

# CRASH LANDING

(by Rocco Privetera at [www.mightyfistgames.com](http://www.mightyfistgames.com))

Crash Landing is a solitaire card game using a single deck of traditional poker cards (4 suits, ace to ten plus royal cards and two jokers). A typical game takes a minute to set up and 15-20 minutes to play.

*The setting: an out-of-control spaceship, plummeting down. The only working equipment is a series of single-fire chemical boosters. Unfortunately they are not all available at the start of the game; the player has to "bring them online" in order to use them. And they need to be fired in pairs. And the computer can only control six of them.*

**OBJECT:** the object is to land the lander at a slow enough speed not to destroy it.

**SETUP:** Starting with a standard poker deck, make several piles of cards. The **ALTITUDE** pile consists of all the nines, tens, and face cards (20 cards). Remove a Joker (one that isn't mirror imaged) – this is a **SPEED** indicator. The remaining cards (Ace through eight in each suit) are the remaining pile of cards – these are the **ROCKETS**.

Arrange the cards in the play area: place the **Altitude** pile face down in front of you (the values on these cards won't be used, only the number of cards in the pile). You can place a 2<sup>nd</sup> joker (or the card box) above this to be the "**lander**". Place a Joker on the Lander – this is the **Speed Joker** pointing up. On the left outside the play area, shuffle the **Rocket** deck and place it face down.

**PLAY:** each turn has the following phases: INCREASE DROP SPEED, LOSE ALTITUDE, FIND ROCKET, BURN ROCKETS.

**INCREASE DROP SPEED:** When the Joker is on the Lander, this is a **SPEED** of zero. Every turn the speed of the Lander increases by one **DOWNWARD** (due to gravity). When the speed is zero, you move the speed Joker to the right of the lander, pointing up (which indicates a speed of one). If the speed increases again, you turn the Joker Clockwise 1/8<sup>th</sup>. In this phase, rotate the card 1/8<sup>th</sup> clockwise to show a speed increase of one. There are possible speeds of 1-8 **down** when the joker is on the right of the lander; if the ship is moving up, move the joker to the **left** of the lander (to show "negative numbers").

Every turn, the speed will increase downward by one, from -8 to -1 on the left, then to 0 on the Lander, then from 1 to 8 on the right.

**LOSE ALTITUDE:** Each turn, after adjusting speed, remove a number of altitude cards equal to the current speed. If the lander is going up (due to a left-hand "negative" speed), add the altitude cards back. The maximum altitude is always twenty. An Altitude of "no cards" means the lander landed (see Victory).

**FIND ROCKET:** After adjusting altitude, the player may look for rockets (to bring them online).

To **find** a rocket, the player takes one face-down card from the Rocket pile into his hand of cards. There is a limit of 6 cards in the player's Rocket hand – at this point the player may decide to not keep the rocket he drew, or discard a different rocket. Discarded rockets that are NOT used go back to the bottom of the Rocket Deck. If the player finds and takes all the rocket cards, no more may be drawn (the rocket pile is not reshuffled).

**BURN ROCKETS:** A player may now fire off rockets to slow his descent.

To **burn** a rocket, the player may discard (into a Rocket Discard pile) cards from his **hand**. The only limitation is the cards must be burned in "groups of two" (one for the port side and one for the starboard side of the lander). Each side of the lander must have burned a rocket of the same value (or the lander tips over). This means you have to either burn a matching pair of cards, or burn 3 or more cards, where the total of cards on each side is equal.

*For example, a player may burn two 3's, or a four on the left and two 2's on the right.*

The speed of the lander is altered in whichever direction the player wants by the exact number of the card. *For example: if the current speed is 5 down, and the player "burns" two 3's, the current speed is changed to 2 down. If the current speed is 4 down (with the joker on the right), and the player "burns" two 8's, the current speed is changed to 4 up (with the joker on the left).*

**VICTORY/FAILURE/SCORING:** When the altitude pile is completely depleted and if the lander is moving at a speed of 3 or more, the lander has “landed” too fast and is destroyed... the player has lost. If the player **lands with a speed of 1**, the lander has made a soft landing. Players “score” by tallying up the value of the remaining rocket cards. If the player **lands with a speed of 2**, the lander has barely survived the landing and gets half the score of the remaining cards.

