

Metadata: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hr\\_QEp42Dpl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hr_QEp42Dpl)

OK, let's talk a little bit about the theory of half guard, why it's one of the most popular sweeping positions in the modern sport of Jiu Jitsu. Why is that? Why are so many high level athletes happy to go out at the start of a match, drop down, pull onto half guard and work from there? A lot of it has to do with the issue of alignment and the way the human body works. Two bodies are in a resisting competitive situation and they're lined up with each other. As a general rule, if I want to be stable on top of a human being, the single easiest way for me to do this is to take a perpendicular position relative to my opponent. So if Mateus lies down, the most stable positions when you go to pin someone and control them are almost always involving some kind of perpendicular body position. Like so. If Mateus from a situation like this tried to roll me in this direction, he would find it extraordinarily difficult from the kind of situation that he's currently in. If he tried to turn into me and push in, this too would be very very hard work. Contrast this with situations where our bodies are lined up. When our two spines go in the same line, say for example he trapped my arm in this position, that same bridging motion which was unsuccessful when I was perpendicular is relatively easy for him to employ when we're lined up. So too, when I'm inside someone's guard, now our bodies are lined up. So a simple scissoring motion in situations like this, because our bodies are in a straight line, it's relatively easy for my opponent to take me down to the floor. Again, contrast this with situations where I'm perpendicular to my opponent. Now when my opponent goes to do any kind of lateral motion and move, it's so difficult for him to do so. That's why as a general rule, perpendicularity is a big desiderata when it comes to stability. You can see this throughout the sport of Jiu-Jitsu. Say for example if we were both in a standing position. If I do a basic form of throw on my training partner, and we're working like so, from here. If I throw my training partner in a way where our bodies are lined up with each other, so it's a completion of the throw, and we're going through and our bodies are lined up, it's very easy for me to be rolled through by my opponent. So I throw him, but I end up in a poor position. Contrast this with the situation where I go in to throw my training partner, and I go into a perpendicular position. So we end up straight across his side. Now when he goes to roll me through, it's a very difficult thing. So whenever we look for stability on a human being, one of the big things we're always looking for is perpendicularity. That maximizes whatever pinning potential we have. That's not to say you can't pin people when you're lined up. You absolutely can. Mounted position is a great pin. But there is going to be a stability issue. You can be taken over more easily than you can when you're perpendicular. Now the beauty of half guard is that it creates situations where you are pretty well lined up with your opponent. That means any kind of lateral motion, left or right, is going to have big ramifications for him as the man on top. So for example, if someone's here in my half guard and holding me down like so, in situations like this, you can see our bodies are pretty well lined up in a half guard situation. Our spines are almost in a straight line. As a result, we can often take advantage of this through various kinds of body motion where we can hit whip overs, for example, and start getting people turned over relatively easily. Often, we can hit destabilizations where we take an opponent over in the opposite direction. These things are very, very effective precisely because our bodies are lined up in something rather close to a straight line. As a half guard player in bottom position, you must be aware of this and take advantage of this fundamental fact of the human body that when it comes time to pin and control people, perpendicularity maximizes pinning power. When we're parallel with each other, this is going to maximize the ability for the bottom player to turn people over. Half guard is a fine, fine example of two athletes lined up in a straight line. So lateral motion, left and right movement, is going to be a big part of what we coach in this half guard series. For more information, visit [www.FEMA.gov](http://www.FEMA.gov)