

# ***MMA Mastery***

## ***Ground and Pound***



***Mark Hatmaker***

***NHB's #1 Author***

# ***MMA Mastery Ground and Pound***

***Mark Hatmaker***

***MMA Mastery #2***



Cover photo by Mitch Thomas  
Interior photos by Doug Werner

**TRACKS**

Tracks Publishing  
San Diego, California

***MMA Mastery  
Ground and Pound  
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Chula Vista, CA 91910  
619-476-7125  
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www.startupsports.com  
trackspublishing.com

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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Publisher's Cataloging-in-Publication

Hatmaker, Mark.

MMA mastery: ground and pound / Mark Hatmaker ; cover photo by Mitch Thomas ; interior photos by Doug Werner. -- San Diego, Calif. : Tracks Pub., c2010.

p. ; cm.  
(MMA mastery ; #2)

ISBN: 978-1-884654-39-8  
Includes index.

1. Mixed martial arts--Training. 2. Hand-to-hand fighting--Training. 3. Wrestling holds. 4. Wrestling--Training. I. Werner, Doug, 1950- II. Title. III. Title: Ground and pound. IV. Title: Mixed martial arts mastery: ground and pound. V. Series: MMA mastery ; no. 2.

GV1102.7.M59 H382 2010  
796.815--dc22

2010930697  
1008

## ***Books by Mark Hatmaker***

No Holds Barred Fighting:  
The Ultimate Guide to Submission Wrestling

More No Holds Barred Fighting:  
Killer Submissions

No Holds Barred Fighting:  
Savage Strikes

No Holds Barred Fighting:  
Takedowns

No Holds Barred Fighting:  
The Clinch

No Holds Barred Fighting:  
The Ultimate Guide to Conditioning

No Holds Barred Fighting:  
The Kicking Bible

No Holds Barred Fighting:  
The Book of Essential Submissions

Boxing Mastery

No Second Chance  
A Reality-Based Guide to Self-Defense

MMA Mastery:  
Flow Chain Drilling and Integrated O/D Training

MMA Mastery:  
Ground and Pound



Books are available through major bookstores  
and booksellers on the Internet.

This one's for Doug.  
A good man who took a chance  
and for that I am forever grateful.

***Acknowledgements***

Phyllis Carter  
Kylie Hatmaker  
Dan Marx  
Jackie Smith  
Mitch Thomas  
Shane Tucker

**Warning label**

The fighting arts include contact and can be dangerous. Use proper equipment and train safely. Practice with restraint and respect for your partners. Drill for fun, fitness and to improve skills. Do not fight with the intent to do harm.

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## ***How to use the MMA Mastery and NHBF Manuals***

This book and the others in this series are meant to be used in an interlocking, synergistic manner where the sum value of the manuals is greater than the individual parts. What we are striving to do with each manual is to focus on a specific aspect of MMA and give thoughtful consideration to the necessary ideas, tactics, and strategies pertinent to the facet of focus. We are aware that this piece-



meal approach may seem lacking if one only consumes one or two manuals at most, but we are confident that once three or more manuals have been studied the overall picture or method will begin to reveal itself.

Since the manuals are interlocking there is no single manual in the series that is meant to be complete

in and of itself. Instead, we think of each manual as an individual piece or section of a comprehensive master manual (with this volume, the master manual clocks in at over 2900 pages). For example, although *NHBF: Savage Strikes* is a thorough compendium on MMA/self-defense striking, it is bolstered with side-by-side study of *Boxing Mastery*. While the book *NHBF: Killer Submissions* introduces the idea of chaining submissions and can be used as a solitary tool, it is made all the stronger by an understanding of the material that preceded it in the first submission manual, *NHBF: The Ultimate Guide to Submission Wrestling*.

And so on and so forth with each manual in this series. With that out of the way, let's explore an area of ground fighting that is too often given intellectual short shrift in MMA instruction.

## *Introduction*

# ***Raining Uninterrupted Hell***

Let's talk ground fighting. Chances are the mention of ground fighting to a Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) com-

petitor/enthusiast conjures images of beautifully executed submissions intricately set up with deft placement of limbs in positions that might appear more like a tangle of appendages to the uninitiated eye. And those images do, indeed, play a large part of what the ground fight is all about. But we are aware that there is another aspect of the ground fight — the point where striking and ground positioning meet. The ground fighting strategy was originally designated “ground and pound” to refer to Mark Coleman’s on-the-mat strategy in the early days of the UFC.

There is something admittedly primal about seeing one human completely corner and pin another to the ground and then rain uninterrupted hell.

The ground and pound strategy reaps huge results (more on that in a bit), and we fans do appreciate a devastating ground and pound KO perhaps just as much as a highlight-reel-worthy standing KO. There is something admittedly primal about seeing one human completely corner and pin another to the ground and



then rain uninterrupted hell. It is something that feels somehow more dominating, more definitive, more “in your face” than finishes in other fashions. And yet, despite the fearful respect given to and the dominance of the ground and pound strategy, it is seemingly still given intellectual short shrift in the ground fighting equation. We see far more attention given to the abilities of the successful submission technicians (deserved attention) in comparison with those who seem to forgo the submission and opt to strike instead.

The roots of this difference in evaluation may lie in two judgments: perception of execution difficulty and the assumption of skill level. The first is a relatively easy concept to wrap one’s head around. Submissions are not natural movements. They are hard earned skills effective only after many hours of diligent practice. Initially, submissions are artificial skills. By no means is the definition “artificial” meant to imply that submissions are not valuable. I mean artificial in the sense that if a healthy untrained individual is attacked, chances are they will throw up their hands and strike (clumsily, but strike, nevertheless) and/or grasp at their attacker. And no one would mistake these clumsy grasps for anything approaching a submission. I sincerely doubt in the history of humankind that the hypothetical untrained individual responded to an attack with a chance cross-body arm bar. Such skills do not occur naturally. They must be learned.

Recognition of the difficulty of attaining the prerequisite submission skill level to be competitive leads to a degree of respect for well executed submissions under pressure that grounding and pounding (grasping and

And yet, despite the fearful respect given to and the dominance of the ground and pound strategy, it is seemingly still given intellectual short shrift in the ground fighting equation.

striking) does not seem to elicit.

The second proposed reason for the differing evaluation, the assumption of skill level, is a corollary of the first. There seems to be a school of thought (not necessarily well considered) that although we may appreciate a ground and pound victory, we still seem to assume that those who pursue ground and pound over submissions lack the technical ability of the submission artist.

It's easy to see where this assumption might be made (incorrect as it may be).

We have seen evidence in competition of novices to MMA with good athletic ability step into competition and deliver a ground and pound victory over a gifted submission player. But we never see relative novices deliver the same surprise trouncing over the submission artist via submissions. The evidence that ground and pound can turn the tide even at early stages of the learning curve leads us to believe that ground and pound is what you do when you don't know subs.

But we seem to be seeing a tilt in favor of the ground and pound strategy over submissions by today's elite

A strategy that can be evolved from the natural tendency to grasp and strike and transformed into a quantifiably qualitative tactic with its own science and precise technical vocabulary.

athletes, and this tilt seems poorly explained by assuming a lack of skill on their part. Today's MMA competitors are arguably far more knowledgeable about the benefits of submission work than the pioneering athletes who steered this sport through its early and middle period.

Therefore, I don't think it's quite accurate to assume ignorance on their part for forgoing submissions more often than not. It seems to be more a conscious decision to ground and pound with

skill and to take the sub if, and only if, the gift is in their hands. But even then sometimes not.

That's what this manual is about — providing an aid to the school of thought that recognizes the ground and pound strategy for the fearsome tool that it is. A strategy that can be evolved from the natural tendency to grasp and strike and transformed into a quantifiably qualitative tactic with its own science and precise technical vocabulary.

Now that you know what you will find between these covers and why, here's a little on what you won't find.

## ***Ground and pound for MMA***

This manual is intended to concentrate on MMA ground and pound only. You can make a few self-defense transfers, but I suggest if self-defense is your focus that you instead read our manual, *No Second Chance*. There you will find a complete ground arsenal as well as our thoughts on grappling as a negative in the grim world of self-protection.

And this is not a submission manual. We have addressed that topic elsewhere, and we will again in the future. We address a few submissions, but only at the margins. Meaning that if the submission has a direct dovetail with the offered ground and pound technique, we provide that link. We also address submissions plus striking where we use the ground and pound strategy to rectify a “stuck” submission.

With those caveats out of the way, let’s look at some quantifiable, qualitative backup for the ground and pound strategy as being even more valuable than the almighty submission. That’s right, I said more valuable.

## ***Knock out versus tap out***

Before we get to the instructional portion of the material, I need to explain that “ground and pound is more valuable than submissions” remark. I want you to fully comprehend that we are not dealing with opinion or personal wishes, but with direct observation of data.

In our book, *NHBF: The Book of Essential Submissions*, we introduce the science of fight metrics to MMA in order to quantify which strategies, tactics,

and techniques prove of high utility, moderate utility, low utility and, in some cases, zero utility in elite level MMA competition. That manual seeks to streamline the training process so you can trim the fat from your regimen and focus on the high return tools. For an in-depth look at the fight metrics process and how you can apply it to your own training across all aspects of the fight, I refer you to that manual. But I want to review one portion of that material here — the portion of the data that has to do with ground and pound and how it stacks up against submissions in elite level competition.

The initial fight metrics study surveyed 640 fights sampled from UFC and PFC events. Out of 640 fights, 114 were finished with ground and pound. If we add the total wins for striking, vertically and horizontally, the striking score is 269 wins.

Out of 640 fights, 187 were finished via submission. You might compare those numbers — 114 ground and pound victories versus 187 submissions — and deduce that my assertion is way off base and we need to give prominence to submissions, but ...

Approximately 75 percent of those 187 victories (140) via submission were set up with a vicious ground and pound attack that seemed to make the acquisition of the submission viable. In other words, without the ground and pound preceding the submission, the submission, in all likelihood, would have failed. In many cases submission attempts without strikes preceding them were simply ineffective. In a great many cases the ending submission seemed to be in a gray area where

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the submission was acquired after damaging strikes had already been delivered. And it appears that a few more strikes would have done the job just as easily. In some cases more easily.

If we revise my approximation and add only 50 percent of the 187 submission wins to our already established 114 via ground and pound alone, the ground and pound utility score rises to 207 versus 187 submission victories.

In addition to these raw numbers in favor of

ground and pound, we need to factor in the time constraint barrier and the value of our sweat equity.

## ***Time constraint barrier***

Combat sciences/martial arts have endless vocabularies to choose from, both in the individual technique sense and strategic approaches. Sure, we know that striking is key, but which weapon do we choose to perfect — the jab, the rear knee, the elbow, the spinning outside crescent kick, the crane's beak? We face the same wealth of approaches when it comes to overarching strategies.

**Develop the techniques and strategies that have direct, observable, high-yielding and reproducible rewards.**

Do we spend most of our time becoming better boxers or better ground fighters? Spend more time honing our kicks or perfecting our takedowns? Developing our submissions or tightening our ground and pound game? You get the idea. We have an abundance of material

to choose from and that is a good thing.

But let's be realistic. There are only so many hours in the day and only so many of those hours (or fractions of hours) that we can devote to training. Knowing that we must pare down our training schedule to realistic proportions, it is only logical that we make the most of those training sessions. Should we shoehorn every conceivable technique or strategy that comes down the pike into our already limited apportioned training time or is it wiser to prioritize like we do with any other limited time endeavor?

Let's say you have a tight schedule this week and you can make only one trip to the grocery store and that trip has to be squeezed into 10 minutes. Do you dally in the spice aisle ticking away the minutes seeking to pick up sage in order to recreate your grandmother's recipe for stuffing? Do you browse the international food section looking for a new sauce to shake things up at the table? Or do you stay mindful of the tight schedule and the immediate needs of you and your

family and head for the staples — eggs, milk, bread, coffee, whatever you consider important for the week (at my house it's peanut butter and anything with caffeine in it). I'll wager you went for the staples. This quick shopping trip strategy is exactly the sort of mentality with which we should approach our training — work the staples. Develop the techniques and strategies that have direct, observable, high yielding and reproducible rewards.

Working the job pays dividends as it is arguably the most important striking weapon in the toolbox. Training the crane's beak at the expense of the job when a crane's beak has never (ever) manifested itself as a viable strategy in MMA competition or street work is akin to dallying in the spice aisle letting your family go hungry. (Of course, please invert my advice if your target goal is, say, wu shu competition where a beautifully executed crane's

**Aim to make high utility technique and strategy work your paramount focus and leave the esoteric or lower utility work (shopping for spices) for “free time.”**

beak is held in higher regard than the job). I advocate that you approach each training session as a precious resource, akin to the forced short trip to the grocery store where you must select the most nutritious items that will feed you and your family. Aim to make high utility technique and strategy work your paramount focus and leave



the esoteric or lower utility work (shopping for spices) for “free time.”

This “time efficient” mentality is exactly how you should approach the ground and pound versus submission dilemma. Allocate training time for each proportional to their observable rewards. Do not be afraid to let low performing techniques or concepts go. Trash these low performers ASAP. By being willing to subtract when necessary, are we able to add newly gained training time to higher utility tools and, thus, multiply our training rewards.

Time isn't the only limiter. Sometimes it's what's inside our skulls.

## ***Sweat equity***

Sweat equity is the physical/intellectual work that you must put into an endeavor or project to fulfill the demands of the project or goal. For example, if you decide to remodel a room in your home yourself, you would wisely tally the costs of materials to ensure, at the outset, that the financial budget will permit the remodel. What is usually not factored in do-it-yourself projects is the cost of your own labor. We are accustomed to labor charges in all other arenas where others do the work, but in DIY projects we often forget to add the costs of our own efforts. These efforts are the sweat equity.

For our hypothetical remodeling project, we need to factor in not only how long we think said project will take, but we also need to factor in the sweat equity

We want the most bang for our buck in the fastest amount of time. Given a choice between more now or more later, we usually opt for more now. Again, there are only so many hours in the day. We have some choices to make.

costs of travel/shopping time to pick up the materials and even the time cost of planning the project. If we have determined that overall the proposed project will take approximately 30 hours of our time plus material costs, we then have a decision to make among three choices.

1. We are comfortable with all costs and proceed with the project.

2. The costs of material or sweat equity or both outweigh the benefits

of the project, so we kill the project.

3. We are comfortable with the material costs, but the sweat equity costs are too high, so we pay someone else for their sweat equity.

We need to approach our training sessions with the same realistic eye on sweat equity costs. Human beings by design are stingy — both with time and resources. We want the most bang for our buck in the fastest amount of time. Given a choice between more now or more later, we usually opt for more now. Again, there

The fight metrics data reveals no effective pounding without efficient grounding preceding it. In other words, without good grounding skills there will be no glorious pounding.

are only so many hours in the day. We have some choices to make.

Let's play the IF game. If you have your eye on being an MMA competitor, and if you have good athletic ability ...

If you are technically a blank slate, and if you are wired like all other human beings with a natural tendency to grasp and strike over inculcated submission technique ...

If you have only so many hours to allot to training, and if you are consumed with choosing highest returning yields for your time and sweat equity ...

Look at those numbers again that reflect overall costs of time and effort. What would you choose to spend your time on?

## ***Ground before pound***

OK, let's assume you buy the wisdom of the empirical numerical data regarding the efficacy of ground and pound over submissions or that you at least want to supplement your submission game with a ground and pound framework. The material within will work for

the believers and nonbelievers alike as is always the case where there is friction between empiricism and dogma. Facts serve all equally well regardless of faith, whereas belief must be twisted into cognitive pretzels to “fit the facts.” But before we get started with the technical portion of the program, we need to focus our attention on the first word in the ground and pound dictum — ground.

More often than not when people envision ground and pound, they are actually thinking “pound” and give little thought to the actual grounding beyond a cursory acknowledgement of a good takedown that preceded the pounding. This is a bit shortsighted — a cart before the horse situation. The fight metrics data reveals no effective pounding without efficient grounding preceding it. In other words, without good grounding skills, there will be no glorious pounding.

What I mean by grounding skills is the vocabulary of movement that enables a good ground fighter to ride, pin, control and pressure his opponent into an inferior position. In essence, effectively cutting off most avenues of escape before dropping the bombs. The few (very few) fights in the fight metric data that show a ground and pound victory with zero to poor grounding preceding them were the result of a slow stoppage. That is, the fighter was clipped and KO'd or TKO'd on his feet. The conscious fighter wisely pursued his quarry to the mat and exploited the situation before the ref diagnosed that the man was out on the way down. In all other scenarios, a conscious fighter with his wits about him (and perhaps more importantly his conditioning) must be grounded effectively and effi-

It is with a respectful eye on that first word “ground” that we have assembled this manual. We will offer a stripped down positional ground vocabulary, add a dollop of movement drills and a few other necessities before the first blow is ever thrown.

Ground before pound. Always.

ciently before pounding.

Two cases in point are Matt Hughes in his second fight with Carlos Newton and in his victory over Royce Gracie. Matt used an efficient stripped down wrestling vocabulary and took great pains to lock down his men and then pressure them tight before delivering the punishing pounding. These two victories are beautiful embodiments of a corollary of the “position before submission” dictum, which takes as axiom that one must control one’s opponent before setting up a submission. The obvious corollary is that one must ground an opponent effectively and efficiently before pounding.

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Ground before pound. Always.

If we wish to keep our energy expenditures at a minimum and still maintain top position, it is wise to re-position our thinking to a riding context ...

## ***Ride versus pin***

You can divide the grounding game into two broad categories — riding and pinning. Pinning easily comes to mind as it is the root of many wrestling systems where the object is to pin one or both an opponent’s shoulders to the mat for a preordained time. To pin, it is neces-

sary (just as it is defined) to freeze the opponent into place to achieve victory.

Pinning is energy intensive because it requires you to not only achieve top (dominant) position, but also to physically restrain a bucking, twitching and struggling opponent. Pinning is tough work, which is one reason why so many victories come via points and other allowances in the sports where the pin is, presumably, the ultimate objective.

Only once the bottom man's energy has been expended do we see an active commitment to lock the man into place to better set up the final blows.

Riding, on the other hand, is less concerned with freezing an opponent into a static/stagnant position than it is with remaining in the top/dominant position no matter how that position manifests itself. To better envision the difference between the two, let's go to a rodeo and observe our recollections of the bronco or bull riding event. When the competitor saddles up, he does not attempt to

subdue the bull by sheer force of his leg squeeze. We see no attempts to subdue the animal into a stock-still position (as ludicrous as that picture may be). What we do see in the most successful riders are good "spurring" technique (hooks), good hip placement and fluid mobility to adjust to each pitch and roll of the massive animal beneath them.

If we wish to keep our energy expenditures to a minimum and still maintain top position, it is wise to reposition our thinking to a riding context. Like the rodeo competitor, we allow the animal beneath us to burn its energy as it sees fit while we expend far less energy by simply reading and following his movement rather than attempting to physically lock the bull into place.

Let's look to a few beautiful examples of excellent riding in elite competition. The individual for each example is Brock Lesnar. Those familiar with Lesnar's size (he is a massive human being) and skills (dominant wrestler) might imagine that he would have entered MMA competition with an eye on grounding his opponents and then pinning them as both his skill and bulk would presumably dictate. But Brock took a different direction. He rode and rode beautifully.

If we examine carefully Lesnar's riding in his matches versus Heath Herring or even his loss in the first match to Frank Mir, his fluidity is textbook. Lesnar makes no attempt to use his energy to lock/pin his quarry down. Instead we see agile movement that reads the bottom man's energy and uses that continuous feedback as punctuation to speed up the bottom man's exhaustion process. Only once the bottom man's energy has been expended, do we see an active commitment to lock the man into place to better set up the final blows. From an efficiency perspective, this is exactly the approach to pursue.

## ***Hands free***

Another huge benefit of riding over pinning is the ability to "multi-task" while riding. I am aware that human beings actually multi-task poorly. I use the term to indicate near simultaneous events in sequence as opposed to true multi-tasking, which leads to performance degradation. Pinning, by its very nature, requires both hands/arms to assist in the task therefore taking them out of the running in any "hit on the move" gambits. Riding is more of a "hips thing" akin to body



Another huge benefit of riding over pinning is the ability to “multi-task” while riding.

surfing and actually requires little input from the hands or arms.

This one (or both) hand(s) free approach allows you to hit while riding. These hits serve as punctuation, tenderizers, demoralizers, spurs to the direction of your

choosing, and as stop signs on roads your opponent might choose to take. Hitting while moving is akin to the boxer’s strategy of “hitting on the fly” wherein you pepper your opponent with jabs and/or loose hooks while evading. Seldom do you see knock outs via hitting on the fly, but anyone who has been on the receiving end of this strategy can vouch for its frustrating quality.

## ***Ground and pound training continuum***

I heartily suggest approaching the ground and pound material in the following stair step manner.

1. Position/Destination in Isolation — Work the riding positions as if they were pins. Play with them in a stock-still manner checking for any defects in your positioning. If you can't hit them perfectly without movement, with movement there will be little chance for success.

2. No Destination Riding — Next work the fluid form of the ride on a moving opponent. Do not, at any point, come to a rest/destination position. No Destination Riding is exhausting, but building this stamina is essential for an effective grounding game. Bear in mind that as tiring as this sort of riding is, it's far more sapping for the person taking your weight.

3. Riding to Destinations — Use fluid riding to travel to designated static destinations or impromptu destinations. Learn to ride fluidly and then stop on a dime when a perfect "rest stop" presents itself. Your destinations may be called by your coach or may be of your own choosing.

4. Static Destination Pounding — Return to the stock-still position of step one and work your entire round(s), firing the appropriate pounding arsenal while checking that you never lose positional integrity.

5. Ride to Destination Pounding — Ride and each time you stop at a destination (whether designated by the coach or self-designated), commence pounding. Stop pounding upon the command to “Ride.” Rinse, wash, repeat.

6. No Destination Pounding — Hit entire rounds of zero destination riding and punctuate with hitting while moving throughout.

7. Ground and Pound — Here, it’s all in — hitting on the move and hitting in destinations.



## ***Use the man, not the mat***

I beg forgiveness of all female competitors consuming this material. I assure you I mean nothing eliminatory by the use of “man” in the

heading. It’s simply a phrase that should echo in all good ground and pounders’ noggins.

Many a top position player ruins (or at least mitigates) his advantage by carrying more of his own weight than is needed. Good top players should strive to give as much pressure/weight to the athlete on the bottom as can possibly be managed without sacrificing base/balance. This giving of maximum weight/pressure to the bottom player explains the “use the man, not the mat” axiom.

