

How to Learn Jiu-Jitsu Faster

Lessons from a world champion and top ranked black belt.



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APR 14, 2025

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Today's post was written by Kade Tsitos. Kade is a black belt under Vagner Rocha, a brown world champion, and is currently ranked #13 in the world at 155 pounds. He's also the head instructor at Carbon Submission Grappling in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

If you enjoy this article and want to learn more from Kade, I highly recommend you check his [Leg Lock University](#).

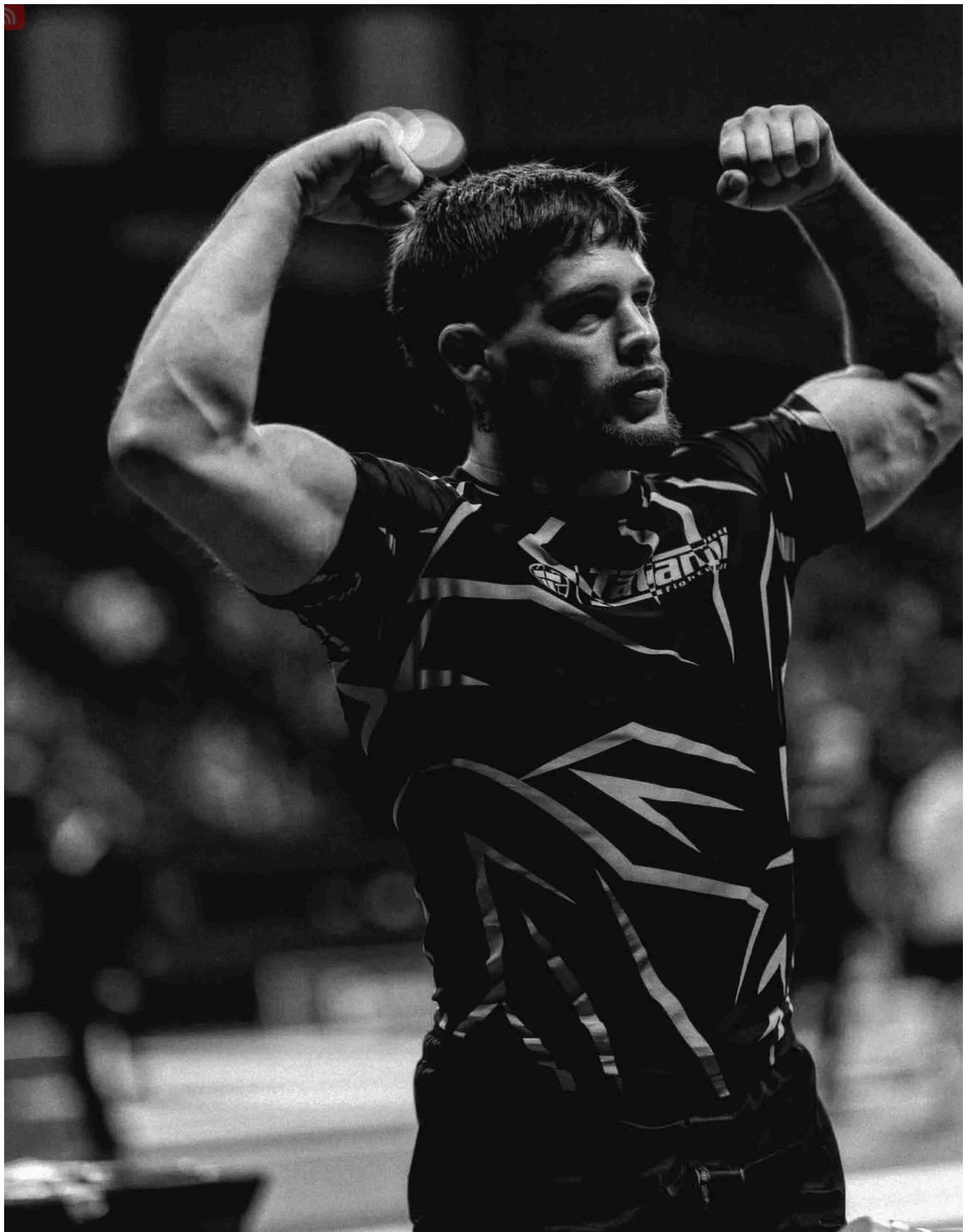


Photo via [Kade Tsitos Instagram](#)

Five years ago, I was just a casual blue belt.

