

Metadata: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AQj2R6U-O5I>

Okay, what is the system of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu? Well, it can be described in a few different ways. I'm going to give you one rendition, which is pretty simple, and will resonate with most of your listeners. Jiu-Jitsu is a system based around four distinct steps. You can add steps, you can subtract steps, but the rendition I'm going to give you now is probably the most widely known. Okay, let's say a friend of yours asks for advice on fighting. He knows you're a Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu expert, you're a black belt in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, and he's saying to me, Joe Rogan, tell me, I don't know anything, I want to fight someone else using your Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. What are the steps of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu? What's the system that it espouses? You're going to see always that step number one is take your opponent to the ground. Okay, why? Why do you think the ground is so special? Why did Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu choose the ground as step number one of its system? Why do you think? Well, it all came out of Judo, right? So Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu took the effective submission techniques of Judo and then just refined them. That's the historical reason, but what's the mechanical or physical reason? Because you can control someone on the ground far better, right? Yeah, you can control people. Lomachenko controls people in the standing position with angle and distance. There's different ways to control people. Yes, in boxing, if you only are boxing. But why the ground? Why did they choose the ground? What's the mechanical reason? What happens when you take a human being to the ground? Well, there's a whole barrier behind them that you can press them against. What about if you're in bottom position? Well, you could use that barrier as leverage. True, but there's something that occurs when someone goes down to the ground. There's something big that you may be missing here. What am I missing? What's the most explosive event in the Olympic Games? The event that probably requires more transfer of energy and development of kinetic energy than any other. There's a bunch you could name, but one of them for me is always going to be the javelin throw. The javelin throw involves a full-powered sprint, a jump, a massive explosive turning of both hips and shoulders, and a throw. All the quintessential explosive elements of the human body are involved in the javelin throw, probably to a greater degree than any other Olympic event. And as a result, people can throw a javelin 80, 90 meters. What would happen if you took those same javelin throwers and made them perform the same event on their knees? Wouldn't be so good. They probably couldn't throw it more than 10 meters. And what's changed? The closer they get to the ground, the less they can employ explosive force. What's the first thing cowboys do when they go to brand a steer? Take it down. They lock up its legs and they put it down on the ground. Nobody tries to brand a standing steer. You're going to get killed because it can employ explosive dynamic movement to hurt you. You put them on the ground, dynamic explosive movement is massively curtailed. It takes away the single riskiest element of fighting, which is quick dynamic movement that can generate kinetic energy. So step number one of resilience is always get it to the ground. It's inherently safer. Less things can go catastrophically wrong on the ground than in the standing position. What's step number two? Secure dominant position. Control. Control, too vague. There's many ways to control people. There's a definite step. You've just taken the guy down. What's your first thing in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu? Well, the first thing I would try to do is get to a dominant position. What do you mean by that? Be more precise. Okay, pass to side control. Good, good, good, good, good. You just answered it right there. Get past his legs. Past his legs. Why? His legs are strong. They carry you around. You could hold a person in position. They're very good defensively. They're dangerous. They're dangerous. Okay, if I end up inside your legs, if you're a skilled Jiu-Jitsu player, you can arm lock me. You can leg lock me. You can strangle me. Even if you were an untrained fighter, you could up kick me. Right. Many a man has been knocked out by an up kick. Even an untutored guy can pull an up kick. Legs are dangerous. So step number two is get past those dangerous legs. What's step number three? Go for submission. No? He must be a 10th planet black belt. Sorry, I had to throw that in some way, Joe. I'm an asshole. Step number three, Joe, you're

