



# No-Gi BJJ Fundamentals: Your Complete Beginner's Guide



## Welcome to No-Gi BJJ!

We're excited to have you join our community. No-Gi Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu is a fun and challenging journey that will build your strength, skill, and confidence. This guide will help you take your first steps and feel at home on the mats!

## Where It All Began

Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ) started in Brazil in the 1920s. The Gracie family learned Judo from a Japanese expert, Mitsuyo Maeda, and adapted it into their own self-defence system. Over time, it evolved into modern BJJ, which is now practised worldwide. Today, BJJ is practised globally in gyms, competitions, and self-defence systems, offering something for everyone.

## What Is Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu?

BJJ is a martial art focused on grappling and ground fighting. It's often called "submission grappling" because the goal is to control your opponent and use techniques like joint locks and chokes to make them submit. The best part? BJJ relies on technique over strength, so even a smaller person can defend against a bigger, stronger opponent by using leverage and body mechanics.

## Enhance Your Learning

Scan the QR Code to Access Technique Videos!

Watch step-by-step demonstrations on our YouTube channel to reinforce what you've learned in class.



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# What to Expect in Your First Class

## Arrive Early

Introduce yourself to the coach, meet your training partners, and get settled before class begins.

## What to Bring

Wear comfortable athletic clothing, such as a shirt and shorts. Don't forget to bring a water bottle and a towel.

## Warm-Up

Start with light exercises to loosen up and prepare your body for training.

## Technique Practice

Learn each move step-by-step with the help of an experienced training partner.

## Sparring (Rolling)

If you feel ready, try some light sparring with your training partner to apply what you've learned in a live situation.

## After Class

Ask questions and chat with your coach or teammates—we're a social gym!

## Pro Tip

Everyone starts somewhere. Enjoy yourself, share a laugh, and embrace the journey—your team is here to guide and support you every step of the way.

# Meet Your Coaches



## Coach Tyrone Coppedge – Head Instructor

### Rank

Black Belt in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (awarded in 2016)

### Experience

- Over 13 years of coaching experience and a full-time instructor since 2013.
- Former Rugby League player for 19 years before discovering BJJ in 2010.
- Successfully guided students to state, national, and international BJJ titles.

### Why I Teach

BJJ began as just another sport to try, but it quickly became so much more. It's a practice that strengthens both mental and physical resilience. I'm dedicated to helping others discover these benefits and achieve their personal goals, both on the mats and in their daily lives.



## Coach Andy Stanway – Instructor

### Rank

Black Belt in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (awarded in 2017)

### Experience

- Over 15 years of training in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and Muay Thai.
- Competed at national and international levels in MMA.
- More than 10 years of teaching experience, specialising in the practical application of martial arts for real-world scenarios.

### Why I Teach

BJJ shows that technique can overcome strength, making it accessible to everyone. I'm passionate about helping others develop their skills, both on and off the mats, while building confidence, discipline, and resilience along the way.

# 10 Steps to BJJ Mastery: Learn Smarter, Not Harder

These 10 steps will help you fast-track your Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu journey by focusing on smart, efficient learning strategies.

1

**Train Consistently** Show up regularly to build muscle memory and improve your skills. Alternate between competitive and practice-focused sparring to maximise learning and avoid burnout.

2

**Ask Questions** Never hesitate to ask your instructors or training partners for clarification. Understanding the "why" behind techniques deepens your knowledge and speeds up progress.

3

**Master a "Home" Position or Submission** Find a position or submission you're comfortable with and make it your foundation. For example, side control or closed guard can be strong starting points. This creates a reliable base to build the rest of your game.

4

**Study Outside Class** Watch instructional videos to learn mechanics, variations, and counters for your go-to moves. Reinforcing lessons off the mat boosts your in-class performance.

5

**Visualise Success** Mentally rehearse techniques. Picture yourself executing moves smoothly and effectively—this boosts muscle memory and improves sparring performance.

6

**Mindful Rolling** Approach rolling as a learning opportunity, not just a competition. Focus on controlling positions, experimenting with techniques, and ensuring control before attempting submissions.

7

**Learn from Mistakes** Mistakes are part of the journey. Analyse errors from rolls and use them to refine your techniques and strategies. Every mistake is an opportunity to learn.

8

**Embrace Bad Positions** Put yourself in tough spots during training. Practicing escapes and defence sharpens your skills and builds composure under pressure. Controlled breathing is key to staying relaxed.

9

**Record and Review** Film sparring sessions to spot patterns, identify weaknesses, and discover opportunities for improvement. Use the footage to make actionable changes.

10

**Compete to Grow** Competitions are the ultimate test of your skills. They expose areas for improvement and provide invaluable experience. Every match is a chance to evolve your game.

# Core Positions and Techniques



## Takedowns (+2 Points)

Takedowns are the starting point for securing control by bringing your opponent to the ground.

