



# Midguard Academy

## Marketing & Messaging Strategy

Prepared February 2026 · For Josh & Team · Confidential

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### Executive Summary

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**The core insight:** Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu naturally attracts professionals, intellectuals, and problem-solvers — software engineers, lawyers, doctors, business owners — but most gyms (including MidGuard currently) market exclusively to the "fighter/MMA" crowd.

By repositioning MidGuard around "**strategic exercise**" — emphasizing the mental/intellectual challenge, stress relief, and confidence-building — the academy can dramatically broaden its appeal without alienating its existing base.

This document provides specific messaging, copy, SEO keywords, and action items to make this shift.

**Origin:** Mark Mahoney identified the opportunity — BJJ should be marketed as "physical chess" to attract the professional/academic audience that's already naturally drawn to the art. This research validates that insight with competitor analysis and concrete recommendations.

## Current State Assessment

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### What's on midguardkb.com Today

- **~957 characters** of homepage copy — very thin content
- Focus on "Expert Instruction," "Train with Champions," "Be Part of a Team"
- Language like "whether you are a beginner or an experienced fighter" — fighting-forward
- No mention of mental/intellectual benefits
- No "physical chess" or strategic positioning
- No fitness/wellness framing
- No class schedule, pricing, or clear CTA visible on main page
- Domain emphasizes kickboxing (midguardkb.com)

### Social Media

- **Instagram:** @midguard\_bjj — 53 followers, 14 posts
- **Facebook:** MidGuard Kickboxing Academy
- Minimal content; competition/fighter-focused

### Key Problems

1. **Fighting-forward language** alienates the broader audience (professionals, parents, fitness seekers)
2. **Zero mental/intellectual positioning** — the biggest differentiator for attracting professionals
3. **No wellness/stress-relief framing** — misses people searching for exercise alternatives
4. **No self-defense for everyday people** — only competitive/sport framing

5. **Very thin content** — hurts SEO, gives no reason to stay on the site

## 5 Messaging Pillars

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These are the core themes all MidGuard marketing should draw from. Every piece of content — website copy, social posts, ads, flyers — should connect to one or more of these pillars.

### 1. Physical Chess — Train Your Mind and Body

Appeals to intellectuals, professionals, and problem-solvers. Differentiates from "tough guy" martial arts marketing.

"Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu isn't about size or strength — it's about strategy. Every roll is a puzzle to solve, every technique a move on the chessboard. If you've ever enjoyed solving complex problems, you'll love jiu jitsu."

### 2. Stress Relief That Actually Works

Speaks to busy professionals seeking stress relief. Positions BJJ as superior to traditional gym workouts.

"When you're on the mat, your phone, your inbox, and your to-do list don't exist. Jiu jitsu demands your complete focus — creating the kind of active mindfulness that melts away stress in ways a treadmill never will."

### 3. For Every Body, Every Background

Removes intimidation. Shows real diversity of practitioners. "Start where you are" is a powerful low-barrier CTA.

"Our students are teachers, engineers, business owners, parents, and retirees. Jiu jitsu uses leverage and technique — not brute force — which means it works for every body type and fitness level. Start where you are."

#### **4. Confidence That Extends Beyond the Mat**

Connects physical training to real-world professional/ personal benefits. Inspired by Renzo Gracie's philosophy.

"We don't just teach self-defense. We build the kind of quiet confidence that changes how you carry yourself at work, at home, and in life. When you know you can handle yourself physically, everything else gets easier."

#### **5. Community, Not Competition**

Reduces intimidation of competitive martial arts. "Smarter way to stay fit" is a perfect bridge phrase.

"MidGuard is a family-owned, veteran-operated school where beginners are welcomed and growth is celebrated. Whether you want to compete or just want a smarter way to stay fit, you belong here."

## Recommended Homepage Copy

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This is a ready-to-use homepage rewrite that Josh can drop directly into the new site design.

### MIDGUARD BJJ & KICKBOXING

Veteran-Owned · Wisconsin Rapids, WI

#### PHYSICAL CHESS. REAL FITNESS. TOTAL CONFIDENCE.

Jiu jitsu is the thinking person's workout. Every session is a full-body exercise that challenges your mind as much as your muscles. Our students are teachers, engineers, business owners, and parents who discovered that the smartest exercise they've ever done happens to be a martial art.

No experience needed. No tough-guy attitude required. Just show up — we'll take it from there.

**TRY A FREE CLASS →**

- ✓ Strategic exercise — like physical chess for your body
- ✓ Stress relief that actually works — total focus, total release
- ✓ For all ages and fitness levels — technique over strength
- ✓ Build real confidence — on and off the mat

✓ Veteran-owned, family-operated — welcoming  
community first

# SEO Keywords for Non-Fighter Audiences

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These keywords target people who would never search for "BJJ" or "martial arts" — but would absolutely love it once they tried it.