**VARIATIONS:** Once a player has mastered the basic game, several variations to add difficulty may be played. Any of these may be combined together as well for a truly nightmarish game of skill (A “*Re-Entry + Rescue Mission + Race*” for example). They are:

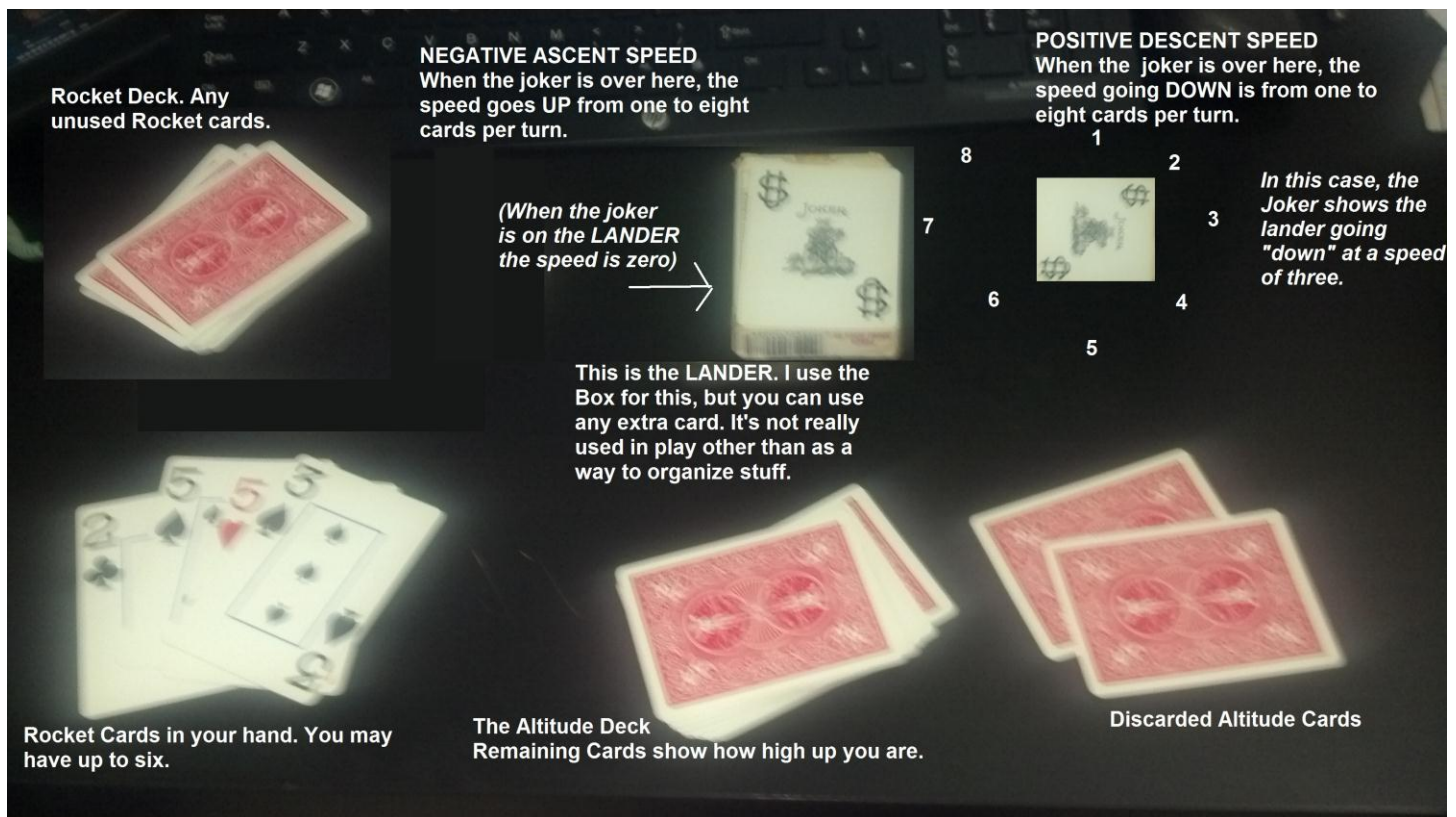
“Re-Entry”. A player draws and discards one Rocket card before play begins. Its value is the starting downward speed (from 1-8).

“Earth Landing”. A player may increase the gravity of the planet (so the speed increases at two per turn, instead of one).

“Rescue Mission”. The player has to land (reduce altitude to zero) and *then get the altitude back up to twenty*. On the return trip, the cards are all worth one less for increasing speed due to the weight of the rescued passengers (so aces do not increase speed, and the 8 card only increases speed by 7). Once the ship hits altitude twenty, end the game and score it.

“Race”. Two players (each with their own deck) setup and play simultaneous phases to see who can land first. In this case, whoever lands first wins.

SETUP EXAMPLE:



**Play Example:**

At the start of the turn, the player has 4 cards (2/3/5/5) and the speed is two. The speed increases to 3. The player then removes 3 cards from the altitude pile. The player draws a new rocket – a 7. The player decides to “burn” his fives, changing his speed to -2 – he moves the speed joker to the left and points it at the imaginary “2”.

On the subsequent turn, the speed “increases” to -1, the speed joker is rotated to the -1 spot, one card is added back to his altitude. The player draws a new card (a 6) and decides not to burn anything.