

The logo for the 'HeartGold & SoulSilver Grinding Guide' features the game titles in a stylized, metallic font. 'HEARTGOLD' is in gold with a red outline, and 'SOULSILVER' is in blue with a silver outline. A small ampersand is between them. To the right of 'HEARTGOLD' is a gold heart-shaped flame, and to the right of 'SOULSILVER' is a silver bird-like creature. Below the titles, the words 'GRINDING GUIDE' are written in a bold, blocky font, with 'GRINDING' in gold and 'GUIDE' in blue.

Pokémon HeartGold and SoulSilver are one of the most highly regarded set of games in the series. Between a second set of Gyms to go through, rematches with all 16 Gym Leaders, a second round of the Elite Four, the battle with Red, and even a port of Platinum's Battle Frontier, HGSS are in no short supply of postgame content - and that's just everything centered around battling.

However, the games are also fairly well-known for one major flaw: **the level curve**. The tougher trainers, and especially anything beyond the Radio Tower Takeover, have *quite* the jump in levels, necessitating the player to grind if they wish to be anywhere facing them on equal footing.

The purpose of this guide is to cover the most efficient places to grind in HeartGold and SoulSilver, useful both for casual play as well as challenge runs such as Nuzlockes. Any listed "Highest Levels" are simply noting the strength of the trainer in question, and are not necessarily a *recommended* level for the player.

One tip before we get started; **if you have any intentions of playing through Kanto, I highly recommend holding onto the TM for Thief once you get it, and do *not* waste it.** It is not strictly necessary but has the potential to save you a good bit of time.

With that out of the way... let's get on the grind.

## Johto



### Falkner - Highest Lv. 13

The first gym leader, and already a bit of a spike. Thankfully you probably don't need too much grinding to get this done, especially if your starter was Cyndaquil and just kind of annihilated Sprout Tower.

There are two main grinding spots; Sprout Tower during the night, and Route 32. Route 32 has the usual assortment of Mareeps and Rattata and such, but also has 30% chance of Lv 6 Bellsprout which grant a sizeable 72 Exp, and 10% chance of Lv 6 Hoppip which are completely non-threatening and give 63 EXP. Sprout Tower meanwhile has Gastly all over the place at night (an 85% encounter rate), giving between 40 to 81 Exp at Lv. 3 and 6 respectively, being very easy to KO, and not being very threatening except to other Gastly. I recommend Sprout Tower over Route 32 unless the Pokemon you're training has only Normal or Fighting moves, simply due to how consistent Gastly is as an encounter. Sprout Tower is also an excellent place to train Togepi once hatched after Falkner is defeated, as it comes with Extrasensory and cannot be touched.



### Bugsy - Highest Lv. 17

Union Cave BF1 is the way to go for Buggy, especially in HeartGold. Geodude, Sandshrew, and Onix all give good chunks of EXP (83, 106, and 123 respectively), and the Zubats aren't completely terrible (54~69). A very good spot for Water and Grass types, or just anybody with solid Special attacks like the Extrasensory Togepi, since everything here has low Special Defense - even Cyndaquil has it good here since none of Sandshrew, Geodude, or Onix know a supereffective move. However, this is a slightly worse spot in SoulSilver, since the 30% chance of Sandshrew is replaced by a major buff to Rattata's encounter rate (48~65).

Pokemon that have a hard time winning here are best off using Route 33; while slower, it's got more easily handled Pokemon for your Normal and Flying types.



### **Whitney - Highest Lv. 19**

Route 35 is the hotspot for this stretch, with the Nidoran granting 101 EXP for females, 102 EXP for males, and Drowzee giving a solid 204. The trainers in the area should be your first priority for EXP, however, as there are quite a few and there isn't a very big level difference between Buggy and Whitney, so unless you have to some new, underleveled teammates, you shouldn't have to grind too much to be prepared for her.

### **Side Note: The Day-Care Couple**

The Day-Care presents an opportunity for passive, minimal-effort leveling; every step you take gets the Pokémon currently in their care 1 EXP, and biking up and down the Goldenrod area is seamless.

This can be an effective way to level up Pokémon that are still fairly weak (below ~Lv 25) and unable to grind on their own. Keep in mind, the price for retrieving a Pokémon goes up by \$100 every level, so this may turn into a bit of a money-sink if you need to do this multiple times.

However, as the game progresses, it becomes an easier investment to simply put the EXP Share on a new team member and let them benefit from the other methods of grinding, until they are capable enough to train on their own. Still, the Day-Care remains a place you can put a couple of low-level Pokémon when you first arrive, and simply leave them there, coming back much later if you wish to use them - the money problem ceases to be an issue once trainer rematches are unlocked anyways.



