

Ice Magick

Date: 2007-03-19 **By:** Enodia Black



My first winter in Eastern Washington was bitter. I had lived in California previously, and I didn't know how to function in really cold, snowy, weather. I wandered bewildered through a world blanketed in white. Large, soft, snowflakes fell on my head, and my feet sank deep into the powdery coldness. Snow slid over the tops of my boots, encrusted the hems of my jeans and soaked my feet. It was cold, miserable and hard to get around. But it was also beautiful. The snow caused the land around me to shape shift into a pure, white, sparkling expanse. I got to know a phenomenon called "freezing fog," when the fog moves in despite the low temperatures, and freezes onto everything it touches, coating the branches of trees with crystals of ice. The ice, though slippery and dangerous, had a beauty that caught my breath. It was powerful, and because it is a force of nature, I began to wonder how its power could be used magickally.

Water to Ice

To understand how ice can be used in magick, it is important to first understand the element of water. Water is one of the most important elements to human beings, because we need it to survive; for this reason, water has always been thought of as sacred. Water is in constant motion, always flowing. In fact, water is so linked with the idea of movement that when we see water that is still, we give it the name "stagnant," a name which denotes unnatural lack of change, and even decay. It is not surprising, then, that water magick is concerned with things that tend to remain in a state of flux: emotions, the subconscious and purity.

Water is like our emotional states; it is deep, mysterious and can even be deceptive. We have all heard the phrase "still waters run deep," a phrase that describes the churning turmoil that can exist beneath a placid demeanor. Water can look calm, but below, out the range of our vision, so much can be going on. An entire ecosystem exists beneath the surface, out of our eyesight. When we enter the water, we enter a new world. The surface of the water is very much like the veil that stands between the world of the everyday and the otherworld. The veil is normally difficult to pierce, and only on certain nights (like Samhain) can we cross it easily. But water can help in the process of parting the veil — we can gaze into a bowl of water, and see into the otherworld. So water is not only magickal, it is also an excellent medium for divination.

Water is also the only element that is capable of changing its form. It is linked to all of the other elements. Water covers the earth, and the earth requires water to produce life. Fire can act upon water and cause it to unite with the element of air to evaporate and form a gas. Finally, when water is cooled, it can combine with the element of air to form ice. This capacity for change, and its need to always move, makes water the quintessential shape shifter. As a form that water takes when it shape shifts, ice is ideal for magick. Perhaps because all magick is concerned with change, ice magick is extremely powerful.

Ice Magick

Ice magick is similar to water magick. However with ice magick, the power of the spell is increased because of the act of freezing the water. When water shape shifts from a constantly moving force to a solid, its power is the most potent. Magickally, ice is not associated with all of the same properties as water; it's mainly used for spells that have to do with transformation. Ice can be used magickally to perform any kind of magick that induces a change in the caster's inner state, so it can be used to help reveal personal secrets, remember forgotten memories, dispel depression and release stress.

Magick is an act of transformation, and ice possesses a strong magickal power since it is in the process of changing. Ice spells have two phases, the freezing of the water, and the melting of the ice. I have seen some spells where the caster writes a problem on a piece of paper, immerses the paper in water, and freezes the water to put an end to the problem. Those kinds of spells only use one of the two phases of ice magick. It is important to remember, however, that problems that are frozen must eventually come back; everything that is frozen must melt. I have found that it is more practical, and more powerful, to use both phases, freezing and melting, in spells.

The freezing of the ice begins the spell, because the caster is already thinking of the spell, and planning the ritual, when the ice is frozen. The process begins as the water solidifies, and the power is released during the ritual as the ice melts. For this reason, I find it most useful to freeze "special" ice for spells. Also, most ice trays are made of plastic. Holding the frozen water in non-natural plastic is not as effective; magick is natural, and should ideally involve natural substances. Metal bowls can be used, but the easiest method is to use cardboard coated with wax (so that the cardboard doesn't stick to the ice). Small paper drinking cups that are coated with wax are ideal, as are frozen juice containers that have been emptied of their contents and washed.

Ice Spells

A piece of ice naturally begins to melt when it is left at room temperature, so it works like the burning of a candle in candle magick, changing itself during the spell, thus releasing its energy to the goal at hand. It is extremely powerful to encircle a candle with ice and perform a spell. The ice melts and the candle burns — two elements that work in a cooperative way can produce powerful results. Spells that use fire and ice are wonderful for obtaining balance, since they employ the complimentary elements of fire and water. Also try putting ice in a bathtub while visualizing. This technique is especially suited for spells involving physical transformation.

Herbs and oils can also be used to enhance ice magick. An infusion of one or more herbs can be frozen, or essential oils can be added to the water before freezing. When water is frozen, it combines with the element of air, so herbs and oils that are associated with either element can be used. Herbs that work best are ones that, when growing in the natural world, can endure cold and snow, or require cold weather to germinate. Below is a list of some herbs and oils that work well for ice magick:

	Herb	Oil	Element	Magickal Associations
Aspen	X		Air	Communication

Pine	X	X	Air	Happiness, Exorcism
Rose	X	X	Water	Love, Healing, Psychic Power, Luck
Spearmint	X		Water	Memory
Spikenard	X	X	Water	Happiness
Willow	X		Water	Love, Healing, Divination
Yarrow		X	Water	Psychic Power, Love, Courage, Exorcism

Information in this table was obtained from *Cunningham's Encyclopedia of Magical Herbs* and Fern's *Plants for a Future*.

Ice and Divination

Ice can also be used for divination. Symbolically, the surface of a body of water represents the veil between this world and the otherworld. So, when water is frozen, the door to the otherworld is closed. But as ice melts during a ritual, the door re-opens and we can look inside.

The surface of melting ice is shiny, and like any reflective surface, is well suited for scrying. One way to do this is to sit in a dark room with a yellow candle burning off to the side, so that the light of the flame flickers on the melting ice. Ice scrying requires patience — messages will be revealed slowly, as the ice melts. Ice scrying is especially suited for looking into the past, since the frozen water symbolically represents a frozen moment in time. Looking into past lives is possible, as is looking back and trying to remember a forgotten memory. The melting ice represents the releasing of memories from the subconscious mind.

Final Considerations

Because ice forms in the natural world during the winter months, ice magick is best performed in the spring, when the world begins to thaw. However, it is also possible to perform ice magick at other times during the year, as the need arises. Dawn is best, because symbolically, dawn is to the day as spring is to the year.

Ice magick is very powerful. It is a neutral, natural force that can be used for positive or negative means. It is therefore important, as it is with any spell, that the caster makes sure of his or her intentions before attempting it. Remember how beautiful ice can be, as it sends off prisms of light, but also remember that it is very easy to slip on ice. Ice should not be feared any more than wind, rain and storm. The spell caster should approach ice magick with respect and reverence.

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