Astral Fire and Umbral Ice III is, while you are in Umbral Ice III, the 3.5s cast time of Fire III is halved to 1.75, and Blizzard III's cast time is halved when you are in Astral Fire III. This makes switching between your two stances much faster. This is why you don't want to transpose to switch stances. In addition, with 3 stacks of Umbral Ice, it will only take 2 ticks to fill your MP completely. That can take anywhere from 3 to 6 seconds, depending on where you are in relation to the server tick when you cast Blizzard III. Meaning, sometimes you will get a server tick immediately after Blizzard III lands. When this happens, you'll get your second tick 3 seconds later. Other times, Blizzard III will land right after a server tick, which means it will take around 6 seconds to get two ticks. So at level 40, your rotation will look like this:

Cast Fire III to give you three stacks of Astral Fire > cast Fire/Fire II until low on MP > Cast Blizzard III to put you right into Umbral Ice III > Use Thunder and Blizzard spells as fillers while waiting for MP to regenerate > Rinse and repeat until everything is dead.

3. Firestarter

The Firestarter trait is learned at level 42. Firestarter grants you a 40% chance that when your Fire spell lands, it will proc a free, instant cast Fire III. Fire III has a potency of 240, which is 432 under Astral Fire III. **Note: Firestarter will proc when the ability actually hits the target, not when the cast bar is full.** This means that you should have already started your next cast when you get the proc. Once you get the proc, you have 12 seconds to use it, and you won't lose it by casting other spells.

A common mistake I see with Black Mages is to cast fire and then delay their next cast to see if they get a Firestarter proc. This is wrong. Remember your ABCs, Always Be Casting. Their argument is that if you delay your next cast and get a proc, you have the potential to get another proc on the next fire, but the odds of getting 2 firestarters in a row are low and it's an overall dps loss to delay any attack. In FFXIV, there is something referred to as skill queuing. Skill queuing is the action of queuing the next spell before your current GCD ends. When the GCD is about 3/4ths completed, you can queue up the next ability by pressing the action. This allows the next action to be executed immediately after the previous action ends with extremely minimal delay. So if played properly, you should have your next spell queued before a Firestarter registers.

This also goes for interrupting your current cast to use a proc, don't do it! Finish casting your spell and then use the proc afterwards. The only exception to this rule is, if you get targeted by an AoE while you're in the middle of a cast, you can interrupt your spell to move, and cast your Firestarter so you aren't losing any uptime on your target.

*Sometimes you will proc a Firestarter on the last Fire in your rotation. So you will actually get the proc after you've started your Blizzard III cast. Again, don't cancel your cast to use it. Finish your cast, reapply your Thunder DoT, let your MP fill, and use the Firestarter proc to get back into Astral Fire III. **And here is where Transpose comes into great use. By transposing before your Firestarter, you turn a 168 potent Fire III into a potency of 336. And since it's a free instant cast, you avoid the 3.5s cast time.**

4. Thunder III & Flare

Thunder III is learned at level 46 and automatically replaces Thunder on your hotbar. Under Thundercloud, Thunder III has a massive potency of 710. This makes Thundercloud your most potent ability and highest priority as long as it's allowed to tick at least twice.

After you complete your level 50 Job quest, you'll have access to Flare. This is one of your big AoE abilities and will spend all of your remaining MP. This is not to be used on a single target unless you have Convert + Swiftcast available. Flare has a potency of 468 under AF III, but after a transpose and waiting for a server tick, you'll lose some time getting back into AF III. So don't do that unless you have at least two targets. We'll talk about Flare and rotations more in depth in [Section V: Rotations](#).

5. Ley Lines & Sharpcast

At level 52 you'll learn Ley Lines. This will create a floating circle on your position, and as long as you're standing in it, it increases your attack speed by 15%. The buff is stationary, but you can move in and out of it and it will stay there for the duration of the buff. You want to try and use this as soon as it's available because it has a 90s cooldown. This way, every other Ley Lines will sync up with Convert. You also want to try and use it when you know you'll be able to stand still for awhile.

Sharpcast will be the next ability you learn at level 54. It has a 60s cooldown and allows you to manually trigger a proc of your choosing. It lasts for 15s once activated, and will automatically proc your next Thunder, Fire or Scathe. I will go into more detail about Sharpcast in [Section VI: Managing Cooldowns](#).