### **Morty - Highest Lv. 25**

B1F of Burned Tower during the Daytime has a 50% chance at Koffing, granting around 220~260 EXP each and being fairly non-threatening, and 10% chance of Magmar at Lv 16 granting ~380 EXP each. However, be wary of the Rattata/Raticate here, as they are high level enough to carry Pursuit.

For physical attackers that can reliably handle Stantler, Route 37 is also a good choice; 30% chance of Lv 15 Stantler, granting 350 EXP, and Growlithe in HeartGold granting around 190 - the Attack EVs are very useful. SoulSilver players may wish to stick to the Burned Tower, as Vulpix (replacing Growlithe) grants a bit less (around 130), though it may depend on the Pokémon.

It should be noted that Morty is significantly less threatening than his levels would let on, as any Normal-type with a non-attacking move and a way to hit Ghost-types can simply stall his Gengar out of Sucker Punches and then attack it without fear.



### **Chuck, Jasmine, and Pryce - Highest Lv. 31, 35, 34**

As the game opens up quite a bit at this stretch, there are many new locations to consider for grinding - however, among all of them, two stand as the prime locations for this chunk of the game; Route 41, just directly east of Cianwood, and Route 48.

Two factors make Route 41 extremely efficient - first, it's but a few steps away from the Pokémon Center for easy healing. Second, the Pokémon simply have the highest potential EXP yield of any location up to this point. Tentacool, Tentacruel, and in HeartGold, Mantine, all found between Lv 15 and 25. The least amount of EXP, from a Lv 15 Tentacool, is 225 - roughly the same as Koffing from Burned Tower. Meanwhile, Tentacruel gives at minimum a stellar 439, and a maximum of 738 at Lv 25, while Mantine is no slouch, granting a minimum 360.

There is one point of caution - Bubblebeam. At Lv 19 onwards, the Tentacool line has Bubblebeam in its arsenal, and Mantine always has it at these levels. For this reason, Route 48 is a better location for training Pokémon with difficulties dealing with Water types.

Route 48 is accessible once the Secret Potion is delivered to Amphy, as part of the path leading up to the Safari Zone. Tauros has a 20% encounter rate, giving 602 EXP, Fearow 486 EXP at 10%, Gloom 414~452 at 20%, Girafarig 425 at 5%, and during Morning and Day, Farfetch'd giving 335 at 20%, totaling a 76% chance of getting a decent-to-high EXP encounter; the rest, Hoppip, Growlithe (HG only), and Diglett, give a bit over 200. SoulSilver has Vulpix over Growlithe, only granting 189, but this route still remains a solid option even so.



### Clair - Highest Lv. 41

After the Radio Tower Takeover, the game finally, *finally* grants players the ability to freely rebattle anybody with a PokeGear number (except Juggler Irwin). Both Clair and the Elite Four Round 1 are fairly significant level spikes compared to everything before them, but luckily, the options for grinding with the PokeGear are *substantial* - and far more effective than training against Wild Pokémon.

All of the grinding from here onwards revolves around knowing that ***you can adjust your system clock freely to challenge these trainers whenever you want in real-time***; though, changing the clock may interfere with other time-sensitive events, so keep that in mind.

The process is simple; adjust your system clock to within the listed timeframe, go to an area adjacent the one your target is in, and give them a call. Battle them, then leave the area and rinse and repeat - you can battle them as many times as you want as long as it's within that timeframe. If you try calling them in the same area, they'll just tell you to come talk to them and won't enable a rematch (a different floor of the Lighthouse will work for Alfred as it is not considered the same "area").

For more details on what trainers are available when, and how their teams will have changed (and will change as the game progresses), [please reference this section on Serebii.net](#). Below, I've listed several trainers that I consider effective for this point in the game.

#### **Pokemaniac Brent (Route 43, Monday, 4am - 10am)**

Gyarados (32), Nidorino (34), Nidorina(32)

EXP: 1467 + 859 + 802

Good EXP even as middle-stage Nidos, and gives lots of Attack and some HP EVs.

#### **Firebreather Walt (Route 35, Monday, 10am - 8pm)**

Magmar (25), Magmar (32)

EXP: 894 + 1145

A perfect spot for special attackers, two Magmar, around 2000 EXP per battle, 4 SpA EVs. Pretty safe for any Water type in particular.

**Fisherman Wilton (Route 44, Thursday, 4am - 10am)**

Goldeen (32), Goldeen (32), Seaking (36)

EXP: 761 + 761 + 1311

An easier alternative to Brent, and my personal highest recommendation; ~2700 EXP Per battle, and 4 Attack EVs.

