SOFTWARE & TECH

# Soulsilver Rock Smash

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## The Essential Guide to Rock Smash in Pokémon HeartGold and SoulSilver

For trainers venturing through the Johto region in **Pokémon SoulSilver**, few moves are as ubiquitous or as practical as Rock Smash. This Fighting-type Hidden Machine (HM) is more than just a battle technique; it is a key tool for exploration, item collection, and progression. While it may not be the strongest move in your arsenal, mastering the use of Rock Smash is essential for anyone looking to fully experience everything the game offers. This comprehensive guide will walk you through everything you need to know about Rock Smash in SoulSilver, from its acquisition and battlefield utility to the secrets it uncovers when used outside of battle.

### What Exactly is Rock Smash?

Rock Smash is a Fighting-type physical attack introduced in Generation II. In Pokémon SoulSilver, it retains its dual-purpose nature. In battle, it delivers a moderate blow with a decent chance of lowering the target's Defense stat. However, its true fame comes from its field effect. When used on the cracked rocks scattered across caves, beaches, and mountainsides, Rock Smash can break them apart, often revealing hidden items or opening new pathways. This makes it an indispensable HM for any serious collector or explorer.

The move itself has a base power of 40 in Generation IV, which later increased in subsequent generations. While it won't sweep through an opponent's team on its own, its 50% chance to lower the target's Defense by one stage makes it a useful support move, especially early in the game when your Pokémon's attack stats are still developing. The PP (Power Points) are plentiful at 15, allowing you to use it freely both in and out of combat without worrying too much about running out.

### Where to Obtain Rock Smash in SoulSilver

Unlike some HMs that require progressing deep into the story, Rock Smash is handed to you relatively early, setting the stage for its importance. You will receive the HM for Rock Smash (HM06) from a lone hiker on Route 36. This route is located just south of the Ruins of Alpha and directly west of Violet City.

To reach the hiker, you will need to have obtained the Zephyr Badge from the Violet City Gym, which is the first gym you should challenge after leaving New Bark Town. Once you have the badge, head south from Violet City through Route 32, passing the Union Cave entrance, and then east onto Route 36. The hiker is standing near a small pond. Speak with him, and he will gladly give you the HM. This early acquisition means you can start using Rock Smash almost immediately after your first gym battle, unlocking secrets from the very beginning of your journey.

### In-Battle Utility: More Than Just a Chip Attack

Many trainers overlook Rock Smash in favor of stronger Fighting-type moves like Brick Break or Focus Punch later in the game. However, in the early to mid-game of SoulSilver, Rock Smash holds significant tactical value. Here is why you should consider keeping it on your team.

Fighting-type moves are super effective against Normal, Ice, Rock, Dark, and Steel types. In the early gyms and routes, you will frequently encounter Normal-types like Pidgey and Rattata, as well as Rock-types like Geodude and Onix. Rock Smash provides a reliable way to deal heavy damage to these threats without needing to switch Pokémon. During your battle with Faulkner, the Flying-type gym leader, Rock Smash is less useful, but it becomes invaluable against Brock in Pewter City (if you choose to backtrack) and later against Jasmine in Olivine City, whose Steel-types are particularly vulnerable to Fighting moves.

The 50% chance to lower the opponent's Defense is what sets Rock Smash apart from other basic attack moves. In a long battle, landing even one Defense drop can significantly swing the momentum in your favor. By lowering the target's Defense, you allow your subsequent physical attacks to hit much harder. This is particularly useful against bulky opponents like Blissey or Snorlax, who might otherwise take several turns to wear down. Pairing Rock Smash with a high-attack stat Pokémon like a Heracross or a Machop can turn tough defensive walls into manageable encounters.

With 15 PP, Rock Smash offers excellent endurance for long stretches of wild Pokémon battles and trainer gauntlets. Early in the game, you may not have access to Ethers or Elixirs to restore PP. Having a move with ample PP ensures you are rarely caught off guard without a usable attack. This makes Rock Smash a reliable "bread and butter" move for your Fighting-type or Normal-type Pokémon during the first few gym challenges.

## The True Purpose: Rock Smash Outside of Battle

While the battle applications are solid, the primary reason to keep Rock Smash on your team throughout your adventure in SoulSilver is its field utility. Cracks in rocks are scattered throughout the region, and breaking them open is the only way to access many valuable items and hidden areas.

Every cracked rock you see in the overworld has the potential to yield an item. These items are predetermined but are often very useful. Common finds include **Poké Balls**, **Potions**, **Revives**, and **Stardust**, which can be sold for a high price. More rare finds include **Heart Scales**, which you can trade to the Move Reminder, and **Evolution Stones** like the Fire Stone or Thunderstone.

