

Breaking

Mr Mike Horsfall

Breaking

It wouldn't be quite accurate to claim that modern men are either less war like or kinder to their enemies. It is certainly true that modern weapons have radically altered human conflict e.g Tanks have replaced the horse, automatic weaponry the sword and nearly everywhere on our streets, handguns or sawn-off shotguns have replaced the fist.

Breaking has therefore become a method of selftesting whereby the Martial Artist can assess their nature and extent of empty handed fighting without injuring an opponent.

Mental Preparation

The Art of Being a Good Breaker.

Before you even think of attempting to do a break, you must have Mental Preparation and Self Confidence. You should keep your mind completely free from doubt, otherwise you're going to injure yourself badly. So before you try to make a break you have to be sure in your mind you can do it and do it right.

Children

Children from the age of 10 and up are able to learn breaking, but children under 10 years old have fragile bones and are too easily injured. Many children want to try breaking. They should be tried on a focus pad first to make sure they know how to make a fist properly or to make the proper tool for the break they are going to do.

Fear Of Breaking

The two most common fears with respect to breaking are probably the fear of being embarrassed in the event of failure and the fear of incurring injury. The first step in dealing with your fear with regard to breaking, is to acknowledge them as being reasonable if you have never hit anything harder than a speed bag or kick bag in your life and you don't know how to punch properly. Your fears are quite justified in such a case. The thing to do to overcome those fears is to prepare yourself. First by knowing how to punch properly and acquiring the right skills. Second by getting yourself into reasonably good physical condition and finally by learning to strike increasingly harder surfaces, gradually and carefully

Beaking At Demonstrations

Beaking at demonstrations are a very big 'crowd draw' and really looks good. Even a bad break looks good to the crowd. Taekwon-Do has the most braking techniques in all Martial Arts

because not only we do we break on the ground but we have the greatest number of breaking techniques in the air.

I was very interested in breaking from the moment I saw Mr McPhail doing a break at the opening of his first club in Auckland (Manurewa). I really enjoy trying all types of breaks with the hand, like Master Hee 11 Cho, renowned for his impressive breaking skills. While the ability to break boards and bricks or supported on a pedestal is not that uncommon, few people these days are capable of using punches and kicks to break boards thrown in the air.

Such breaks require not only sharp focused blows but also extraordinary eye and hand co-ordination, perfect timing and a high rate of Speed. Hence they are commonly called 'Speed Breaks'.

Breaking Material

For a variety of reasons, wood has been the material of choice for Martial Artist's demonstrating breaking skills. There are some woods you should never try for breaking; commercial paneling, plywood or hardwoods. New Zealand Pine is the wood we use. In most cases it is twelve inches in length by 12 inches in width with a one inch thickness. All measurements are approximate. The one inch thickness is more likely to be about three quarters or five eighths of an inch thick.

Breaking Glass

The breaking of glass is just for entertaining an audience. I think it should be left to reckless warriors of Martial Arts. While there is certainly nothing wrong with demonstrating and promoting the Arts, it would seem that demonstrations in which people slice their hands and elbows to the bone do as much to detract from the Arts as anything else. It is much better to take a few moments to educate the audience, explaining that it requires greater technique to break safer materials e.g. Pinewoods and tiles. My guess is that pound for pound, truck drivers and some of the actual audience could break as much glass and ice with their elbow, hand and forearms as black belts are able. Let us see them try to break boards and tiles in mid-air or on the ground and see who goes to the doctor first.