

## Breaking Bad Tips for a Better Pool Break

If you've ever seen me play, you might think it's ridiculous that I am about to give advice on improving your break. I'll be honest, my break stinks. I've spent my entire career learning the game inside and out and put zero time or effort into learning how to break balls well. In my quest to be a better player, I have decided to dedicate 2013 to improving my break and hopefully make it a strength. Lately, I have been interrogating players that have awesome breaks and they all seem to agree on the same things.

### 1. You Must Practice, Grasshopper

The mighty Shane Van Boening, God of the Break Shot says, "**The break is the most important shot in pool.**" And he is so right. He claims to have practiced his break every day for about 2 to 3 hours, racking them himself and breaking them. Once he practiced it for 10 hours straight. It is no accident that Shane is the best breaker in the biz, and it makes me ashamed of myself that in 15 years of playing pool, I have not really practiced the single most important part of the game.

### 2. Pre-Shot Routine Applies.

Line up the break as you would any other shot. In other words, you must use your pre-shot routine and whatever aiming system you prefer for your initial set up. Your break is only as good as your accuracy of the hit on the first ball.

### 3. Use a Controlled Backswing.

When a lot of power needs to be generated, many people, including myself will take a fast choppy backswing. The break is all about timing, and if you yank your cue back and quickly accelerate forward you will have no time to shift your body weight for added force. By using a slow controlled backswing, you can give yourself time to build up the pressure that you can release on the rack.

### 4. Keep Your Wrist Loose

You will get some extra acceleration when your wrist snaps forward, and hopefully you will also get the pop on the cue ball that great breakers feel is necessary to stick the rack. Ideally, your cue ball will pop up off the one ball and land in the middle of the table.

### 5. Follow Through!

Johnny Archer visualizes himself touching the tip of his cue to the one ball to get himself to follow all the way through. The more forward momentum you create, the more acceleration you will get on your cue ball.

Besides being a physical advantage (the more balls you break in, the closer you are to running out the rack), having a big break is psychological torture for your opponent. They know that

every time you make balls and stick your rock, you control the action, and that alone is worth hours of practice.