
ONYXIA STRATGEY GUIDE

Originally from <http://pacifistguild.org/onyxia/>.

Onyxia has three unique phases of attack, designated phase 1, phase 2 and phase 3.

PHASE ONE

Phase One Special Attacks

Fire Breath: Cone shaped fire that hits everything in front of her for 3000-4000 damage. Solution: Always keep her pointed north, away from the groups on the sides.

Knock back: AE knock back that throws you really far, likely well into the eggs if your back is to them. Solution: Correctly position yourselves at her sides as far away as possible while still being in melee range, keep your back away from the eggs.

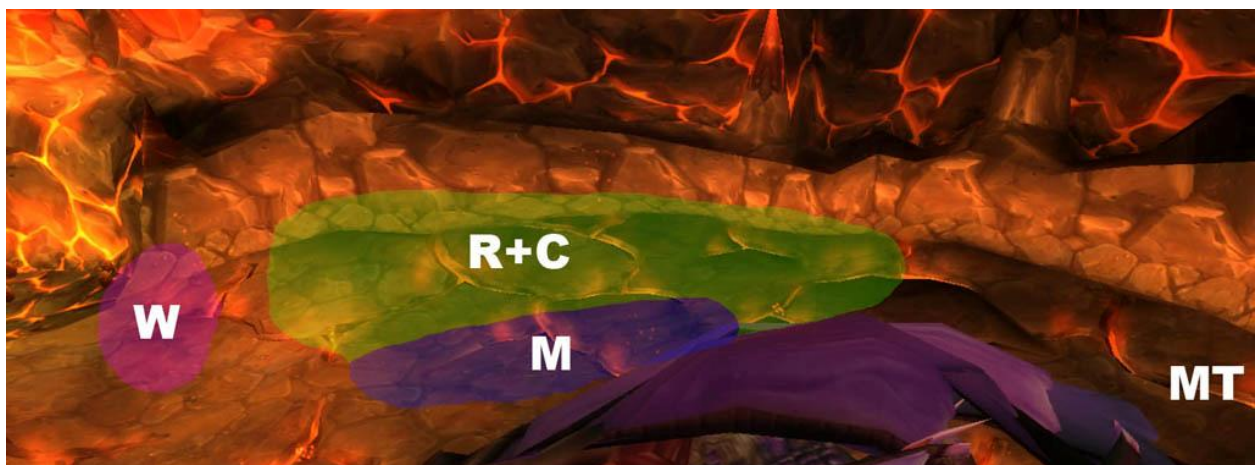
Tail Whip: Cone shaped 2-3 second stun that hits everyone behind her and does 200-300 damage. Solution: Never stand behind an angry dragon.

Phase One Player Positioning

Odd numbered groups run to the NW corner:



West side/odd number group positions

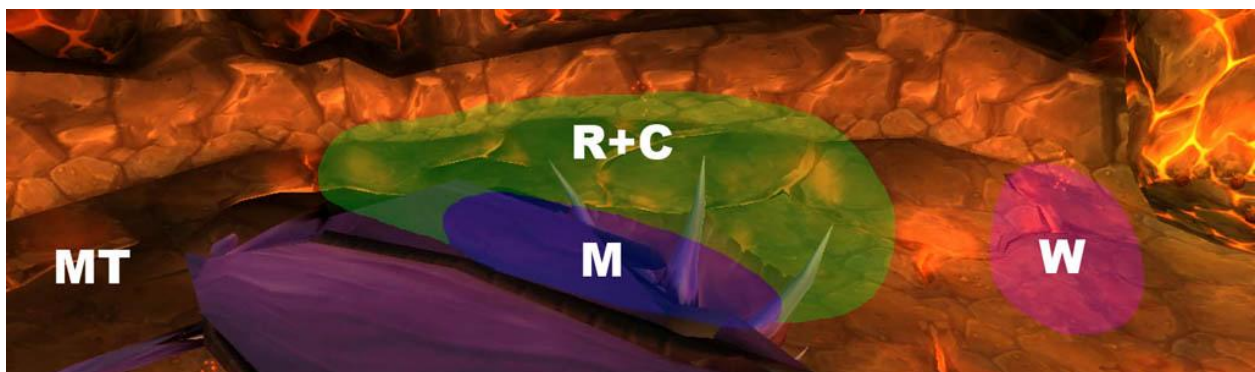


W = Whelp Group
R+C = Ranged and Casters
M = Melee
MT = Main Tank

Even numbered groups run to the NE corner



East side/even number group positions



W = Whelp Group
R+C = Ranged and Casters
M = Melee
MT = Main Tank

The south is a death zone.