If at any point in your ride you find one or both elbows on the mat when they don’t need to be, you are doing more work than the bottom player. Likewise, if one or both knees are on the mat, this is unnecessary work for you and a lucky opportunity for your opponent. If your hips are on the mat, ditto. Who should be doing most of the work here? You, the mat or your opponent?

It is with the “use the man, not the mat” decree in mind that I urge you to give careful reading of the descriptions of the positions and not merely rely on the photographs. The photos, as instructive as they may be, may not always communicate all the minute details. So let’s assume that, yes, a photograph is worth a thousand

words, but let's also assume that the 25-50 words that accompany the photo doubles or even triples its value.



## ***Sternal arrow***

OK, I want you to pause in your reading right now and use the fingers of your right or left hand to feel your sternum, the bony plate that shields your heart and lungs. Allow your fingers to trace a centerline down your chest until it comes to the bottom of your sternum. At the bottom you will most likely feel a bony notch — this is the sternal notch.

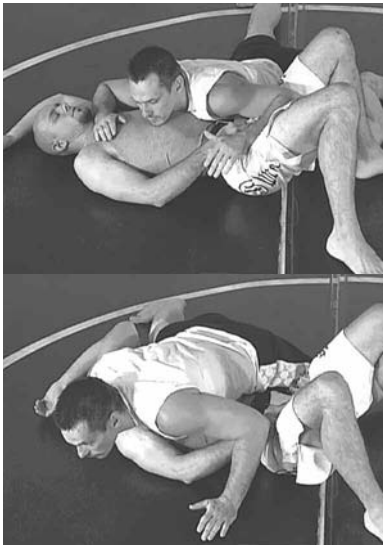
Now that you've located the sternal notch, travel your fingers approximately one inch above the notch. There will most likely be no landmark, but I want you to commit this area of the sternum to memory all the same. Imagine a virtual arrowhead approximately 2 inches long emerging from this landmark. This arrow emerges from your body in a facing forward direction. Have you got this picture in your mind? Good, now do the following.

Look around the room or environment you are currently in. Don't merely turn your head, orient your body so that this sternal arrow is facing whatever object(s) come to your attention. Allow this arrow to

become a directional point of focus. The truly committed might want to spend a few days occasionally orienting the sternal arrow in everyday life. There's no reason why anyone in your vicinity need know what curious activity you're up to, unless weirding people out floats your boat. If so, feel free to announce, "I'm orienting my sternal arrow upon you." Please write from prison with details of how they reacted.

Let's take the sternal arrow concept to the ground game. The arrow, as you have already gathered, is your focal point, your point of contact and your pivot axis all in one tidy package. If you have top position and find your sternal arrow pointing anywhere but directly into your opponent's center of mass, chances are you are riding lightly or in danger or being reversed. If any portion of your chest other than the sternal arrow region is making contact with your opponent, again, you are most likely riding lightly and in danger of

losing position. During an active ride, there will be numerous changes of position. If you pivot on any point of your body beyond sternal arrow contact, you're heading for trouble.



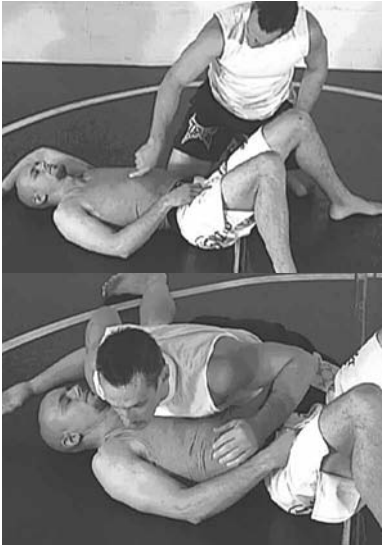
In each and every position and ride that follows in these pages as well as in the pounding portions of the material, aligning the sternal arrow is job

#1. Even if I fail to mention sternal arrow alignment, it is always implied.

## ***Dissect your opponent by bisecting***

I want to provide a simple formula for inflicting the maximum weight/pressure upon your opponent. A formula that also reduces your chances of being bridged, rolled, bucked, pressed, swept or reversed. In short, a formula that provides the basis of both the offensive and defensive game. This formula can be summed up in one word — bisecting.

We want to bisect our opponent in three dimensions (only two dimensions are needed at any given time): length, width and height. In addition to these three dimensions, we must recognize the three ways an opponent may be positioned upon the mat: supine, prone or on his side. The good news about your opponent's positional orientation is that we need recognize it only as a dimensional reference, that is, a width, length or height approach. There is no need to alter your game plan according to prone, supine or sideward positions.



### ***Widthwise bisecting***

This is an easy concept to grasp. Simply envision a line drawn down the length of your opponent's body from the top of his head to his crotch describing his midline. Your job when positioned to either side of your opponent is to never allow your sternal arrow to cross this imaginary line. Maintaining proper midline relation-

ship allows you to ride with good pressure and reduces the chances of being “overrotated” into a reversal position.

While being sure not to cross the line with your sternal arrow, you are also advised to keep your arrow as close to the midline as is comfortable while riding to assure maximum pressure. Riding too far from the midline (even too far on the “good side”) offers too little pressure/weight on your opponent.





***Lengthwise bisecting***

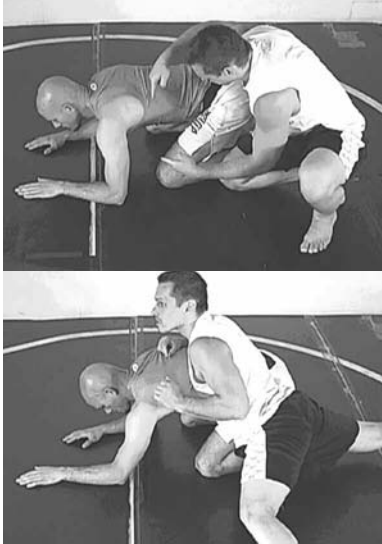
When we approach an opponent along his long axis (entering from his head or from his feet), we are approaching him lengthwise. Lengthwise axis riding is ideally approached using the “just below the sternal arrow” approach. If you are riding with a top body hold/lateral press/upper four corners hold/69 position, what-

ever you call it, ideally you will position your sternal arrow just below his sternal arrow (keeping in mind that approaching from the head makes your “below the arrow” point two inches from the sternal notch toward his head). Positioning yourself any further along this longitudinal axis will increase the risk of being reversed.

Riding lengthwise with an approach from the feet is approached in one of two ways: either a mounted/top saddle position or while inside the guard/bottom scissors position. Again, you will position your sternal arrow two inches below his. In this approach, “the below” relationship is toward his feet.

As odd as the concept might feel initially, riding in this “low mount” position assures tighter (but not ideal) hip control. The reason why this isn’t ideal will be clear when we discuss height bisecting.

This same “below the arrow” concept inside the guard allows for the fact that you may occasionally “posture up.” But by sprawling back quickly to the proper sternal arrow relationship, you can put the kibosh on the majority of sweeps that are predicated in “high-riding.”



### ***Height bisecting***

Length and width riding are fairly easy concepts to grasp, but they are nothing without adding the proper height component. Violating the height rule is the most common error in the top ground game.

Just as we describe imaginary lines in the dimensions of length and width, we want to bisect

our opponent in the height dimension as well. We do this by sighting along the top of our opponent’s body (his chest if supine, his upper back or hips if prone) and then envision an imaginary point midway between the top of his body and the floor. Once we have that midway point, we want to keep our hips below that midline. This concept will come as no surprise to wrestlers, but might feel a bit awkward to those used to riding on their knees. Trust that the gains in pressure and control are enormous.

To ride well in this height dimension, you will place

your sternal arrow wherever appropriate in either the length or width dimension and then sprawl to drop your hips below the midline in the height dimension. This rule should almost never be violated (a few exceptions will be discussed later in the manual).

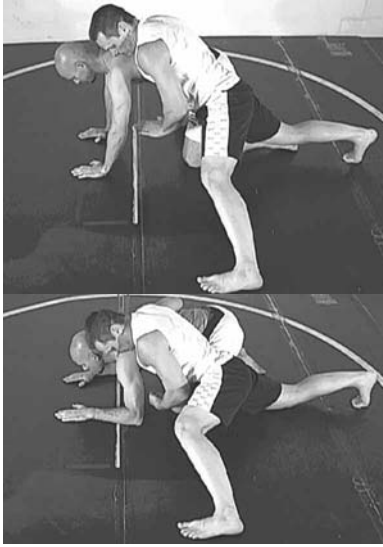
Height riding is subject to variability. For example, if your supine opponent bridges/arches his hips from the mat, the midline changes position, but the reference points are the same — midway between the top of his body and the mat. If your opponent scrambles to hands and knees, find the midline between the top of his body and the mat. As long as you place the sternal arrow properly and align the hips below the midway point on the height plane, you'll have 90 percent of the riding game down.

But what of that last 10 percent?

### ***Unifying the bisections***

Once we have bisected along the three planes, we've got one more angle to take care of to steamroll your opponent. To give maximum pressure to your opponent, you must learn to intersect two of your planes (either height and width or height and length). To do this you will need to develop an aggressive hip-in. But first, let's talk about where the unification point is.

Let's assume that you are riding an opponent width-wise (a cross-body ride as in the pictured example) and have found your height midpoint properly. Your sternal arrow should be directed to the mat directly beneath your opponent — in essence, a virtual arrow spearing him to the mat as if he were a butterfly in your collec-



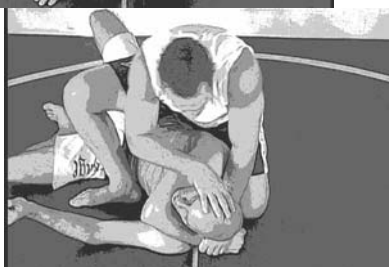
tion. Along the shaft of this virtual arrow will be the height midpoint, the point below that is where we want our hips to ride.

While keeping your sternal arrow properly positioned, you want to hip-in (think sprawl or arching the hips) toward this midpoint on the sternal arrow shaft. The successful imagined ver-

tical intersection of these two bisections greatly increases the perceived pressure of the bottom man. In every ride (static or fluid) that follows, you are to keep at the forefront of your mind the concepts of bisection and hipping-in.

With this longwinded preamble out of the way, we now turn to building that vocabulary.

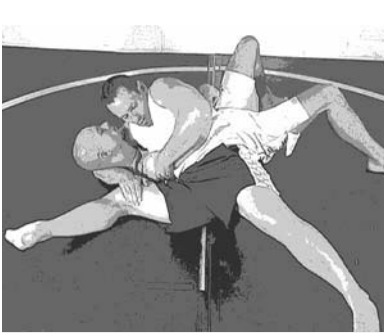
## MMA Mastery: Ground and Pound



# 1 *Static rides*

What follows is a complete arsenal of static rides for the ground and pound game. These static positions are destinations or stopping points along the journey of aggressive fluid riding and should be trained using

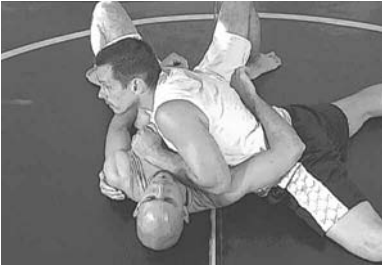
the already introduced Ground and Pound Training Continuum.



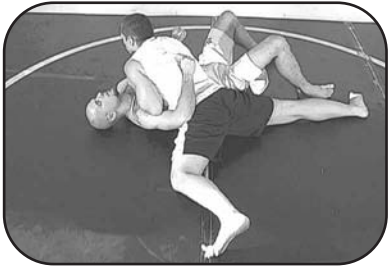
These rides are ground and pound specific thus making them MMA and (in worst case scenarios) street ready. I call your attention to this point in

the happenstance that you notice your favorite ride is not present in the arsenal. Or you may wonder why we introduce a distinctly different version of a common ride. It is because just as we can strike from the top, we can be struck from the bottom, and often the introduction of strikes alters the way a ride should or would normally be utilized in a strike-free rule set.

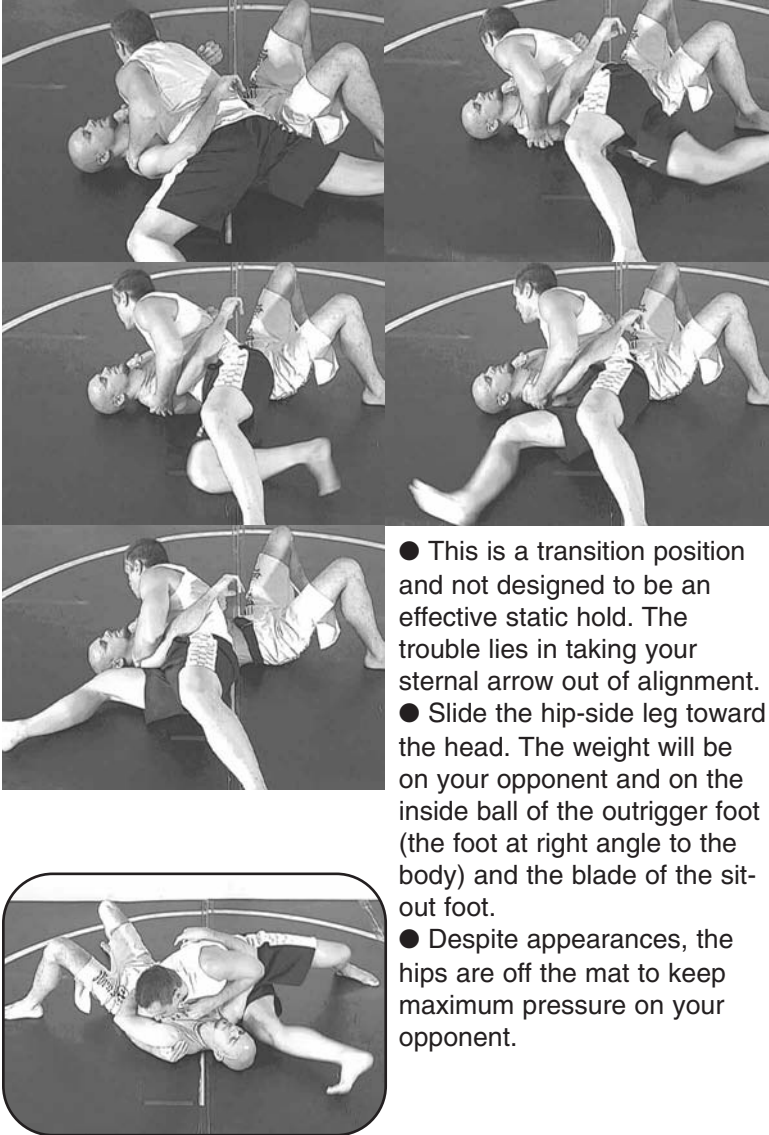
**Cross-body ride**



- Hit your bisections and hip-in.
- All the weight will be on your opponent and the inside balls of the feet.
- Although the hips are low, they are held off the mat to keep pressure on.
- For those still not used to the hip-in concept and mistake the photographed position for one easy to re-guard, keep in mind that a strong hip-in punctuated with a hip-cut (turning the hip-side pelvis point to the mat) will block the re-guarding knee.



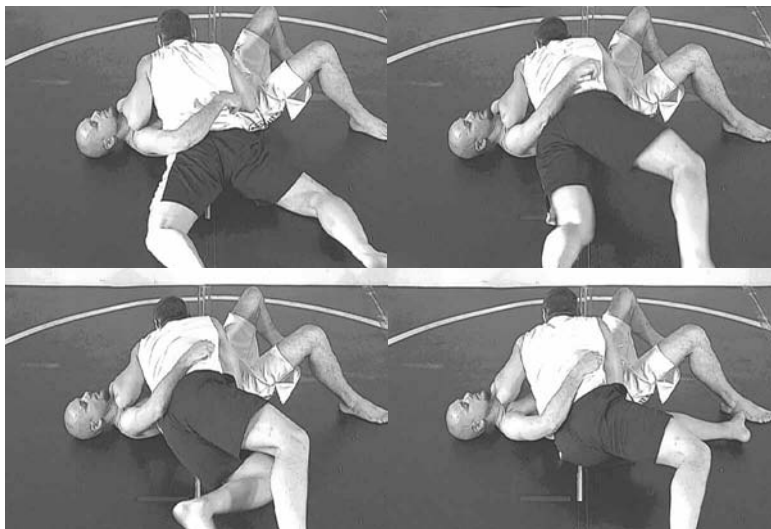
**Sit-out cross-body ride — toward head**



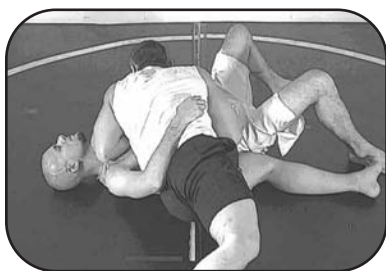
- This is a transition position and not designed to be an effective static hold. The trouble lies in taking your sternal arrow out of alignment.
- Slide the hip-side leg toward the head. The weight will be on your opponent and on the inside ball of the outrigger foot (the foot at right angle to the body) and the blade of the sit-out foot.
- Despite appearances, the hips are off the mat to keep maximum pressure on your opponent.



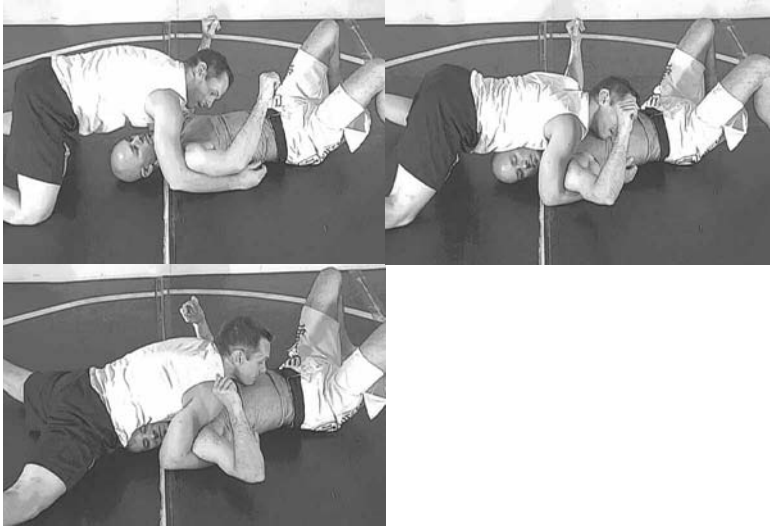
***Sit-out cross-body ride — toward hips***



- Another transition position.
- Reverse the steps from the preceding ride.

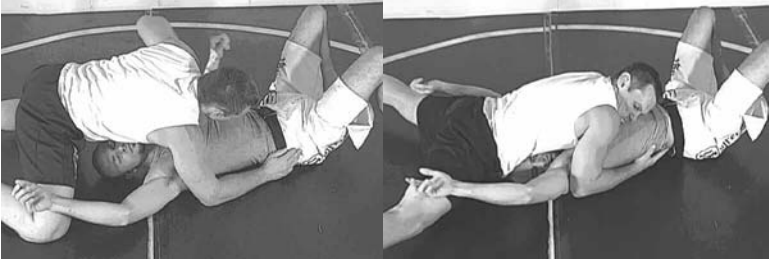


**Top body ride / lateral press / “69” — under arms**



- Align your sternal arrow and hip-in giving pressure to your opponent's head.
- The weight distribution is as in the cross-body ride.

**Top body ride / lateral press / “69” — over arms**

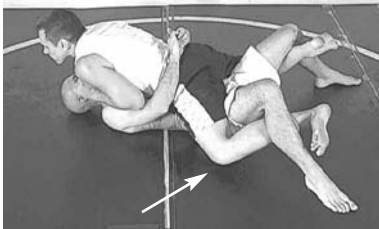
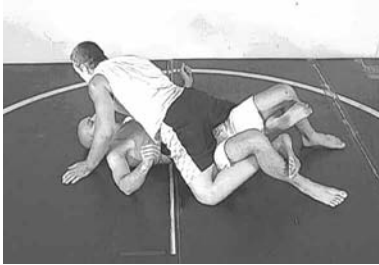


- The same as the preceding ride except that your arms are over his.
- There is no need to make a distinction about which is “better,” arms over or under. These positions will be determined by accident of scramble. The constants will always be bisection and hiping-in.

**Note**

Top saddle/mounted rides violate bisection and sternal arrow concepts and can be harder to maintain on skilled opponents precisely because of these violations. We compensate for these rule violations by using some hand assists.

### ***Top saddle / mount — spurs in***



- Hip-in and hook spurs in (also called double grapevines). Wrap your insteps over his lower legs from the inside.
- Use spur control and a harsh hip-in to stay on top.
- A harsh hip-in will leave your knees free floating above the mat.

### ***High top saddle / mount — face post***



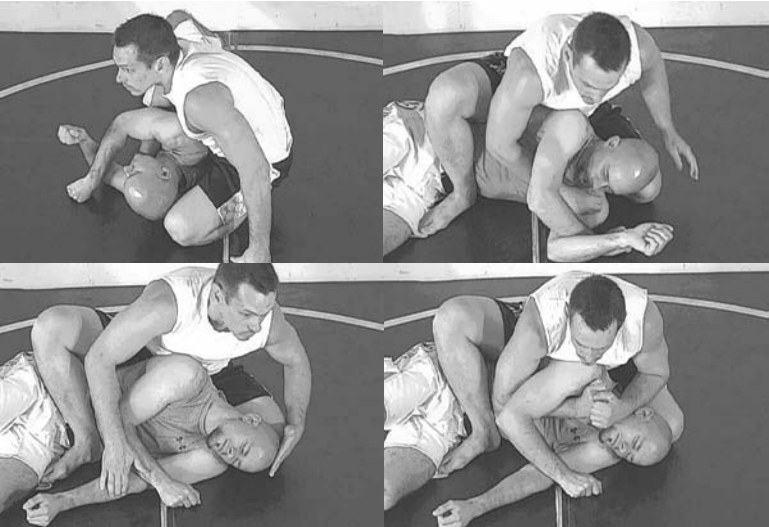
- If you choose to ride high, elbows to armpits, you must ...
- Run your knees directly into his armpits and squeeze in with your legs — leave no space between your lower legs and his body.
- You must also use head control to stay on top.
- You can post one hand on his face driving it into the mat with aggression or ...