failing. Okay, I pass the legs. Well, I'm going to try to control. I'm going to try to either mount or, like I said, side control. You're on the right track. You're going to work your way through a hierarchy of positions. Yes. You're going to go knee on belly. You're going to go side control. You're going to transition to mount. You're going to transition to rear mount. Depending upon my game. There's a sequence of pins once you get past your opponent's legs, and Jiu-Jitsu encourages you to go through those various pins. If you look at the sport of Jiu-Jitsu, the pins score different amounts of points. Knee on belly scores a certain amount. Mount position scores more. Rear mount scores more. Why? Ever wondered about that? Why do we score the pins of Jiu-Jitsu differently? Well, there's more available from rear mount, of course. You can, of course, you can attack the neck. You can also attack the arms. You have a positional advantage where you can't be attacked. You're behind them. So it's one of the most superior positions to achieve. Very good. What about the mount? Mount, when the striking involves, phenomenal. You just put your finger on it right there, Joe. Every one of the pins of Jiu-Jitsu, the value of it is measured by your potential to strike your opponent on the ground. That's why they score more. Knee on belly scores more than side control. Because from distance of knee on belly, you can strike with more power. It's inherently unstable, however. So it scores less than mount, which is inherently more stable and offers the same punching platform. Step number three of Jiu-Jitsu is to work your way through a hierarchy of pins where the pins are graded in value according to your ability to strike with effect on the ground. So far, we've got three elements in this system of Jiu-Jitsu. Step number one, get the fight down to the ground where explosive kinetic energy is less likely to be developed by a dangerous opponent. Step number two, get past his dangerous legs. Step number three, work your way through this hierarchy of pins where the pins are understood in terms of the potential to harm your opponent with strikes on the floor. What's step number four? Step number four is try to secure a position where you can submit them. You've already got the position. So what's step number four? Attack with a submission. Correct. So we've just described Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu as a four-step system. It's beautiful, it's elegant, and it's deadly effective. Step number one, take the fight to the ground. Take away the danger of explosive kinetic energy. Step number two, get past his dangerous legs. Step number three, work your way through a hierarchy of pins. Each one graded upon your ability to harm your opponent with strikes on the ground and set up. Step number four, submissions. And now the question that needs to be asked. Where do leg locks fit into that system? And where do they fit in? They don't. Now, they don't. They don't, traditionally. Leg locks fit into the system in only one way. When the system has failed. When the system's not working and you can't take your opponent down, you can't pass his guard, you can't maintain a dominant position, and you can't get the regular submissions to work. Fuck it. Try a leg lock. Yeah, that's what you used to have. Leg locks were seen for generations as a signal of failure. When you couldn't get the system to work, you had to resort to leg locks. It meant you were a bad jiu-jitsu player. You couldn't impose the fundamental system of jiu-jitsu, and so you chickened out and you went to leg locks. That's why they were despised. That was the real reason why, for generations, leg locks were dismissed. You don't think it was because so many people were injured by them that they were... No, absolutely not. People get injured. The worst injuries in jiu-jitsu don't come from submission holes. The worst injuries in jiu-jitsu come from falling body weight, when people jump guard, when people accidentally poorly perform takedowns. That's where you see catastrophic injuries in jiu-jitsu. That's where you see career injuries. The joint lock submissions, you're out for a week, two weeks. You know, catastrophic injuries. As I said, go on YouTube and put in guard pull gone wrong. You'll see catastrophic injuries. You'll see career-ending injuries there. You're not going to see from arm bars, heel hooks, etc. You'll see people getting hurt, but it's a contact sport. You expect that. No, there's a very simple, elegant system, Brazilian jiu-jitsu. We just saw one rendition of it, the four-step approach. And you clearly see leg locks don't fit comfortably into that system. So what I did is I tried

to find an avenue where they could come in. And the results were surprising. The first thing is our four-step rendition of jiu-jitsu looked at jiu-jitsu from top position, where we took our opponent down to the ground and we were on top of them. But my study of jiu-jitsu didn't start from top position, started from bottom position. If you look at my students in competition, you will notice that around 80% of their entries into leg locks come from bottom position or with their opponent behind them. In other words, from what are supposedly inferior positions. So for me, it was never a question of losing position when I went for leg locks because I was already underneath my opponent. I started underneath. How can I end up on bottom by going for a leg lock? I'm already on bottom. So most of my early work in leg locks was how to get into leg locks from disadvantageous positions, from underneath or when someone is behind me. So I never felt this problem of, OK, I'm going to lose position if I go for leg locks. I could still play a conventional jiu-jitsu game and have a very, very strong leg lock entry. That was the first avenue of leg locking. But things became more interesting when I got further into the leg lock game and I started to realize that as you add leg locks into the game, you change the very nature of the sport. If you look at jiu-jitsu as it's ordinarily practiced, it's a single direction game. If someone is in front of me and I'm standing over them, Jiu-Jitsu is all about movement from the legs towards the head. I'm supposed to pass their guard, work my way up to chest-to-chest contact and get my head next to their head, either in front of them or behind them, either mounted or rear-mounted. So Jiu-Jitsu always goes in one direction. If you ever get stopped or you lose position, you just start the process over again. It's a mono-directional sport. It always goes from the legs to the head. Once you start adding leg locks into the game, Jiu-Jitsu becomes a two-directional sport where you can go from the head down to the legs. You can go in both directions. So if I'm passing someone's guard and I simply can't do it, I can fall back and go back into the legs. If I'm side control on someone and they start to recompose their guard, I can fall back into the legs. I'm going from their upper body down to their lower body. Traditional Jiu-Jitsu always goes from the lower body, directionally, up to the upper body so that you end up head-to-head with your opponent. But once you start adding leg locks, Jiu-Jitsu for the first time becomes a two-directional sport instead of a one-directional sport. And you can play your opponent's reactions between the threat of lower body and upper body in ways that opens up submissions so much more easily than the traditional game. So if I take you back to the moment where Dean Lister says to you, why would you ignore 50% of the human body? You go back and think about this. And what is your next step? Do you just start looking at students and looking at what you're teaching and analyzing positions? And you're still rolling at the time. Yes, correct. The first thing that I started to look at is, okay, who out there is doing a good job of leg locking? And the honest answer was, there weren't a lot of people. What you would see is random success with leg locks. You'd see a guy wins a match here, a guy wins a match there. Most of the eminent leg lockers of that generation were actually coming out of Japan. You'd have people like Romina Sato who had a decent heel hook for that time. Imanari. Imanari. That was a little bit pre-Imanari. Imanari came slightly after Romina Sato. They fought each other in grappling matches. One was younger than the other. But they had some success. I believe even Sakuraba finished Newton with a knee bar. So the knowledge was there. But there was nothing systematic about it. There weren't people who were coming out and just systematically finishing people with one move. So there wasn't much in terms of people to study. So the first thing I started to ask him is, well, what is the nature of leg locking? It seems to have some problems associated with it. It's not as controlling as the traditional methods of Jiu-Jitsu. That was really the key word there, control. Why do people favor things like rear naked strangles so much? Because it's such a controlling position. Rear mount is an incredibly controlling position. Why do people favor things like karigatami, the arm triangle? Because this too is a very inherently controlling position. All the most high percentage finishing holds in Jiu-Jitsu all have control as their dominant feature. It's hard for people. And as a result, one person can continue to use the same move with a