### Attacking Concepts (Standing):

- *Break Their Balance:* Use grips or setups to disrupt their posture and centre of gravity.
- *Leverage Over Strength:* Focus on timing and angles instead of brute force.
- *Transition Smoothly:* After completing the takedown, move immediately into a strong top position to maintain control.

### Defending Concepts (Standing):

- *Stay Stable:* Keep a strong, balanced stance with active footwork to resist takedowns.
- *Disrupt Their Setup:* Use frames, hand fighting, or movement to counter their grips and setups.
- *React Quickly:* Sprawl or counterattack with sweeps or redirects to regain control of the situation.



## Guard

The guard is a versatile position that allows you to defend, control, and attack from the bottom.

### Attacking Concepts (Bottom Position):

- *Control Their Posture:* Use your legs and grips to keep them off balance and limit their attacks.
- *Move Your Hips:* Create angles to set up sweeps or submissions like armbars and triangles.
- *Stay Offensive:* Look for opportunities to attack or transition to a better position.

### Defending Concepts (Top Position):

- *Stay Balanced:* Keep your weight centred and posture strong to avoid sweeps.
- *Control Their Hips:* Pin their movement to stop escapes or attacks.
- *Break Their Grips:* Clear their grips to maintain control and prepare to pass.



## Sweeps (+2 Points)

Sweeps allow you to reverse the position, moving from the bottom to the top.

### Attacking Concepts (Bottom Position):

- *Break Their Base:* Disrupt their balance with grips and angles to set up the sweep.
- *Use Leverage:* Employ your body's mechanics to reverse their position.
- *Transition to Control:* Move immediately to a stable top position after the sweep.

### Defending Concepts (Top Position):

- *Maintain Your Base:* Stay low and balanced to make it harder for them to sweep you.
- *Watch Their Grips:* Break their grips before they set up a sweep.
- *React Early:* Adjust your balance or posture quickly if they start to attack.



## Guard Passing (+3 Points)

Guard passing means moving past your opponent's legs to take control from the top.

### Attacking Concepts (Top Position):

- *Control First:* Secure their hips and posture before attempting to pass.
- *Apply Pressure:* Use steady pressure to disrupt their defence and create openings.
- *Move Around, Not Through:* Use angles to bypass their legs effectively.

### Defending Concepts (Bottom Position):

- *Frame and Create Space:* Use your arms and legs to keep distance and stop their progress.
- *Stay Mobile:* Move your hips to create angles and make passing harder.
- *Look for Counters:* Exploit their mistakes to sweep or attack.



## Side Control

Side Control allows you to pin your opponent and prepare for your next attack.

### Attacking Concepts (Top Position):

- *Stay Heavy:* Use your body weight to keep them pinned and control their movement.
- *Control Their Head and Hips:* These are the keys to stopping their escapes.
- *Set Up Attacks:* Use your position to isolate limbs or transition to mount or submissions.

### Defending Concepts (Bottom Position):

- *Frame and Escape:* Use your arms and hips to create space and recover guard.
- *Protect Yourself:* Keep your arms tight and avoid giving up submissions.
- *Stay Calm:* Anticipate their movements and disrupt their control.



## Knee on Belly (+2 Points)

Knee on Belly is a dynamic position that allows for excellent control while transitioning or attacking.

### Attacking Concepts (Top Position):

- *Apply Pressure:* Use controlled pressure to keep them off balance.
- *Stay Mobile:* Be ready to adjust if they try to escape or counter.
- *Transition to Finish:* Use this position to set up submissions or move to mount.

### Defending Concepts (Bottom Position):

- *Relieve Pressure:* Turn towards them and use frames to push their knee off.
- *Create Space:* Shrimp or roll to recover guard or escape.
- *Stay Aware:* Avoid giving them opportunities to transition to mount or submissions.



## Mount (+4 Points)

Mount is one of the most dominant positions in BJJ, offering excellent control and opportunities to attack.

### Attacking Concepts (Top Position):

- *Balance and Control:* Keep your hips low and maintain your stability.
- *Isolate Limbs:* Attack their arms or neck with submissions.
- *Adapt to Their Defence:* Transition smoothly if they attempt to escape.

### Defending Concepts (Bottom Position):

- *Control Their Hips:* Use your arms as frames against their hips to stop their movement and create space.
- *Protect Yourself:* Keep your arms tight and avoid exposing your neck.
- *Recover Guard:* Focus on getting your legs between you and your opponent to regain a defensive position.



## Back Control (+4 Points)

Back Control is the ultimate position for submissions, allowing you to dominate while keeping your opponent immobilised.

### Attacking Concepts (Top Position):

- *Maintain Hooks and Grips:* Keep your legs tight and control their upper body with a seatbelt grip.
- *Stay Tight:* Keep your chest close to their back to prevent escapes.
- *Set Up Submissions:* Use consistent pressure to isolate their neck or arms for attacks.

