

Magical Tools

Magical tools are used by a Witch to help in focusing the energy flows to accomplish a particular task, and to aid in establishing a magical atmosphere in which the mind will accept the idea that magic works.

It is not necessary to have expensive or flashy items in order to perform successful magic. In the old days Witches traditionally used items found within the home, not something purchased for ritual use. In fact, it is not necessary to have any of the ritual items for magic to work. Remember that everything is optional, but not until you realize it is.

Magical tools can be found almost anywhere – junk shops, flea markets, occult stores, catalogs, etc. Find something that appeals to you. One important tradition is that when purchasing magical tools, one does not haggle over the price. The idea is that if you try to bargain and tell the seller that the item is not worth what they are asking, then your mind also accepts the idea that the tool is somehow unworthy – not something you want with a magical tool.

Incense: Represents the element of Air. It is placed to the east on the altar. You will need either a thurible (sturdy and heat proof) for powdered incense or a holder for stick or cone. Air is generally considered a masculine element. Represented by the wand.

Athame: Black handled knife used to focus the will and to direct energy flows. It is generally made of iron, steel, titanium, bronze, copper, stone, or silver. Beware of obsidian, glass, crystal (these are only used for specific rituals). The athame is never used to cut anything physical; however it may be used ritually, to carve runes into a candle for instance.

Candle: Represents the element of Fire with a red candle in the south (or a tea light in a red glass holder). Fire is a masculine element, and associated with the Sun, and thus can also be represented by a sword or athame (forged in fire).

Chalice: Represents the element of Water. May be made of any material. May be filled with water, wine, or other appropriate beverage. It is a feminine element and associated with the Moon.

Traditional choices for beverages include:

Red wine for God- ruled celebrations (Samhain)

White wine or fruit wine for Goddess- ruled celebrations (Brighid)

Ale – Lammas

Mead – Summer festivals

Cider – Fall rituals

Fruit juices, water – anytime

Pentacle or Bowl: The element of Earth may be represented by a flat plate or piece of wood with a pentacle inscribed on it. Alternatively, a bowl (preferably earthenware) containing salt or earth may be used.

The above represent the usual tools utilized by some Neo-Pagan in performing rituals, and your mileage will vary depending upon your specific traditions. However, there are many other ritual implements which may be used if desired. Some of them include:

Bell: Used for invoking and banishing, and to call attention. A horn is sometimes used instead. Placed in the northeast corner of the altar.

Nails or iron rods: Iron is proof against magic, it blocks, wards, or absorbs negative energy; hematite stone can be used in much the same way. Place two pieces of iron together, touch to ground, separate to form gate. Placed on the northeast corner of the altar.

Boline: White handled, non-magical knife with a single edge. The boline is used for chopping herbs and other ritual uses that require cutting of materials. The boline is placed in the south next to the athame.

Wands: Like the athame, wands are used to channel energy; however, they are more diffuse in that movement than the athame. Wands store the Sun's energy. They can be used to call the Horned God. They are generally made of oak, ash, hazel, or any of the sacred woods. The wand may be decorated with feathers or crystals. It represents the element of air, and is therefore to be found on the east side of the altar.

Staffs: Staffs also represent diffuse energy which may be used for defense. They are generally made of the same woods as wands. The staff can be used to store energy. Energy radiates from a staff. Top may be rounded (phallic symbol) or carved in animal form. May be shod in metal; in fact, this is a good idea. It helps to ground the energy and also to protect the end of the staff from splintering. May be set with feathers or stones.

Sword: The sword represents offensive energy. It focuses power even more strongly than the athame. Generally the sword is reserved for the High Priest. It is a symbol of the Sylvan Lord, the Guardian of the realm of the Dead. The sword should be kept in a sheath which is often decorated with stars, symbols of water or movement. The sword is a magical weapon. Remember, if the sword has tasted blood, it must be fed anytime it is drawn. The sword is placed in the south, generally not on the altar. It is traditional for the hilt to point to the east.

Oils: May be used for many purposes – anointing, blessing, consecration. They are used to form alignments or bonding, and for identifications. Oils are considered to be a combination of fire and water and are thus placed in the southwest.

Broom: unites masculine and feminine principles. The handle is male, the bristles are female. Used for cleansing and purifying the ritual space. It may be placed in a doorway as a barrier, jumped over at weddings, or hung up in blocks, it allows only the initiated to enter. Broom making is covered in the Foxfire books. The broom is especially sacred to the Crone. The broom is traditionally placed in the west, leaning against the side of the altar.

Quarter candles: Can be used to mark the boundaries of the circle. The traditional colors are yellow for East, red for South, blue for West and green for North.

Book of Shadows: A Witch's Ritual book. The Book of Shadows is used to record spells, chants, herb work, or any other ritual items which the Witch wants to keep a record of.