**High top saddle / mount — head lift**



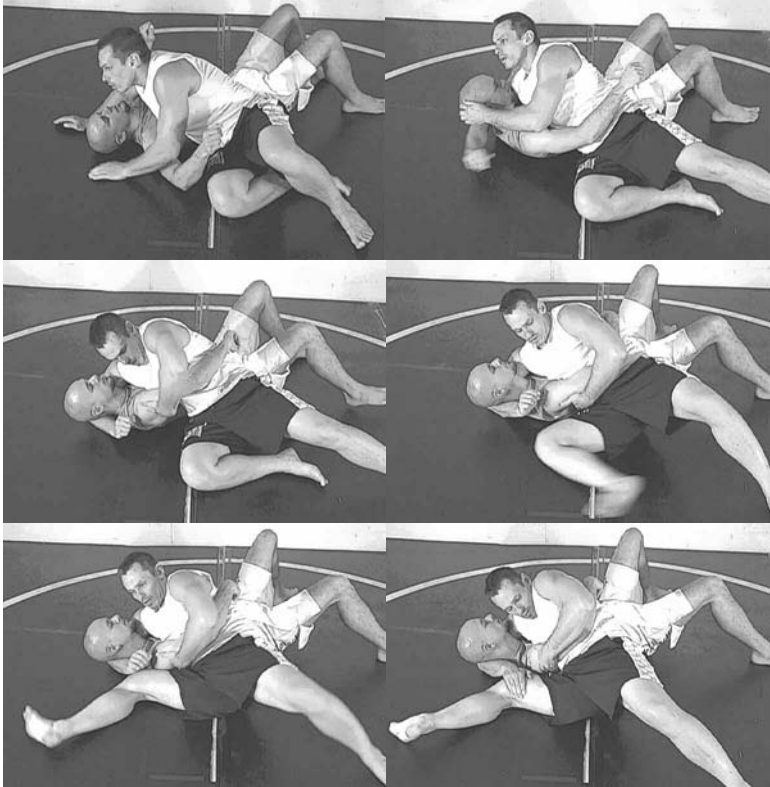
- Scoop the back of his head from the mat and lift.
- A good head lift removes bridging.

**Squat mount**



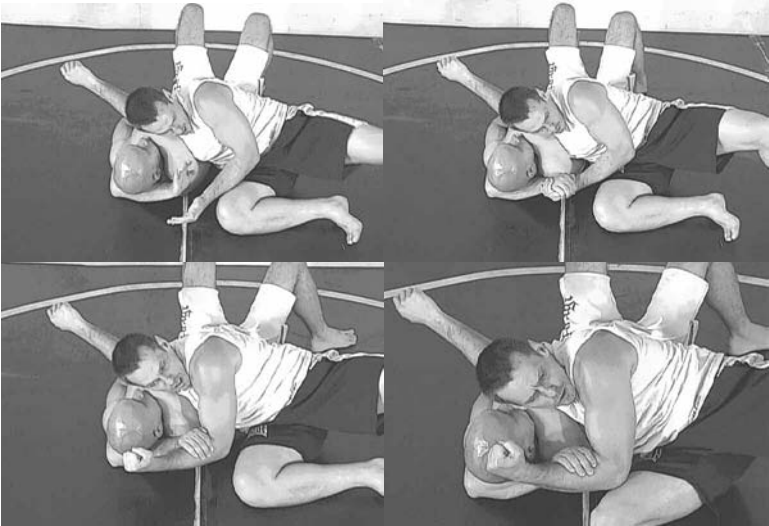
- This one is ideal for when your opponent tries to avoid punches by turning his back.
- Slide the knee that is against his back to be even with the top of his head.
- Pull the stomach-side foot tight to his body.
- The knee and foot positions are important to thwart escape gambits.

## Head and arm ride



- A powerful static ride, but leaves little options for pounding. We include it as a potential transition ride.
- Sit-out toward his head using the weight distribution described in the sit-out cross-body ride toward head.
- Hook the head in a head-hold position (a headlock is a completely different technique from a head-hold — we'll discuss that another day).
- Hook his near arm with your outrigger arm and pull it tight.
- Keep your head low to block escape attempts involving head/face work.
- Keep your hips off the mat — think sliding your body (and his) toward your outrigger foot.

**Shoulder choke ride**



- This position is most commonly seen as a submission (and a damn powerful one), but here we use a perhaps failed submission as a transition position.

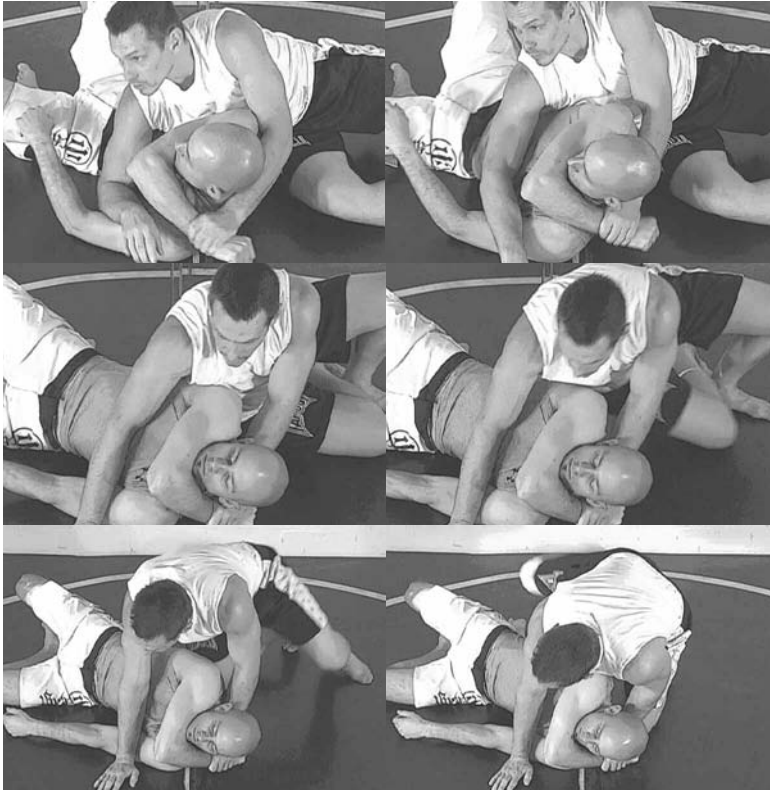
- Hit your sit-out and headhold as in the previous ride.

- The difference is his near arm will be shoved across his face/neck.

- Lock that arm into place by dropping your head/neck onto his trapped arm and ...

- Grip your hands together.

## Cobra mount ride

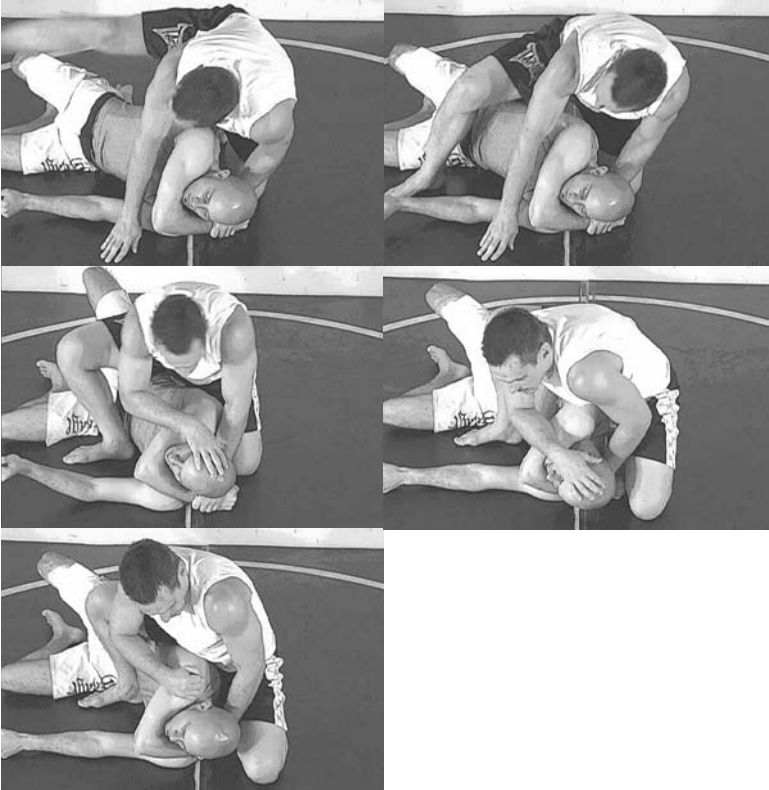


- You transition to this tight ride from the shoulder choke ride, whether from top saddle (mounted) or sit-out position. Here we go from sit-out position. This is simply a squat mount with the addition of the arm control.
- From the shoulder choke ride, underhook his head with your outrigger hand and grip his trapped wrist.
- Pull his wrist tight as you pop up and step your hip-side leg over his stomach. Pull your heel tight to his abs to prevent escapes.

*More images next page.*

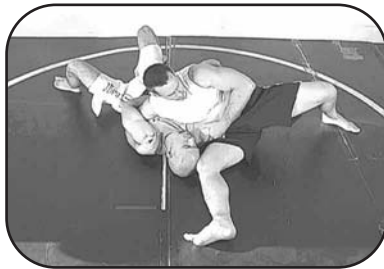
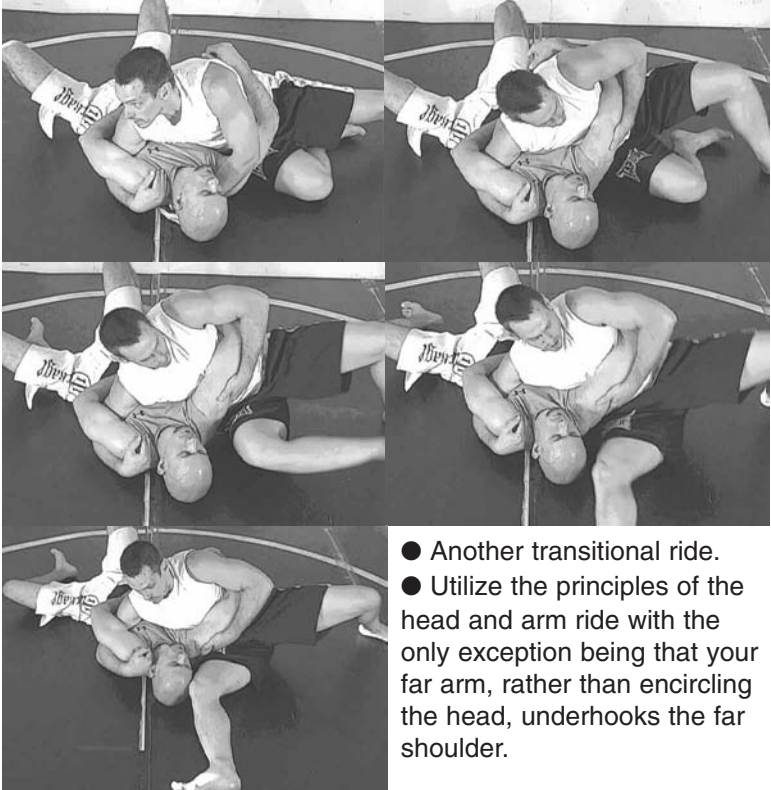


*More cobra mount ride*

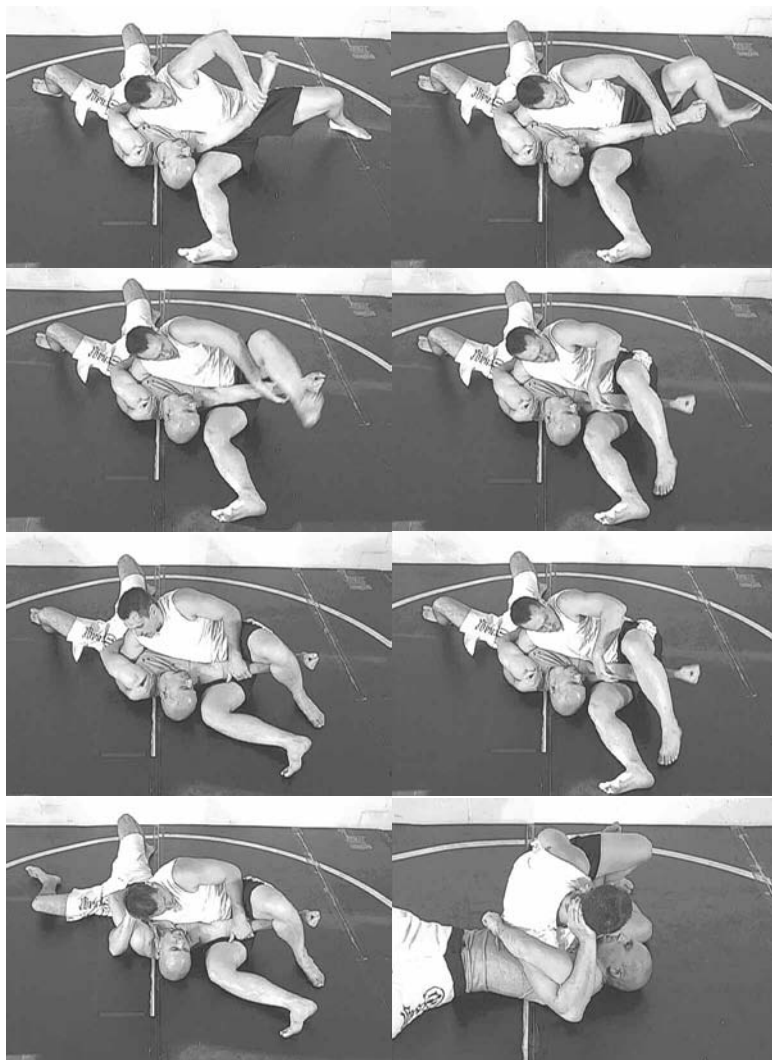


● Pull your heel tight to his abs to prevent escapes.

**Shoulder and arm ride (aka broken scarf hold)**

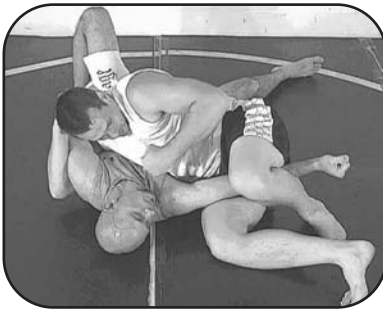


***Crucifix ride***

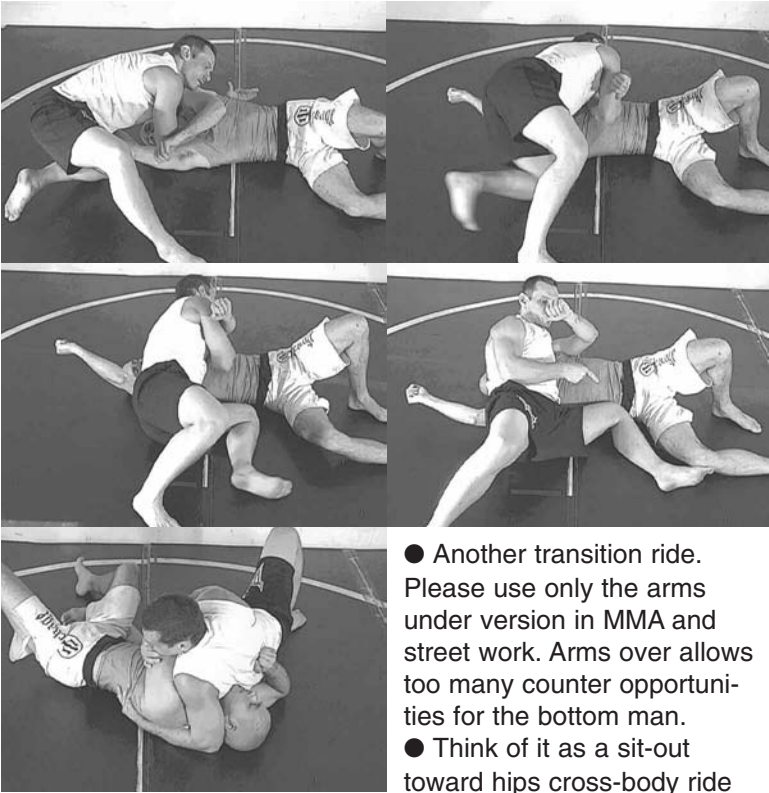




- This is an opportunistic static ride.
- As you transition from a cross-body ride to a sit-out toward head cross-body ride, if ...
- You find your far arm underhooking his far arm and if ...
- Your sit-out leg drives underneath his near arm, shelving it on top of your sit-out thigh ...
- Scissors or figure-4 lock your legs to trap his near arm.
- Trap his far arm by gripping the back of your own neck with your hip-side hand.
- This is a strong pound position, but I urge you not to force or seek it out. Instead take it if it falls into your lap. Fighting for position when you are on top is a waste of energy — you already have the advantage. No need to sweat more than necessary.

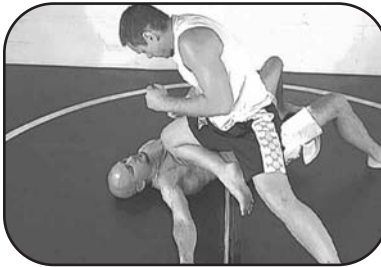
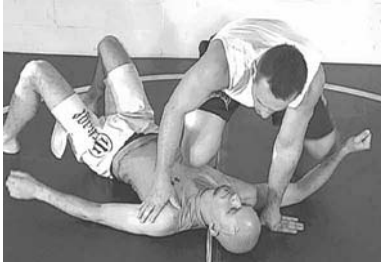


**Reverse head and arm ride — arms under shoulder**



- Another transition ride. Please use only the arms under version in MMA and street work. Arms over allows too many counter opportunities for the bottom man.
- Think of it as a sit-out toward hips cross-body ride with the only significant difference being that your far arm is positioned under his far arm.

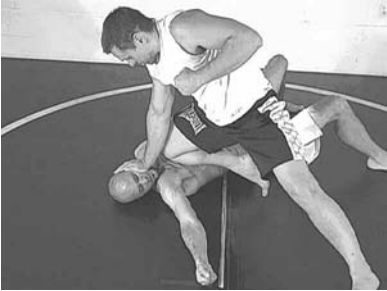
## Knee on chest ride



**Note** — Like the top saddle / mounted rides, the knee on chest rides violate bisection and sternal arrow rules and are easy for skilled opponents to counter. But sometimes in a scramble they do present a nice opportunity.

- First, notice that we place the knee on the chest, driving the point of the knee through his sternal arrow as opposed to “knee on belly.” Knee on belly provides significant diaphragmatic pressure, but knee on chest provides more pressure overall due to sternum compression as well as avoiding an opponent’s bridging hips.
- The outrigger foot is positioned well away from the opponent to prevent its being easily swept or used as a turning hook.
- The foot of the knee on chest is held off the mat to insure that all the weight is driving through the chest.

***Knee on chest ride — face post***



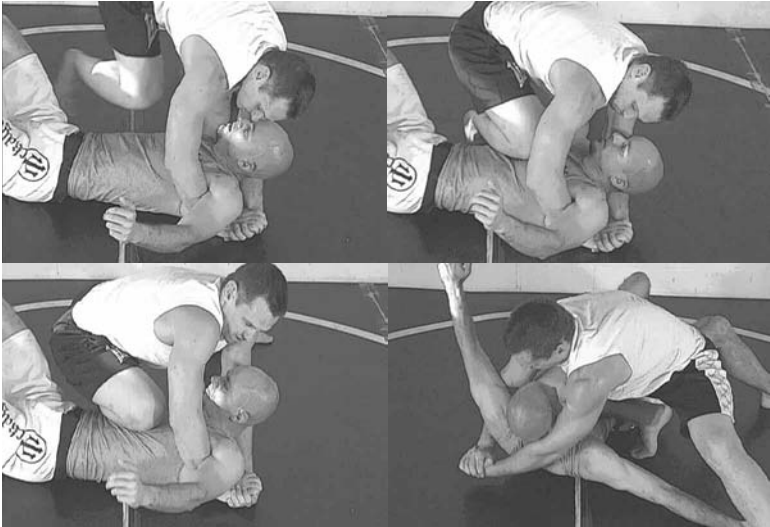
- Just as with the top saddle/mount position, you can make this one tighter by using hand assists.
- Here we post on the face.

***Knee on chest ride — head lift***



- Here we hit an aggressive head lift.

***Knee on chest ride — head and shoulder lift***



- A powerful form of this ride, but it removes the hands-free aspect.
- Underhook his far shoulder with your far arm.
- Underhook his head with your near hand.
- Grasp your hands together and lift.
- Sometimes an aggressive lift and knee drive can pull the tap by itself.



### ***Posture inside bottom scissors / guard***



#### **Note**

The bottom scissors/guard is one of only two positions (the other being the 1/2 guard) where being on the bottom can have some advantages. It is for this reason that you must approach your top work inside these positions with a more cautious eye.

● The key to most submissions for the bottom player is to break you down/bring you in close, so that serious attacks can be launched against your head/neck and arms. For this reason, we start with posture first and foremost.

● Sit up tall, chin high with your weight distributed equally over your hips and knees.

● You will be on your knees and the balls of your feet. Although it is hard to see in the photo, there is a hip-in.

### ***Sprawl inside bottom scissors / guard***



● The posture assumes you are able to maintain base, but a good bottom player will seek to break you down every step of the way. If you find yourself with your weight tipped off your equal distribution any more than 10 percent in any given direction ...

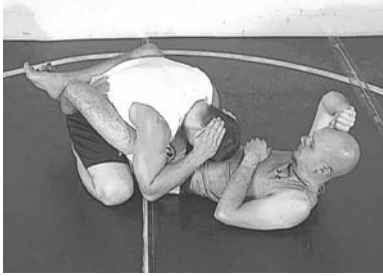
● Immediately sprawl as if defending a takedown.

● Hip-in hard against your opponent's groin/inner thighs.

● Any time you feel one leg go on the offensive (as the legs must do in all bottom scissors/guard submission attempts) hip-cut hard against the offending inner thigh.

● Riding low and back into a position where you can bisect the height line keeps your head/neck out of easy jeopardy that high sprawling permits.

### ***Clamp inside bottom scissors / guard***



● A cage behind you will not permit a sprawl in the event you lose your base. In that case, go to this second choice position:

● Maintain your knee and foot position ...