C. Black Mage - Levels 56-70

The next three abilities that you will learn on your way to 70 will change the way the class plays and feels a bit. These abilities will be incredibly important for maintaining high damage, and you will have to learn to master them. It won't come easy right away, but just have a little patience and keep practicing.

1. Enochian, Blizzard IV & Fire IV

Enochian is learned at level 56, but until you get Blizzard IV and Fire IV, Enochian isn't much of a change. It gives you a 5% damage increase and lasts as long as you keep Astral Fire and Umbral Ice active.

At level 58, you'll learn Blizzard IV which, when used, will grant you 3 Umbral Hearts. It has a potency of 273, a 2.8 second cast time and does not refresh Umbral Ice. The tooltip will read its potency is 260, but since you must be under the effect of Enochian, there is a 5% damage increase. While you have Umbral Hearts, the MP increase for your Fire spells under Astral Fire are removed. You'll have 3 Umbral Hearts, which means your next 3 Fire spells will cost the same MP as if you were not under the effect of Astral Fire.

Note: Your first Fire III that you'll use to get into Astral Fire III will not consume an Umbral Heart.

The next spell you'll learn is Fire IV at level 60. This will replace Fire as your main attack spell. It also has a potency of 260, but under Astral Fire III and Enochian, that potency becomes 491.4. You must be in Astral Fire to use this ability and it does not refresh Astral Fire. So you'll still need to use your other Fire spells to refresh Astral Fire.

2. Level 60 Rotation

Now that you have these 3 abilities, your rotation will look much different. You'll start by casting Blizzard III to gain the effect of Umbral Ice III. You can then activate Enochian to give you your damage buff, as well as access to Blizzard and Fire IV. Cast Blizzard IV to give you 3 Umbral Hearts, then cast Fire III to get into Astral Fire III. You can then cast 3 Fire IVs which will consume your 3 Umbral Hearts. Your Astral Fire will be running out, so next you'll cast Fire to refresh that. Follow up with another 3 Fire IVs and then use a Firestarter if you got it to proc. Now cast Blizzard III to go back into UI3 and then use Thunder to apply your DoT. Now you'll just rinse and repeat until everything is dead. It's really not so bad once you get the hang of it.

You'll learn a few more abilities on your way to 70, but those are pretty self explanatory. **Between the Lines** will teleport you back to your Ley Lines if you have to move out of them, **Thunder IV** will replace Thunder II as your AoE Thunder DoT, and **Triplecast** will help manage movement and increase the ease of weaving oGCDs.

3. Enhanced Enochian & Foul

Enhanced Enochian is a trait that is learned at level 70, and it has 2 major effects. The first is that it increases magic damage to 10% for all spells; bringing Blizzard IV's potency up to 286, and Fire

IV's potency 514.8. The second is that it starts a timer for Polyglot. Polyglot is granted after Enochian has been active for 30s, and when achieved, allows you to cast Foul; one of the most potent spells in the entire game.

Foul is a massive AoE and single target nuke. Its base potency is 650, which is 715 under the 10% Enochian buff.

Because of the effects of Enochian, it is now your top priority to keep this maintained throughout the fight. Everything you do throughout the course of a fight should be dictated by keeping the Enochian buff active. Luckily this is pretty easy because of Transpose. Astral Fire and Umbral Ice both last for 13 seconds, and Transpose has a 12s cooldown. So you can technically keep Enochian active without ever casting a single spell. As long as you Transpose before AF/UI runs out, Polyglot will continue to accrue.

4. Job Gauge



This is the Black Mage Job Gauge. It may seem complicated but it's rather simple to understand.

- 1) The top left shows which stance you are in, and how many stacks you have in that stance. This particular image shows you're in Astral Fire with 3 stacks. There will be ice crystals if you are in Umbral Ice.
- 2) The bottom left shows how many Umbral Hearts you currently have. You'll have 1 blue arrow for each Umbral Heart.
- 3) The timer in the top right shows the time remaining on Astral Fire or Umbral Ice.
- 4) The purple gauge filling up in the bottom right shows how much longer until Polyglot is obtained.
- 5) Finally the purple diamond on the bottom of the gauge shows that I currently have one Foul ready for use. The diamond will not be illuminated if Foul is unavailable.

The gauge will go transparent if you lost the effect of Astral Fire or Umbral Ice.

