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Okay guys, I'm here today with the great John Denninger again. So guys, today John is gonna show us here what are the three most important things a jiu-jitsu white belt should know. So what are the three most important jiu-jitsu techniques that a Brazilian jiu-jitsu white belt person should know. So we get this question all the time and how would you answer that John? There's a sense in which it's an impossible question because jiu-jitsu is an ocean of moves so to say okay what are three important things for me to know three important techniques because the question was said is what are the three most important techniques for us to know. Now I'm sure you'll agree with me but out of the most important things when a beginner first comes in are usually concepts. They're something that can which can govern your behavior across a wide spectrum of situations. Otherwise techniques tend to be relativized more to okay you're in this scenario here apply this technique and see what happens. But nonetheless it's still a very important question you know at the end of the day you only win a match when you go out and apply techniques. You can talk all day about concepts this and principles that but at the end of the day you've got to apply a technique on a resisting opponent and only that way can you actually win a match. So it's an important question and I believe I have three candidates which we can illustrate in this video which will make you more effective in your first week in jiu-jitsu and on throughout your time in the sport and which also illustrates some important lessons which have important carryovers into your further development as you go further down the line. So I'm going to start the ball rolling by saying the absolute most important move in all of jiu-jitsu bar none is the elbow escape. Okay this this move goes by several different names. Classically it was always called the elbow escape. There's a sense in which that can be a slightly misleading name but don't worry we'll explain it now and it'll start to make sense to you. Okay first let's understand what the hell is an elbow escape. An elbow escape is a situation where I start in a poor position pinned by my opponent. We need to start off by defining a pin in the sport of resisting jiu-jitsu. In the sport of wrestling anytime my back and shoulders are on the mat you're pinned. Okay and jiu-jitsu you have to go further than that. It's only when my opponent blocks one of my shoulders down to the mat and he's gotten past my legs and he has some kind of direct chest to chest contact or in some cases knee to stomach contact only then does it count as pinning me. Okay so if I'm on my back and my opponent is in front of my legs yes I'm on my back but it's not a pin because Bernardo is not past my legs. However if Bernardo should control my legs and go past and then from here start to come up and control my head and shoulders better okay now he's pinning me. Understand also that there are different kinds of pin here. Right now Bernardo is settling for one of the most popular all-round pins in the sport the side pin. He could for example transition to a knee on belly pin where it comes up places a knee on my stomach and from here he gets additional points in a pin like this. He could also transition his hands to the mat go forward into the mounted position and from here he's making a different form of pin okay and this scores even more points for him in this situation. He's still pinning me it's still in the category of pins but it's a different kind of pin. If I make the mistake for example of turning my back and Bernardo starts moving around I create a situation where his two legs hook into my hips. Now he has a different kind of pin. This is a very interesting one because now he's no longer chest to chest he's chest to back. Interestingly in the sport of Jiu-Jitsu even if Bernardo ended up in bottom position here he would still count as pinning me in this situation. You can see that the notion of a pin is quite different in the sport of Jiu-Jitsu to most grappling arts. It's not necessarily top and bottom it has more to do with your body position relative to the legs than it does to top or bottom. Most of the time it's the top man is pinning provided he's past the legs but a situation like this I'm technically on top of Bernardo even if we come all the way up here now I'm definitely on top of him but still I'm in Bernardo's pin because he's past my legs and he's established this hooks in upper body control etc etc. So you see that the notion of pinning is quite interesting in the sport of Jiu-Jitsu. It has to do with the idea of getting past