Phase One Strategy

MT rushes in a good 20-30 feet ahead of everyone to make sure he gets initial agro. No one is to attack Onyxia until the MT is in position and has been in position building agro for at least 60 seconds.

Whelps that are still spawned from the last wipe are pulled off the MT with light AE damage (ie: Consecration) and dealt with quickly. There are usually only a few whelps on each side so this is never a big deal.

There should no whelp spawns what so ever during this phase unless someone gets knocked into the eggs. If there are whelps the whelp groups (group 7 and group 8, one for each side) has the sole duty of taking care of them. You should be able to handle any amount of whelps that come, but any more than about 10 will damage long term survivability significantly. Don't get anywhere near the whelps and you will be fine. Note: the eggs do not require you to stand on top of them before the spawn like UBRS Rookery room, their agro/spawn distance is much larger.

MT slowly moves into position at the north center of the lair. The MT's exact position is very important due to the knock back. He needs to be 10-15' away from the north wall. When positioned correctly the knock back should bounce the MT against the north wall and have him land very close to his original position.

Onyxia should always be facing north.

Once the MT has built 60+ seconds of agro, everyone can attack. Mind your DPS, hunters FD as often as you can, rogues feint when it's up, mages don't over nuke, and so on. If the MT loses agro, she will turn to one of the sides and kill everyone with a Fire Breath.

Kill her slow and steady keeping her on the MT and in position.

At 70% life take a good 30 second break on attacking to let the MT rebuild agro, better safe than sorry. During that break is an okay time to drink a fire absorption potion in preparation for phase 2.

At 65% she will walk from the north to the south and take flight. Phase 2 begins.

Phase One Thoughts

Agro management and MT positioning are the most important parts of this phase. This phase is remarkably easy compared to the next two due to its straightforward "MT tank with a heal rotation, everyone else kill slow and steady" strategy. There should be 0 deaths and no whelps alive when phase 2 starts. There shouldn't be any need to drink any potions (except maybe a fire prot.) or use anything with a noticeable cool down during this.

PHASE TWO

Phase Two Special Attacks

Engulfing Flames: She spits fire at random people. The fire hits you for around 3000 damage and people near you for a decent amount of damage too. Solution: Stay spread out to avoid the fire hitting people near you. Use first aid to heal yourself so your healers don't waste mana.

Deep Breath: She will emote "Onyxia begins to take a deep breath" and CQOnyxia will warn you a deep breath is coming in <5 seconds. Huge column of fire shoots out from the spot she is in killing everyone it hits instantly. This attack will completely destroy the run if not dealt with correctly. Here is where the column of fiery death is going from every possible position:



D = The dragon.

===> = Fiery death.

Solution to Deep Breath: If you aren't bunched together and spread nicely apart, deep breath likely won't even happen. She will only do deep breath when everyone is bunched together and she will intelligently target the largest bunch of people. However, you need to be prepared if it's coming, run to the wall, as far as you can go against the wall, away from where the breath is going to go. We have people on Ventrilo giving position updates constantly so we always are ready to move out of the way if a deep breath is coming.

Update to Deep Breath: The Deep Breath attack is a hot topic of discussion and seems to have changed in a recent patch. Some people will claim that positioning has nothing to do with it, or that debuffs and DPS is all that matters. I disagree and it's been my experience that deep breaths only occur when one of two mistakes are being made: 10+ people are clustered in one area, or DPS sucks and she is still in the air after about 4-5 minutes. We also started getting more deep breaths when we slacked on debuffs, so I always stress to keep 6+ debuffs on her at all times during this phase. The exact workings of deep breath will probably remain a mystery; different people will have different experiences and make different observations. But the core strategy to avoid it remains the same: spread out and get her on the ground as soon as possible.

Phase Two Positioning

West side positions:



X = Players

East side positions:



X = Players

As you can see, everyone is well spaced apart so when someone is on fire it shouldn't spread to anyone else. Also note you are pretty much where you were during phase 1.

Onyxia will be flying around in the lair so people doing ranged damage need to be keeping in range. Your healers know you are going to be moving around and will stick with you, but try to stay as close to your side as possible. It's okay to do ranged damage from most of the lair as long as you aren't clustered together and get to the wall immediately if she is going to deep breath.

