

Fox Den Martial Arts Brazilian Jiu-jitsu Curriculum



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Introduction

Unlike many traditional martial arts Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ) is not strictly defined based on lineage, a catalogue of techniques, uniforms, or rules of competition. There is no international governing body charged with developing and regulating BJJ. It is a living entity, indiscernible from those involved in its practice and development. It is our view that BJJ's distinguishing characteristics are that it prioritizes effectiveness over tradition and a positional systems-based approach over any specific set of techniques.

This curriculum is intended to give students a clear understanding of the Fox Den Martial Arts approach to BJJ. By laying out the central concepts and systematic underpinnings of BJJ we hope to provide a road map for your future development. It is our hope that this document will be of use to you over many years of happy training.

FOX DEN MARTIAL ARTS

Terminology

Tori and Uke - The Japanese terms *tori* and *uke* are used in this document to describe training partners and relative positions. The term *tori* refers to the partner who executes a technique while the term *uke* describes the partner who receives a technique. Other terms are defined as they are used.

The Central Concepts of Brazilian Jiu-jitsu

BJJ builds upon the idea of fundamental asymmetries in human anatomy to develop a four step approach to combat that further determines a hierarchy of standard positions.

The Three Fundamental Human Asymmetries

- There are three fundamental human asymmetries that inform the basic principles of BJJ

1) Back to Front (Ventral vs Dorsal)

This is the most obvious human asymmetry. Our eyes and all of our limbs face our front; we have almost no ability to defend ourselves from someone behind us. This means, our priority must be to prevent the *uke* from exposing our back and we must seek to expose the *uke's* back whenever possible.

2) Upper Body vs Lower Body (Superior vs Inferior)

Our legs and hips are vastly more powerful than our arms and shoulders. If you want a visual example of this measure how far you can throw a ball from standing vs from on your knees. In terms of self defence, this means if we can limit the *uke's* use of their lower body muscles then we can drastically limit their athletic ability. In practical terms, this means we must move them to a grounded position (preferably below us either supine or prone).

A less prominent upper-body/lower-body asymmetry is motor control. Our fine motor control is almost entirely limited to our arms (with a significant preference for our dominant arm). This has two outcomes. 1) we should expect to be struck with punches most of the time. 2) After moving the *uke* to a grounded position, we should look to attain control of the head and shoulders.

3) Right vs Left (Dominant vs non-Dominant)

As discussed above we show significant preference for our dominant arm, usually our right. Following from this, in a confrontation you must take special care to defend yourself from blows from the *uke's* dominant side.

Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu as a 4-Step Process

Brazilian Jiu-jitsu takes advantage of the 3 fundamental asymmetries and uses them as the basis for a 4-step approach to combat.

- 1) Put the *uke* on the ground. Once the *uke* is in a grounded position the use of their lower body becomes extremely limited. As a result their ability to generate explosive power is greatly reduced.
- 2) Pass the *uke's* legs. Once we have achieved a pin passed the *uke's* legs, we will further reduce their athletic ability and mitigate the threat of kicks and knees.
- 3) Work through a hierarchy of controls and pins. Certain control positions are preferred over others largely based on their potential to strike the *uke* and not be hit back in return.
- 4) Create the conditions needed to submit the *uke* by isolating a limb or applying a strangle.

BJJ as a Positional System

BJJ defines a grappling encounter on the basis of several fundamental positions. Positions that grant greater control over the *uke* and greater ability to strike and not be hit are given preference over others. This determines a hierarchy of

positions. The fundamental skills of each position have been refined into overlapping positional and submission systems. Each system represents a series of techniques with clear parameters for when each should be used. The result is that our athletes always act with a clear sense of purpose and can actively dictate the course of a fight.

Standing Position	Upper body - <i>Tie-ups where the tori grips the uke's upper body</i>
	Lower body - <i>Tie-ups where the tori grips the uke's lower body</i>
Mat Wrestling	Front headlock - <i>The uke is grounded on all fours and the tori is kneeling or sprawled and grips the uke's upper body from the opposing direction</i>
	Back rides - <i>The uke is grounded on all fours and the tori is kneeling or sprawled and grips the uke's behind their shoulders facing the same direction</i>
Ground Work	Open guard - <i>Any position where the guard player (supine) is using their legs to defend, but does not have them wrapped around the passer (kneeling or standing)</i>
	Half guard - <i>The guard player (supine) has one of the passer's (kneeling) legs wrapped up with their legs</i>
	Closed guard - <i>The guard player has the passer's body wrapped up with their legs</i>
	Side control - <i>The passer has bypassed the legs of the guard player (supine) and has control of their upper body</i>
	Mount - <i>The top-player is straddling the bottom player's (supine) upper body</i>
	Back - <i>Similar to mount, but with chest contact on the uke's back.</i>
	Leg locks - <i>positions used to control the uke by isolating one of their legs, with the goal of applying a submission to their knee or ankle joints</i>

