

Metadata: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpwglQJbR\\_o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpwglQJbR_o)

Being able to spar as a way to test and practice our techniques against real resistance and intensity is one of the more important aspects of jiu-jitsu that makes it such an effective martial art. However, for most people starting out, sparring is intimidating, uncomfortable, and discouraging. And as we progress, sparring becomes an easy way to kind of just fall into a flow state and go where the roll takes you, which leads to not much development of your jiu-jitsu game. This video is not going to be catered towards beginners in jiu-jitsu. Not to say that if you're a beginner that you're not going to find value in the video, but the video is going to be catered towards colored belts and how to use sparring effectively to progress. We're going to do a deep dive into what I believe is the best way to go about sparring, but at the end of the day, we all learn differently. So at the end of the video, we're going to talk about some different options that were discussed in the discord. And one of the Patreon members even created a tool that combines intention with reflection, which spoiler alert, I think is the overarching theme of all the strategies we're going to discuss in this video when talking about sparring. So if you're interested in joining the discord to have access to this tool, as well as conversations with many people who are interested in developing their no-gi jiu-jitsu, please leave a comment down below and I will send you the link to the discord server. And if you would like to support the channel, the link to the Patreon will also be in the description below. So with that being said, let's get into the video. Now when talking about the ideal scenario to incorporate new techniques into our jiu-jitsu, let's compare it to baseball. And again, in the interest of giving credit where credit is due, I got this idea from George St. Pierre's book. But the idea is when you're first learning to hit a baseball, you'll start with hitting off a tee where you'll learn the mechanics of the swing and how to actually swing a bat effectively. Then you'll work your way up to soft toss where there won't be much resistance. They'll just kind of toss the ball to you and you can work on your timing a bit. Then you'll progress to batting practice where there'll be a pitcher, but the pitcher won't have the intention of beating you. They're trying to help you with your swing. Then ultimately you try to hit a ball against the pitcher who is trying to strike you out. It doesn't really make sense to teach you how to swing for 10 minutes on a tee and then throw you in against the pitcher who is trying everything they can to not let you hit the ball. But unfortunately this is how a lot of jiu-jitsu schools operate. And because most of us are students that do not have the ability to control the curriculum, it's important to understand how we can cater sparring to meet this ideal scenario so that we can continually progress our jiu-jitsu. So this video is attempting to answer the question of how to create this ideal scenario in say an open mat or a school that has a heavy emphasis on sparring. A lot of schools will have enough variety of training partners where you can pick and choose which partners you want to train with based on what you're trying to improve in your game. If you think about the batting practice analogy, the time spent in a game situation trying to hit a ball against the pitcher trying to strike you out is relatively small. The majority of the time is spent in the practice leading up to the game. So when you're picking a training partner, we typically have three options. We can partner with someone who's worse than us, the same as us, or better than us. I believe certain partners are better than others depending on what you are trying to work on. For example, if you're trying to work on a new attack from half guard, then most of the time should be spent with training partners that are worse than you. However, if you're trying to work your heel hook defense, I think training with people worse than you can be dangerous. No matter what people say, they have egos. If a white belt gets a hold of a purple belt's heel, they might have something to prove at the expense of your leg. Compare that to a black belt that has your heel. They will most likely apply pressure slowly or maybe even just let you work the escape. Obviously, there are exceptions to both of these generalizations, but at the end of the day, your safety is your own responsibility. So pick your training partners and practice wisely. Let's say you just watched Andrew Wiltsy talk about half guard and you want to give it a shot. We can break this down into specific technical details as well as