Phase Two Strategy

Right as she goes into the air the first wave of whelps is like 15-20 so everyone needs to help with whelps immediately. After the first wave is dead groups 7 and 8 are still solely focused on keeping them under control. If they get out of control everyone needs to help deal with them and go right back to attacking Onyxia once they're dead. Throughout this phase whelps are almost constantly spawning so the whelp groups (7 and 8) are going to need support.

Everyone moves into position and spreads out. Warriors are now taunting whelps off of casters since they are worthless at ranged. Paladins are AEing whelps and healing. Groups 7/8 are ignoring Onyxia, everyone else is doing ranged damage to her.

Healers are mainly focused on keeping whelp killers alive. Anyone hit by Engulfing Flames should be able to first aid themselves back up.

Ranged damage is the most important thing. The goal is to get her back on the ground as quickly as possible. Do every DoT, curse, damage spell you have. Zap wands. Remember this phase is long and you will need to recast curses and DoTs as they wear off.

At around 45% the MT starts building rage on whelps to pull Onyxia back onto him when she lands. At this point ranged DPS should be unloading, the whelps should be under control, and the MT should have rage.

40% she is going to land any second (we've seen her land as late as 35% but it's almost always at 39-40%), MT moves under Onyxia ready to get agro and everyone stops attacking the second she is on the ground. Phase 3 begins.

Seconds before she lands everyone moves away from the egg entrances to avoid being feared into them, and back to their phase 1 positions up against the wall.

Phase Two Thoughts

The whole key to this phase is positioning. If you are spread out enough Onyxia will only hit a couple people at a time with Engulfing Flames and she will likely never take a deep breath. Even on our best executions of phase 2 she has taken a deep breath. This isn't a big deal at all as long as everyone is ready to react and knows exactly where to go. A hunter is designated on Ventrilo to give us updates on Onyxia's position. The only hard part about this phase is the last 5% of life right before she is coming back to the ground. Then the transition into phase 3 is the hardest part of the entire encounter.

PHASE THREE

Phase Three Special Attacks:

Everything from Phase 1.

Lava Floor: The cracks in the floor shoot lava every 20-30 seconds fearing everyone near the crack which usually sends them running through other lava cracks for a good 1500 damage. The fear isn't dispelable and fear ward doesn't work. Solution: Stay off and away from the cracks. Hug the wall. When you get feared, immediately get back into position. Mithril Insignia works for anti-fear but switching stances to break fear is dubious at best for the MT.

If you are moving forward and backwards rapidly while meleeing you will not run around when you're feared, you'll stand in one place feared. Anyone who can should be rapidly moving forward/backward to avoid being feared through lava.

Phase Three Positioning:



R = Ranged/Casters

M = Melee

The positioning is the same as phase 1 but much tighter due to the exploding lava cracks. Remember, it's now okay to bunch together again so cluster up and stay off the cracks. Melee stay as far away as you can off the cracks. Ranged people hug the wall away from the cracks.

Be careful not to get too far in front of her along the wall. The MT will slowly be moving her north, don't go too far north and get hit by the fire breath. Keep your back away from the eggs incase you are knocked back.

Whelp groups get a break because there are very few whelp spawns as long as no one gets knocked into the eggs just like phase 1. They need to be positioned further away from the eggs so they aren't feared into them. Near the leftmost/rightmost R spots on the above map.

Phase Three Strategy

Big dragon lands, MT is waiting under her with rage, slaps her in the face, and questions her mother's sexual orientation. Nobody else is attacking and the MT has agro.

MT moves to the phase 1 position but mindful of cracks in the floor now.

It's likely that the MT will get feared and lose agro before he's in position. Assuming the MT has enough agro she will chase him around while he's feared. If she doesn't, #2 on her agro list is promised a swift death. If she fire breaths a bunched up side while the MT doesn't have agro the run is over.

The MT is going to lose agro more than once because he gets feared, teleported, knocked around, and downright violated by her special attacks. Stop attacking, get ready to move to avoid fire breaths/eggs, and move back into position for attacks when she is back on the MT pointed north.

Beyond the floor exploding with lava, being feared into the lava, the MT losing agro or changing positioning often, and everyone being very low on survivability, this is exactly like phase 1. Mind your DPS and position. Deal with the whelps. Let the MT tank and keep him alive at all costs. If the MT dies even at 5% the raid is over.

Anything that can do damage should be focused on balancing DPS and surviving. Anyone that can heal should be healing the MT. If your priests say the MT is under control backup healers should be keeping DPS alive.