Some particularly notable locations for Rock Smash item hunting include:

- Route 45: This area south of Blackthorn City is littered with breakable rocks and is one of the best places to farm for rare items.
- Cliff Cave: Located on Route 47, this cave has numerous breakable rocks that can yield Heart Scales and Rare Candies.
- Dark Cave: Multiple entrances to this cave offer several rocks to smash, providing a steady supply of useful items early in the game.
- Mt. Mortar: This large mountain between Route 42 and Route 43 has many hidden treasures behind its cracked walls.

For trainers looking to maximize their item collection, it is worth revisiting areas after you have the HM. Some rocks respawn their items after a certain period of time, making them a renewable resource.

Beyond items, Rock Smash sometimes clears the way to new areas or provides shortcuts back to earlier routes. In the Union Cave, for example, breaking certain rocks allows you to access a lower floor where a Lapras can be found (only on Fridays). In the Ruins of Alpha, Rock Smash is used to access certain puzzles and chambers. These shortcuts can save you considerable time when backtracking through the region, making your journey more efficient.

## Best Pokémon to Teach Rock Smash in SoulSilver

Choosing which Pokémon to teach Rock Smash requires balancing your team's needs. You generally want this HM on a Pokémon that can both use it effectively in battle and is not your primary attacking powerhouse, so you don't waste a moveslot on a dedicated fighter. Here are some excellent candidates.

Geodude is arguably the best early-game user of Rock Smash. It is a Rock/Ground type that learns Rock Smash naturally and benefits from Same Type Attack Bonus (STAB), making the move hit harder than it would on most other Pokémon. Geodude is also commonly used as an HM slave because few trainers keep it on their final team. It can also learn other HMs like Strength and Rock Climb, making it a versatile utility Pokémon. You can catch a Geodude early in the game on Route 46 or in Dark Cave.

Heracross is a Bug/Fighting type that appears in SoulSilver after you slather honey on trees (using the Headbutt move). It's one of the strongest Pokémon in the game and gets STAB from Rock Smash. While you may want to teach it a better Fighting move later, early on, Rock Smash is a fantastic option for this powerhouse. Its high Attack stat ensures that even with base 40 power, Rock Smash deals respectable damage, and the Defense drop chance is a welcome bonus.

Machop, obtainable via the Pokéwalker or through in-game trades, is another pure Fighting type that benefits from STAB with Rock Smash. It evolves into Machoke and then Machamp (via trading). Machamp's immense Attack stat makes Rock Smash surprisingly effective even late into the game, though you will likely replace it with a stronger move eventually. For the majority of the story, however, Machop is a reliable choice.

Many players prefer to keep their battle Pokémon's movesets optimized for combat. In this case, you can designate a Pokémon solely for using HMs. Staryu is a fantastic choice because it learns a wide range of HMs, including Surf, Waterfall, Whirlpool, and Rock Smash. While it does not get STAB from Rock Smash, its primary role is to be a floating utility tool that you keep in your party for overworld navigation. Krabby serves a similar purpose and can learn Strength, Surf, and Rock Smash, though it is less flexible than Staryu.

## Rock Smash vs. Other Fighting Moves

As you progress through SoulSilver, you will encounter other Fighting-type moves that may tempt you to replace Rock Smash. Understanding the trade-offs is key to building an effective team.

| Move | Base Power | Accuracy | Additional Effect | Best Use Case |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rock Smash | 40 | 100% | 50% chance to lower Defense | Field utility and early-mid game |
| Brick Break | 75 | 100% | Breaks Light Screen/Reflect | Strong attacking move, mid-late game |
| Focus Punch | 150 | 100% | Fails if user takes damage first | High risk, high reward |
| Cross Chop | 100 | 80% | High critical hit ratio | Unreliable but powerful |
| Low Kick | Varies | 100% | Power based on target's weight | Countering heavy Pokémon |

Rock Smash remains relevant even after obtaining stronger moves because you cannot forget HMs without the Move Deleter. If you replace Rock Smash with Brick Break, you may find yourself unable to progress through certain areas that require the HM to break rocks. A common strategy is to keep Rock Smash on a support Pokémon who does not need four offensive moves, allowing your primary attackers to learn the stronger Fighting techniques.

### Rock Smash in the Post-Game

Your journey does not end with the Elite Four. In the post-game of SoulSilver, Rock Smash remains useful. When you travel to the Kanto region, you will find many new areas with breakable rocks. The Seafoam Islands, Cerulean Cave (where Mewtwo resides), and Mt. Silver (home to Red) all have rocks that block your path or hide treasures. If you plan to complete your Pokédex or collect all the TMs and held items in the game, keeping Rock Smash on your team is a wise decision.

Additionally, Rock Smash is used in the Pokéathlon, the sport minigame in SoulSilver. The Power Course often includes events where you must break rocks to score points. While not as critical as the main adventure, having a Pokémon that knows Rock Smash can give you an edge in certain competitions.

### Tips for Using Rock Smash Efficiently

To get the most out of this HM, consider the following strategies:

1. Always carry a Pokémon with Rock Smash. You never know when you will stumble upon a cracked rock. Missing an item because you lacked the HM is frustrating.

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