The battles below aren't quite the best for EXP, but have other incentives for rematches.

**Gentleman Alfred (Olivine Lighthouse, Tuesday, 10am - 8pm)**

Noctowl (36)

EXP: 1249

A simple, quick battle. While the EXP yield isn't too hot, and it gives only HP EVs, the selling point here is the metric TONS of money to be made with the Amulet Coin (\$14400 per battle), which can buy Vitamins, healing items, some TMs, and even Coins if you're playing on the Japanese version.

**Youngster Ian (Route 34, Saturday, 4am - 10am)**

Mankey (27), Dugtrio (33)

EXP: 427 + 1081

1500 EXP, 1 Atk and 2 Speed EVs is not bad on its own, but the real jackpot here is Berries - after every battle, Youngster Ian will give you a random berry, which can include the ever-valuable Lum Berry and even Leppa Berries. Growing these is an excellent investment and all you need is one to get the train started.

With these options available, the grind for Johto's lategame is considerably less intimidating - still, the time investment is significant regardless. Be prepared to accept Fisherman Wilton as your new best friend for life.



**Elite Four & Champion - Highest Lv. 50**

I have taught you everything there is to know about grinding for lategame Johto; the tactics remain the same for the Elite Four as they were for Clair. The rest is up to you...

# Kanto



## Preparing For The Grind

Arriving in Kanto signals the end of an era; believe it or not, grinding just became *a whole lot easier*.

Our first step is to grab a Lucky Egg or six - this is purely optional, and may be more trouble than it's worth depending on your personal preference, but I feel it's worthwhile enough to make note of.

First, check if you have a Pokémon with Compoundeyes - Butterfree is very common and easily available for this. It is not necessary, but will make things much faster. As well, *make sure you have the Technical Machine for Thief, or a Pokémon with Covet - anything to let you steal items*.

Go solve the Power Plant's problem as normal, and get the Expansion Card from the Lavender Radio Tower. For this strategy, we need to listen to the radio.

Fuschia City is the next destination; make your way there, by whatever means you may decide, and save your game just at the gate heading east. Before anything else - *check your current Swarm*. If you have a Chansey swarm, lucky you - you don't need to do anything else! Just head to Route 13, and start stealing Lucky Eggs. If you aren't that lucky, that's where this next step comes in.

Reboot your system, and adjust the clock to be just before midnight. Open the game quickly, and let the day in-game roll over. Then, do an area transition (enter or exit the gate), and check the radio for your Swarm of the day - repeat this process until you, eventually, get a Chansey swarm. Be warned; *this may take a while*. There is no way to guarantee you will have a Chansey swarm on any given day - it is simply down to luck.

By rigging the Chansey swarm, you now have a whopping 40% encounter rate with Chansey on Route 13. Now, you can head down to start stealing Lucky Eggs - this is why you need Thief, Trick, Covet, or Switcheroo. You may also get lucky with capturing them. The base rate for Chansey to hold a Lucky Egg is 5%, but with a Compoundeyes Pokémon in the lead slot, that chance is boosted to 20% - quite the jump in reliability.



### The Kanto Gym Leaders

With these Lucky Eggs, the world is your oyster - simply traveling around Kanto fighting the trainers should prepare you quite well for the coming Gym Leaders, and it will save you a *massive* amount of time in the grinding yet to come.

The strategy for grinding otherwise, remains fairly unchanged - change your system clock, and rematch-spam trainers appropriate for the 'mons you're trying to train. However, there is the possibility now of something else as well - Gym Leader rematches. We'll cover these below.



### Elite Four Round 2 + Red

Without a doubt, the cruelest level spike in the game. Red's strongest pokemon, his Pikachu, towers at Lv 88, and the rest of his team is no slouch, ranging from Lv 80 to Lv 84. Elite Four Round 2 seems reasonable enough at first, with Will, Koga, Bruno, and Karen all around the mid-60s... not that much stronger than Blue, but a decent challenge, right? The problem is, things take a sharp jump at Lance, whose strongest pokemon towers at Lv 75, **11 levels above** the strongest Pokémon of Karen. Eeesh.

The best place to grind out these levels is simply to grab your Lucky Egg(s), get the phone numbers of the various Gym Leaders, and spam them for rematches. Of the Gym Leaders,



Brock is one of the most efficient due to the EXP yield and easily exploited weakness to Grass, Water, and Ground. However, which Gym Leader you should face largely depends on the Pokémon you're training. I have listed below the total EXP yields for each rematch. Note that, while Blue is the best in terms of raw EXP gained, his team is quite varied and at a very high level (67~72), so will likely be too difficult to fight reliably.

