



# Basics of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu

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## Our Prime Directive & The Endgame

When it comes to ground fighting, it is important to know our mission, objectives, and end goal to not only understand the art of Brazilian jiu-jitsu, but to fully grasp what we are trying to stop our opponent from doing to us, and what we are ultimately trying to do to them.

Ground fighting can be broken down and compartmentalized in the following way. Our opponent is trying to gain a dominant position on us so they can control us and ultimately submit us in a variety of ways, such as: strikes with hands, elbows, & knees; chokes, and joint locks. Our mission is to stop the aggressor from gaining a dominant position, or to escape one unscathed if they do happen to achieve this on us. Without position, they do not have a submission.

In turn, our prime directive is to gain, and maintain the advantageous position on our attacker so we can launch our own submissions, or...return to our feet quickly and end the fight before they can recover.

Now that we know that, it is important to classify the various positions, escapes, sweeps and submissions we will use to complete our objectives and win the day.

## Categories:

- Base
- Rolling
- Dominant Positions
- Escapes
- Submissions
- Types of Guards

Passing Guard  
Sweeps

## Base

Establishing a good base is imperative in BJJ and one of the first objectives we have once we hit the ground. We do this by keeping our hips close to the ground, grabbing our opponent with specific grips/holds, and maintaining at least 3 points of contact at all times. If we get to our feet while they are still on the ground, the third point of contact is usually our opponent based on the grip/hold we have.

## Rolling

When we engage with an opponent on the ground in class, this is called *rolling*. Rolling is sparring on the ground. A back and forth flow between teammates to test and advance our technical skills. In a contested tournament, or real self-defense situation this is met with full resistance between us and the opponent. In a class setting this is scaled back for learning purposes to help us test our skills without injuring ourselves, or others.

## 4 Primary Positions of Dominance

These are the main positions of advantage in ground fighting. The objective when rolling with an opponent is to achieve one of these dominant positions so we can complete a submission (see below). "Position before submission." Without a strong position, our submissions will be easily countered and we are vulnerable to our opponents will and abilities. We will also be defending against our opponent trying to secure these same positions on us, and if they do, we must know how to escape. The 4 primary positions of dominance are:

- **Mount**

One grappler is on their back with the other sitting on their torso pinning them down. Spines are parallel to one another.

- **Side Mount**

One grappler is on their back or side on the bottom position. The other grappler is on top of them pinning them to the ground in a perpendicular position. Think of a T, or a +.

- **Back Mount**

One grappler is on the other grapplers back. This can be in a face down position, or face up.

- **Guard**

One grappler is on their back while the other is on their knees. There are two main categories for guard - closed guard, and open guard. In closed guard the bottom grappler (on their back), has the top grappler locked inside their legs and is holding them down. There are a variety of open guards that I'll list below, but the overall concept of open guard is fairly simple, any guard where our legs are not locked around the opponent.

## Escapes

As mentioned, if our opponent secures a dominant position on us, we need to know how to escape. The following are the types of escapes you will learn based on position. There are additionally, escapes from submissions that will be learned later after you learn to recognize what each of these submissions are.

- Mount Escape
- Side Control Escape
- Rear Mount Escape
- Guard Breaks

## Submissions

Submissions are ways to end the fight and 'submit' our opponent. These involve various joint locks on the arms, wrists, shoulders, ankles, knees, as well as a variety of chokes. Here are the ground fighting submissions we train in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu:

## Chokes

- Arm Triangle
- Leg Triangle
- Underhook (Darce)

- Ezekiel
- Seal Tightly
- Rear Collar, and Rear Naked (no jacket)
- Guillotine
- Cross Collar
- Anaconda
- Bow and Arrow
- Baseball Bat
- Clock
- Loop
- Peruvian Necktie

## Shoulder Locks

- Keylocks (Americana)
- Hammerlocks (Kimura, Omoplata)

## Elbow Locks

- Straight Arm Lock (armbars, violin)

## Wrist Locks

- Twisting
- Folding/Compressing

## Finger Locks

- Folding

## Knee Locks

- Knee bar

## Ankle Locks

- Twisting
- Folding

# Guards

There are a variety of guards we use in ground fighting and each for its own purpose. Initially we will start with basic - **closed guard**, and **open guard**. Later, more advanced guards will come into play based on our style of movement, strengths, and abilities. The types of open guard you will find include:

- Spider
- De La Riva
- Leg Lasso
- Butterfly
- 50/50
- X
- Mantis
- Half
- Deep Half

# Passing Guard

In order to get to a position of advantage we will often have to advance past our opponent's guard. This is known as passing the guard and there are a variety of ways to do this. Two macro distinctions are standing passes and ground passes. This part of our BJJ game is very personal. After being introduced to different ways to accomplish guard passing, we will find what works best for our body type and abilities and adopt these methods into our skillset.

# Sweeps

Sweeps are what we refer to as flipping our opponent, or toppling them from their **base**. A throw on the ground. There are many ways to sweep, but we will primarily use our opponent's energy and movement against them at an opportune moment to make a sweep work. Once we sweep our opponent it often presents an opportunity for us to secure a dominant position. Here are the common sweeps in BJJ:

- Scissor
- Pendulum
- Elevator
- Waist Chop
- Pincer
- Tripod

- Sickle