● Crunch and clamp your elbows to the inside of your

own knees and keep your head low.

● This is purely a defensive posture and does not allow for the free floating return to offense that the sprawl does.

### ***Biceps ride inside bottom scissors / guard***



● There are times when you need to rise from your posture to strike or drive your man to the fence. In these cases you need some defensive protection because you leave a good base position.

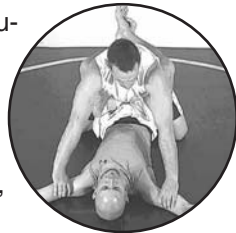
● Place both palms on his biceps — thumbs pointing to

the mat. This is exactly as it's done in a standing biceps ride in wrestling.

● Drive his arms to the mat as you pop to your feet — both legs at the same time. Stepping one leg and then the other allows for sweeping opportunities as you unbalance yourself.

● Once you are on both feet, keep your biceps ride tight and apply an aggressive hip-in.

● At the first sign of balance/base trouble, hit your sprawl.



### **Head lift inside bottom scissors / guard**



- This one is purely opportunistic — that is, accidental or incidental.
- If at any time in the inside bottom scissors/guard scramble you find that you can gain head control of your opponent ...
- Pull the head hard, taking his chin to chest and ...

- Hit an aggressive hip-in.
- Rookies may tap, but don't expect that from experienced players. Instead view it as a control position to split the legs or as a handle to drive the bottom man to the fence.

### **Half-pressure squat vs. bottom scissors / guard against cage**



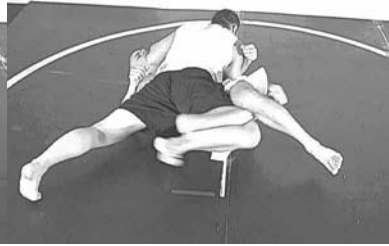
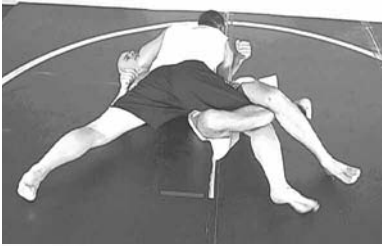
- Speaking of the fence, once you have driven him there, you want to keep him there. This is not a problem for all other top rides except the inside the legs position. We must have a strategy to prevent him using the fence to reverse you.
- If at all possible, keep the orientation with his head driven into the fence. If/when he tries to escape/scoot/wrestler's kick/shrimp out to either side ...
- Immediately drop the escape side knee to the mat and lift the non-escape knee.



- Example: If your opponent scoots his hips to your right, drop your right

knee to the mat, leave the left knee up and use a hip-in and inward drive of the lifted knee to keep him pinned to the down knee.

## 1/2 mount sprawl



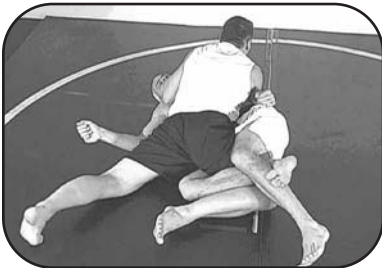
- First, a thinking shift. Regard this as less a position to escape than a position to go offensive from. A 1/2 bottom scissors or 1/2 guard to the bottom man is a 1/2 mount to the top man.

● You can be swept from this position if you ignore your bisecting, so stay diligent.

● Also, you can be returned to full guard position easier if you stay close to his legs. With that in mind ...

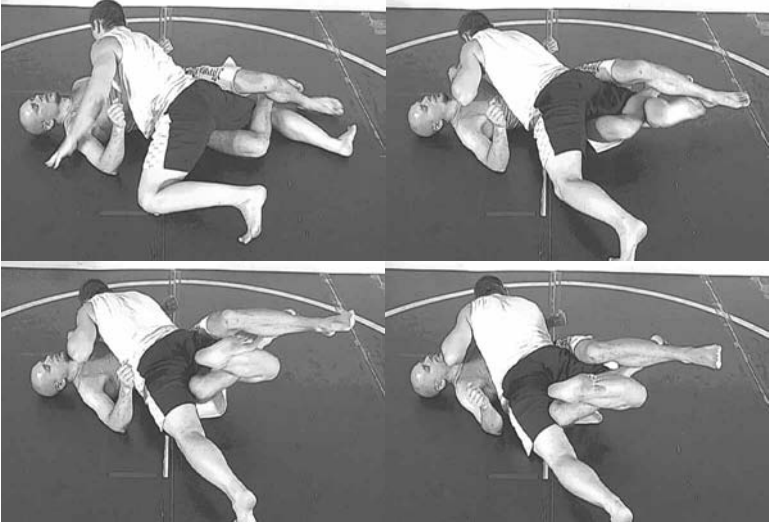
● Get Perpendicular — Throw your hips toward his head gaining as much of a right angle as you can and then ...

● Hit your sprawl and hip-in aggressively.



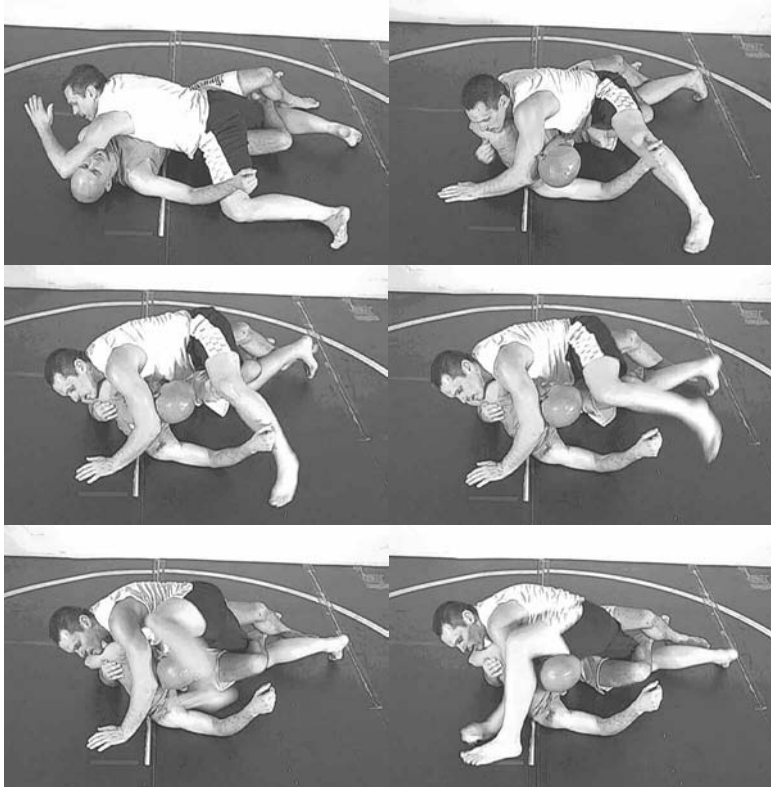
**Note** — The 1/2 bottom scissors or 1/2 guard is the second position of advantage for the bottom player. While not as strong as the two-leg position, it has enough offensive potential to warrant staying diligent.

**1/2 mount turk**



- You can assist the pressure of the 1/2 mount sprawl by turking (lifting his near leg with your “trapped” leg).
- To do this, hip-in and then hip-cut the head-side pelvis point to the mat and think lifting your “trapped” leg heel to the sky back and over your body. You won’t get much lift, but this is the direction to envision.
- You will have an easier lift if you maintain back-of-knee to back-of-knee contact.

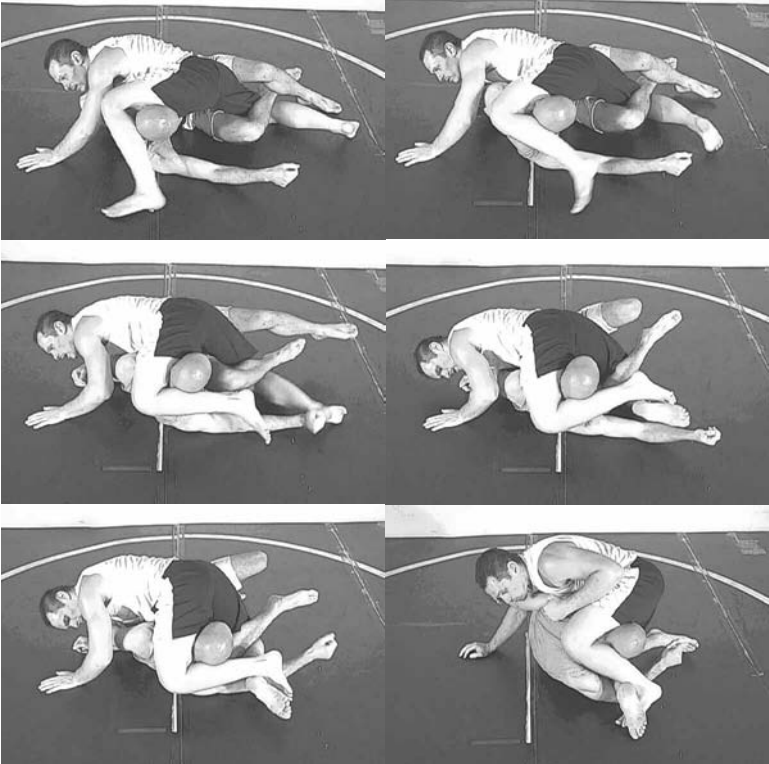
**1/2 mount step-over**



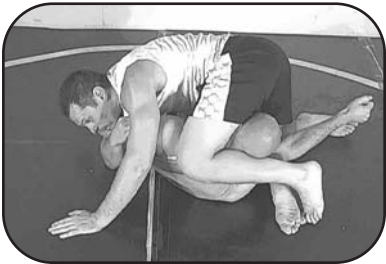
- Another opportunistic position.
- If you've been able to manage a bit more than 90 degrees on your sprawl position and ...
- Find that you can easily drive his head toward your hips with the back of your head-side elbow ...
- Step the head-side leg over his head catching his head/neck with the back of your knee.

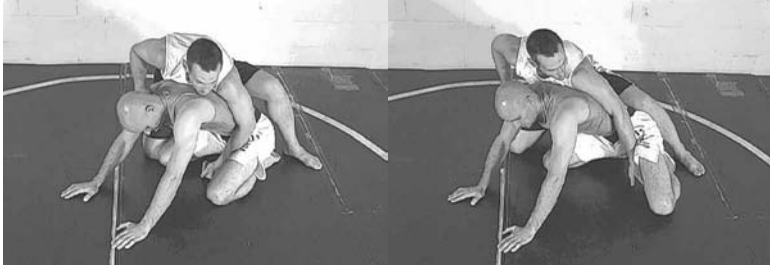
*More images next page.*

*More 1/2 mount step-over*



- Scoop it back toward your hips and strive to scissors your legs. Often this won't be possible, but the direction of movement can be enough for control.
- This position provides a surprising amount of control if you obey the bisection rules. Allow yourself to glide on top of him, and you will be reversed easily.



**Pry****Pry**

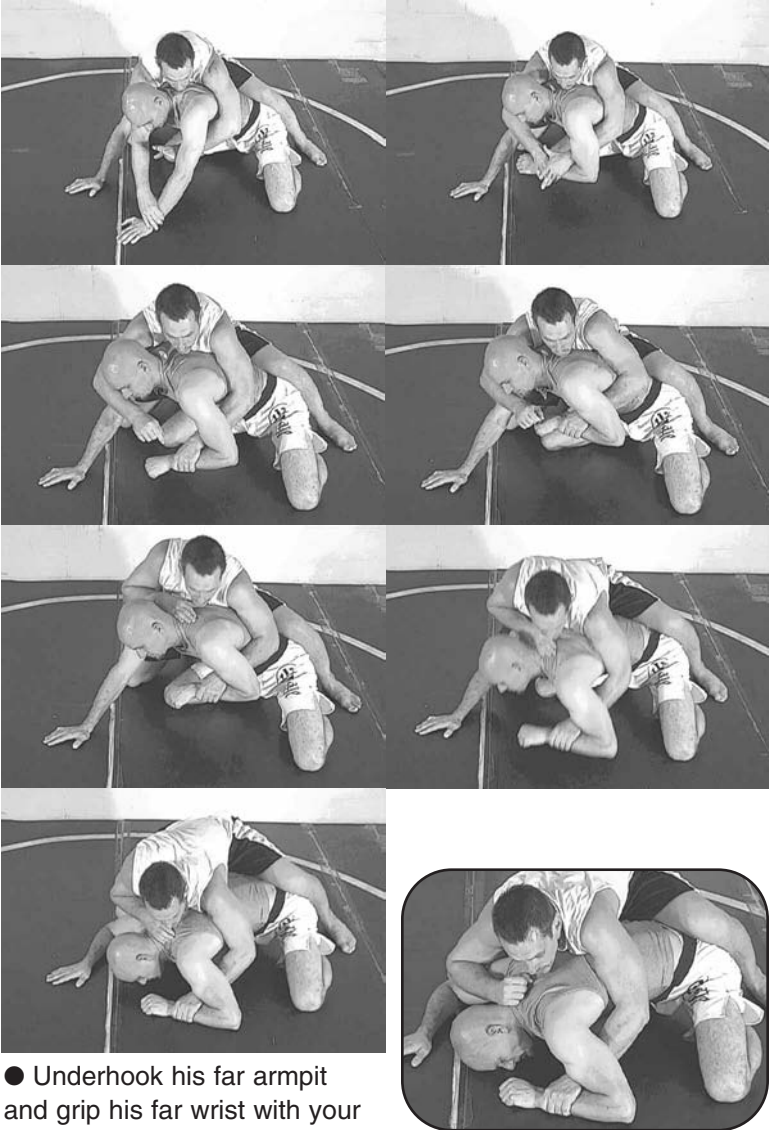
- Place the back of your hip-side hand again the inside of his far thigh.
- Brace your hip-side biceps across his far kidney.
- Post your hip-side knee against or in front of his near side knee.
- Keeping your sternal arrow tight and bisection pressure on, think lifting outward with your hip-side hand.

**Note**

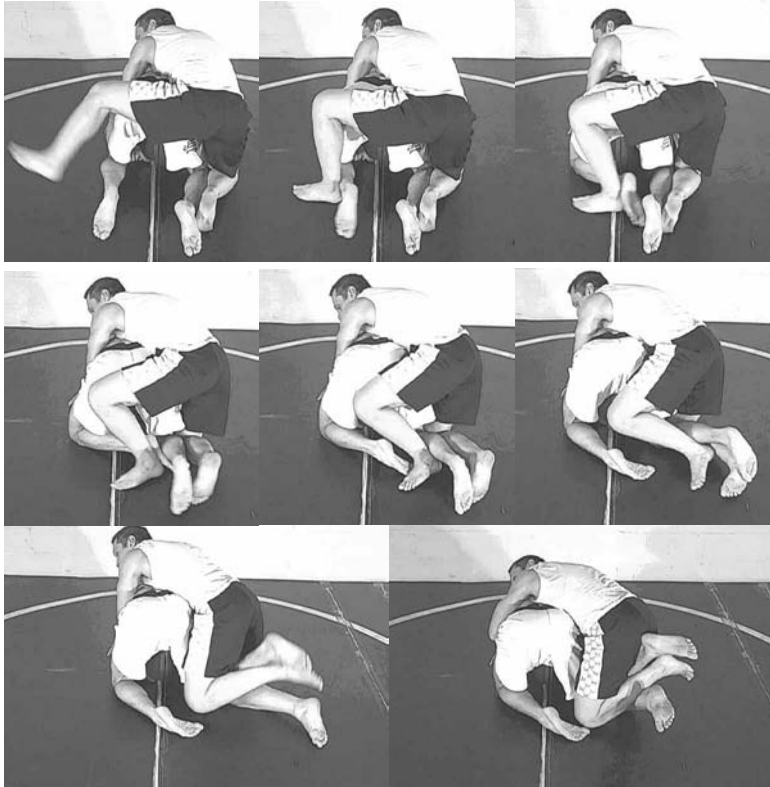
The turtle or referee's position provides a huge vocabulary of rides for the top player, but the vast majority of these are related to nonstriking break-downs and turns for pinning sports. Here we concern ourselves with the top three high return turtle rides for MMA and the street.



**Far one-on-one**



## Overleg



● The end result here will be your hip-side leg trapping his near leg between your calf and hamstring.

● To set this up there is no need to step between his legs.

Simply step over his far ankle with your hip-side leg and scoop your heel toward you for the overleg ride.

● Combine this with the pry or the far one-on-one while cranking his hip by driving in against his near knee with your head-side knee and dragging his caught ankle toward the outside.

**Getting legs in (setting hooks or double-knife riding)**



● We include this since it's a popular position for submissions. But our focus here is ground and pound. With that in mind, putting legs in violates the rules of good riding (hips are high and there is no way to bisect). While great for subs, less so for pounding unless ...

● You get your legs in and stretch him out by driving your hips through his while striving to touch the ceiling with your heels.

● You can assist breaking him down by using one-on-one wrist control or by aggressively pulling his head up.

● At this point we have a powerful punching position and not until then.

Now we have a ride vocabulary. It's time to start putting these "words" together as sentences. Time to go from static to fluid.

## **2 *Fluid riding***

Fluid riding is transitioning from one static position to the next. There are essentially two ways to approach fluid riding: clock and half clock, sometimes called 360 or 180 degree riding.

Clock or 360 degree riding means that you start at destination A, say a right side cross-body ride, and travel either toward your opponent's feet or head, around to the far side of his body and continue until you wind up in your starting position. Clock riding builds a great deal of fluidity, but there is a caveat. You must pass his legs in clock riding and, as we all know, the legs are the foundation of the bottom man's best defensive positions.

Half clock or 180 degree riding means that you will travel from hip to hip, but making the journey going only over the head and avoiding the feet at all costs.

Although half clock riding is safer and the easier skill set to inculcate, you will need both versions of riding for a complete and successful grounding game. Since half clock riding is the easier of the two skills to learn, let's build facility here first.

## ***Half clock drills***

While working each clock drill, maintain your focus on your sternal arrow, bisections and hiping-in. Work each drill for several rounds.

### ***Chest to chest spin drills***

- Start in a **right cross-body ride**.
- Using your sternal arrow as a pivot point, travel around his head to a **left cross-body ride**.
- Return via the same path.
- Rinse, wash, repeat.

### ***Sit-out and step drill #1***

- Begin in your **right cross-body ride**.
- Move to a right side **sit-out toward head cross-body ride**.
- Step your outrigger foot over his head and onto the mat far above his far shoulder moving yourself into a **lateral press ride — arms under**.
- Hit a reverse **head and arm ride** on his left side.
- Step your outrigger foot into a **left cross-body ride**.
- Reverse the steps to return.

### ***Sit-out and step drill #2***

- Perform the above drill with the difference being that you use a **lateral press ride — arms over**.

### ***Sit-out and step drill #3***

- Here you move from the **cross-body ride** to the ...
- **Head and shoulder ride**.
- You can use either version of the **lateral press ride** and ...
- Step into a **shoulder and arm ride**.

### ***Sit-out, step and spin drill #1***

- Here you combine two previous drill sets.
- Perform **Sit-out and step drill #1** until the **lateral press** position.
- Once in the lateral press, spin chest to chest to the **cross-body ride**.

### ***Sit-out, step and spin drill #2***

- Perform **Sit-out and step drill #2** until the **lateral press** and then spin to the **cross-body ride**.

### ***Sit-out, step and spin drill #3***

- Sit-out into the **head and arm ride** and then spin to the opposite side.

### ***Sit-out, head and arm spin drill***

- Hit your right **cross-body ride**.
- Hit your **sit-out toward head** into a **head and arm ride**.
- Step your outrigger foot into a **lateral press**, which will take his arm across his face with your hips.
- Spin to a **cross-body ride**.
- Return.

### ***Sit-out, head and arm sit-out drill***

- Perform the previous drill, but at the **lateral press** apply a ...
- **Reverse head and arm**.
- Then step into a **cross-body ride**.
- Return.

### ***Sit-out, head and arm to shoulder choke ride***

- Do the first three steps of the **Sit-out, head and arm drill**.
- Once in the **lateral press**, back step your outrigger foot returning it to its original position.
- Keep his arm across his face with your outrigger hand, your head and neck.
- Settle into a **shoulder choke ride**.

### ***Sit-out crucifix spin drill***

- Start with a **cross-body ride**.
- Sit-out to a **crucifix ride**.
- Spin to the opposite side for a **cross body ride**.
- Repeat.

***Cross-body to knee ride  
to cross-body sprawl spin drill***

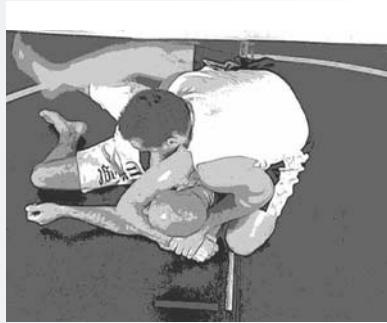
- This drill educates you how to sprawl immediately in the event that you begin to lose base to a knee ride counter.
- From a **cross-body ride**, rise to a **knee ride**.
- Your bottom partner attempts an escape ...
- Immediately sprawl back to the **cross-body ride**.
- Execute a spin to a **cross-body ride** on the far side.
- Repeat.
- Execute this drill with all four versions of the **knee on chest ride**.

***Knee ride spin***

- From a **cross-body ride**, rise to a **knee ride**.
- To travel a **knee ride** to the far side...
- Place your knee ride palm on his chest with your fingers facing your knee.
- Place your other hand on his chest with fingers pointing in the opposite direction. (You must use the prescribed hand orientation — place them in a reverse manner, and you lock your own elbow.)
- Place all of your weight through your hands (think pommel horse) and ...
- Use your hands as a pivot to travel to a **knee ride** to the opposite side.
- Sprawl to a **cross-body ride**.
- Repeat.