General Positional Hierarchy as a Top-Player

- *Back*
- *Mount*
- *Side control variations*
- *Cross ashi garami*
- *Half guard*
- *Guard variations*

(Positions listed in order of most to least dominant from top to bottom)

- *Cross ashi garami could replace any of the first 3 positions based on the situation and personal preference*

While a top player will aim to advance through the above positions, a bottom player's goal is to attain a top position, often by working backwards through the hierarchy of positions until they can perform a sweep or takedown to attain a top position.

Submissions in BJJ

The ultimate objective in BJJ is to submit the *uke* through application of a joint lock or strangle. This is the logical conclusion of the BJJ positional system and best described by the maxim "*attack their whole body with your whole body*", meaning use position to isolate one of the *uke's* limbs or (their head), then through the application of lever and fulcrum attack their vulnerable portion with the strength of your whole body. This can also be understood as an opposite application of the superior/inferior asymmetry; instead of trying to minimize the *uke's* use of their legs, we will attempt to maximize our ability to engage with our own lower body. In more practical terms, joint locks will always involve control above and below the target joint, while strangles will attempt to temporarily stop the flow of blood to the brain through both common carotid arteries.

Overview of Systems and Key Skills by Fundamental Position

- Flow charts and procedural documents are available for systems marked with *

Standing Position

The goal of standing position is to move into a position of the advantage on the ground. Standing positions may occur in free space or with one person braced against a wall or barrier.

Key Skills of the Standing Position

- *Stance and motion*
- *Gripping*
- *Off-balancing*
- *Transition to the ground*

Key Positions

- *Upper body takedowns*
- *Lower body takedowns*

Systems Taught

- *Double leg**
- *Single leg*
- *High C*
- *Body lock**
- *Body lock defense*
- *Over/under (standing 50:50)*
- *Cage takedowns*

Ground Work

Most of the core innovations of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu take place in groundwork. Groundwork is divided into top and bottom positions.

Key Skills of Top Position

- *Opening closed guard*
- *Passing open guard*
- *Passing half guard*
- *Pins and transitions*
- *Front headlock and backride breakdowns*

Key Skills of Bottom Position

- *Pin escapes*
- *Guard retention*
- *Guard sweeps*
- *Half guard sweeps*
- *Front headlock and backride escapes*

Key Positions

- Open guard
- Half guard
- Closed guard
- Side control
- Mount
- Back
- Leg locks

Systems Taught

- *Guard posture breaks*
- *Half-guard and butterfly guard passing**
- *Open guard passing*
- *Guard retention*
- *Half-guard sweeps**
- *Side control escapes**
- *Top position pinning*
- *Mount attacks*
- *Mount escapes*
- *Back attacks**
- *Back escapes*
- *Armbars**
- *Kimuras (T-Kimura*, Dorsal Kimura*)*
- *Triangles**
- *Leg locks**
- *Mat Single**

Mat Wrestling

The backride and front headlock positions represent key transitions from standing position to grounded positions. Many of the techniques and skills used in these positions are adapted from freestyle-wrestling, though many others are found in both Judo and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu.

Key Skills

- *Front headlock and backride escapes*
- *Front headlock and backride breakdowns*

Key Positions

- *Front headlock*
- *Backride*

Systems Taught

- *Front headlock attacks and breakdowns**
- *Back attacks**
- *Back ride breakdowns**
- *Back ride escapes*
- *Mat single**

Overview of all Systems Taught

- Flow charts and procedural documents are available for systems marked with *
- *Double leg**
- *Single leg*
- *High C*
- *Body lock**
- *Body lock defense*
- *Over/Under (standing 50:50)*
- *Cage takedowns*
- *Front head lock breakdowns and attacks**
- *Front headlock escapes*
- *Triangles*
 - *A**
 - *B**
- *Ashi garami (leg locks)**
- *Half guard and butterfly passing**
- *Half guard**
- *Back attacks**
- *Back ride breakdowns*
 - *Ben Askren seatbelt series**
- *Armbars**
- *Kimuras*
 - *T-Kimura**
 - *Dorsal Kimura**
- *Passing closed guard*
- *Passing open guard*
- *Attacking from closed guard*
- *Attacking from open guard*
- *Guard retention*
- *Side control escapes**
- *Top position pinning*
- *Mount attacks*
- *Mount escapes*
- *Back escapes (including back ride escapes)*

