

Metadata: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48qJCTEKuY>

Now, we've gotten to the chest-to-chest position, and we're trying to negate our opponent's initial attacks upon us. We know that our opponent's initial attacks are mostly comprised of getting to the underhook position, getting up on his side, off-balancing us to the left or the right with bridges and knee levers, and of course, his fundamental move from bottom, the elbow escape. So if my opponent's down, if I ever create situations where my knee gets away from his hip, it's so easy for my opponent to elbow escape and put me back in guard, okay? So I've got to monitor the space here between his hip and his knee and make it difficult for him to hit elbow escapes. I've got to be cognizant of the fact that he can off-balance me to the side with knee levers in one direction and bridges in the other. I've got to be cognizant of the fact that if he gets an underhook on me, he can start building up to a base and getting into the single leg situation and off-balance me and sweeping me, okay? Wouldn't it be amazing if we had a universal or fundamental stance that we could work with, a starting position, which did a good job of shutting down all of those problems? I've got good news for you. There is a fundamental starting position which gives you an unfair advantage when you first start the half guard passing game, which enables you to negate much of what he does from bottom position to try and gain advantage. And if we make use of this first time every time, you're going to be a lot more successful when it's time to pass your opponent's half guard. Is this the only successful starting position? No, there are others. Some of them are quite good, but this is the one I want you to focus on, okay? The idea is, first, shut down your opponent's elbow escape because that's the most common form of resistance we run into. If my knee flares too wide and his knee comes through, it's so easy for him to put me back in guard, okay? So that's our first thing. I need to monitor the space in front of his knee. So I need my knee to come in towards his hip, like so, okay? Second thing, if my knee is on the floor, it's so easy for my opponent to knee lever and off-balance me. Second thing, if I come too far over to my hip in an unsupported position, he can bridge into me and cause problems, okay? Thirdly, if he swims in here and gets an underhook and then gets his shoulder far up off the mat, that's going to be a problem, okay? Then he can start sweeping me and moving me around, okay? So what's going to be my fundamental starting position to stop all this from happening? Well, first, starting the blocking of the elbow escape, I put my knee in, I get a hold of my training partner's upper body with a mild cross face. Don't worry, we'll be going in much more detail into cross faces soon, but this is our first one, okay? I just put my hand behind my training partner's back and hold him like so. Now from here, I'm going to turn my body in like so, so that my foot is cocked behind me. I don't sit down with a straightened leg. Now a simple bridge will knock me backwards. I don't put my hip on the floor, not yet anyway, okay? I bring my foot in here so that my foot is like a spring behind me. I can use that spring to push back when he bridges into me. He bridges and I can push back like so. I make sure my knee points towards his hips. If my knee points towards his shoulders, he can easily elbow escape and put me back in guard. So my knee points in towards the hips. You'll watch my right knee comes off the floor. So when he goes to knee lever, it has no effect. If I put my knee on the mat, the knee lever takes me over easily, okay? So this is our fundamental starting position. My knee faces towards his hips. So when he goes to elbow escape, it's difficult. My knee blocks him. My foot is cocked behind me on the floor. So I can use it to push into my opponent. So when he goes to bridge, it's difficult. This knee here is off the mat. So when he goes to knee lever, it's very, very difficult, okay? The last key to the puzzle is this shoulder, okay? The more this shoulder comes up off the mat, the more problems we face, okay? I want this shoulder down to the floor. Now here's an interesting thing. I want this shoulder on the mat. How am I going to put a shoulder back down on the floor? Nine times out of 10, people are going to tell you, oh, it's easy. It's your cross face. Your cross face puts him back down, okay? So he brings his body up. The idea is I put on a cross face and I use cross face pressure to put his shoulder down. That's not true. If Giancarlo makes a strong, resistant body and I try to use my cross face to put him down,

I'm doomed to failure, okay? Strong body, Giancarlo. I cannot push his shoulder down with a cross face, okay? As he turns into me here, it's going to be very easy for him now to elbow escape and put me back and down. What puts his shoulder down is not cross face pressure, it's movement. In particular, a certain kind of movement which I refer to as a lateral shift. A lateral shift is where I walk across his body and I walk his hip down to the mat. If I can make his hip touch the mat, look what happens to his shoulder, okay? If the hip touches the mat, so will the shoulder. So when he's got an underhook, I never try to cross face him when he's got an underhook, okay? Look what happens when he hikes his underhook. I lose all my position. I try to cross face him here, it's a disaster. Now I've got no control over him at all. So what we do is we don't use the cross face to put his shoulder and hip down to the mat, rather we use movement. Strong body, underhook. Now I walk across his body and now he's flattened out. Giancarlo is always looking for situations where he comes up on his side. I'm looking for situations where his shoulder and his hip go down to the floor. So we start off and I walk, one, two, three, and now he's flat. Now when I apply cross face, now it'll be effective. My cross face is not effective when he has an underhook and I just got this naive cross face like so. When I try to put cross face pressure, he puts underhook pressure, and now I'm done. So what we do in these situations is we walk, one, two, three, knee on the floor, and we flatten him out. Now when we go to apply our cross face, he goes to move around, and it's so difficult. He goes to apply knee lever, my knee's off the floor, it's so difficult. He goes to elbow escape, my knee points towards his hips, it's so difficult. He goes to bridge into me, my foot is cocked behind me, it's so difficult. And so in this way, I use our fundamental starting position to shut down all of his ability to off balance me or gain advantage from bottom position. So let's quickly run through this again. What we're fighting against is first, the elbow escape, second, the knee lever, third, the bridge, fourth, the underhook, and fifth, his shoulder and hip position. And I can win all five battles with one position, the fundamental starting position. He gets everything he wants, okay? We take our body and we point our knee at our training partner's hip and take our knee off the floor. So my left knee points at his hip, right knee comes off the mat. I use movement to flatten him out. I take a cross face grip, like so, and I turn my body to this position here, okay? When he goes to bridge into me, it's difficult because my left foot is cocked behind me. When he goes to elbow escape, it's difficult because my knee points towards his hips. If my knee points to the armpit, it's so easy for him to elbow escape. Here I'm blocking. When he goes to knee lever, it's difficult because my knee is off the floor. If my knee was on the floor, it's so easy for him, okay? Now from here, when he goes to use his underhook, it's difficult because I'm walking him down to the mat and I put my forehead on the floor. When he tries to use his underhook, it's worthless. If I was up here, that underhook would be very, very useful. When I'm sitting on top of it with my head on the mat, it's worthless, okay? So this is our fundamental starting posture. I recommend whenever you get to the half guard, chest to chest position, take this posture to shut down your opponent's five most effective off-balancing moves from bottom position and get yourself off to a good start. Go to Beadaholique.com for all of your beading supply needs!