## Primary Local

jiu jitsu Wisconsin Rapids

martial arts Wisconsin Rapids

BJJ near me Wisconsin

self defense classes Wisconsin Rapids

## Strategic / Intellectual Appeal

physical chess exercise

strategic exercise near me

mental workout fitness

problem solving exercise

mindful martial arts

active meditation

functional fitness for professionals

## Wellness / Lifestyle

stress relief exercise near me

best exercise for anxiety

fitness for beginners over 30/40/50

full body workout that's not boring

exercise that builds confidence

workout for mental health

adult fitness classes near me

## Self-Defense

self defense for women Wisconsin Rapids

women's self defense classes

practical self defense training

self defense for professionals



## Competitor Analysis Highlights

What the best BJJ schools are doing to attract non-fighter audiences:

School	Key Approach	Takeaway for MidGuard
<b>Gracie Barra</b> 1,000+ schools globally	"Jiu-Jitsu for Everyone®" — inclusive branding at scale	Inclusive language, no fighting imagery in tagline, personal growth framing
<b>Renzo Gracie Academy</b> NYC flagship	"We are in the business of building confidence"	Reframes value prop entirely — not selling fighting, selling life confidence
<b>Stockman Jiu-Jitsu</b> Indianapolis area	Explicitly positions BJJ as "a physical chess game"	Mental health/stress relief messaging directly speaks to professional audience
<b>Bowerhouse MMA</b> 600-member gym	Leveraged storytelling and PR for massive growth	Content marketing and student stories drive enrollment
<b>Midgard Jiu Jitsu</b> Trevor, WI — similar name!	"Family owned," "welcoming atmosphere," "safe and fun"	Even simple inclusive language works — MidGuard can do this AND the intellectual angle

## Common Patterns on Successful Sites

1. Hero section with **clear value proposition** (not just "learn martial arts")
2. **Free trial/class CTA** above the fold
3. Testimonials from **diverse students** (not just fighters)

4. **Benefits-focused copy** (confidence, fitness, stress relief, community)
5. Clean **schedule and pricing** easily accessible
6. Photos of **real students** (diverse ages, genders, body types)
7. **Mobile-optimized** with easy contact options

### Key Gymdesk Industry Insight

"Your target audience for BJJ differs from the striking arts. BJJ attracts problem-solvers, chess-players, and technical thinkers — people who appreciate the 'human chess' aspect. Your marketing should emphasize technique, strategy, and the intellectual challenge, not just physical intensity."

### Reddit Validation (r/bjj)

A thread asking BJJ practitioners "What do you do for work?" revealed: **40%+ of one gym were software engineers**. Common professions: lawyers, doctors, professors, CEOs, data scientists, firefighters.

"BJJ attracts the engineering/science crowd because it's high-stakes troubleshooting for people who like to solve puzzles."

## Content & Blog Ideas

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These blog posts are designed to rank for the non-fighter keywords above and attract the professional/intellectual audience through search.

1. **"Why Software Engineers, Lawyers, and Doctors Love Jiu Jitsu"**

Targets: professionals searching for exercise. Validates that BJJ is for "their type."

2. **"Jiu Jitsu: The Physical Chess That's Taking Over Professional Culture"**

Targets: "physical chess" keyword. Builds the intellectual brand.

3. **"Too Old for Martial Arts? Why Adults Are Starting BJJ in Their 40s, 50s, and Beyond"**

Targets: age-related fitness concerns. Huge untapped audience.

4. **"5 Reasons Jiu Jitsu Is the Best Stress Relief for Busy Professionals"**

Targets: stress relief/wellness keywords. Listicle format for shareability.

5. **"I'm Not a Fighter — Why I Started Jiu Jitsu Anyway (And What Happened)"**

First-person student story. Reduces intimidation barrier. Highly shareable.

6. **"The Mental Health Benefits of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu: What Science Says"**

Targets: mental health + exercise keywords. Builds credibility with research.

## Social Media Content Strategy

- **Instagram:** Share "day in the life" content showing diverse students — not just competition highlights

- **Facebook:** Target local professionals with ads emphasizing stress relief and mental fitness
- **Google Ads:** Bid on "fitness classes Wisconsin Rapids" and "stress relief exercise" — not just "BJJ"

## Action Items

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### Quick Wins (Do First)

HIGH

**Rewrite homepage hero section** using one of the 5 messaging pillars (see recommended copy above)

HIGH

**Add "Veteran Owned" prominently** — huge trust signal, especially in Wisconsin

HIGH

**Add a free trial class CTA** above the fold with online booking

HIGH

**Create an "About" page** with Josh's story — veteran background, why he opened MidGuard

HIGH

**Add testimonials** from non-fighter students (professionals, parents, fitness seekers)

### Medium-Term (Next 30–60 Days)

MED

**Start a blog** targeting the SEO keywords listed above (begin with the 6 article ideas)

MED

**Create separate landing pages** for: Adults, Kids, Women's Self-Defense, Fitness

MED

**Optimize Google Business Profile** — hours, photos, reviews all current

MED

**Consider domain strategy** — midguardbjj.com or midguardma.com to broaden positioning beyond kickboxing

## Ongoing

ONGOING

**Instagram content shift** — diverse students, daily life, not just competition highlights

ONGOING

**Facebook ads** — target local professionals with stress relief / mental fitness messaging

ONGOING

**Collect and publish student testimonials** — especially from non-fighter demographics

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