your opponent's legs and fixing yourself to either chest to chest or chest to back position with certain kinds of constraints in mind as you control the position. Now if there's one method that's going to get you out of these pins which trumps all the others put together it's the elbow escape. Let's start off by looking at different variations of the elbow escape and showing how it creates a situation where your opponent has passed your legs. The act of elbow escaping is essentially the act of putting your opponent back inside your legs. Now as a complete beginner in the sport you might be asking okay what's so special about that you're still on your back I don't care if you put your legs in front of it or not it means nothing to me. Well we're going to go on to show other techniques after the elbow escape which will show you the value of putting your opponent back inside your legs. You can go from a situation where you're completely losing a match to one where you can absolutely turn around and win from underneath your opponent provided your legs are involved in the movements. So putting your opponents back inside your legs after they pin you is a big big deal in this sport. Basically the entire bottom game of Jiu-Jitsu is almost all centered around the idea of keeping my legs between myself and my opponent. If he gets past my legs and gets his upper body pins he's winning. If I can keep my legs between myself and my opponent I have an excellent chance of winning even from bottom position. So let's have a look at a situation where I got off to a dreadful start and my opponent got mounted on top of me. Even a complete beginner can see that this is a bad bad situation for me and a very good one for Bernardo. In situations like this we want to form a frame where one forearm goes across my training partner's hips so that if Bernardo tries to walk forward with his knees and get into a higher and higher mount it's quite difficult for him. I take my elbow and I put it inside my training partner's knee. I'm gonna start actively looking to invert my knee so that my knee points down to the floor and my foot is higher than my knee. If my knee is higher than my foot and I try to perform an elbow escape I'm just gonna run helplessly into my opponent's hamstring and I'm never gonna get a hold of my opponent's leg. So I have to create a situation where I take my foot higher than my knee and by doing this I can easily scoop my knee underneath Bernardo's ankle and capture it. The way we capture it is by going across the second leg and locking just like so. Now I've captured the ankle I need to transfer now to the knee so I started at the ankle now I just turn my hips watch Bernardo's knee it comes off the mat and as a result it's very easy for me to go around the corner and capture the whole knee. If we bring the camera around on this side now now I'm gonna repeat the process on the opposite side I'm gonna take my elbow and put it inside Bernardo's knee and as a result I can shift my hips and bring my foot higher than my knee so that as a result my knee comes through like so. Now if we bring the camera further around now there's a potential problem when I try to take my foot out it gets caught and I feel it would take some kind of extraordinary flexibility on my part to get my legs around my opponent but if I plant my foot and shift my hips the angle changes between us and as a result it's very easy for me now to lock my ankles around my training partner's lower back. Okay at this point you are no longer pinned yes you are still on your back but you now have a situation where you're out of the immediate danger of a pin and from here we'll soon be showing we can get on the offense. So once again let's have a look at the situation. Bring the camera back around. Bernardo gets off to a strong start and goes into a mounted pin. We start things rolling by getting a hand across and locking a frame where one of my elbows goes inside his knee. I never want situations where my arms are around my opponent like so when my opponent can easily get to a higher and higher position and threaten me with all kinds of nastiness from this situation. Okay so we want to frame across the hip and inside the knee. Now I turn onto my side. There's a world of difference between being flat on my back where I'm not particularly effective and one where I turn onto my side where I can be highly effective. Now from here my foot goes higher than my knee and as a result we can easily bring our training partner's ankle into a position where we can lock the figure of four around that ankle and then turn to get his knee off the mat and as a result make a good catch. Now I turn around on this

side. I bring my elbow inside my training partner's knee on the opposite side. I shift my hips out. I bring my knee inside Bernardo's hip and we shift the second time so that from here we can quickly lock up a closed guard on our training partner. Okay so this will be a classic escape from the mounted position. Understand that the elbow escape is the most versatile of all the methods of escape in the sport of Jiu-Jitsu. It works on almost all of the major pins. So for example if Bernardo's across my side and is now pinning me in a classic side pin. From the situation I bring my elbow inside my training partner's hip. I bring my knee to my training partner's hip here. I put my foot higher than my knee so that as I shift my hips out I find the perfect angle to bring my elbow and knee together and as a result from here we can start pushing on our training partner's hips and aligning our body with our training partner. If we bring the camera around in this direction here. Now it's an easy thing for me to plant my foot on the