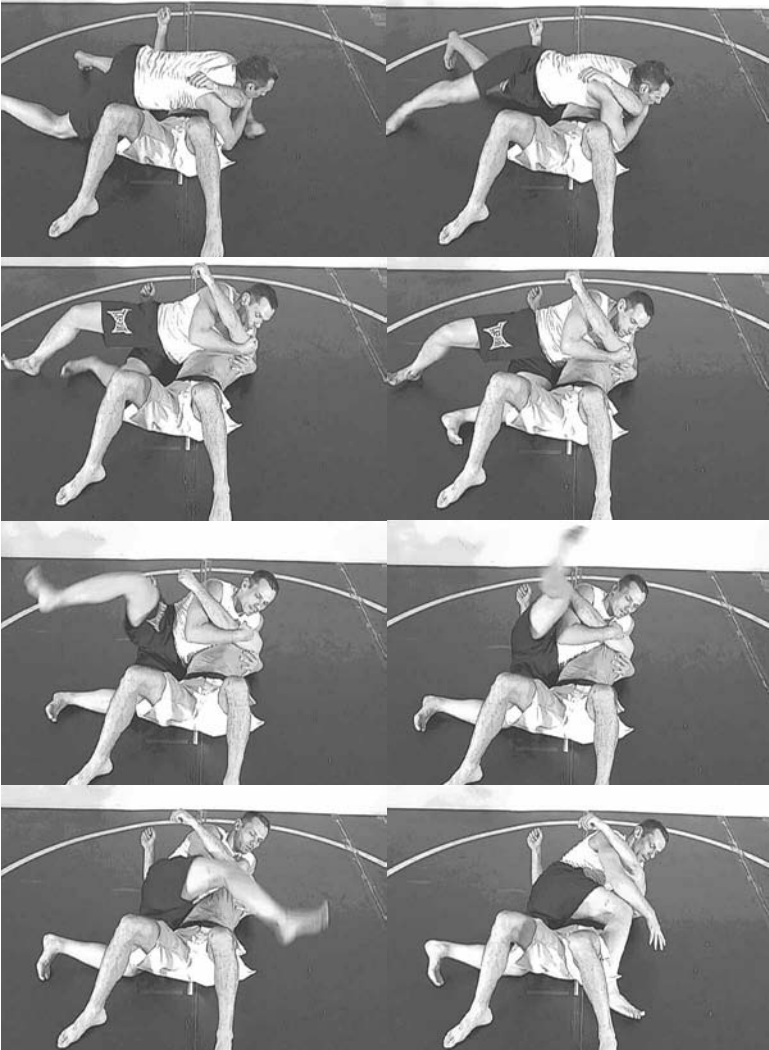
## ***Top saddle / mount transitions***

We provide a few high return ways to gain top saddle or the mounted position so that we can take the half clock drills and run them through the full clock drill set. It is advised that you run these drills for all three versions of the top saddle ride in isolation before applying them in the clock drills.

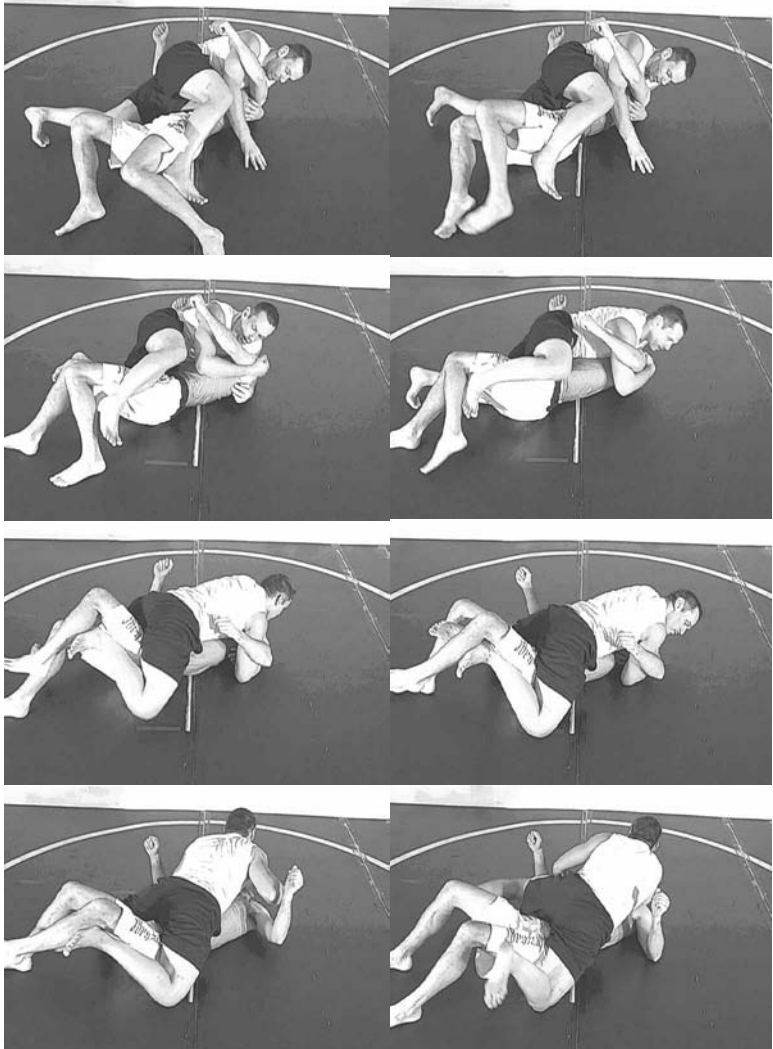




**Sit-out spur in and step-off drill #1**



- From your cross-body ride, hit a cross-body sit-out toward hips ride.
- Throw (aggressively) your outrigger foot high and over his body (high to evade his guard or 1/2 guard attempts).
- Hook your outrigger foot over his far leg.

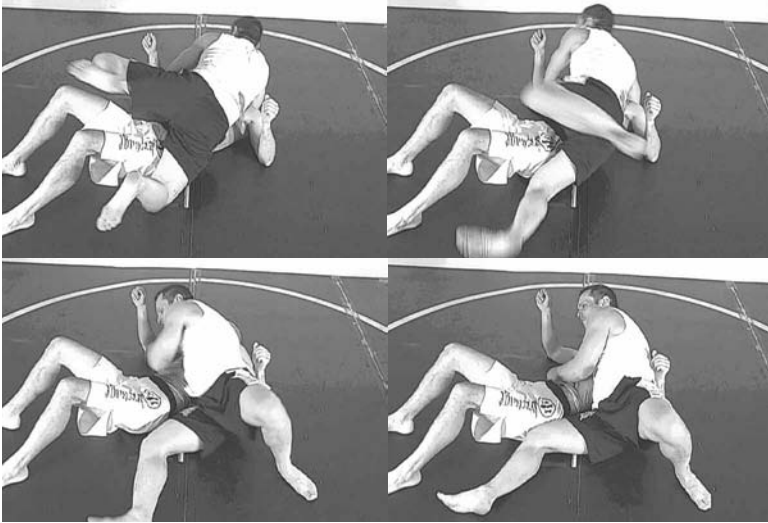


● Use this purchase gained by your step-over foot to literally pull you on top of him.

**Note** — Using the pull as opposed to simply settling your hips on top keeps a fair amount of pressure on your opponent.

● Once on top, maintain good ride and then ...

**More sit-out spur in and step-off drill #1**

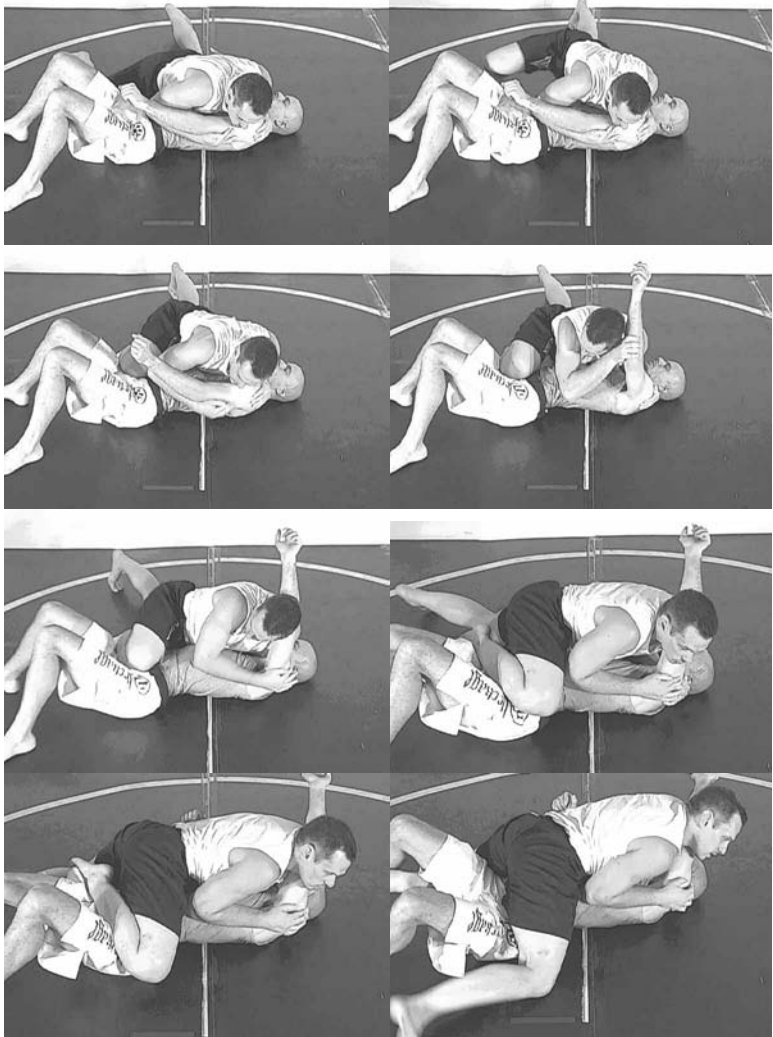


- Use the leg that was not the outrigger in the previous position and step that shin across his stomach.
- Your knee will remain on the original side, but your instep will spur onto his far side hip.
- Slide off into a cross-body ride.
- Repeat.

**Sit-out spur in and step-off drill #2**

- This drill is the same as the preceding, but here you use the reverse head and arm ride as opposed to the cross-body sit-out toward hips.
- These are small differences, yes, but I think you'll find preparing yourself for all contingencies is key.

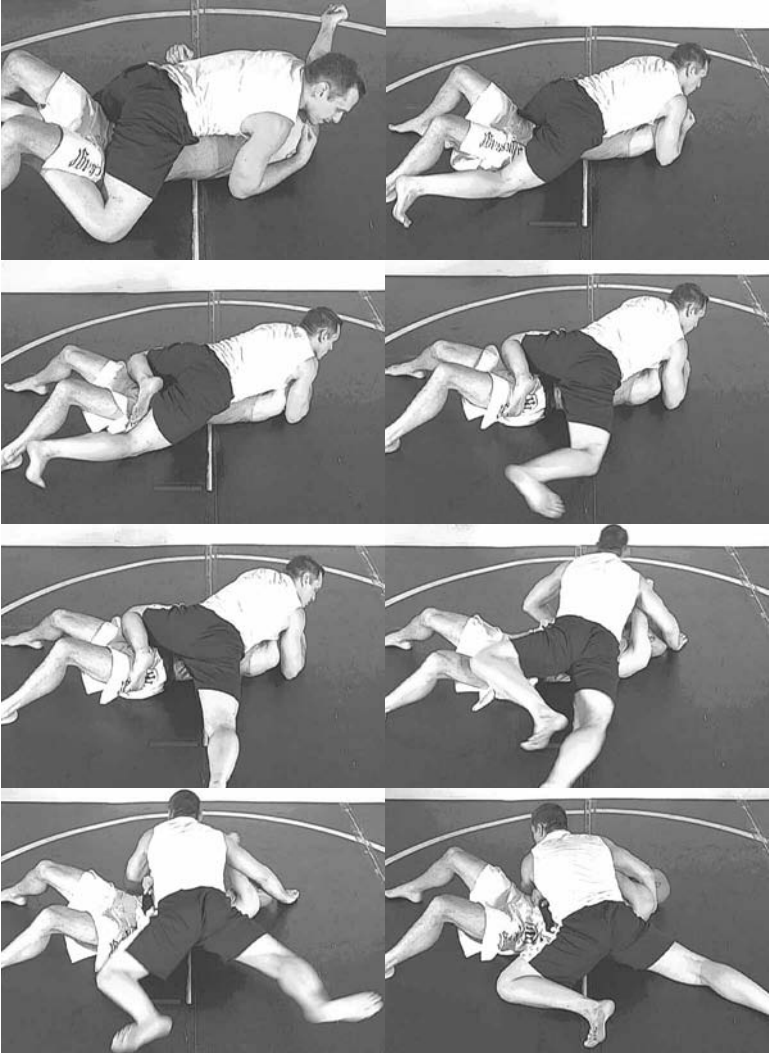
**Low knee sneak drill**



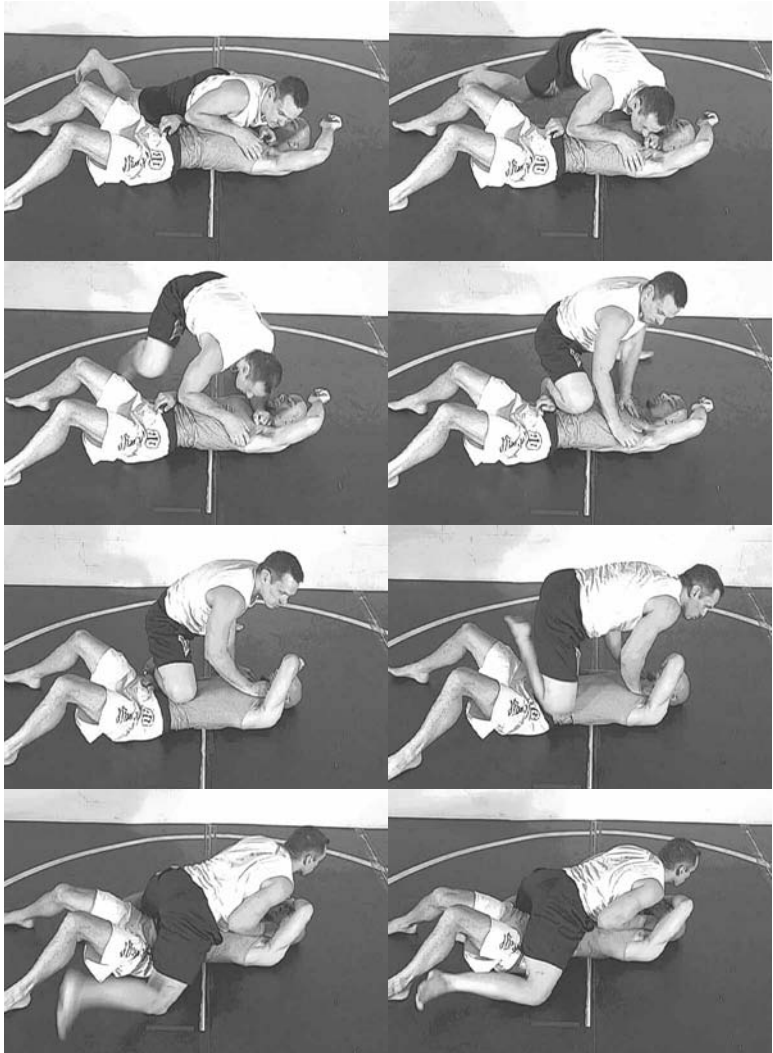
- From a cross-body ride, stay as low as possible while placing your hip-side knee on top of his near-hip.
- Begin sliding it across his abdomen until you gain top saddle.
- Hit the step-off and repeat.

*More images next page.*

*More low knee sneak drill*



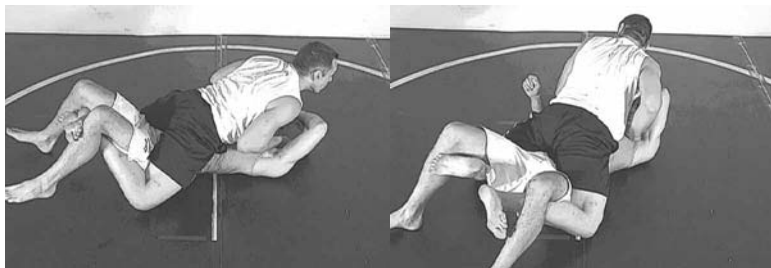
**High knee sneak drill**



- From a cross-body ride ...
- Pop up to a knee ride.
- Hit your knee sneak from here.
- Step off and repeat on the opposite side.

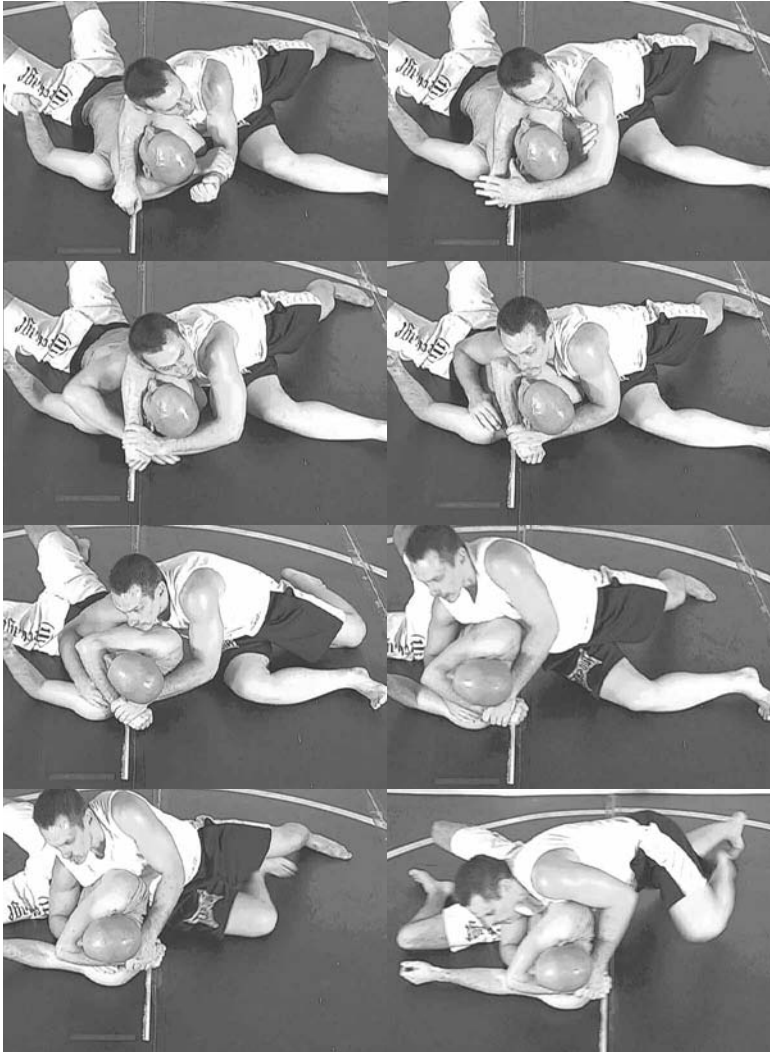
*More images next page.*

*More high knee sneak drill*





### ***Shoulder choke ride to cobra mount ride***

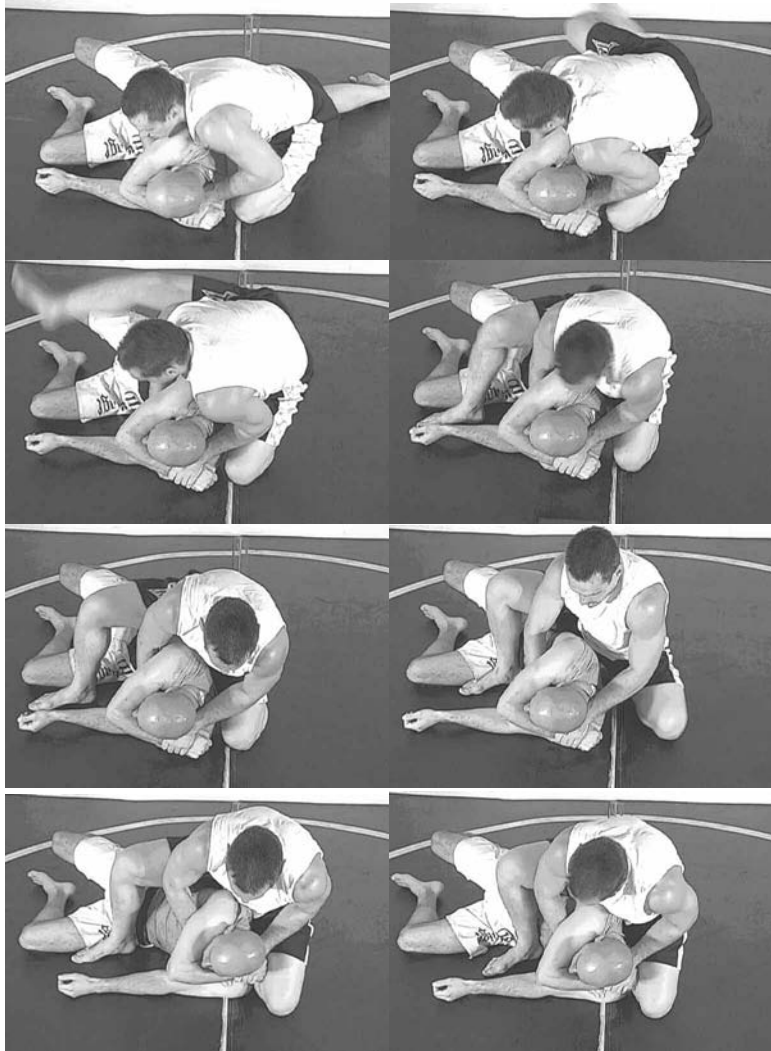


- See the static ride section for details. You can add this at any point in a drill set that calls for the shoulder choke ride.
- Pop to the cobra ride and then dismount back to the shoulder choke ride.
- Spin around the head and hit it on the opposite side.

*More images next page.*



*More shoulder choke ride to cobra mount ride*



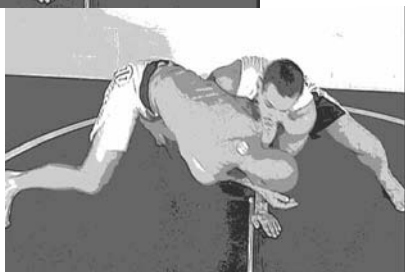
## ***Clock drills***

By adding the transition drills with the half clock drills, you can now create an entirely new vocabulary of 360 riding. You will now simply take every half clock drill and add one top saddle transition drill and run that twice clockwise and then twice counterclockwise, then repeat the process. I urge you not to skimp on the process, but rather to run every permutation of clock drilling to give yourself the confidence that you have been through every position and every transition hundreds (if not thousands of times).

Rather than bore you by repeating every drill set or to cause you undue work flipping pages back and forth to piece drills together, below is a list of the half clock and transition drills for easy reference that you can use as a combination checklist.