large degree of success over time against a wide array of opponents. So every question I asked ultimately always came back to control. And the one thing you would see with regards to the use of leg locks in the late 1990s and early 2000s was a lack of control. So all of my studies immediately went to the notion of control. Now there are many forms of leg lock, but the ones that interest me the most always come out of what the Japanese call ashigurami. Ashigurami is a generic term, it just means tangled legs. There are many different forms of ashigurami. Ashigurami is a mechanism by which I can use two of my legs to control my opponent's legs and hips. What I started to do was make a deep study of this notion of ashigurami. How am I going to use my legs to control the real estate between my opponent's knee and his hips, preferably on both sides? Probably the single biggest cliché that you'll hear about Jiu-Jitsu is that it's position before submission. At the time, I was primarily interested in the idea of control before submission. Control is a much deeper and wider concept than the basic point structure based position before submission model of Jiu-Jitsu. There are many ways to control people that have very little to do with position. For example, ashigurami itself scores nothing in Jiu-Jitsu, but done well, it can control an opponent just as well as rear mount can. So I started to see that there are many forms of control that went outside of the traditional basic positional hierarchy of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. Ashigurami is one of them. Probably the single greatest key in the development of my leg lock system, again, came from a simple realization that the greatest mistake that people had made in leg lock work prior to the arrival of the squad was that they made no distinction between the mechanism of breaking and the mechanism of control. Ashigurami was the mechanism of control. The lock itself, whether it be a heel hook, an Achilles lock, a figure four toe hold, that was the mechanism of breaking. If you watch 99% of the people out there who claim to be experts in leg locking, they don't distinguish between the two. They see, for example, heel hooking as a single skill. There's the lock on the legs, the ashigurami, or whatever term they use for it, and the lock itself. They're not distinguished. They're taught as a single skill. You can't differentiate the ashigurami and the lock. And you'll see people teaching in this manner. What I did was to strongly distinguish between the two so that my students could all hold an ashigurami position and switch from one ashigurami to another and hold people for extended periods of time and inhibit movement. If I can inhibit movement for long periods of time, I can break you at will. I can take my time when I come to break you. Because you know, deep inside, I studied lots of minds. And you know, deep down, I'm the one for you. I'm the one. I'm the one for you. I'm the one. I'm the one for you. I'm the one. My book blocks, violin drums, gold brooms. I am not rich enough to give you the life you want. But then, baby, you know me. But then, baby, you know me. Then again, baby, you know me. But then, baby, you know me. Then again, baby, you know me. I don't know if I could take this new religious bent that you've made. But this year, I'm a scientist. We've come out of the Big Bang. Come on, haven't you? You came from the Big Bang, and I came from the Big Bang. And you came from a small star, and I came from a big star. And we're all some strange part of this gaseous. Gaseous. I want to be a who. But I can't act like I am failing. My book blocks, violin drums, gold brooms. I am not rich enough to give you the life you want. But then, baby, you know me. But then, baby, you know me. But then, baby, you know me. But then again, baby, you know me. But then, baby, you know me. But then again, baby, you know me. But then again, baby, you know me. But then again, baby, you know me. But then again, baby, you know me. But then again, baby, you know me.