general principles. Again, to give credit where credit is due, the principle approach stemmed from the Gracie brothers and I'll leave a link to their video in the description below. But the technical side of the technique would be to get a good bite on the leg, put your opponent's hands on the mat as you slide down their body, and get a deep underhook as you turn onto your side, and so on and so on. The principles being displayed in this technique are that you're controlling one of your opponent's legs with two of yours, you're off-balancing them, so it's a form of kizushi, then you're creating angle. So now when it comes time to spar and we have this new half guard sequence on our mind, what do we focus on? Do we focus on the technical portion or do we focus on the principle portion? So the goal of sparring is to get our timing better, right? We drill so that we understand how to do the technique, but we spar to understand when to do the technique. In baseball terms, you can have the best swing in the world, but if you swing at the wrong time, you're gonna miss. So timing is super important, and when we're trying to implement a new attack sequence into our game, the goal is volume. We want to get as many reps as possible in against resistance. The advantage to rolling with someone worse than you is that you can often steer the direction of the roll without much effort. I can put a white belt in half guard for 10 five-minute rounds and still probably have energy to do it some more. Compare that to a black belt. You can start in half guard, try the technique once, and it doesn't work, so they pass your guard. Now you have to recover your guard, and it requires a lot of energy to do that. Finally, you recover it and you try the technique one more time, it fails, you get smashed for another two minutes until the round ends with you exhausted. If our goal is volume, it makes sense that the majority of our time should be spent with training partners that are worse than us when trying to add a new offensive technique. If you're doing the technique against someone worse than you, I recommend to focus your attention on the technical side of the move, so the little details that are going to make it work against very good people. When we're first starting out, this is not realistic to expect us to do this against people that are better than us. So when we're rolling against people that are better than us, our focus should shift from specifics to principles. The specifics to a half guard technique apply only to half guard, but the principles apply to every position in jiu-jitsu. So when you're rolling with someone where you can't steer the direction of the roll to half guard, it's important to still practice the principles of that move that you're working on. So say for this week you're focusing on the principle of kuzushi, of off-balancing. So when you're in half guard, you try that specific technique that you're working on, but when you're not in half guard, you try to implement that principle of kuzushi. People that are the same rank as you, I believe, should be the least of your time sparring. These are typically competitive rolls and can be exhausting. Again, our goal is volume and not to tire ourselves out. The benefit of rolling with someone your rank is you get to see how the move fits into your overall game. So there is value in rolling with people that are your same level, but I think the main value is after you have had some initial development and success against people that are worse than you. Our ultimate goal is submission or sweep when practicing our new offensive technique and anything other than this is easy to consider failure, but this can be discouraging. Instead, if you are focusing on the principle of kuzushi for this week, consider getting hands to the mat a success. You are successfully off-balancing your opponent. Against all your training partners, if you can get their hands to the mat the first week, that is a success. Against people worse than you, this is most likely going to be from half guard. Against people better than you, this might be from the bottom of the mount, but regardless, you are getting used to the idea of using kuzushi from a lot of different positions. So not only is your half guard technique going to benefit from this, your overall game is going to benefit from this practice, but it's important for us as upper belts to not fall into the trap of saying things like, oh, I'm a purple belt. I should be smashing this white belt, right? No, you're learning a new technique that you currently suck at, and right now, all you can do is get their hands to the mat, and that's okay. Now, as you start to develop your game around this technique, you're

going to learn to capitalize when they put their hands on the mat, but right now, getting their hands to the mat for this first week is a success because you chose to focus on the principle of kuzushi. So that is how I think the best way to go about sparring is. Now, we're going to dive into some other ways that we discussed in our discord. Now, if you've been around jujitsu long enough, there's a good chance you've tried to start a journal where you talked about maybe the move you learned that day, some techniques you used in training that you had success with, and then some problems that you ran into. This can be beneficial, and in a lot of ways, this YouTube channel is my version of a journal, but a lot of you found that it is difficult to be consistent when journaling. You're pretty brain dead at the end of the day, and even if you are consistent, you don't go back and check it very much, so it's not as beneficial as it sounds. Another strategy we talked about is giving yourself a goal leading up to training. So an example of this strategy would be to tell yourself to hit three ankle locks today, and people find that this is a good way to give themselves direction as you spar. It can also lead to seeing different connections or entries that you didn't see before because this is your primary focus during the training session. Another plus is that it will help with the finishing mechanics for a specific submission. You'll learn the limits of that submission and the ways to apply it successfully. A downside is that the measure is typically a successful submission, and like we talked about previously, this can be discouraging if you do not get it down right away. Another downside would be that you are not practicing natural follow-ups. So for example, instead of taking an easy guard pass, you might be so set on getting the ankle lock, which is obviously fine, and you'll learn the limits of that submission if they escape, but I'm just saying that the habits being developed could not be the best habits. Now the last idea that we talked about was setting an intention, and Chewy has a video on this, and I'll leave that link in the description below, but basically he says the intention you set for the day can be technical or it can be mental, like trying to breathe more during your sparring or something like that, but the idea is to give your rolling in intention, and I think at the end of the day that is what all of these strategies have in common. If you are sparring with intention, you will find you will progress much faster than if you were just sparring and seeing where the roll takes you. Now if you combine this intention setting with some sort of reflection like journaling, that I think is when you'll really start to see yourself progress. I hope you guys enjoyed the video. Please consider subscribing, and if you would like to support the channel, check out the link to the Patreon page in the link below, and we're always hoping for more people to join the Discord to contribute to conversations such as this, and we'll see you in the next video.