Should the Gym Leaders be too dangerous to be worthwhile for a given Pokémon, the previous strategy of using normal trainer rematches is still fairly sufficient, now stronger due to having all 16 Badges.

**Falkner:** Staraptor (1842) + Noctowl (1805) + Swellow (1805) + Honchkrow (2163) + Pelipper (1686) + Pidgeot (2064)

**Total:** 11,365 EXP per battle

**With Lucky Egg:** 17,046 EXP per battle

**Bugsy:** Shedinja (977) + Vespiquen (2094) + Pinsir (2357) + Heracross (2314) + Yanmega (2206) + Scizor (2400)

**Total:** 12,348 EXP per battle

**With Lucky Egg:** 18,521 EXP per battle

**Whitney:** Bibarel (1342) + Lickilicky (2067) + Clefable (1437) + Girafarig (1660) + Delcatty (1596) + Miltank (2485)

**Total:** 10,587 EXP per battle

**With Lucky Egg:** 15,879 EXP per battle

**Morty:** Drifblim (2273) + Dusknoir (2340) + Sableye (1092) + Mismagius (2163) + Gengar (2320) + Gengar (2320)

**Total:** 12,508 EXP per battle

**With Lucky Egg:** 18,761 EXP per battle

**Chuck:** Medicham (1770) + Hitmonchan (1560) + Hitmonlee (1638) + Breloom (1909) + Primeape (1788) + Poliwrath (2378)

**Total:** 11,043 EXP per battle

**With Lucky Egg:** 16,563 EXP per battle

**Jasmine:** Bronzong (2014) + Skarmory (1872) + Empoleon (2340) + Metagross (2340) + Magnezone (2532) + Steelix (2604)

**Total:** 13,702 EXP per battle

**With Lucky Egg:** 20,552 EXP per battle

**Pryce:** Abomasnow (2568) + Glalie (2083) + Froslax (2083) + Dewgong (2187) + Walrein (2221) + Mamoswine (2661)

**Total:** 13,803 EXP per battle

**With Lucky Egg:** 20,702 EXP per battle

**Clair:** Dragonair (1604) + Gyarados (2568) + Aerodactyl (2250) + Charizard (2328) + Kingdra (2306) + Dragonite (2802)

**Total:** 13,858 EXP per battle

**With Lucky Egg:** 20,787 EXP per battle

**Brock:** 2086 + 2291 + 2388 + 2345 + 2430 + 1411

**Total:** 12,951 EXP per battle

**Lucky Egg:** 3129 + 3436 + 3582 + 3517 + 3645 + 2116

**Total:** 19,425 EXP per battle

**Misty:** Quagsire (1644) + Lapras (2628) + Lanturn (1805) + Floatzel (2059) + Milotic (2738) + Starmie (2661)

**Total:** 13,555 EXP per battle

**With Lucky Egg:** 20,331 EXP per battle

**Lt. Surge:** Magnezone (2351) + Electrode (1671) + Manectric (1872) + Electivire (2388) + Pachirisu (1491) + Raichu (1568)

**Total:** 11,341 EXP per battle

**With Lucky Egg:** 17,010 EXP per battle

**Erika:** Jumpluff (1998) + Victreebel (2292) + Bellossom (2208) + Shiftry (2094) + Roserade (2404) + Tangrowth (2712)

**Total:** 13,708 EXP per battle

**With Lucky Egg:** 20,562 EXP per battle

**Janine:** Ariados (1665) + Toxicroak (2016) + Weezing (2076) + Drapion (2404) + Crobat (2273) + Venomoth (1744)

**Total:** 12,178 EXP per battle

**With Lucky Egg:** 18,266 EXP per battle

**Sabrina:** Espeon (2448) + Mr. Mime (1632) + Jynx (1585) + Wobbuffet (2010) + Gallade (2362) + Alakazam (2391)

**Total:** 12,428 EXP per battle

**With Lucky Egg:** 18,641 EXP per battle

**Blaine:** Torkoal (1863) + Camerupt (2137) + Rapidash (2468) + Magcargo (1914) + Houndoom (2360) + Magmortar (2643)

**Total:** 13,385 EXP per battle

**With Lucky Egg:** 20,076 EXP per battle

**Blue:** Machop (2853) + Arcanine (3103) + Exeggutor (3043) + Rhyperior (3255) +  
Tyranitar (3270) + Pidgeot (2653)

**Total:** 18,177 EXP per battle

**With Lucky Egg:** 27,262 EXP per battle