I didn't compete, I trained like everyone else, and I had no idea I'd soon be ranked # in the world — training alongside the best and performing at the highest level.

What changed?

Everything — especially how I trained.

Here's the process I used to fast-track my growth and build black belt-level skill in record time.

Instructional Study: The Right Way

Most people watch instructionals passively, skip around, and never retain what they see. That's not how I did it.

I turned every instructional into a personal study guide. Here's my exact process:

- I watch every video from beginning to end — no skipping.
- When I see a valuable detail or move, I screen-record it.
- I name the clip based on volume and technique. For example: 2.3 - Arm Drag Counter. Hence volume 2 move 3 .
- Then I rewatch that short clip and take quick notes in my phone — just 2-3 sentences on the key ideas.
- I organize everything into folders on my hard drive.

Now here's the magic:

At the gym, I pick a move, watch the clip with a partner, drill it a few times until it's smooth, then create resistance-based games around it. We start easy and add layers

difficulty, chaos, and creativity.

If I discover a new variation or detail during sparring, I film it, name it, and file it away. It becomes part of my personal jiu-jitsu encyclopedia.

This method made my memory for techniques razor-sharp — and gave me a structured way to continuously improve, without feeling overwhelmed.

Mental Performance: Rewiring My Mind

A huge turning point in my journey was reading [*With Winning in Mind*](#) by Lanny Bassham. That book changed how I approached learning forever.

Bassham breaks performance into three components:

- The Conscious Mind
- The Subconscious Mind
- The Self-Image

The conscious mind is where step-by-step learning happens. It's slow, focused, and limited — it can only do one thing at a time.

But when you repeat a technique consciously enough times, it becomes automatic — drops into the subconscious. That's where the magic happens. The subconscious can process billions of tasks at once. It's the reason you can write your name without thinking.

But here's what most people miss:

The self-image controls how much of your subconscious ability you can access.

If you constantly doubt yourself, you block your full potential. But if you believe you're elite, your subconscious rises to meet that belief. You perform smoother, faster, and

more intuitively.

That's why I became obsessed with building a strong self-image. I rewired how I talked to myself. I trained my thoughts to align with who I wanted to become. I did just practice moves — I practiced belief.

Game-Play & Problem Solving

Jiu-jitsu isn't just about memorizing moves. It's about solving problems — especially under pressure.

Most people break down when their favorite technique doesn't work. They freeze. They forget. That's where I separated myself.

I began mixing traditional drilling with ecological training — game-based scenarios that replicate the chaos of live rolling. Instead of memorizing steps, I learned to adapt, improvise, and apply core concepts.

Want to level up faster? Look into ecological dynamics. It teaches you how to train your decision-making, not just your movements.

By blending structured study, mental training, and creative game-play, I didn't just get better — I evolved.

Games are essentially positional sparring with specific goals, tasks, and constraints. I enjoy playing them because they help me focus on developing particular skills, and they really allow me to connect the different parts of my Jiu-Jitsu in a more intentional way.

Closing Thoughts

This journey wasn't magic. It wasn't talent. It was a system. A process.

I studied like a scientist, trained like an athlete, and believed like a champion — even before I had the results to prove it.

If you're serious about jiu-jitsu, don't just train harder. Train smarter. Build systems. Build belief. Build games.

That's how you go from hobbyist to world-ranked in five years or less.

Today's post was written by Kade Tsitos. Kade is a black belt under Vagner Rocha, a brown world champion, and is currently ranked #13 in the world at 155 pounds. He's also the head instructor at Carbon Submission Grappling in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

I had the pleasure of training with Kade a couple of weekends back when I was in Florida, and I learned a ton over the time I was there, not just techniques, but processes that are helping up my game.

[I highly recommend you check out Kade's Leg Lock University if you enjoyed the ideas illustrated in this article.](#)

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A guest post by

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