

The Easy Way to English

Bridge

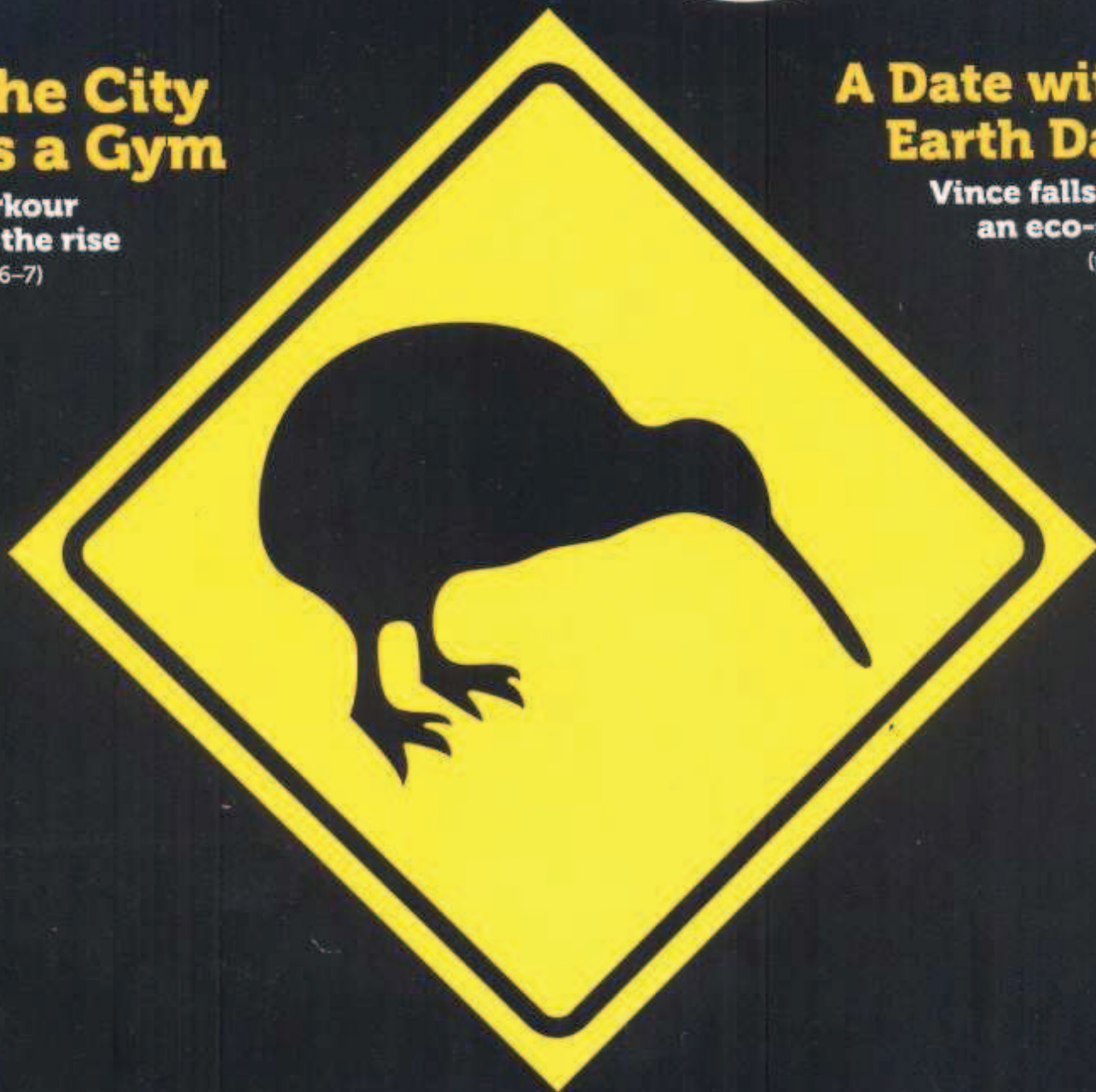
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No Rules Running

The Art of Parkour

A new movement has been spreading around the world. Part physical activity, part philosophy, parkour has made a grand appearance on the world scene and is becoming more and more popular. For better or for worse...

A bit of history

The art of modern parkour started in France in the 1980s in a small Parisian suburb called Lisse. There, a small group of friends got together after school, and practiced different techniques, using whatever was available – railings¹, walls and

buildings, but also natural obstacles² such as trees and rocks. The group of young boys eventually formed the first parkour group – the Yamakasi. Its most prominent member was David Belle, a young man who is now regarded³ as the father of modern parkour.