1. Chest to chest spin drill
2. #1 Sit-out and step drill #1
3. #2 Sit-out and step drill #2
4. #3 Sit-out and step drill #3
5. Sit-out, step and spin drill #1
6. Sit-out, step and spin drill #2
7. Sit-out, step and spin drill #3
8. Sit-out head and arm spin drill
9. Sit-out head and arm sit-out drill
  - Perform the previous drill, but at the lateral press step into a ...
  - Reverse head and arm.
  - Then step into a cross-body ride.
  - Return.
10. Sit-out head and arm to shoulder choke ride
11. Sit-out crucifix spin drill
12. Cross-body to knee ride to cross-body sprawl spin drill
13. Knee ride spin
14. Transition drills
15. Sit-out spur in and step-off drill #1
16. Sit-out spur in and step-off drill #2
17. Low knee sneak drill
18. High knee sneak drill

## MMA Mastery: Ground and Pound



### 3 Breakdowns

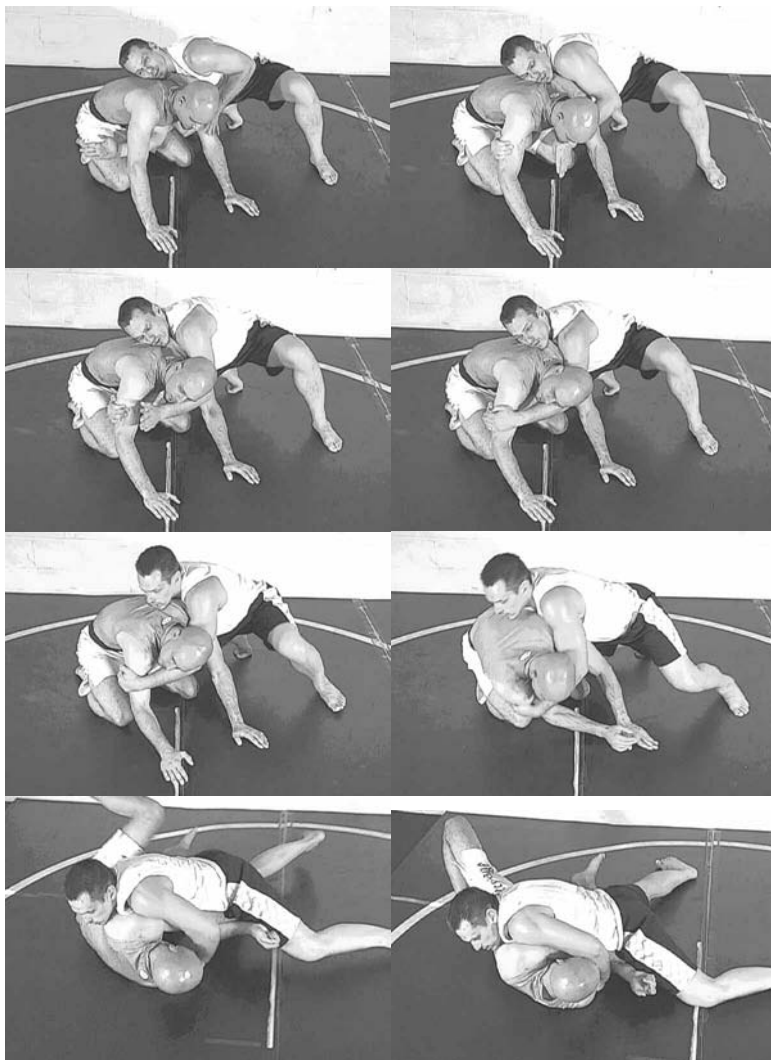
Breakdowns are a skill set used by wrestlers/grapplers to break down an opponent into a true ground position. Breakdowns almost universally refer to moving an opponent from the turtle position to one of the other static rides, although there are breakdowns for other positions as well. Here we focus on the turtle since that is the only position of importance that needs breakdown attention in MMA.



Thanks to the thousands of years of grappling cultivation, we have a huge vocabulary of breakdowns at our disposal. But for the ground and pound strategy, we don't have to master this

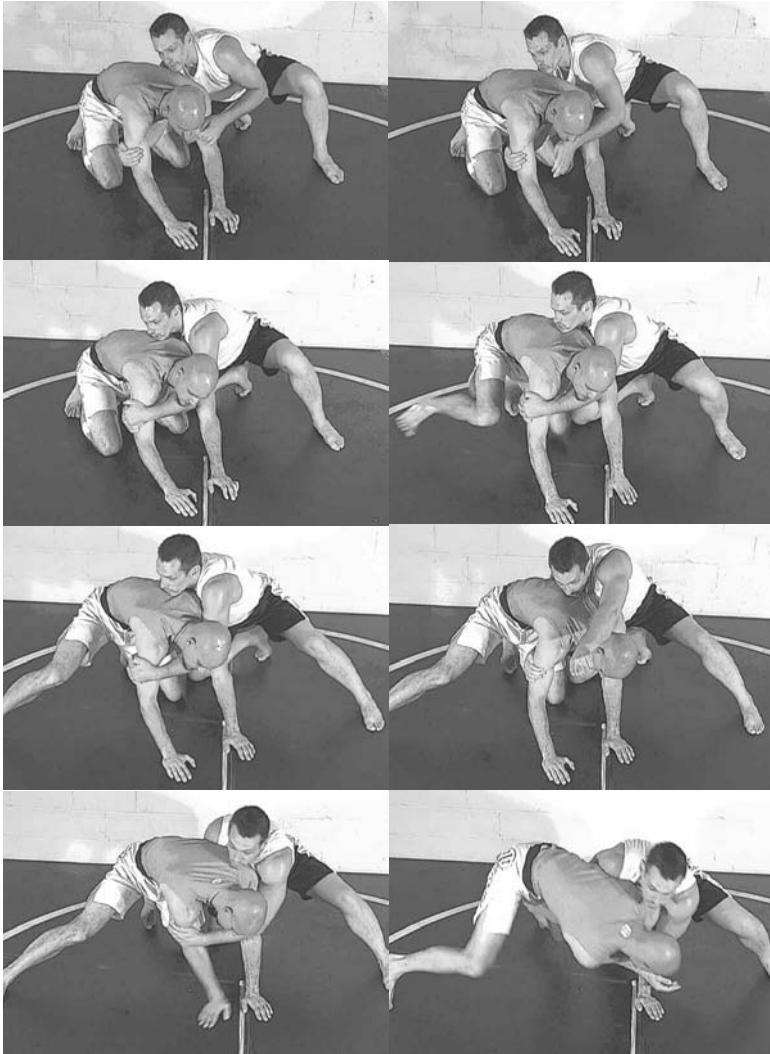
wealth of material. The vast majority of breakdowns are predicated on moving to the pin or toward the submission. All we need concern ourselves with are a few high percentage breakdowns that can always be left in the dust if you choose to simply ride the turtle position and strike instead (usually a pretty good call).

**Far arm drive**



- Underhook his body with your hip-side arm and block his far triceps.
- Hit a cross-face with your head-side arm and double up your triceps block.

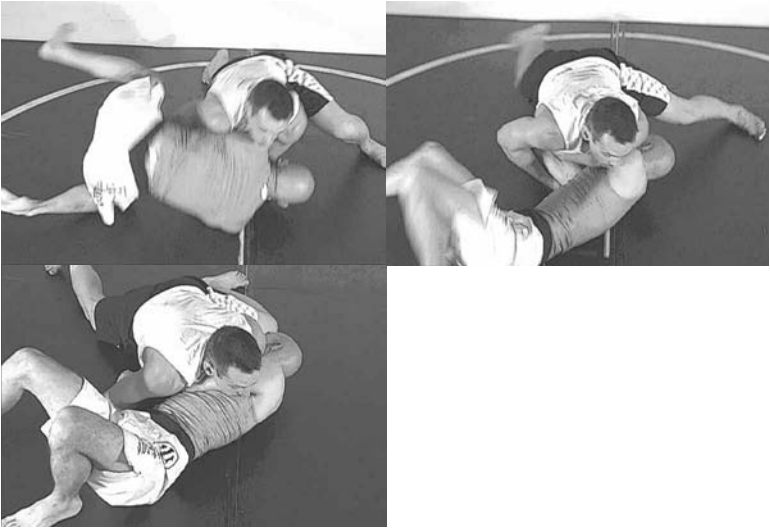
**Turn the corner far arm drive**



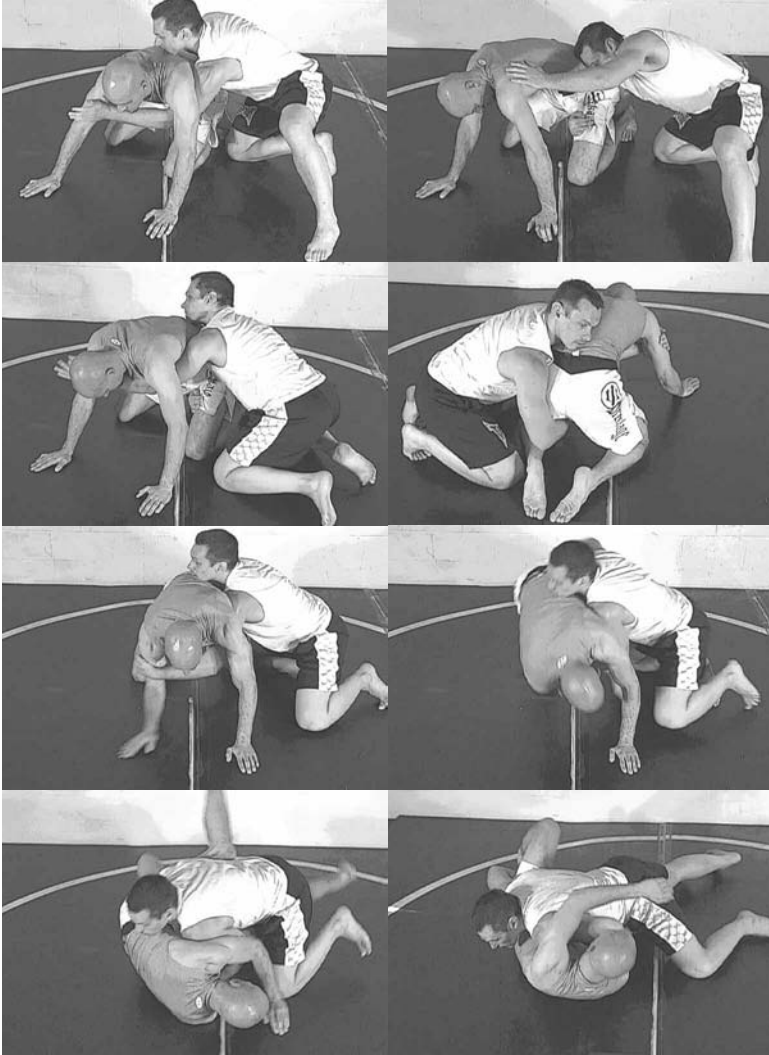
- Here your opponent is blocking your drive by posting with his far foot.
- Keep your blocks in place and alter your drive 45 degrees above his blocked shoulder.

*More images next page.*

*More turn the corner far arm drive*



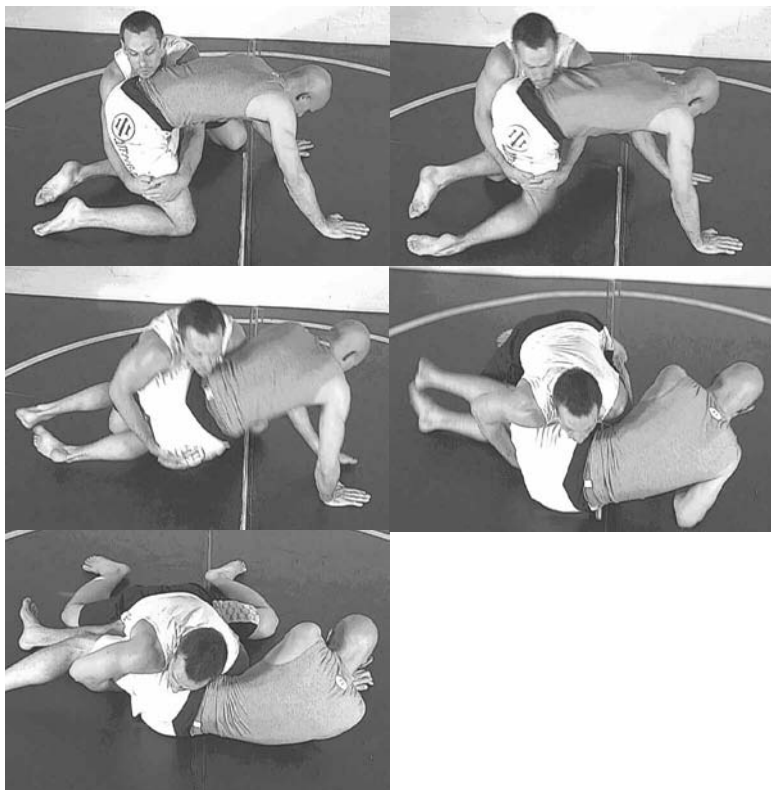
**Near leg and far arm drive**



- Overhook his near leg with your hip-side arm.
- Hook a far arm block.
- Drive him over the far shoulder.

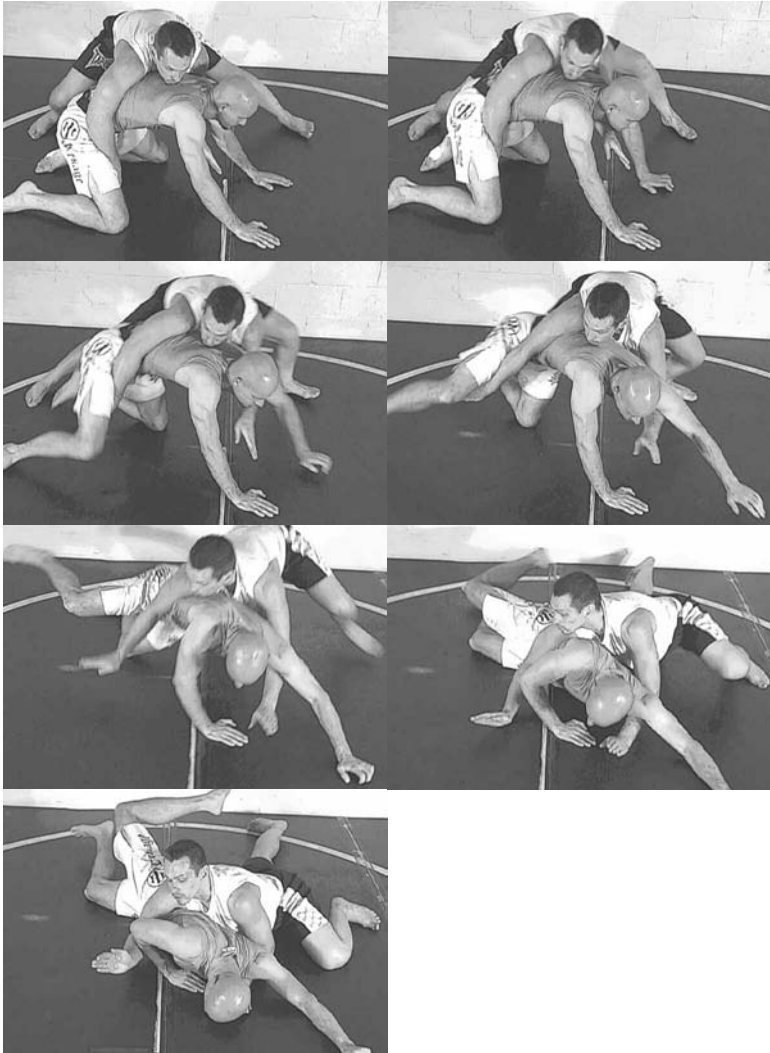


### *Far leg breakdown*



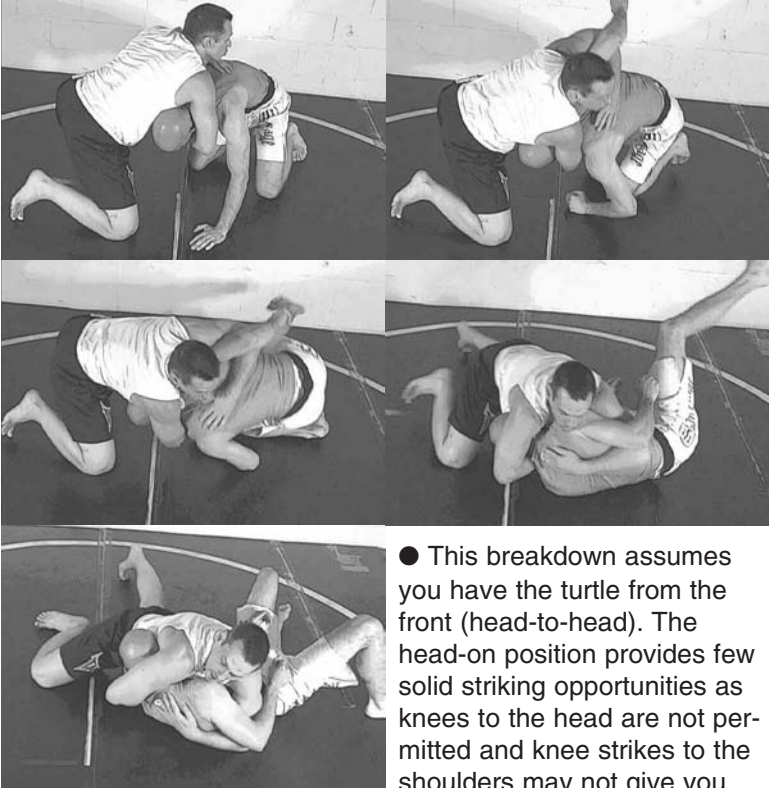
- Overhook his far leg with your hip-side hand (reaching behind and underneath his butt).
- Underhook his stomach with your head-side arm; double up your block on the far leg.
- Drive your chest through his hips.

**Rotary / pry breakdown**



- Hit your thigh-pry ride.
- Place the back of your head-side and on the inside of his near arm.
- Turn the corner toward his head while spreading your arms to the outside.

**Bar and chancery**



● This breakdown assumes you have the turtle from the front (head-to-head). The head-on position provides few solid striking opportunities as knees to the head are not permitted and knee strikes to the shoulders may not give you

maximum return on your effort. If you choose to forgo submission attacks it is usually wise to spin to the side, but assuming you want to turn him from here ...

● Overhook his head (here with the right arm) and underhook an arm (here, his right arm).

● Turn the corner toward his underhooked arm as you pry down on his head and up on his arm.



## 4 *Pounding arsenal*

OK, here we go!

We've finally arrived at that second word — POUND. What follows is a vocabulary of striking tools conducive to the horizontal environment. Please resist the temptation to tip the balance toward the striking work and skip or give short shrift to the grounding foundation because without good grounding, there is no pounding.

As with all techniques in any of our manuals, I encourage you to work each tool in isolation for several rounds to build familiarity with the strike and to learn how to build maximum power in firing the weapon. A floor bag is ideal for this task (see our DVD on this topic for 60-plus drill ideas). Once the tool feels good in isolation, work it in combination with other striking tools just as you would in the stand-up striking game. These combinations will contain less variety. They have no need of variety since you have cut off so many variable angles with your grounding. And then, of course, get to firing the strikes as you hit on the fly.

Do not assume that a demonstrated strike can be delivered only from the shown position. In most cases, the arsenal can be transferred among many positions. There will be a few position specific strikes demonstrated, but for the most part, take the arsenal, run the clock drills and be creative.

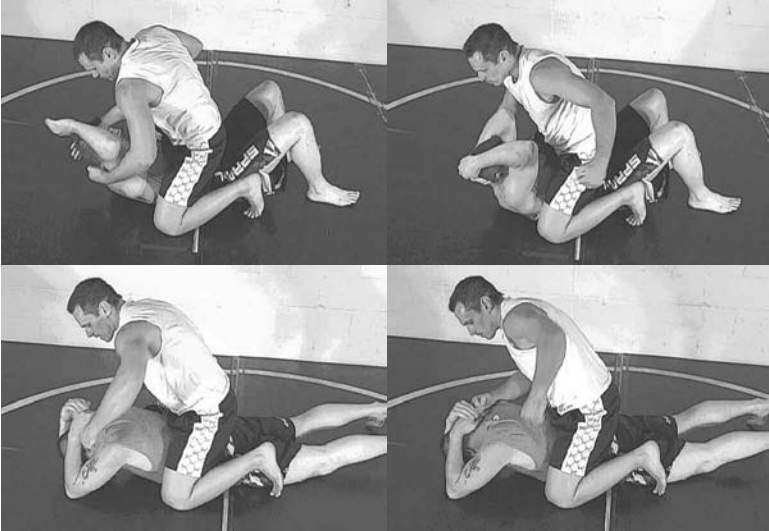
One more thing. Striking on the ground does not require the same commitment to economy that stand-up striking demands. Stand-up striking always carries the potential to be countered. Whereas on the ground, yes, you can be countered, but if you have grounded well, these counter-strikes are annoyances at most. With the worry of counter-strikes being low, you have the liberty to swing punches in big haymaker motions that you could never get away with while on your feet. Have fun with that and swing hard!