V. Rotations

The difficulty in playing Black Mage does not come from a long, complex rotation. In fact, it's probably one of the easiest rotations in the game. The difficulty will lie in your ability to effectively use your skillset to minimize movement and maximize uptime.

Rotations aren't always concrete. Every encounter in the game is different, so there can never be a "master rotation" that applies no matter the situation. You must be able to adapt. For that, the most important skill you should learn while playing FFXIV is awareness. Knowing exactly what the enemy is doing, knowing each of your party member's location, keeping an eye on all your cooldowns and effect timers, and knowing what is going on in the environment around you. But there is a blueprint you can follow. For the sake of saving time and energy, we'll only be focusing on the rotations for max level.

A. Opener

Your opener is the most important part of the fight as far as your DPS is concerned. All of your party should be using all of their buffs simultaneously, so it is where you will get your highest burst of the fight. Plus, it's much easier to maintain a high damage output, as opposed to trying to catch up.

A good player will build his opener around the fight. No two fights are the same, so your opener could and will probably vary fight to fight. You'll want to design your opener around the first 30 seconds (roughly) of fight mechanics. Position yourself at the safest spot in the arena before the encounter begins, figure out if you have to move during your opener and use your instant casts to compensate, and add in defensive buffs as necessary. These are all things you need to be thinking of while building your opener. The primary goal in your opener is to deal as much damage as possible in as short a time as possible. Just remember that uptime is key here.

Disclaimer - I have not tested every variation of openers. I will continue working on these throughout the expansion and make adjustments as needed. If there are any discrepancies or something I am missing, please inform me and I will test and update as necessary.

To see potencies of current BLM Openers, check [Black Mage Openers & Data](#).

The current opener with the highest PPS:

Precast Sharpcast > Blizzard III lands at pull > Enochian > Thunder III > Blizzard IV > Thundercloud > *Ley Lines* > Fire III > Triplecast > Fire IV > *Infusion Potion* > Fire IV > *Swiftcast* > Fire IV x 2 > *Convert* > Fire > Fire IV x 4 > (Firestarter if proc'd) > Blizzard III > Foul > Thunder III > Blizzard IV.

B. Single Target Rotation

Once your opener is finished, it's just a matter of maintaining both Enochian and your Thunder Dot.

Fire III > Fire IV x 3 > Fire > Fire IV x 3 > Firestarter (if you got it) > Blizzard III > Blizzard IV > Thunder/Thundercloud proc > Foul > Repeat.

One important thing to note during your single target rotation is that both Blizzard IV and Thunder cost MP, while Foul does not. Thunder III costs the most MP, so make sure to never cast Thunder III last before you re-enter Astral Fire III. If you cast Foul > Thunder III > Fire III for example, there is a very good chance that you won't have full MP entering Astral Fire III. So cast either Blizzard IV or Foul last.

During your rotation, just keep an eye on your Astral Fire/Umbral Ice timer. If you have to move, you may have to cast Fire in place of Fire IV to maintain AF. If you won't be able to refresh AF/UI in time, use Transpose to maintain Enochian so you do not lose Foul.

C. AoE Rotation

Black Mage really specializes in its AoE. With 6+ mobs grouped together, you can pump out upwards of 12,000 potency every 30 seconds.

Your AoE Rotation will all depend on how many enemies you are fighting. Because of the potency of Flare, your goal will be to use as many as possible, while using Foul on cooldown and any Thundercloud procs you get.

For 3 to 6 enemies: **Blizzard III > Enochian > Blizzard IV > Thunder IV > Fire III > Flare x 2 > Transpose > Repeat from Blizzard IV.**

With 7 or more enemies, Flare's diminishing returns start to show, so you'll use Fire II as well: **Blizzard III > Enochian > Blizzard IV > Thunder IV > Fire III > Fire II x 2 > Flare x 2 > Transpose > Repeat from Blizzard IV.**

Use Foul on Cooldown and Thundercloud as they proc.

To see the breakdown for number of enemies, check the AoE Section in the [Spreadsheet](#).

1. Quad Flare

This is the Quad Flare rotation. All 4 Flares will be instant cast and you are able to weave your oGCDs making this incredibly potent. This only works if Max-Ether and Convert are both off cooldown. If you don't have an Ether, you can do three Flares.

