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Thread: [How to break or brick an iPhone 7](#)

notmeyou1234 - May 31, 2020, 7:36 am

Hi all,

Sorry to trouble you but I am not looking for a way to gain access to data or remotely access a phone, I am looking for a way someone without any technical skills at all would be able to brick a phone when it is not in their possession.

I have a friend who's young daughter (under 16) is self harming and they are in a very difficult position at the moment.

What they would like to do is completely remove the phone and set up parental controls on the device but in the short term this would cause the family relationship to break down further so all they want is the phone to be totally broken.

They take the phone off her every night and do not allow her to use it and return it in the morning, but would prefer not to give it back already broken, ideally a charging cable that would break the phone once it has been plugged in that bricks it would be ideal. They would then replace the phone with one that has parental controls set up some time later. Basically they want their daughter to think she broke her own phone so would be more likely to accept a replacement with the conditions of setting up parental controls.

While I know this isn't hacking and probably the wrong place to ask for help they feel getting her to stop using the phone would be a step to recovery.

Could you possibly think of anything they could do to break the phone without the daughter thinking it was them?

They are not adverse to spending money buying something to do this for them.

Thanks for any advice you could provide.

D3xus - May 31, 2020, 9:36 am

I'm sorry to hear that you're going through this.

What's the model of the iPhone?

If you want to break the phone yourself (not ideal for what you're going through, but it's one way), you could do this:

You could put the phone into DFU mode, which acts similar to an iPhone's recovery mode, but from all outward appearances, the phone is inoperable. You'd probably only know if a phone was in DFU mode if you put it into DFU mode yourself, or if you connected the phone to a computer. Does the daughter have access to a computer? And do you think the daughter would connect the phone to her computer to debug this?

If you don't think that would happen, you could put the phone into DFU mode.

<https://www.imore.com/how-to-iphone-ipad-dfu-mode>

If the screen is completely off, but if you or someone else plugs it into a computer, iTunes should pop up and say the phone is in recovery mode. That means it's in DFU mode. The only way to get the iPhone out of DFU mode is to hard-turn-off the phone, which isn't super straightforward.

If you need to do it remotely, you could hypothetically jailbreak the phone while it's in your possession, open up SSH access, and then cause it to randomly reboot through SSH. That would give the phone the appearance of being broken, even if it isn't. The hardest part of this is the jailbreak and then getting SSH access over WiFi (and also SSHing while the daughter is on the same WiFi network at the same time.) Once you have SSH access, pretty much anything is possible.

notmeyou1234 - May 31, 2020, 10:11 am

Thanks for the reply D3xus,

The phone is an iPhone 7.

Alas something as technical as this is probably beyond the abilities of the parents.

While I could probably talk them through putting it into DFU mode, it would be given back to the child already broken and that's the scenario they want to avoid.

They don't even care if the phone is no longer working, if they could stick it in a glass of water and it broke later in the day they would be fine with that, as long as the daughter thinks she was the one to break it. I suggested simply ignoring the daughters wishes and immediately putting the parental controls on the phone and blocking all social media (as I understand its instrgram they are most concerned over) but this currently isn't an option.

I was hoping for low tech solutions like hitting it with a hammer, but obviously this would be very obviously broken prior to returning the phone in the morning. I looked into the O.MG cable but this looks like it is more suited for remote access to the PC it is plugged into and not something they could use to brick the phone while it was on charge.

Setting the date to 1970 isn't an option either as I believe the phone is fully patched and up to date with firmware. Also, it would already be broken prior to returning it on the morning.

I suspect nothing exists because why would anyone want to be able to break a phone remotely in the first place? I was just hoping there was something someone might know of that did it as an unintended outcome.

Cheers

D3xus - May 31, 2020, 2:33 pm

If you don't want the phone to be broken when you give it back to her, you could also take out the SIM card and replace it with a dummy SIM card. Or, alternatively, cut off service to the phone (disconnect the phone line, pause the plan, whatever) any time when she's using it. That way, the phone can "break" while it's in her possession, and there's no suspicion that the parents did anything.

If you're in the USA, most carriers can do this. If you or the parents explain what's going on, I also think that they would have additional ideas to make the breakage seem less conspicuous if someone's health is at risk.

This is probably a better bet than messing with the software. You could even reuse the phone, since it's just an issue with activation.