At around 5% her damage output will go up noticeably (by 25-30% I'd guess) and pretty much everyone in the raid who can heal should be spamming their fastest ones on the MT. Like I said, if the MT dies at any point the run is almost certainly over.

Don't die.

Reduce the dragon's life to 0% calmly and steadily. Keep things under control.

Phase Three Thoughts

Total chaos. Stick to the plan, stay calm, and be at the top of your game. Your MT has a lot of learning to do during this phase. He needs to be ready to deal with fears, agro, positioning, knock back, teleports, everything. The MT makes or breaks this phase.

The most important thing everyone on the raid has to know is not to get overconfident when she is really, really low on HP. We had a run where we had her down to 5% and had the people alive to kill her, but in a blink of an eye here's what happened: 2 extremely experienced people got knocked into the eggs (it happens, this phase is very chaotic), 30 whelps come out and start one shotting ranged DPS dealers along their side, heals from that side are focused on the whelp killers instead of the MT, the MT dies due to lack of healing, Onyxia and her 30 whelp minions go on a killing spree and we wipe at 1% hp. The entire breakdown happened extremely quickly as you can watch in the video below.

Patch Update: This phase is harder, but the plan remains the same. Our MT was complaining about being teleported much more often than he used to, and we have been having problems keeping Onyxia positioned during phase 3 post-patch, but we didn't change anything in the plan and still killed the dragon after 3 tries.

SPECIFIC TECHNIQUES THAT WORK AND DON'T WORK

Heal rotations: Obvious big one. Only really effective during phase 1 in my opinion. We usually have 3 priests in rotation healing to 25-35% mana before swapping out. The MT should be able to literally solo Onyxia down to 60% if he wants to since we can keep him alive forever via rotation. During phase 2 people really aren't taking that much damage. Engulfed people are easily healed with first aid 80% of the time. The other times not much more than a flash heal or, very rarely, PW:S is needed. I, as a priest, usually end phase 2 with nearly full mana. We've got into heal rotations for brief periods during phase 3 but with the fears and the amount of damage the MT is taking (especially when she gets really low on HP) it would be impossible to not keep him alive without everyone healing as fast as they can.

Offtanking: Never really did it. If our MT died the run was over for us. A few times a second warrior successfully obtained agro but he never would last very long. We preferred simply never letting our awesome MT die.

Carefully popping eggs for a more controlled whelp killing: Tried it. Didn't work. They respawn too fast and your whelp teams should be able to deal with the waves as long as no one is knocked into the eggs.

Turning Onyxia south during phase 1 if/when the tank gets knocked far to one side: Tried it in our very very first runs with little success. Once your MT knows how to position himself so the knock back isn't a big deal, Onyxia should never ever face anywhere but north during phase 1 and the majority of phase 3.

Hunter AE frost slowing traps at whelp entrances: I would remind the hunters to lay a trap if they could at the very start of phase 3. One hunter accomplished this once. They simply get into combat too quickly after FD to lay a trap. I guess it would be worthwhile if hunters could consistently get traps down at key moments.

Battle resses: Obviously. Druids would battle res priests usually towards the end of phase 2. Priests would come alive and immediately res someone useful near them before they are put into combat. Sometimes they got someone ressed, sometimes they died instantly upon being battle ressed, sometimes they were put into combat immediately and never got a chance to res.

Double soulstones: Ideally everyone would begin phase 1 with around 7-10 minutes left on their soulstone. That way if they died during phase 2 or phase 3 they could reincarnate and get another stone a few minutes later thanks to cool down. Honestly, we never really used this to it's full potential. And I never even used my first soulstone on the run where we killed her. Reality is, if you do the phases correctly you shouldn't have your raid relying on battle resses or soulstones in the slightest. These people shouldn't be dying in the first place (but it happens).

Blasted Lands Quests: Get your MT +50 STA things from Blasted. Healing a MT with 7500+ hp is pretty damn easy.

Gear discussion: We did our original runs with full fire resist gear, everyone had around 130-150 fire resist on average, with some people up in the 200s. Eventually we ditched all of our fire prot gear in favor of +sta gear (or just your normal equip) and only had paladin auras for fire resist. Now we don't bother with fire resist equip.

Cozy fire is essential at all times in all positions. Fire! Her one weakness! We should have known!

Your chances of success go up exponentially with every ninja and/or pirate at the run. Also, when your MT dies the only way to beat her is by having a paladin pirate start tanking and furiously smash his win button while dancing.

The Warders dropped 1 blue the entire time. It was a nice mace. We killed around 150 Warders.