***Straight punches from top saddle***



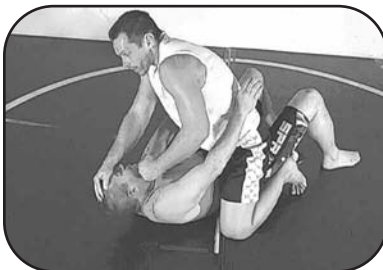
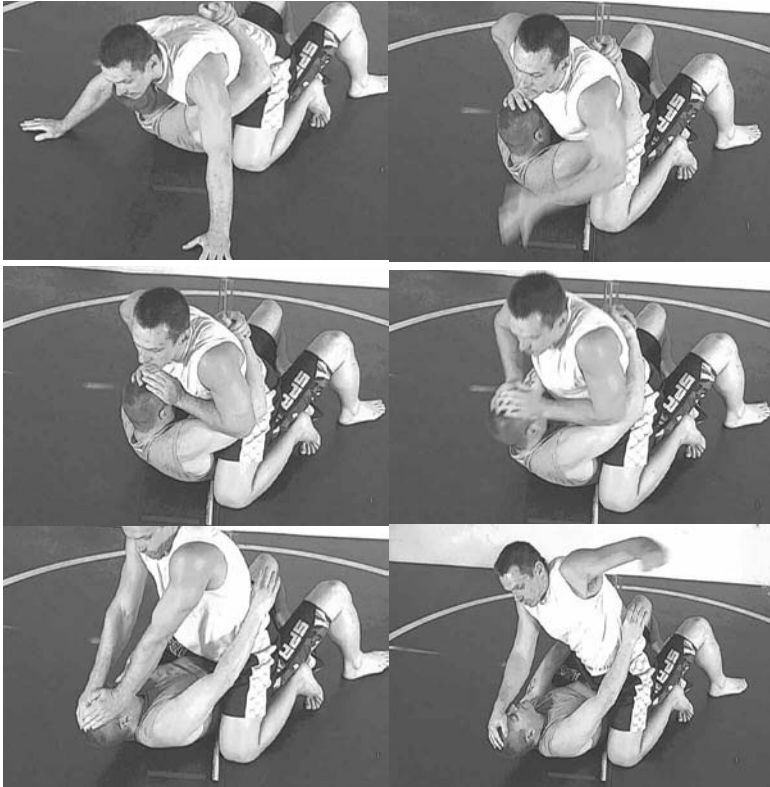
- The jab and cross are ideal from a high top saddle position.

***Hook punches from top saddle / rear mount***



- Hooks are ideal when an opponent covers the straight punch angle.

### Top saddle / mount body lock / head control release



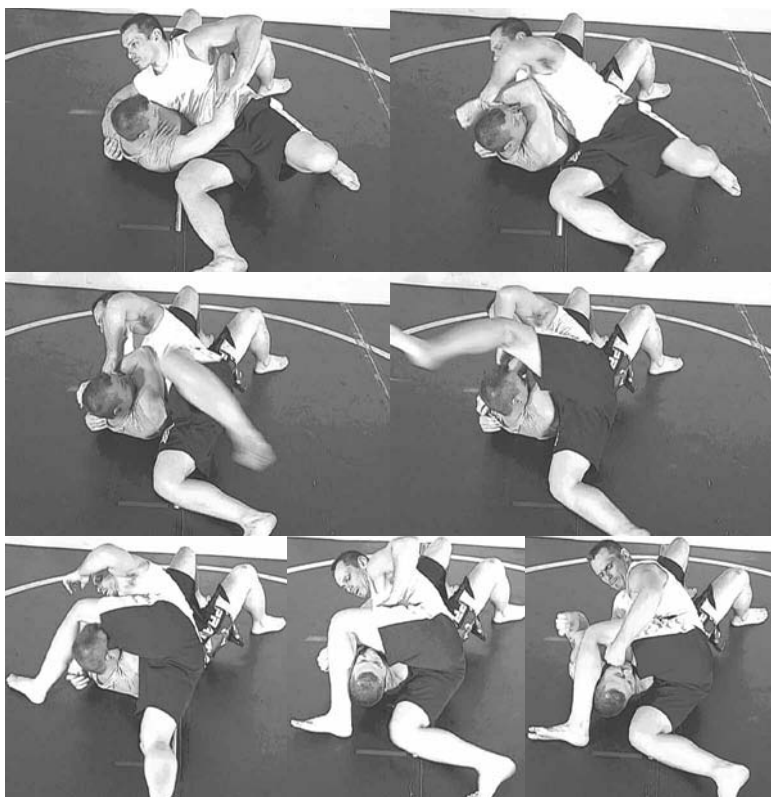
- While we're on the topic of the top saddle, often an opponent will lock you down to take away the stink from your strikes.
- To release, cram one or both hands/forearms into his face/neck ...
- Arch your back to look toward the ceiling to release his grip.
- Pay him back with a quick strike or two to prevent his rehooking his grip.



***Hook punches from the turtle ride***

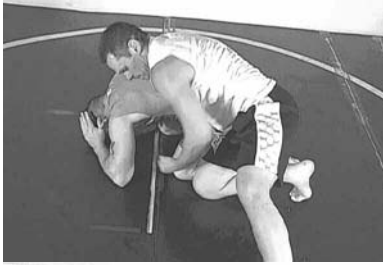


***Sweep hook from the stepover ride***



- The stepover ride provides the opportunity to fire this shot.
- Use the head-side fist to drop a hook/overhand over the top of your stepover thigh into your opponent's face.

### ***Uppercuts from the turtle ride***



- Often there is a nice little hole up the middle when your opponent covers for the hook.

### ***Hammers***



- Hammer fist shots are ideal for most collapsed positions — cross-body rides and their variants.
- Use the bottom portion of your closed fist and go to town.



## *Elbows*



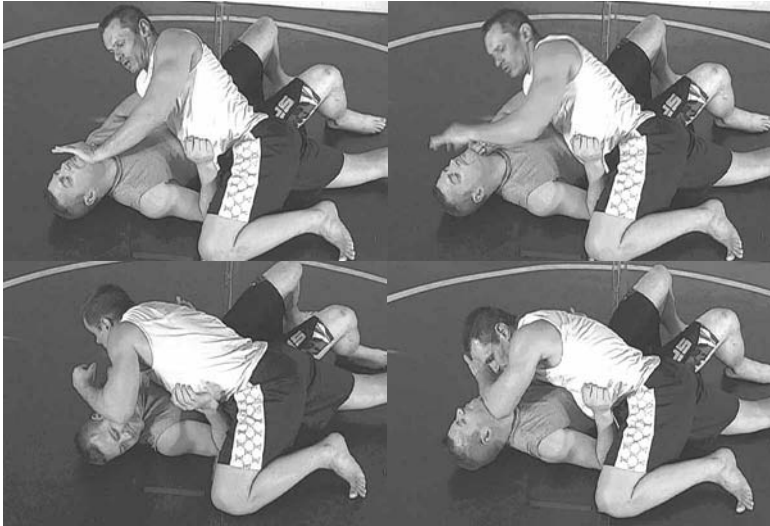
● You can use the elbow just as you would in the standing fight — with a whipping action planting the point of the elbow as a cutting tool.

## *Drop elbows*



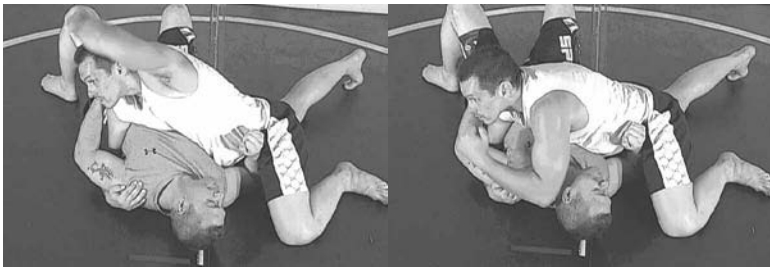
● You can also forgo the whip action and drop the elbow in an action similar to the one you use in hammering.

### ***Post and pop elbows***



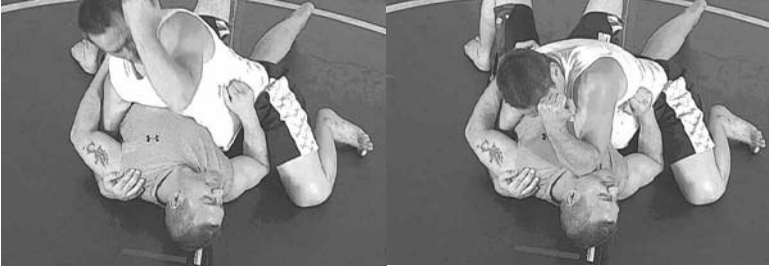
- This is a sneaky little way to fire an elbow.
- Post your striking palm on your opponent's face/head.
- Drive your weight through your palm.
- Allow your arm to “collapse” and drive your elbow across or into your target.

### ***Back elbows***



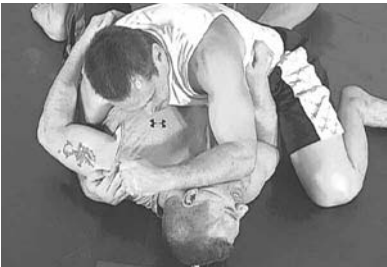
- Another tool ideal for collapsed rides.
- Use the back of the elbow to hammer into your target.

**Down elbow**



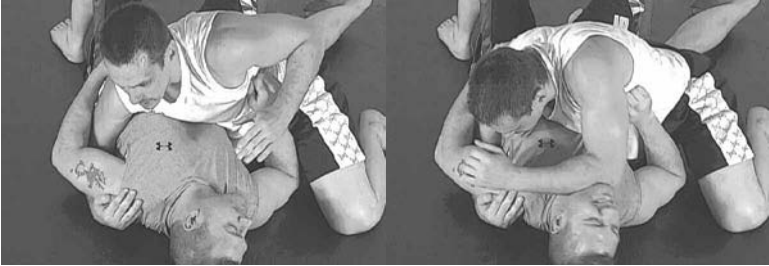
- Essentially a back elbow delivered from above, but here you strive to strike with the point of the elbow.

**Cram**



- In collapsed positions you can drive a forearm into your opponent's face/neck.
- Drive in a 45 degree forward and down motion for maximum effect.

**Hacksaw**



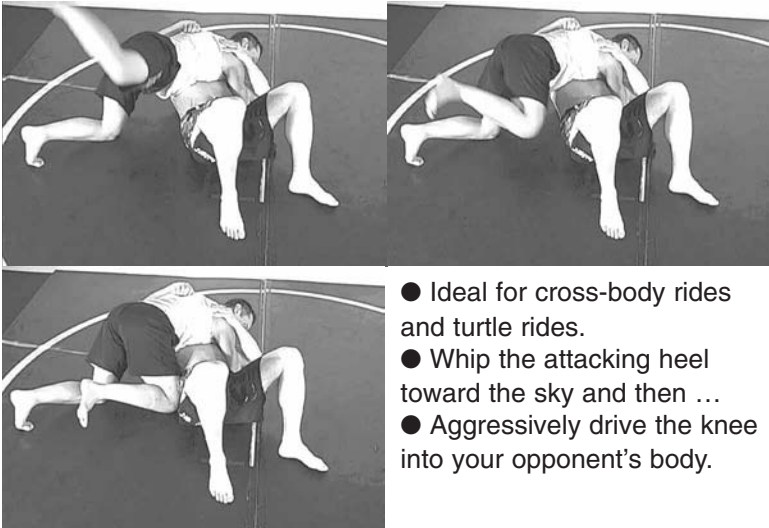
- This is a sliding forearm shot ideal for collapsed positions.
- Think of delivering a hook to your opponent's head/face.
- If the hook lands, great! But what we are aiming for is an aggressive drive of the forearm blade across the target surface.

### ***Shoulder jam***



- Use only in collapsed rides when you don't have a hand free as you are attempting to lock down a very slippery opponent.
- Use short bumps and jams/crams with the point of the shoulder to the face and neck.
- Not a stopper, but nice punctuation to your grounding.

### ***Knee to body***



- Ideal for cross-body rides and turtle rides.
- Whip the attacking heel toward the sky and then ...
- Aggressively drive the knee into your opponent's body.

***Drop knee from sit-out rides***



- Raise the outrigger knee high and then whip it into your opponent's head.
- The striking surface will be the inside of the knee as in the Muay Thai round knee performed on the feet.

## **5 *Inside bottom / scissors guard***

We give more than a few specifics for inside bottom scissors/guard work as this can be a problematic



position. Maintain your principles of grounding, perfect your pounding and you may never need grappling answers for this position if you choose not to use them.

We'll start off with how to beat the bottom man's tie-ups so you can get back to your pounding.

***Double arm hug ground and pound***



***Bump and rip***

- Your opponent has hugged both of your forearms with his.
- Slide one arm forward as if delivering a sliding uppercut to the chin while ...
- Yanking the other arm back toward your hips to free it.



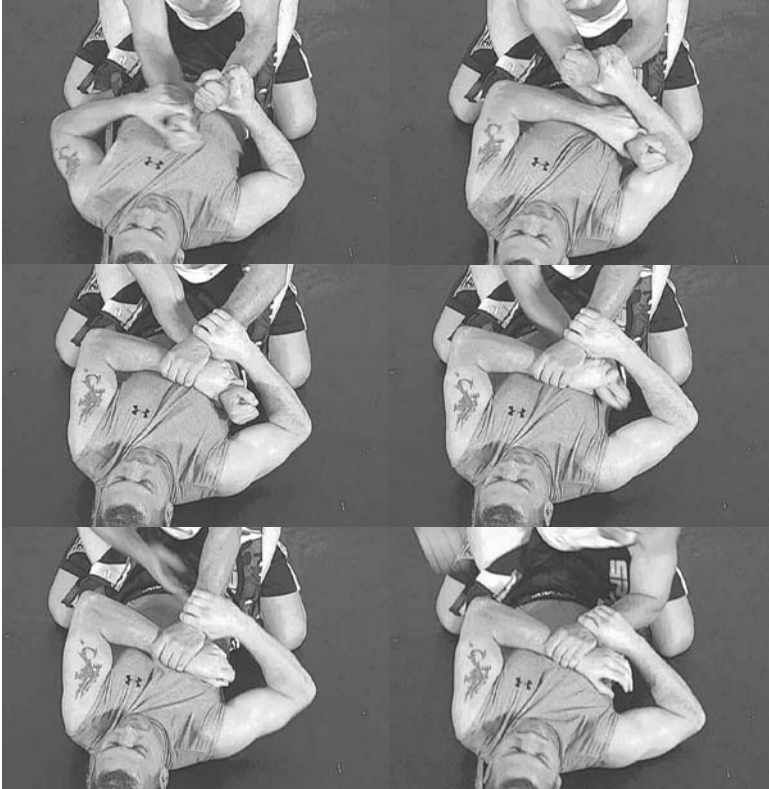
***Bump and rip to overhand***



***Bump and rip to elbow***



***Double wrist control ground and pound***



***Hand fighting versus double wrist grab***

- Your opponent is controlling both wrists with his hands.
- Send one wrist under the other.
- Grip his bottom wrist with your top hand.
- Wheel the bottom hand out.

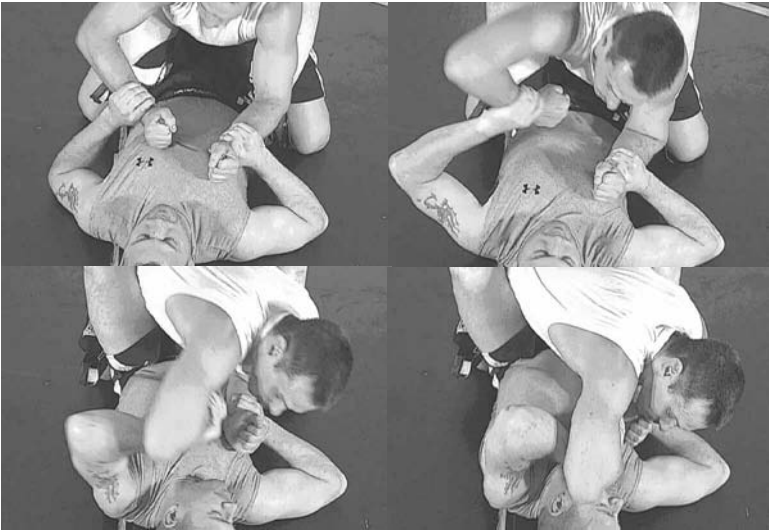




***Hand fighting  
to overhand***

***Hand fighting  
to elbow***

***Corkscrew elbow versus double wrist control***



- Here you can't free a wrist.
- Pull back with one arm as in the bump and rip.
- Fire a corkscrew elbow over the top with the pull-back arm.

***Double overhook control ground and pound***

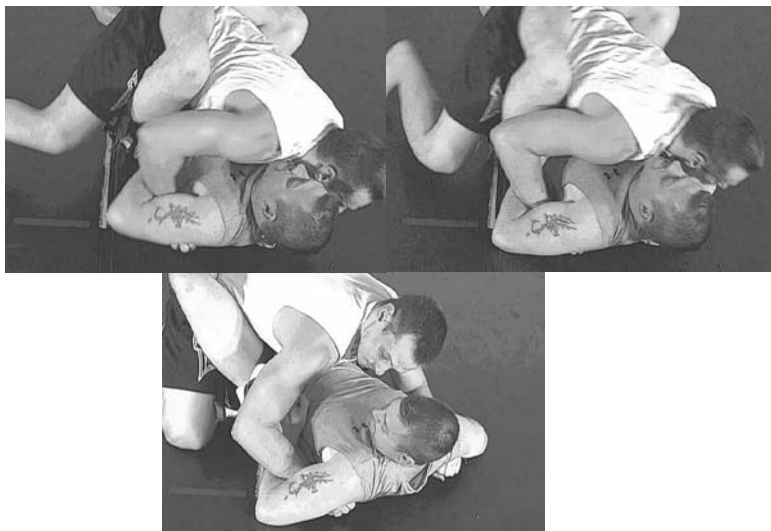


***Limp arm out versus double overhook***

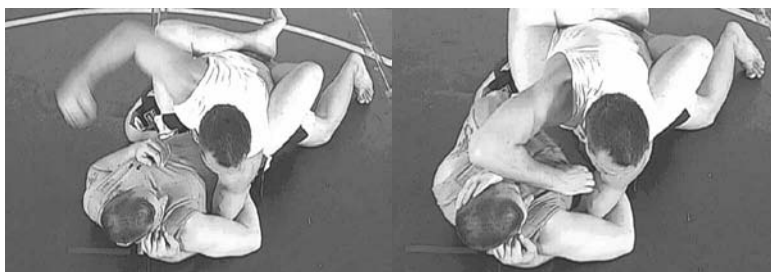
- Drive your head into his face.
- Lean right and limp arm the left until you are free, pinning his arm with the left forearm.
- Now do the right.

*More images next page.*

*More double overhead control ground and pound*



*Single overhead control ground and pound*



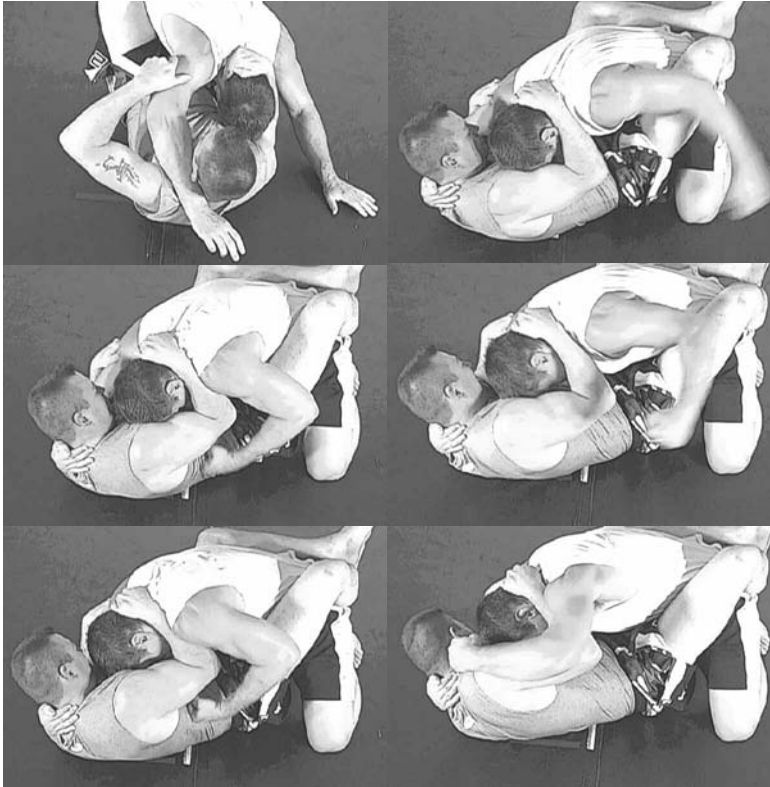
***Hand tight and fire***

● You can choose to leave the single arm “trapped” and fire or ...

***Limp arm out and fire***

● You can assist the limp arm with a cram to the neck/face if you choose.

**Collar and elbow control ground and pound**

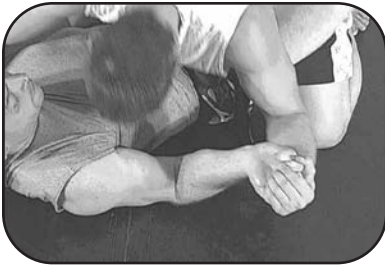
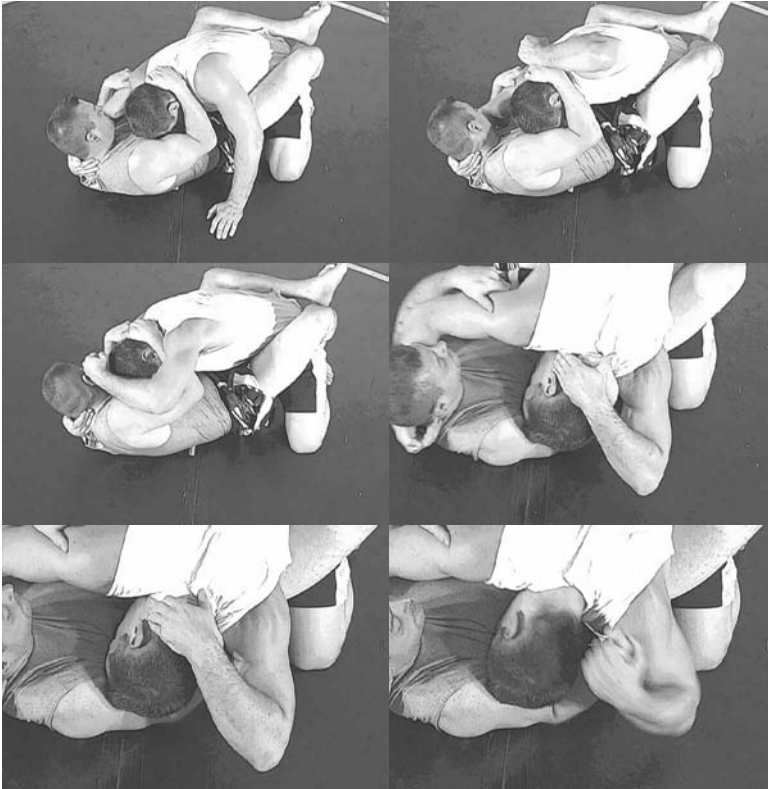


***1-2-3 versus collar and elbow***

- Bang two body hooks to draw his head control arm down to protect ribs.
- Throw an overhand to the head.