Quad Flare: Blizzard III > Enochian > Blizzard IV > Ley Lines > Fire III > Triplecast > Flare > (Swiftcast) > Flare > (Convert) > Flare > (Max Ether) > Flare > Transpose.

Note: Ethers and Potions of Intelligence share a cooldown. So you can't use an Intelligence potion during a Quad Flare.

VI. Managing Cooldowns

This is what will separate the mediocre Black Mages from the great ones. Everyone can learn an order of buttons to push to maximize damage for a 30 second opener. It really all comes down to maintaining that high damage output during the course of a 10+ minute fight. A lot of what goes

into being good at your job isn't just reaction, its preparation. So while the first thing we are going to talk about is important for every single job in FFXIV, it's especially important for Black Mage.

A. Learning the Fight

A Black Mage is most devastating when allowed to stand still. On fights with very little movement, BLM will out dps any other class. But unfortunately there are very few fights in the game which make this possible, which is what brings balance to the class. Therefore, learning a fight is extremely beneficial to us. When you have an idea of what's coming, you can prepare yourself by prepping procs or by positioning yourself in a safe area. For example, you know the boss's next attack could potentially target you with a ground AoE, you can save your Firestarter or Thundercloud proc in case you are targeted, or activate Manaward and take the hit if you know it won't kill you. Ley Lines is a nice attack speed increase, but if you use it during a high movement phase of a fight, it may end up going mostly to waste. Knowing where to position yourself, and when movement is coming will be your greatest strength, and really the only way to learn the fight is to just get in there and practice.

B. Triplecast & Swiftcast

Triplecast and Swiftcast are our most useful cooldowns. They have so many uses and they're both only 60s cooldowns. They can be used to cast spells on the move, to avoid hardcasting longer spells like Flare or Fire III, or used to weave oGCDs like Sharpcast and Ley Lines to gain some uptime. Once you are extremely familiar with a fight, you can use Swiftcast to quickly cast a final spell right before a boss becomes untargetable. These two abilities will be invaluable on mastering Black Mage.

The duration of Swiftcast is 10 seconds, and it does not consume the buff on spells that are already instant cast. So for example, if you cast Swiftcast and then use Thundercloud, Firestarter or Scathe, you will not lose the Swiftcast buff.

Triplecast lasts for 15s and is also not affected by your procs. Swiftcast and Triplecast can also stack. Meaning that if you use both at the same time, using one spell will not consume both Swiftcast and one of your three Triplecasts.

C. Sharpcast

Sharpcast is best used on Thunder because Thundercloud is our most potent Spell. It is especially optimal to use Sharpcast on Thunder if you are fighting multiple enemies that are spread apart. Sharpcast > Thunder III your first target, and then cast your Thundercloud on the second one. If you have Thunder ticking on multiple targets, your chance of getting another Thundercloud doubles. Cycle your TCs around to multiple enemies while trying to avoid as much clipping as possible. Using Sharpcast to proc a Firestarter is only better when you know you'll need it to refresh Astral Fire, but with proper planning, you should be able to avoid this.

Also note that if you currently have a Thundercloud proc available, you can Sharpcast that TC to immediately get another one. This works great for high movement phases or multiple targets.

Sharpcast has the same cooldown as both Triplecast and Swiftcast so you should always be looking to use Sharpcast after you cast an instant spell. This just gives you a little extra PPS from weaving.

D. Convert & Ley Lines

As we talked about earlier, Convert has a 3 minute cooldown, and Ley Lines is a 90 second cooldown. So by using Ley Lines as soon as it's available, assures it will always sync up with Convert. You should always use those two abilities together.

You also want to use your potion during Convert. You have to keep the fight length in mind though. Your potion cooldown is 4 and a half minutes, or 5 minutes if it's Normal Quality. So let's say the fight is 7 minutes. You know you'll be able to use Convert thrice during the fight (the first being your opener). So you shouldn't use your second potion immediately after it comes off CD. You should delay and save it for your 3rd and final Convert.

Another tip for using Ley Lines is to activate the buff, and then scoot all the way to one edge of the circle. Go as far as you can without leaving the circle. Now if you get targeted by a ground AoE, you should have enough room to move to the opposite edge of your Ley Lines, dodge the AoE, and still remain inside the Ley Lines. This works in most cases, unless the AoE is larger than the Ley Lines.