floor. Once again if Bernardo's knee comes towards me you'll notice that my foot is stuck and it's difficult for me to bring my legs around my opponent. No problem. We plant the foot. We shift our hips out. We form an angle where even an inflexible person like myself can easily lock up around. We find ourselves once again in a closed guard situation. Again we've recovered our legs. With our legs around our opponent we're in a position where we can start to get on the attack. So once again side pin situation. Bernardo's here in an excellent pinning position. We take our elbow bring it inside the hip. We take our foot higher than our knee and we start the action of scooting our hips out. As our hips go further and further away from our opponent we get more and more space to bring our legs between ourselves and our opponent. As my knee goes to Bernardo's hips we shift our body. We align with our training partner and from here we have more than enough space to bring our legs around and lock a so-called closed guard position on our training partner and now we're ready to fight from bottom. Alternatively from a situation where Bernardo is behind me and has two hooks in. The elbow escape will work just fine in this situation too. First things first this is a potentially very dangerous situation where if Bernardo got a hold of my lapels he could start strangling me here. So this is a serious serious problem. So what we want to do here is always to monitor our training partner's strangulation hand. That's the one that comes over my shoulder and could potentially strangle me in this position. So we want to make sure we monitor that hand and lock it in place defensively like so. Now even as Bernardo holds the position I'm gonna use the fingers of my training partner's strangling hand to point the direction of my escape. The escape starts with the head. We're gonna take our feet, we're gonna plant a foot and I'm gonna turn my foot outwards. I want to fall in this direction. As a general rule Bernardo will be interested in me falling in this direction here. There are some variations to that but it's a good general rule. Now I want to determine which way I fall. I don't want him determining which way you fall. How do I win this? I take one foot and plant it. Now Bernardo is gonna try and take me to the right side. I'm gonna use my left foot to turn out. As Bernardo goes to my right by straightening my leg I force Bernardo in the opposite direction he wanted. Okay once again from a seated position Bernardo wants to take me to the right. I don't care. I just put my foot, plant it, watch my left foot turns and my toes point the direction I force him to go. Now as he hooks in tight with his legs I want to beat this bottom hook. How are we gonna do this? I'm gonna swish my legs through underneath him. I take my foot back inside his and I turn my knees to face the ceiling. Bernardo wants his head beneath mine so I take my head forward and I put my head underneath his. As a result we're able to push forward on our training partner and bring our knee over his foot. There's not much danger of a strangle now so as I monitor his strangle hand I don't let him go in and start dragging my lapels. I peck over my training partner's ankle and I start moving out and away. There's a danger now that Bernardo will start getting up on top of me into the mounted position so we perform an elbow escape. We go over the top as Bernardo gets up on top of me now. It's top position. Okay we finish the elbow escape and capture our training partner's leg. Now from this position we go through, elbow goes inside the knee, foot goes in, shrinking our body out and once

again we perform the elbow escape to put our opponent back in guard. So once again Bernardo is behind me in a very strong attacking position. First monitor the strangle hand. We can't have someone just go in and strangle us while we're trying to escape so we monitor the strangle hand, we bring our feet together. I want to force him to fall this way. Even if Bernardo makes a strong resistant body I do this by planting the foot and I turn my leg outwards and as a result we determine which side we fall towards. Now I want to beat this hook as he pulls in tight with this hook. Look how I walk my leg back until I can get a situation going where I can step over that annoying bottom leg. Look how I step over it, get my hips out and get everything down towards the floor. One big problem that many people have here if you bring the camera in is head position. As long as Bernardo's head is below mine it's very hard for me to escape. So let's take the time to bring our head forward and get bottom head position. That's going to make it much easier for us to get our shoulders down to the mat and our elbow down to the floor. Now Bernardo is forced to come up on top of me. Look how I catch him. Bernardo's ankle, make that figure of four that we're always looking for and then we just give a simple push and capture his leg in like so. Now we bring the camera on this side. From here we put our elbow inside his knee. We complete the elbow escape by bringing our knee there in front of his hip, shrimping our hips out to the side. As a result we quickly lock up a closed guard. Now can you see a pattern emerging here? In the mounted escape, the side escape and the back escape we always ended with our legs locked around our training partners hips and waist. We went from a situation where we'll pin