Movements and Other Skills

- *Shots*
- *Entering and finishing leg based takedowns (standing and on the mat)*
- *Entering and finishing upper body takedowns*
- *Breakfalls*
- *Sprawl*
- *Pummelling (for leg and arm positions, standing and grounded)*
- *Shrimping and hip escapes*
- *Hip heists*
- *Sit outs, sit throughs, and knee slides*
- *Granby roll*
- *Summersault*
- *Bridging; to the shoulders and top of the head*
- *Cartwheels*
- *Handsprings and round-offs*
- *Jab, hook, cross*
- *Low kick, and push kick*
- *Checking kicks*
- *Slip, roll, and block punches*
- *Punch block 1-4*
- *Gripping and grip breaks*
- *Striking while grappling*

Goals of the Fox Den Grappling Curriculum

- You think strategically and effectively string your techniques
- You can effectively put your opponent on the ground
- You are a competent striker
- You can transition smoothly from striking to grappling
- You can defend strikes while grappling and use striking to enhance your grappling
- You have strong controlling and riding skills
- You can escape well from control and riding positions
- You have strong positional grappling
- You have a very strong knowledge of the most effective submissions, and a basic knowledge of all the submissions that you might reasonably encounter

Techniques By Belt Level

To help keep you motivated and working productively towards your next promotion our curriculum provides a list of techniques that would typically be expected of each belt level. Please understand that this is not a strictly prescriptive list and that your ability to roll competently with your peers is also a major factor in promotion; regular attendance and diligent practice, training logs, and analysis are the best methods to ensure your next promotion.

Lower Body Takedowns

White Belt (2 stripes)

- Single and double; 1 entry, 1 finish, basic defenses (sprawl) and escapes
- Basic stance and motion

Blue Belt

- Single; two finishes + low single
- Double, windshield finish
- High C; 1 entry, 1 finish + switch to double

Purple Belt

- Single; three entries, three finishes + mat single
- Double; three entries, three finishes + blast double
- High C; two entries, two finishes

Upper Body Takedowns

White Belt (2 stripes)

- Body Lock; entry from over-under, 1 finish
- Collar tie; two clears
- Grip breaks from lapel and sleeve

Blue Belt

- Under-hook; entry and clear
- Over-hook; Whizzer
- Over-under; 2 take down entries
- Bodylock; 1 defense
- Collar ties; two clears + Russian Entry
- Russian; 1 clear

Purple Belt

- Under-hook; knee tap, single, high c, snap
- Over-hook; 2 takedowns, snap
- Over-under; 3 take down entries
- Bodylock; 3 takedowns; 2 defenses
- Collar tie; 3 clears
- Russian; single, back take, + 1 other transition

Wall Positions

White Belt (2 stripes)

- Basic escape from 50

Blue Belt

- Single; 1 finish
- Double; 1 finish
- Over-under; switch to double or single
- Basics defenses

Purple Belt

- 2 transitions to open space TD's
- Single and double defense

Mat Wrestling

White Belt (2 stripes)

- Front head; basic hand fighting,
- 1 guillotine escape

Blue Belt

- Front head; 2 escapes, 1 go behind, 1 turn
- 3 Chokes + guillotine defense no arm and arm in
- Back ride; 2 rides, 1 entry to back, 1 submission entry, 1 mat return

Purple Belt

- Front head; 3 escapes, 3 go behinds, 2 turns
- 5 chokes,
- Back ride; 3 rides, 3 entries to back, 3 submission entries, 3 turns, 3 mat returns

Newaza

Side Control

White Belt (2 stripes)

- Escape basics
- 2 submissions
- Ride/control basics

Blue Belt

- Early and late escapes, 1 underhook escape, 2 Kesa gatame escapes
- North south choke and basic defense
- arm lock series,
- Kimura and breaking mechanics
- Ride transition basics and striking

Purple Belt

- cross face, and 2 on 1 escapes, 3 kesa gatame escapes
- transition to mat single and deep half
- 1 transition to back

- Near and far side ride
- Far side arm bar
- Kimura transitions
- North south escape

Mount

White Belt (2 stripes)

- Maintaining mount/ basic riding
- 1 escape

Blue Belt

- 2 escapes
- 1 armbar
- Collar choke
- Back take
- Basic riding and striking

Purple Belt

- Escape combos
- Transition to leg lock
- 2 armbars
- Head and arm choke
- S mount/high mount, riding

Back

White Belt (2 stripes)

- RNC
- 1 back escape

Blue Belt

- Basic back position sequence and escapes (fat leg, and sit-up)
- Basic hand fighting
- Bow and arrow choke