E. Your Party

This won't always be possible, especially in Duty Finder, but if you are in a static for high end raiding or have any type of communication with your party, let them know what you need. We don't have the same freedom of movement that most others have, and if we are forced to move too much, our damage drops off significantly; which affects everyone. So let them know if you need to stand still in a particular spot and/or opt out of dealing with a mechanic so you can continue dealing damage. As an example, let's say there is a point of the fight where everyone needs to stack together to soak damage. As long as you're in a decent position, you can have everyone run to you for the stack point instead of you running to them. Or maybe there is a mechanic that requires switching debuffs with another party member. It's always beneficial to have the other person run to you.

Another thing is, let your healers know if you are planning on taking any avoidable damage so you can keep your rotation going. Black Mage is pretty much the only job where it's universally accepted to purposely take avoidable damage, while Dragoons on the other hand are universally expected to take avoidable damage. /jab

You should also be coordinating your buffs with the other members in your party. Abilities like: Battle Litany, Trick Attack, Fey Wind, Mage's Ballad, Army's Paeon, Chain Strategem, etc. are all abilities that increase raid DPS. There is also the Astrologian's Balance and Arrow Cards, but those are RNG so you can't really plan for them.

F. Freeze

So I wanted to touch on the Freeze spell. The damage on this spell is quite low compared to your other AoE spells but you can still find a use for it under the right circumstance.

Freeze has slightly higher PPS than Blizzard II so there really isn't a reason you should ever use Blizzard II over Freeze. Now 99% of the time you won't use this ability at all, and you'll just stick to your normal AoE rotation; making sure to land as many Fire IIs, Flares and Fouls as possible. During dungeon runs where you are fighting packs of trash mobs, Your Blizzard AoEs are not needed. The damage is just too insignificant.

However, there are a few situations where Freeze can be beneficial to your DPS. Let's say you're fighting a group of 5-6 enemies. You're using your normal AoE rotation ending in Flare > Transpose. After those adds die, you move on to the next phase of the fight, and you can get right back into your single target rotation. Now in order to maximize your dps, you want to make sure you're in Umbral Ice III with full MP when the boss becomes targetable again. Well you can accomplish this by using Freeze on that group of 5-6 enemies you were just fighting. This way, you're still doing AoE damage to a pack of mobs, but you are assuring you are in Umbral Ice III when they die. Now this only works if your Flare/Foul doesn't kill them.

So as an example: You cast Fire III > Flare x 2 > Transpose > Foul. The mobs are still alive, but you know they won't be alive long enough to do another AoE rotation. You can then cast Freeze a couple of times on those mobs which will put you into Umbral Ice III. The adds then die and the boss or next set of adds spawn and voilà, you're in UI III with full MP. This assures that you have a halved Fire III cast at low mana cost.

G. Movement

There are only a few boss encounters in the entire game where you can stand completely still, so mastering movement in a fight will be what really takes your damage to the next level. When learning a fight, spend the first few pulls figuring out exactly when the first potential movement will be, and then build your opener around that. You always want to learn the mechanics of the fight first. Once you start to feel comfortable with mechanics, it's time to start optimizing your damage output. In order to do that, you have to experiment, take risks, and find out exactly what you can get away with, without putting yourself or your party in danger. Figure out exactly what mechanics you can ignore, how much damage certain boss abilities do to you under Manaward, safe zones of the arena, etc.

1. Firestarter & Thundercloud

Your procs are designed so you can cast on the move. If you have to move, any proc you have becomes your #1 priority, regardless of potency or clipping. After becoming extremely comfortable and familiar with a fight, you'll know when certain mechanics are coming and you can either prep a proc with Sharpcast, or hold on to one you get naturally for a few extra seconds. Use your Swiftcast, Triplecast and Aetherial Manipulation if you don't have any procs, and finally if you have no other option, you can use Scathe. As mentioned earlier in the guide, I only recommend using Scathe if you have to move for longer than a single GCD and have no other cooldowns available.

2. Aetherial Manipulation

This is only a 30 second cooldown and should be in a spot on your hotbar where it's always at the ready. This cuts down on movement and allows you to move around the battle arena with ease. It

is off the Global Cooldown so it's best used under a instant spell, but you can't always plan for that. There are many fights in FFXIV that require the group to stack and soak damage. You can continue casting, and use this ability to quickly get to your position. It's also incredibly useful for dodging ground AoEs.