our opponent had gotten past our legs and was in a strong dominant pin and we put him into a situation where we had him in close guard. Now an obvious question for you as a complete beginner in the sport is okay, what's so special about that? I look at this close guard, it doesn't look a lot better to me than where you were before. The guy was still on top of me, right? Understand something. Yes, his upper body is still on top of me when we're in a closed guard, okay? So if Ferrari gets mounted, his chest and shoulders are on top of me. But more importantly, his hips are on top of my hips. That's the real problem. That's why it's a strongly dominant position, okay? Now, Bernardo, going to my closed guard Bernardo. If I elbow escape and I put Bernardo in a closed guard, yes his upper body is still on top of me. But you'll notice that my hips are on top of his hips. So even though he has upper body top position, I have lower body top position. Even though it looks on the surface, on a superficial manner, from a superficial point of view, that he's on top of me, the part of our bodies that's the most important, my hips are on top of his. So it's not obvious that this is an inferior position. Yes, my upper body is underneath him, but my lower body is actually on top of his lower body. And as a result we can start doing good work from here. One of the most important moves to start off bottom position from closed guard, which will get you thinking in the right terms in the sport of Jiu Jitsu, is to understand how we can use a position like closed guard, which when you first see it doesn't look particularly promising, and turn it into some magic where you can turn fights around from underneath. So we're going to go through and we're going to take a cross cuff grip on our training partner's gi right here. We're going to get a hold of our training partner's arm and we're going to pull our training partner's arm on by using our legs. My legs pull inwards and as I break the grip, we're going to send our training partner's arm straight on by into position where the elbow has been beaten. You have now gone halfway towards your opponent's back. Even though you're underneath your opponent, you've beaten your opponent's arm. So technically, though you're underneath, you're in a fine position to begin attacking. What determines our ability to attack from here is our ability to get our head higher than his head. So we're going to go through and hold on to our training partner's lat muscle. We're going to now take our second arm and pull it out and start building up to an elbow. So I come back on my elbow and I prop up on the elbow like so. As a result, my head is now higher than his head. Now, what seemed like a rather unpromising situation, your legs wrapped around your opponent, you underneath them, is starting to look a damn sight

better now. You're halfway behind your opponent. Now from here, we're going to unweight our bottom leg by putting all the weight on the top leg. Because I'm higher than my opponent's hip, it's very easy for me to slide around behind my opponent and start to go through into a fine attacking position. I'm going to post my second leg inside. At this point, you can see we're traded places. Our opponent had a good pin on us and now you have a good chest to back pin on them. So you've gone from a 100% defensive situation to a 100% offensive situation. Now from here, we're going to go through on our training partner, make a strong body movement, and we're going to take a lapel grip on our training partner like so. We're going to take our second hand, don't worry, I'll show you once we emerge from this top position, and grab our opponent's opposite lapel. As a result, we can go down towards the floor and start the action of pulling our opponent on top of us. If we bring the camera around in this direction, let's just look at my hand position. I've taken my thumb and gone inside my training partner's lapel. And as a result, we're now in a situation where I can use my left arm, my left hand, to take the slack out of my training partner's jacket by bringing the lapel down. Now from here, we start to exert the strength of our legs into the strangulation. I take my right foot and pass it over and inside my training partner's armpit so that I can employ a pushing force with my right leg. As my two legs push away, we get a strong pulling force as my entire body weight comes back into the strangle. So as my head moves away from my opponent, all my body weight goes back and into the strangle, while all the strength of my legs goes forward into the strangle. And it creates an immensely strong scissoring force, which will strangle my opponent in a very short order of time. So what have we got here? What's the big picture we've got? We've got a sense in which we started off in the spirit of Jiu-Jitsu in a very poor defensive situation. Our opponent was in a powerful pin from where they could easily defeat us. And we saw