

Metadata: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yquAL8CBIdY>

We just looked at the idea of inside position and inside control. Now let's go to the other element which we have to work concurrently with that, the idea of grip. Now, it's very, very important you understand gripping will be probably the first activity you engage in in any grappling match or even just everyday sparring. It's absolutely critical that we distinguish between positive and negative gripping and the notion of gripping for a purpose. If I have an opponent in seated position, one thing which I always preach to my students is the idea of positive gripping. This is gripping for a purpose where they use grips to enter into attacks. There's two basic ways we can use gripping. We can use it in a positive and a negative way. If I have an aggressive opponent underneath me and I'm afraid of his grappling skills, I may well use gripping in a negative sense. If he goes to get a grip on me, my whole thing is just to pull away. If he takes inside position, my whole thing is just to negate him. I'm not playing a positive game, I'm playing a very negative game where every time I feel him get any form of grip on me, I'm simply breaking grips and moving away. This is the exact opposite of the spirit in which I want you to learn. This is a very negative kind of game which doesn't lead into any kind of submission. There's a sense where you're actively trying to deny your opponent's control, but at the same time you're not trying to assert your own control that leads towards submission. Done in this way, grip fighting is a very negative and I think a very poor display of jiu-jitsu. What I teach to all of my students, and you'll constantly see them assert this in competition, is positive grip play where they try to assert a grip upon their opponent with a purpose that leads them towards submission holds. Very often you will see opponents of my students play negative grips just to back away from what they see as dangerous attacks. You will see a situation where one guy is trying to work with positive grips and the other guy with negative grips and it can deteriorate into a rather boring looking match. Let's focus on this idea of what constitutes a positive gripping game. If we switch positions, when I grip I must do so for a purpose. I must have a clear sense of what I'm trying to accomplish. If my goal is for example to get into some form of ashi garami, my initial gripping must reflect that. So I must have a clear sense of what I want to achieve. Let's say for example I wanted my opponent to put his right leg up to facilitate a grip into ashi garami. A good way for me to do this would be to assert an initial double wrist grip and threaten an arm drag. If my opponent keeps his knee on the floor to the arm drag then it's very easy for me to access his back. So I had a clear sense of what I wanted to do. My opponent knows that. He knows back exposure is a bad thing. So when I go into the drag he puts his leg up. That's a smart thing for him to do. If I continue the arm drag, my opponent can put his leg over mine. From here my arm drag deteriorates into a situation where I'm just pulling him on top of me. I didn't get his back at all. Knowing all this I can play a very positive gripping game where I threaten an arm drag. I get a wrist control. I threaten a drag. I see my opponent come up and now from here I switch to a two-on-one grip on my training partner's leg. Now I have a positive form of gripping which leads me directly into an ashi garami. This would be a simple example of a sense of direction with gripping. I began with what I wanted. I knew from the start what I wanted to achieve. Some form of ashi garami contact. I engaged in a gripping game which led us inexorably towards that goal. This is the sense in which I want you working with the notion of gripping. Have a sense of where you want to go. Grip with a purpose and get to your goals.