A tip for Aetherial Manipulation is to create a custom [macro](#) which can help you if you want to be able to move in an emergency and don't have to time select a target.

3. Between the Lines

You can also use Ley Lines + Between the Lines strategically. If you know you need to end up at a certain point in the arena and mechanics will force you to move, you can place your Ley Lines, move to bait a mechanic, and then use Between the Lines to teleport to your desired location.

VII. Macros

A macro is a single command that activates a customizable sequence of commands or actions. Macros can be extremely beneficial, and can be used for a number of things like: Informing your party when you are executing a specific ability, or for combining multiple abilities to save space on your hotbar. Macros also have their shortcomings though.

However, skill queuing does not work with macros. So it is my recommendation to never use any macros to perform any sort of rotation. You should have complete control over all of your abilities.

I also don't recommend using Macros to combine cooldowns, which I have seen some Black Mages do. They have different effects, and you need to be able to use the right skill for the situation. If you specifically need the second skill in your macro, than you would have to waste the first one to get to it.

You can create a macro by manually inputting a series of text commands in the "User Macro" submenu (**Menu > System > User Macros**). You can assign a customized name for the macro, and then insert your commands that you would like the macro to perform.

COMMANDS

Command	Shorthand	Effect
/macroicon "Action Name"	none	Changes the Icon of the macro to the specified action's icon and displays its cooldown timer.
/action [action name]	/ac	Uses the specified action
/recast [action name] <recast.action name>	none	Displays the time remaining until the specified action can be used again
/mark [sign]	/mk	Marks the selected target with the specified sign
/focustarget	none	Sets the selected target as your focus target
/wait [time] <wait.time>	none	A command for adjusting the wait between commands
/party [message]	/p	Sends a message to all party members

TARGETING

Target	Description
<t>	Selected target
<tt>	Your selected target's target

<me>	Your character
<mo>	Selected target under your mouse cursor
<f>	Selected focus target
<1>	Party member number 1
<2>	Party member number 2
<3>	Party member number 3
<4>	Party member number 4
<5>	Party member number 5
<6>	Party member number 6
<7>	Party member number 7
<8>	Party member number 8

MACRO EXAMPLES

/macroicon "Sleep" /ac "Sleep" <t> /mk ignore1 <t> /p Casting Sleep on <t> Ignore <i>A sleep macro which marks and informs your party which target you are putting to sleep</i>
/macroicon "Addle" /ac "Addle" <t> /p Casting Addle on <t> <i>Informs your party that you are casting Addle to prevent others from using their cooldown</i>
/macroicon "Apocatastasis" /ac "Apocatastasis" <tt> <i>Uses Apocatastasis on your selected target's target which should be your tank.</i>
/macroicon "Aetherial Manipulation" /ac "Aetherial Manipulation" <mo> <i>Uses Aetherial Manipulation to the party member which your mouse cursor is on</i>
/macroicon "Aetherial Manipulation" /ac "Aetherial Manipulation" <t> /ac "Aetherial Manipulation" <2> <i>A macro like this gives you the option of teleporting to your currently selected target, or if you don't have a target selected, you'll teleport to the party member second in your party list. Adjust for your preference</i>
/focustarget <t> <i>Sets your selected target as your focus target. Great for controller play</i>
/macroicon "Convert" /p Convert ready in <recast.Convert> <i>Informs your party the time remaining on Convert before a pull</i>

These are just a few examples of some effective macros. I don't suggest flooding your chat log with everything you are doing, and if you are in a static with voice communication, you won't have much need for party chat macros. But they can sometimes be useful in Duty Finder to let your party members know you are casting something so they don't waste their cooldown as well.

Another tip is, in your Macro menu, Macros #98 and #99 are designated slots that you can assign to L3 and/or R3. So you can make a /sprint Macro for example, and set it to L3 to remove the Sprint action from your hotbar to save space. Plus you get to pretend you're playing an FPS.

Feel free to experiment with macros and find out what works best for you. My only recommendation is to never use macros to execute a rotation. Keep all of your abilities in your complete control so you can execute them exactly when you need them. I personally only use two macros. An Aetherial Manipulation macro, and a Focus Target Macro.