that the key to getting out of a pin situation in Jiu-Jitsu is to recover our legs. We don't care if we get put on our back, but we do care if we get put on our back and our opponent gets past our legs. So your number one prerogative is to get your legs back between you and your opponent, so that you can use the strength of your legs to wrestle a bigger, stronger opponent from bottom position. The absolute king of methods of doing this is the elbow escape. And you would be well off if you just spent your first year of Jiu-Jitsu just practicing elbow escapes. Of course, you need to know other things, but that wouldn't be a bad start, believe me. Now, once you get good and adept at the elbow escape, you can get out of dangerous pins and start putting your opponent back in some variation of guard. We looked at probably the most well-known variation of close guard, where our ankles lock around our opponent. Now, when you first look at close guard, it doesn't look that special. It looks a little strange, to be honest with you. And it might not strike you as a position where you go out and win fights from. But understand that because your hips are on top of your opponent's hips, the most important part of your body is actually in top position, even though the rest of your body is underneath your opponent. And as a result, you can start performing some incredible moves from there. One of them turns the nature of the fight around completely. It's a transition where I'm in close guard to one where I beat my opponent's arm and swivel around behind my opponent, taking advantage of the fact that my hips are on top of his hips. And as a result, we can get around into probably the most well-known form of victory in the sport of Jiu-Jitsu, the art of strangulation. Let's understand something about strangulation using the lapels. If you look at Bernardo's jacket and, of course, my jacket too, you'll see that the material involved in the lapel is very, very similar in nature to the material of the belt. And you will start to understand that really what the gi is, and there's a very obvious sense in which the gi is simply a belt or a noose woven into a set of sleeves. So you will see how the belt mirrors the action of the lapel. And just as a rope around your training partner's neck could be used as a superb method of strangulation, probably the most efficient method of strangulation, so too this lapel is essentially that rope around your opponent's neck. Just as a murderer would use a rope to strangle, so too a Jiu-Jitsu player can use this superb lapel as a murderer's rope around his

opponent's neck. We want to make use of it whenever we can. Now when we're behind someone, just as we could use this kind of strangulation technique with a belt, so too we can go in on a training partner and create that same kind of effect of strangulation. In fact, we can do it even better, because here I'm only using the strength of my hands to enact the strangle. But when we employ the dominant pins of Jiu-Jitsu, we can start to employ by far and away the strongest part of the human body, the legs, if we bring the camera over here. Now, as my legs pass over my training partner's shoulders, I have a pushing force with my legs and the pulling force of my entire body weight, which creates incredibly strong strangulations. The key idea in these strangles is the idea of slack removal. When I go in on my training partner, I want my second hand taking all the slack out of my training partner's lapels. Just as when we work with a murderer's rope, the idea here is we want to take the slack out of the noose. Here the noose is ineffective as a strangulation implement. But once we create that ligature around our training partner's neck and take the slack out, that's when it becomes a superb instrument of strangulation. So too, when we work in like so, we use a two-on-one lapel feed. We feed the lapel onto the thumb. We bite our hand up into a strong strangulation position. Now, the right hand takes all the slack out of the jacket. I haven't even applied the strangle hand yet. You can see Bernardo's already starting to feel the effects of the strangle. Now, when the legs go over the top, we have this incredible ability to use the legs to push and the upper body to pull. And as a result, we create enormously strong strangulation. So running through all of this very quickly now. Let's start off with Bernardo in a mounted pin. We're going to work our way out of the mounted pin using the elbow escape, the king method of putting our legs back in a situation where we can use our legs to fight our opponent's upper body. Once we've done that, we use the closed guard position. We use the fact that our hips are on top of our opponent's hips to shimmy around behind our opponent and go from a bottom position, which is somewhat neutral, to a strongly dominant position where you're behind your opponent and you can use the incredible power of strangulation to end a match in your favor. So once again, we start off, bottom mount situation. We need to capture the foot first. So our first target is going to be the foot. We turn and capture the foot. The second target is going to be the knee. Then if we bring the