Parkour versus freerunning

Many people confuse parkour with freerunning. Although these disciplines may seem similar, they are not the same thing.

Parkour is a type of modern philosophy that is at the same time a physical activity. Its basic idea is to **traverse**⁴ all obstacles along a certain route in the most harmonious and efficient⁵ way possible. There is also a great **emphasis**⁶ on the practitioner (called *traceur* for men and *traceuse* for women) being in harmony with society.

Alternatively, we have freerunning, which **evolved**⁷ from parkour and has recently become a sports discipline. In freerunning, the emphasis is more on acrobatics and showmanship. Although it may look very impressive and is certainly extremely difficult to do well, the philosophy so important to parkour is quite often **lacking**⁸.



Right or wrong?

Whenever I do parkour, it is very interesting to note the reactions of people. Although parkourists should not be practicing the art for showing off or being noticed, one cannot help coming into contact with people. Once, I was yelled at⁹ by an elderly lady. She said that I was

The tricks that these guys do are a dream come true.

destroying the railing that I was practicing on. Another older woman overheard this comment and actually stood up for me¹⁰. She said that there was nothing wrong with what I was doing. It was interesting to see the clash¹¹ of these two opinions.

The future of parkour

The future of parkour is an open question. As it is becoming more and more popular, more and more money can be made from it. This is not always positive, because the message of parkour becomes diluted¹². We see it in movies, advertisements and just about everywhere. There is now even branded* equipment specially 'made' for parkour!

This process of commercialization was perhaps inevitable¹³. However, the true traceur or traceuse will always need only two things: a pair of good shoes and an open mind.

Vit Bohal (Canada)

Photo: © Lukas Nazdraczew/Red Bull Photofiles



TAKING THE LEAP INTO FREERUNNING

Freerunning is much more easily 'sold' than the philosophy-laden¹⁴ parkour. Recently, it has played an important role in movie-making. Most notably, Sébastien Foucan (pictured) appeared in the new Bond movie *Casino Royale*. But other movies, such as *District B13* with parkour founder David Belle, make use of the art of freerunning. And one can see why – the tricks that these guys do are a dream come true for a movie choreographer.

VOCABULARY

- ¹ railing ['reɪlɪŋ] – zábradlí
- ² obstacle ['ɒbstəkl(ə)] – překážka
- ³ to regard ['rɪɡɑːd] – považovat
- ⁴ to traverse – překonat
- ⁵ efficient [ɪ'fɪʃ(ə)nt] – účinný, efektivní
- ⁶ emphasis [ɪ'mfəsɪs] – důraz
- ⁷ to evolve [ɪ'vɒlv] – vyvinout se
- ⁸ to lack [læk] – chybět
- ⁹ to yell at [jɛl] – ječet, křičet

¹⁰ to stand up for sb – zastávat se někoho

¹¹ clash [kɫæʃ] – střet

¹² to dilute [daɪ'ljuːt, di-] – oslabit

¹³ inevitable [ɪn'evɪtəb(ə)l] – nevyhnutelný

TAKING THE LEAP INTO FREERUNNING

¹⁴ philosophy-laden [fɪ'lɒsəfi 'leɪd(ə)n] – filozoficky zaměřený



GET GOING

You may ask: "How do I start? What should I do?" The answer is simple: Go outside and have fun! After all, parkour is about receiving simple pleasure from physical motion. If parkour is being done properly, you should feel the child in you coming to life. Children love to move, and so should we. Here are a few very basic rules to get you started:

Go slow – Your body has to get used to moving properly. You can spend the first few months of training just getting your body fit by swimming, jogging, or exercising in any way you want. Don't immediately start doing the tricks you see on YouTube – you might damage your knees and ankles beyond repair¹⁵.

Be safe – Parkour is not about doing flashy tricks. It's a state of mind that allows the parkourist to deal with situations around him harmoniously and efficiently. Start small, and never, ever do something that puts you in serious danger, no matter who might be watching you. Believe me, getting a severe brain concussion¹⁶ is very unsexy.

Be courteous – A parkourist is not a rebel. While parkouring, you should always be constructive in your dealings with other people. After all, when you do parkour, you are representing a new movement – your reactions today shape the way that it will be seen in the future. So please, be polite.

GET GOING

¹⁵ beyond repair [bɪ'jɒnd rɪ'peɪə] – nenapravitelné

¹⁶ brain concussion [kən'kʌʃ(ə)n] – otřes mozku

GLOSSARY*

If you do something for better or (for) worse, you accept the bad results of the action as well as the good ones.

A brand is a well-known company name or trademark.