Purple Belt

- 3 hand fighting sequences
- back position sequences and escapes (hooks, no hooks, weak side, strong side)
- Crucifix
- Weak-side submissions
- Arm traps
- Transitions

Guard

White Belt (2 stripes)

- Basic hand fighting
- Punch block stage 1

- 1 submission
- Posture in guard
- Basic breaking guard
- Technical stand-up
- ½ guard; getting back to guard

Blue Belt

- Arm drag
- Arm bar
- Triangle
- Kimura
- Omaplata
- 2 guard breaks
- 2 sweeps
- 2 passes
- Breaking posture in guard
- Hand-fighting and hand trap positions
- Punch block stages 2-4
- ½ guard; underhook sweep and back take/single

Purple Belt

- Hand-fighting from all common grips
- 3 submission sequences
- 8 sweeps (2 from guard, 3 from form of open guard, 2 butterfly, 1 x-guard)
- 5 guard passes
- ½ guard; lucas leite sweep, transition to deep half

Leglock Positions

White Belt (2 stripes)

- Straight ankle lock and defense from Ashi
- Ashi entry from guard

Blue Belt

- Irimi ashi to inside ashi transitions
- basic butterfly entries
- basic entries from top and bottom half guard
- 1 standing entry

Purple Belt

- Kneebar, toehold, and heel hook
- Entries from standing over-hook
- Entries from x-guard and half guard and deep half
- Entries from back ride
- Reverse ashi
- Inside ashi escapes and counters
- Basics of 50/50, escapes and counters, “outside sankaku”

Movements and Skills

White Belt (2 stripes)

- Shrimp and hip escape
- Breakfalls
- Basic shot and sweep single
- Summersault
- Knee slide
- Sprawl
- Bridge
- Basic grip breaks

Blue Belt

- Granby
- Sitout, sit-through
- Basic punches and kicks
- Block punches
- Check kicks
- Standing hand on throat defenses

Purple Belt

- Roll and slip punches

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Notes

- Our curriculum has a stronger wrestling focus than most BJJ gyms, which would traditionally be more judo oriented. This is for several reasons, wrestling works great both gi and no gi, it has greater focus on working from and escaping bad positions, and ground work in wrestling is generally much more developed and stems naturally from standing positions, (with the front headlock and backride representing key transitions between standing and mat work).
- The idea of developing a strong riding ability is emphasized. Riding is the ability to maintain control from a dominant position by making fluid adaptations to your opponents means of escape. A strong ride position will allow a grappler to strike freely in a way that doesn't compromise their position.
- Striking both standing and on the ground is a key element of self defence that is emphasized in our curriculum. The possibility of striking (in terms of either offence or defence) should be considered with nearly all the techniques that have been listed.
 - One of the main goals of the curriculum is to develop an athlete that can grapple effectively from any common position, and who's grappling improves when strikes are allowed.
- Our curriculum does not separate certain techniques for self defence situations. All the techniques will be taught in a way that they will lead to success regardless of whether the opponent responds correctly or not.
- Our curriculum teaches leg lock positions with the same emphasis as other mat positions. Leg locks are incredibly effective and an athlete needs to be able to fully integrate them into their style of grappling, even if only to defend them.
- This curriculum should not be thought of as anything more than a guideline to help develop the best style of grappling for you. There are countless very important details and concepts that had to be under-emphasized or left out to create a sensible list; lots of things on the list might not work well for you personally. This curriculum will probably be re-made repeatedly so don't get hung up on details, just take the broad strokes and figure out what works for you. Improving at BJJ takes an enormous amount of effort, so make sure you enjoy what you are practicing.

Broad Strokes

- Wrestling or otherwise putting people on the ground is very important.
- Get really good at riding and transitioning and controlling where people go.
- Be able to hit people and make it difficult for them to hit you back.
- Don't think that self defence techniques are just the ones where your opponent makes some obvious error.
- Leg locks are just as important as other ground positions (you can't just ignore them and hope they go away).

Detailed Chart of BJJ Positions

Standing	Standing Lower Body	Single Leg	Double Leg	High C			
	Standing Upper Body	Over/Under	Body Lock	Overhook	Underhook	Ties and Grips (Collar, Russians, etc...)	
Wall Positions		As above					
Mat Wrestling		Front Headlock	Back Ride				
Newaza (Ground Work)		Side Control					
		Mount					
		Back					
		Guard	1/2				
			Butterfly				
			X				
			Deep Half				
			De la Riva				
		Others...					
		Leg Lock Positions	Outside Ashi Garami (Top and bottom)				
			Inside Sankaku (Cross Ashi garami)				
			"Outside" Sankaku, 80/20, Outside 50/50				
50/50, Etc.							