camera on this side, we move around the body. Now the second, sorry, the third target is going to be this knee. So we elbow escape and lock. And then the fourth target is going to be our opponent's hips. We go around the corner and capture the hips with our legs. Now, even though I'm underneath Bernardo, my hips are on top of him. So as Bernardo goes to assert grips on top of me here, we're going to go through and take our training partner's arm on by. I use my legs to pull my training partner in. It looks like I'm pulling with my arms. It's actually my knees pulling behind. Even with no hands, you can see the pull with the knees is a very strong one. However, his bracing arm, make strong braces Bernardo, will stop my legs pulling him in. So we need to be able to take the arms on by to be able to pull in effectively with the legs. Now we've exposed our training partner's back. So that even though we're underneath, our hips are on top. And as a result, you can start the action shimming out to the side. I build up to an elbow and get my head higher than his head. As a result, I can create an unweighted leg. Look at my left leg, pulls my hips off the floor, and my right leg becomes weightless. And as a result, we can quickly go in and start scoring a flying attacking position. From here, we fix up that first lapel grip. From this position, we go down towards the floor, and we tilt our training partner over. Then from here, we find either the wrist, the second lapel, and in some cases, the pants. Okay, they're all excellent alternatives. But for now, let's focus on slack removal to come in here and feed our leg over the top of our training partner and end up in the perfect position to go into strangulation. The key element here is the use of the legs going in one direction, and the upper body going in the other. So that even with a single finger, we can create enormously strong strangulation pressure. So this creates a sense in which we work with the key themes of the sport of Jiu-Jitsu. The idea that ultimately, we always want to be able to recover from a bad start. If you look

at an untrained fighter, probably the single most common thing you see is that if they get off to a bad start, they never recover and they lose. One of the great things about a Jiu-Jitsu player, you can get off to a terrible start and come back strong. The number one method of coming back strong, the one that you will be using throughout your time in the sport of Jiu-Jitsu is the elbow escape. Bernardo, I'm sure you'll agree with me, that was probably your happiest first moments in Jiu-Jitsu, by the time you first started hitting elbow escapes. I agree, yeah. I think that's true for all of us. Yeah, Roger, I think it was very good because you did pretty much like an overview of how to escape from a bad position, from side control, from mount, from back. Then, how to sweep and how to get back, because if you stop on top of your opponent, coming from behind, that's considered a sweep. And you also work in this triangle. We covered the essential ideas of defense, top and bottom position. These are key themes in the sport of Jiu-Jitsu. Everything begins with defense, okay? You have to recover from a bad position. Then the idea of working effectively from bottom position, one of the absolute key themes of Jiu-Jitsu, okay? Most grappling styles, if you're on bottom, you're losing. Simple as that. In Jiu-Jitsu, you can absolutely win almost all of your matches from bottom position if you so favor that method. And then finding the idea of turning a situation where we were chest to chest with our opponent to one where we were chest to back. That's always our favorite thing. If you can get behind people, life's good, okay? That's an easy place to start winning fights from. So as much as possible, we're trying to push the dynamic of every match towards chest to back situations. And if we get chest to back, that's when we can start taking advantage of this murderer's rope, which is around our necks every time we put on a jacket. And if you can get a hold of that when you're behind people, you're going to have a lot of success in the sport. Yeah, no, that was amazing, John. I think it was a great overview for all the white belts out there. And also, not only white belts, but I think it's always good to review all this stuff. It's funny, I'm sure you'll agree with this. The happiest times as teachers you have, you come and teach a beginner's class. Yeah, I love it. My favorite things to teach are the fundamentals. Even though I'm mostly known as someone who teaches more advanced classes, it's the fundamentals that always put the biggest smile on my face. So guys, I hope you guys enjoyed. And we are launching all the fundamentals series from John. And the first one we launched was the escapes, the pin escapes. And now we're about to launch the guard retention. That's going to happen in July 2019, in case of you were watching after that. So make sure to keep an eye out for BJJFanatics.com, and we have all John Denham products there. All the best, John. Thank you. BJJFanatics.com. Use the promo code YOUTUBEFARIA to get 10% off any instructional video. Improve your jiu-jitsu faster. BJJFanatics.com