

Metadata: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eA9MZmfVrmA>

We're trying to portray one of the great virtues of half guard passing, why it's such a big part of any strong fundamentals program, is that it gives direct access to your opponent's head. And this is something you cannot underestimate the importance of. This is a big, big deal. Almost all of the truly high percentage ways of passing tough opponent's guards comes down to some form of head control at some point in the action. The beauty of half guard is once you force half guard, you can get direct access to the head right from the start. And this is very, very helpful when you're dealing with a tough opponent in bottom position. A big part of controlling the head is the use of cross faces. And I want to take a little bit of time now just to talk to you about ideal ways of setting a cross face, because this is going to help you a lot as we get further into the half guard passing program. So often I'll see athletes do a good job of forcing their way into a half guard situation, but then a poor job of setting their cross face. The good news is the cross face is so intrinsically strong, you can mess it up to quite a large degree and still be effective with it. But the higher you go in the sport, the more you will be required to work with the most efficient forms of cross face possible. Probably the single biggest problem that I see when people go to set cross faces is they make the mistake of holding their opponent's neck. It's an understandable mistake to make, because it feels like when I'm pulling my hand and my shoulder against each other that I can put quite a bit of pressure on my opponent's neck. But in fact, you get significantly greater pressure when instead you aim your hand to go and cover the rear deltoids of your training partner's shoulders. There's a measuring stick to make sure you're doing this properly. I want you to take your middle finger and tuck it into the opening of the armpit, where the armpit meets the rear deltoid and the lat muscle, right there. That's when you know you've set your cross face properly. This positions your shoulder in the optimal position to exert maximal pressure. Now, we can massively tighten up a cross face by always looking to pull our elbow to our hip and knee. So that if I have an opponent in here, once I get my preferred grip, look how I always take everything back in. Then my first movement is forward. I bring my chin to my training partner's jaw, and then everything goes over my training partner's shoulder. And then we start walking so that our head comes down towards the mat. This puts tremendous pressure on my opponent's spine. It puts tremendous pressure on their ability to keep an aligned body. Remember, from his point of view, as the half guard guy, he wants his knees pointing towards me. That's always his goal. But if his knees are pointing east and head is pointing west, that's a real problem for him. So we're going to start off with my opponent taking a half guard situation and working towards me. We're going to go through underneath and get the hand all the way around until we can lock up just like so. And get our preferred grip. Where our middle finger goes all the way through and connects just like so. Now, we're going to take everything back towards our own hip. We're going to reset so that my chin goes close to his jaw. And then I put my chin outside of his shoulder. And then I start an action of walking. And I turn my hip down so that my hip goes in towards my own elbow. The further my hips from my elbow, the less power in my cross face. Remember, the true power of the cross face ultimately comes from your hips. It looks like it's the drive of the shoulder. It's not. It's not. Look how, from a situation like this, my shoulder is always limited in how far I can drive forward. It only puts a certain amount of pressure on my body to make a strong body. He pushes and pushes and he feels pretty strong here. It's only when I walk my hips behind my cross face that I get genuine pressure. Once my elbow and hip are touching, now you have a true cross face. Will you be able to walk your hips all the way up to your elbow? Probably not. That's not the idea. The idea is just to get as close as possible. So once again, we've got an opponent in the bottom position. We go through and we secure our hand in its proper position. My middle finger tucked into the armpit. That enables me to bring his head in towards me. I bring my head over his shoulder and then my chin over the outside of the shoulder like so. Now, as Mateus goes to hold me off, pushing on my hips, etc., etc., we always just want to turn our hips in. That

makes his legs very, very weak and unable to hold on to that half guard. It greatly facilitates our ability to start freeing the knee of the trapped leg. You know you're doing it correctly when a mild strangulation effect is imparted upon your training partner. He should feel like it's almost about to pass out. It's not a complete strangle, but it's a partial strangle. You can actually test this with your training partners by a very simple test. Anytime strangulation occurs, there will be bloodshot eyes. Mateus is here in front of us. He'll trap my leg and we go in and lock our hand in position where it should be. My middle finger in my training partner's armpit. I draw the head. I bring everything forward. From here, we engage in that action of turning in just like so. As he tries hard to hold on to my leg with his legs, we just apply our cross face pressure until we can go through into the pass. Mateus faces the camera now. Say hi, Mateus. You'll see very clearly that his eyes are heavily bloodshot. That tells you that a strangle was imparted upon your training partner. The idea is not to actually pass your opponent out. That's unlikely to happen in competition. It can actually happen in drilling, so be careful of that. But it does create considerable pressure on your training partner. That's the whole idea. Cross facing is supposed to be an intimidating and debilitating means of controlling your opponent's head. It greatly reduces his effectiveness as the bottom half guard player.