VIII. Hotbars

Since I play on controller, I've had quite a few questions about how I set up my hotbars. Now, of course I'm in no way saying this is the best way or anything like that. You have to do what feels comfortable and natural to you. But if you're looking for some ideas, maybe this will help.

First, I highly recommend using additional cooldown hotbars as seen below. The reason for this is to keep track of all your cooldowns that are on different hotbar sets. In **Character Configuration > Hotbar Settings > Display Tab**, there is a box you can check to "Hide Unassigned slots" so you are only seeing the slots that are filled. You can also uncheck the box "Display hotbar numbers" which could clutter up your interface.

Also, in the same menu under the **Cross Tab**, I choose to have my set selection enabled for only Hotbar 1 and Hotbar 2. So pressing R1 only cycles between those two hotbars at all times. You can customize this however you see fit.



Set 1: Should include your main rotation abilities and any CDs that you will normally use on cooldown.



Expanded Hotbar: With a class like Black Mage, I prefer to only use one expanded hotbar. So L2>R2 and R2>L2 are the same. I don't feel we have enough abilities to warrant using 2, but if you're comfortable with that, then by all means.

For my expanded, I put all of my most used utilities on the left and my most used movement abilities on the right.



WXHB/Double Tap Hotbar: I only enable 4 buttons on this and only use the right side. These abilities are ones that I will use often but are situational. So here I have Addle, Mana Shift, Diversion and Freeze.



Set 2: On my Second Hotbar, I have CDs that I'll only use once or maybe twice a fight. I keep my fire abilities in the same spot just to help with uptime if I need to switch to the Second Hotbar, but for the most part, I never use this bar.

The commonality between all of my hotbars is to keep abilities such as Scathe, Swiftcast, Firestarter, Thundercloud, Aetherial Manipulation, etc. on the face buttons as opposed to the D-pad. This way, I can use all of those abilities while keeping my left thumb on the left analog so I can continue moving comfortably. Whereas, I have abilities on the D-pad where I'd normally be standing still.

So that's just a few tips and maybe it can help if you're struggling to find a place to put your abilities.

IX. Credits & Additional Links

I wanted to create a guide that not only explained the rotations and optimization for max-level Black Mages, but also for new players to BLM and FFXIV alike. And so I would like to thank Aikaal Leyma of Faerie and Sleigh Presty of Diabolos. Credit goes to Dervy for his work on the DPS stat weights. I would also like to thank all the other great contributions by the entire FFXIV community on the FFXIV forums and r/ffxiv subreddit. I couldn't have done this guide without them.

Best in Slot Calculator

<http://ffxiv.ariyala.com/BlackMage>

Black Mage Openers & Data

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1I-e9nCBLUyzCxBVEgLjRkGo-dqfGXoEcnSCscj42HxA/edit?usp=sharing>

Dervy Does Theorycrafting

<https://dervyxiv.wordpress.com/stat-weights/>

Black Mage Sanctuary

<http://forum.square-enix.com/ffxiv/threads/246796-Black-Mage-Sanctuary-A-Guide-to-DPS>

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X. Change Log

I will continue to update this guide through each patch, expansion and any changes to Black Mage. If you have any input, suggestions, comments or concerns, feel free to contact me in game, on the forums or Reddit. My username is Garotte14 and in game name Alayna Lazriel on Balmung. Stop by my twitch or youtube to see any videos if you'd like.

22 Feb 2016: Original Guide

11 Mar 2016: Black Mage Opener Video added

20 Mar 2016: "Hotbar" section added

31 Mar 2016: 3 Minute A8S Dummy Rotation Video added

16 Apr 2016: "Stat Weights" section added

16 Apr 2016: "Piety Melds" section added

21 Apr 2016: "When is it OK to use Thundercloud" section added

24 Jun 2016: Updated Stat Weights for Patch 3.3

09 Sep 2016: Updated Opener Spreadsheet and PPS with increased Spell Speed

19 Sep 2016: Modified Sharpcast Openers added in BLM Opener Spreadsheet.

07 Oct 2016: With changes to Face Target in 3.4, I have removed that section.

31 Oct 2016: Stat weights for Patch 3.4 have been updated.

20 Mar 2017: Updated Black Mage Opener Video to 3.4/3.5

16 Aug 2017: All changes and updates have been made for the Stormblood expansion

23 Aug 2017: Black Mage Openers & Data spreadsheet added