### Defending Concepts (Bottom Position):

- *Protect Your Neck:* Focus on hand-fighting to stop chokes before they start.
- *Disrupt Their Control:* Use your hips and shoulders to create angles for escape.
- *Escape Strategically:* Turn towards the mat or create scrambles to neutralise the position.
- Escape by turning towards the mat to neutralise their control and transition to a safer position, such as turtle or a neutral scramble



## Turtle Position

The turtle position is a defensive posture where you are on your knees and elbows with your opponent on top. It is often used when your opponent has passed your guard but hasn't secured side control, mount, knee-on-belly, or back control.

### Attacking Concepts (Top Position):

- *Control Their Hips:* Use grips and pressure to limit their movement.
- *Stay Balanced:* Avoid overcommitting and giving them opportunities to escape.
- *Look for Transitions:* Use turtle to set up back control or submissions.

### Defending Concepts (Bottom Position):

- *Stay Compact:* Keep your elbows and knees tight to avoid openings.
- *Watch Their Grips:* Prevent them from gaining control of your arms or hips.
- *Focus on Escapes:* Look for opportunities to recover guard or stand up.



## Submissions

Submissions end the match by forcing your opponent to tap out using joint locks or chokes.

### Attacking Concepts (Top Position):

- *Control First:* Secure a dominant position before attempting a submission.
- *Focus on Technique:* Use leverage and mechanics, not brute strength.
- *Be Persistent:* Chain submissions together to keep them on the defensive.

### Defending Concepts (Bottom Position):

- *Protect Your Vulnerabilities:* Keep your neck and arms safe from attacks.
- *Break Their Control:* Use posture and frames to stop submissions before they're locked in.
- *Stay Calm:* Avoid panicking—look for escape opportunities and regain control.

# Understanding the Scoring System

The BJJ scoring system rewards you for gaining dominant positions and improving control during a match. While we don't count points during training, understanding the system helps you recognise when you're achieving good positions and making progress. Points are awarded as follows:

Action	Points	Description
Takedown	+2	Bringing your opponent to the ground while maintaining control.
Sweep	+2	Reversing from a bottom guard position to a top position with control.
Knee on Belly	+2	Placing one knee on your opponent's midsection while maintaining balance.
Guard Pass	+3	Moving past your opponent's guard to a dominant position, like side control.
Mount	+4	Achieving the mount position, pinning your opponent on their back.
Back Control	+4	Securing control of your opponent's back with hooks or leg control.

## Tips for Beginners:

- Focus on control first—establish a stable position before advancing or attacking.
- Stay calm and deliberate—the points will come as you improve your positioning.
- Don't worry too much about points—mastering the basics is more important in training.

# Gym Rules and Etiquette

## Mat Etiquette

- Keep a positive attitude; BJJ is about growth, teamwork, and building friendships.
- Lower belts should give way to higher belts during rolling.
- Always tap early to ensure safety—it's a key part of learning
- If you're unsure about something, don't hesitate to ask your instructor.
- Stay humble—everyone starts as a beginner.

## Safety

- Training should always be safe and fun—never intentionally hurt anyone.
- No striking, punching, or kicking.
- Avoid actions like eye gouging, hair pulling, or twisting/grabbing fingers.
- Neck cranks, slamming (lifting and dropping someone), and jumping guard are not allowed.
- Remove all jewellery before training to prevent injuries.
- Use your skills responsibly and never misuse your martial arts knowledge.

## Hygiene

- Keep the mats clean—wear shoes when off the mats and remove them before stepping on to the mats.
- Always wear clean training gear to every session.
- Practice good personal hygiene: trim your nails, shower before class, and wear deodorant.
- Tie back long hair and cover any open wounds with a bandage.
- If you're feeling unwell, take a rest day—your health and your teammates' health matter.

# FAQs: Frequently Asked Questions

## **Do I need to be in shape to start?**

Not at all! BJJ is for everyone, and training will naturally improve your fitness over time. The most important thing is to show up and give it your best.

## **What if I don't know any techniques?**

That's exactly why you're here! Every class is designed to teach techniques step by step, and your instructor and training partners will guide you along the way.

## **What does "tap out" mean?**

Tapping out signals that you want to stop. You can tap your opponent, the mat, or simply say "tap" to stay safe. It's a normal and encouraged part of training—everyone does it!

## **Will I get hurt during training?**

BJJ is very safe when practiced responsibly. Always tap early, communicate with your training partners, and let your instructor know about any injuries or concerns. Safety is our top priority.

## **Can I roll (spar) as a beginner?**

Absolutely! Rolling is a great way to practice what you've learned. Start at your own pace and focus on the techniques you're comfortable with—there's no pressure to perform.

## **How often should I train as a beginner?**

Training 2–3 times per week is a great way to start. It allows your body to recover while helping you build consistency and confidence on the mats.

## **What if I feel nervous about joining?**

It's totally normal to feel nervous at first! Remember, everyone starts somewhere, and the BJJ community is welcoming and supportive. At T Jiu Jitsu, we're not just a gym we're a social team that's here to make you feel at home.