***Hammers versus collar and elbow***

- Use your free hand to fire hammer fists until he's inspired to release.



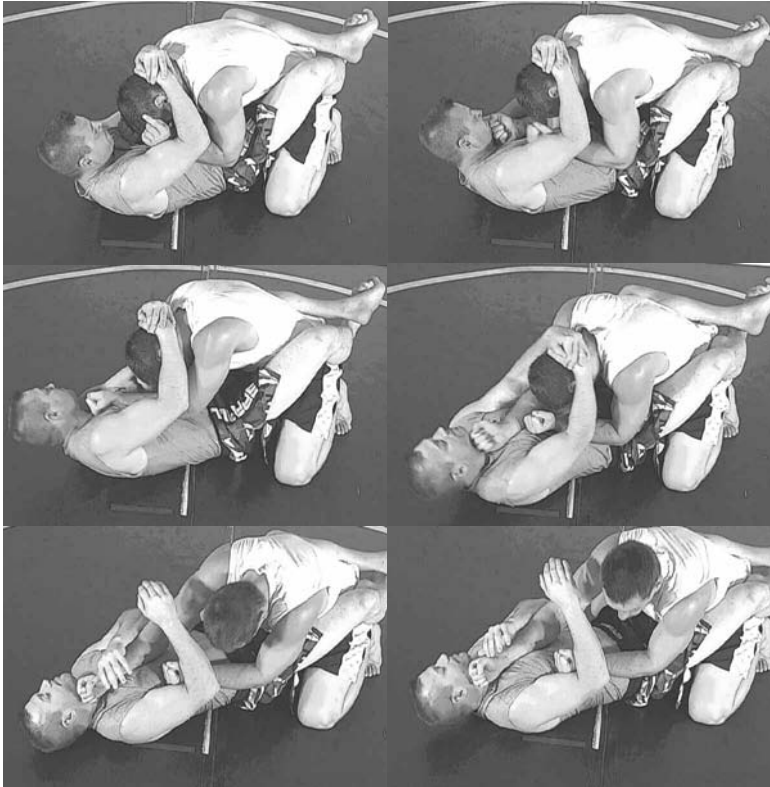
***Hammer and peel  
versus collar and elbow***

- Hammer the face as in the previous technique, but if he doesn't let go ...
- Hammer, then gain a one-on-one on his collar wrist with your hammer hand and peel his grip away.

***Hammer and peel to corkscrew elbow  
versus collar and elbow***

- Perform the preceding.
- Keep your one-on-one and fire a corkscrew elbow with the same arm.

***Double-up head control ground and pound***



***Sliding uppercuts versus double-up head control***

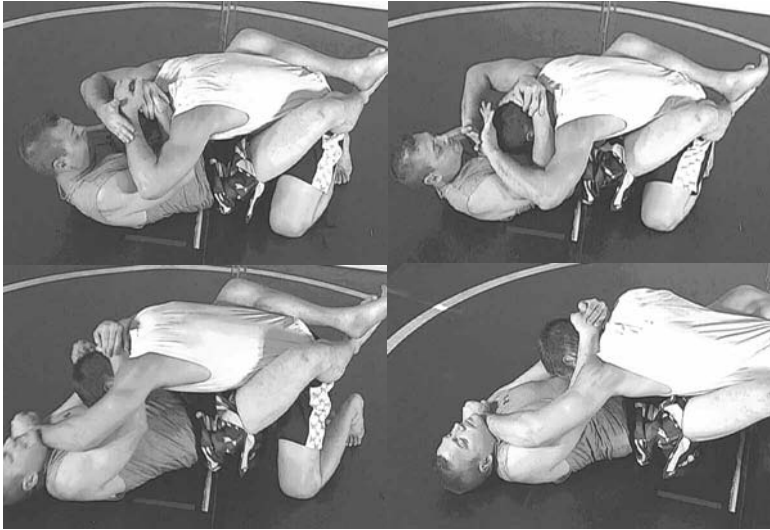
- If he has both hands on your head/neck, your hands are free.
- Fire uppercuts to the chin by sliding your forearms along his body as in the bump and rip.





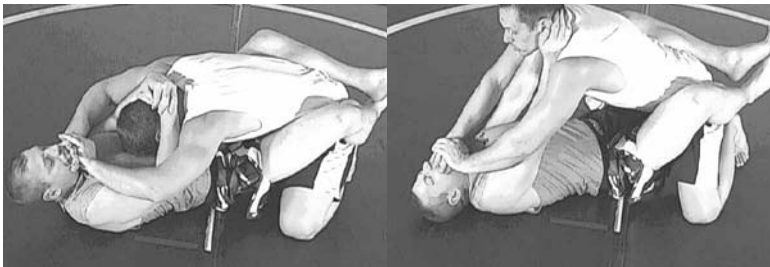
***Body work versus double-up head control***

- Fire body shots to change his mind.



***Cram versus double-up head control***

- You can also simply drive a forearm across his face.
- Build a frame with the second hand.
- Drive and break the grip.



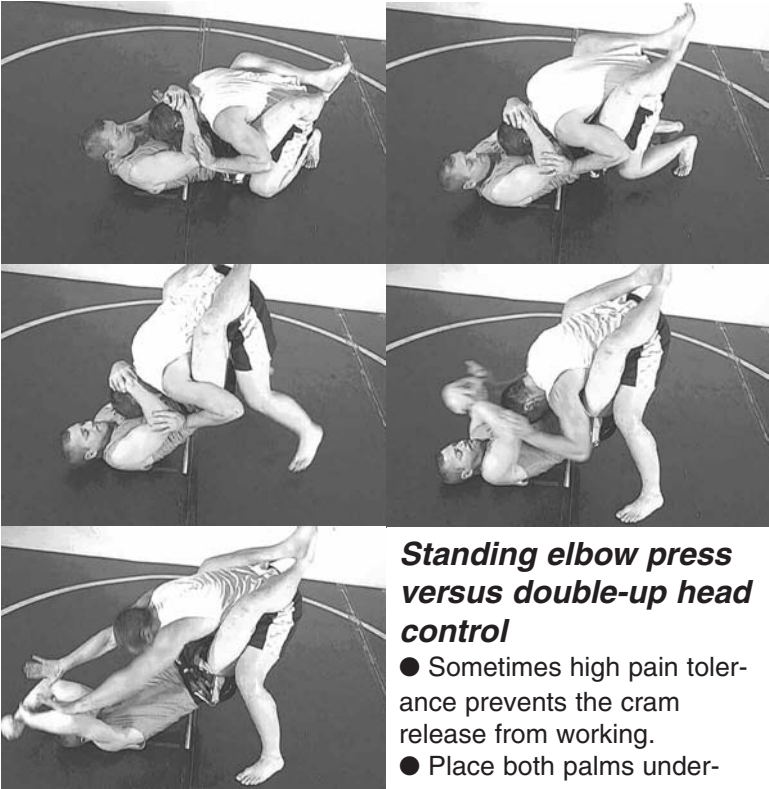
***Face drive versus double-up head control to overhand or elbow***

- Break his grip and fire away.

***Standing cram versus double-up head control***

- The only difference here is that you come to your feet on the face drive. This will give your strikes more stink.

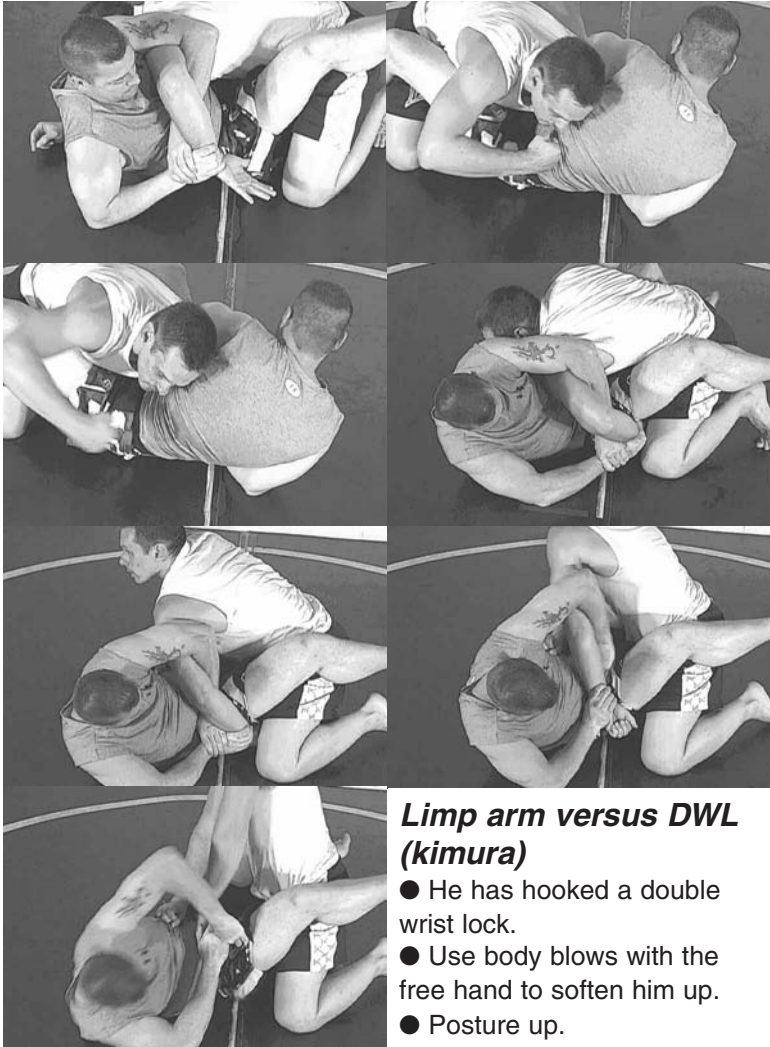




***Standing elbow press  
versus double-up head  
control***

- Sometimes high pain tolerance prevents the cram release from working.
- Place both palms underneath his elbows.
- Stand and press his elbows overhead to release.
- Follow with overhands and elbows.

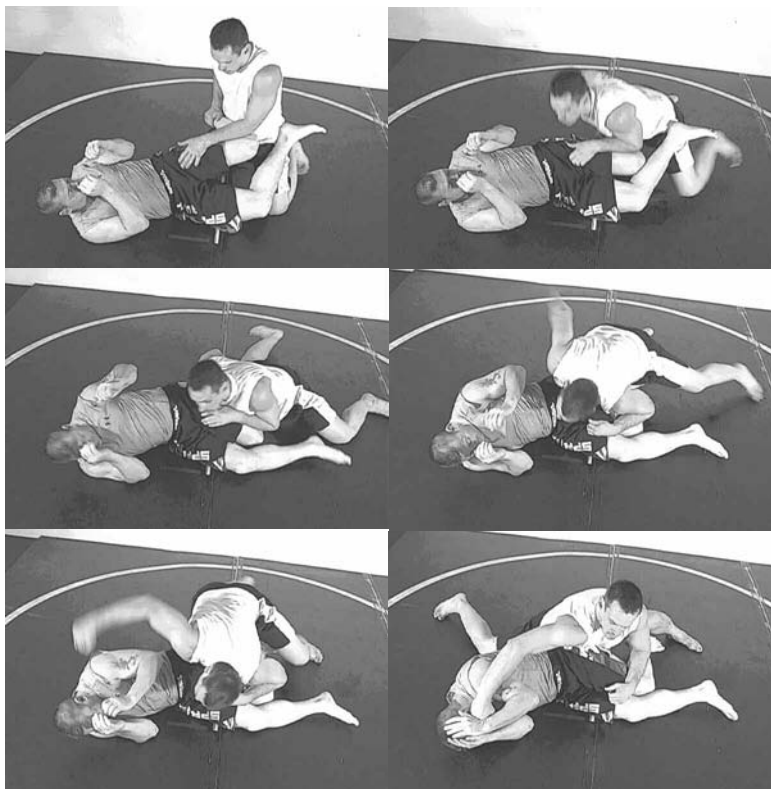
**Double wrist lock (DWL) kimura control**



**Limp arm versus DWL (kimura)**

- He has hooked a double wrist lock.
- Use body blows with the free hand to soften him up.
- Posture up.
- Straighten your attacked arm and let it go limp.
- Pull it out of jeopardy.
- Once free, return and throw overhands with the same arm.

### ***Shin wedge control ground and pound***

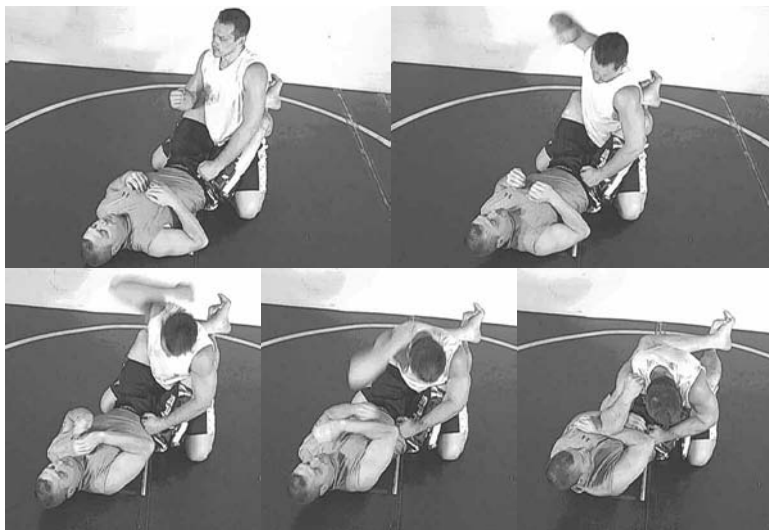


### ***Shove and fire***

- Some fighters will use a legs open position and place a knee/shin against your stomach to keep you out of punching range.
- Place both hands on the blocking leg ...
- Use downward pressure to keep it in place and then ...
- Use your foot-side hand (the hand closest to his blocking foot) to fire an overhand.
- From here you can usually settle into a posture position or pass.

### ***Striking from posture***

Here we assume you have beat his tie-ups to get to posture. Time to have fun.



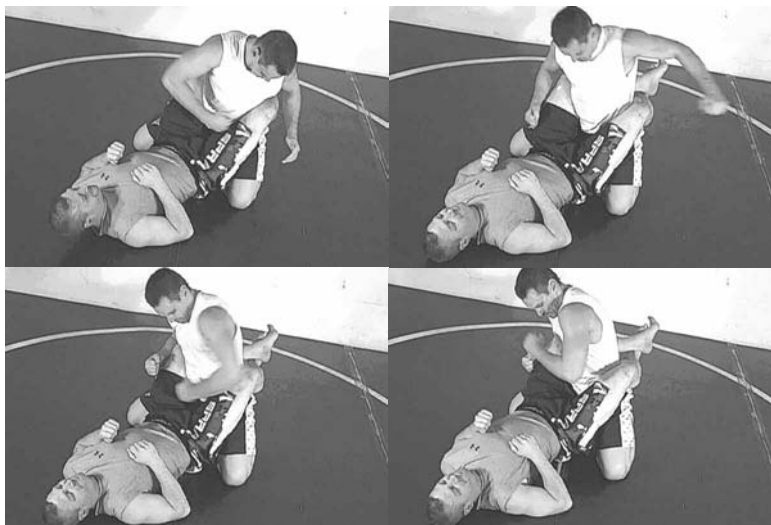
***Drop elbow to body*** ● Aim for the sternum or diaphragm.



### ***Back elbow to thigh***

● Raise the striking arm high and smash with impunity.





### ***Sweep hooks versus thighs***

- This one is a little unorthodox but it packs a surprising amount of wallop.
- Fire hooks across your body into the top of his thighs.

### ***Overhand body***

- Once you've gained posture, you may want to stay away from using the overhand against the head because this increases his opportunities for control.
- But nothing says you can't fire a short overhand to the diaphragm.

### ***Hammer body***

- You can hammer the short ribs and or/the diaphragm.

### ***Long straights to chin***

- To keep from being broken down, fire long straight punches to the chin.

## ***6 Leg/guard passing ground and pound***

If you choose to pass, and keep in mind there are many successful fighters who deliberately choose not to pass (Fedor Emelianenko and Chael Sonnen come



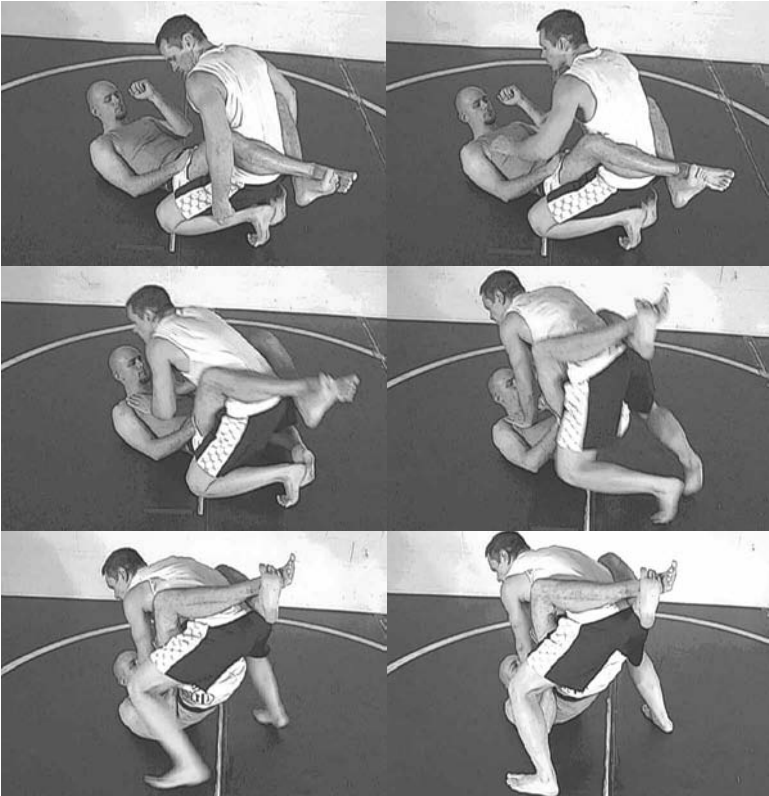
to mind), I heartily recommend using the ground and pound as your leg-splitting technique. No need to work harder than necessary. With that said, the occasional “attempt” or fake at leg-splitting

(elbow prying, et cetera) can be a nice feint to draw your opponent’s attention back to the grappling aspect of the game so you can return some ground and pound fire.

Although this is a text on ground and pound, we feature a few high percentage passes because ground mobility must be emphasized over pounding.

Use the posture to pass if you choose to stay low, but you will probably find standing up to pass far easier in the MMA rule set, particularly with the addition of our focus — ground and pound.

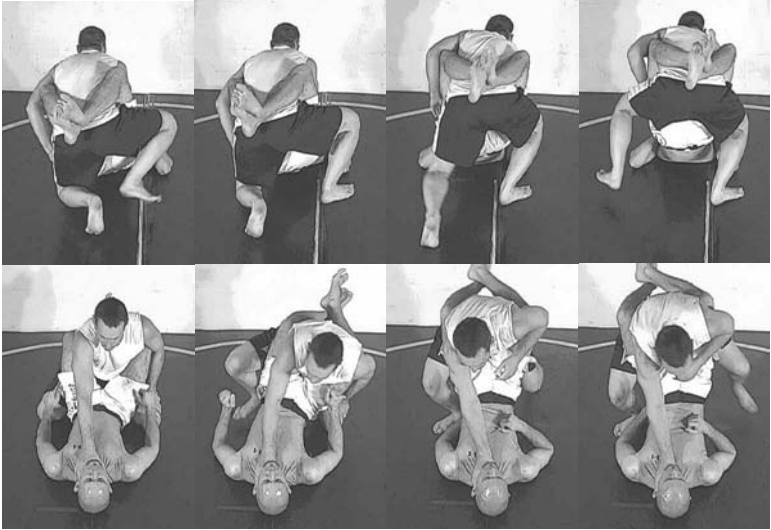
***Standing up inside the legs — pop up***



- Post both hands on his chest or on his hips in a biceps ride.
- Pop to both feet at the same time.



***Standing up inside the legs — step up***



Correct step-up — with the leg same side as posting hand.

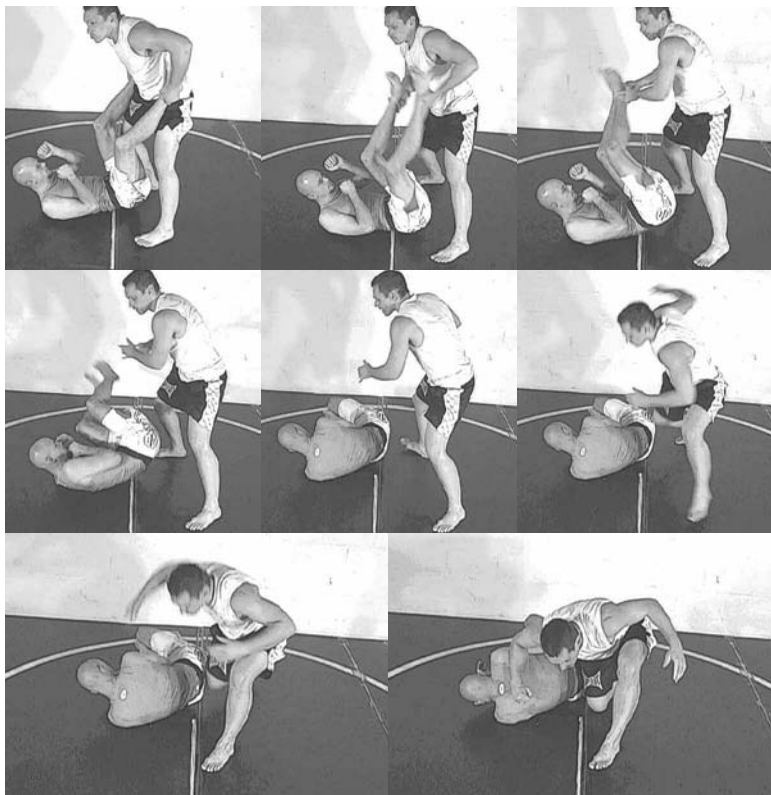


Wrong foot forward will set you up.

- Post a hand on his throat.
- Step up the same side leg. If you post with your right hand, step your right leg up.
- The step-up acts as a hip block for your opponent's submission attempts by blocking his hips. Stepping up with the foot opposite your post arm is a recipe for hurt versus a skilled submission player.

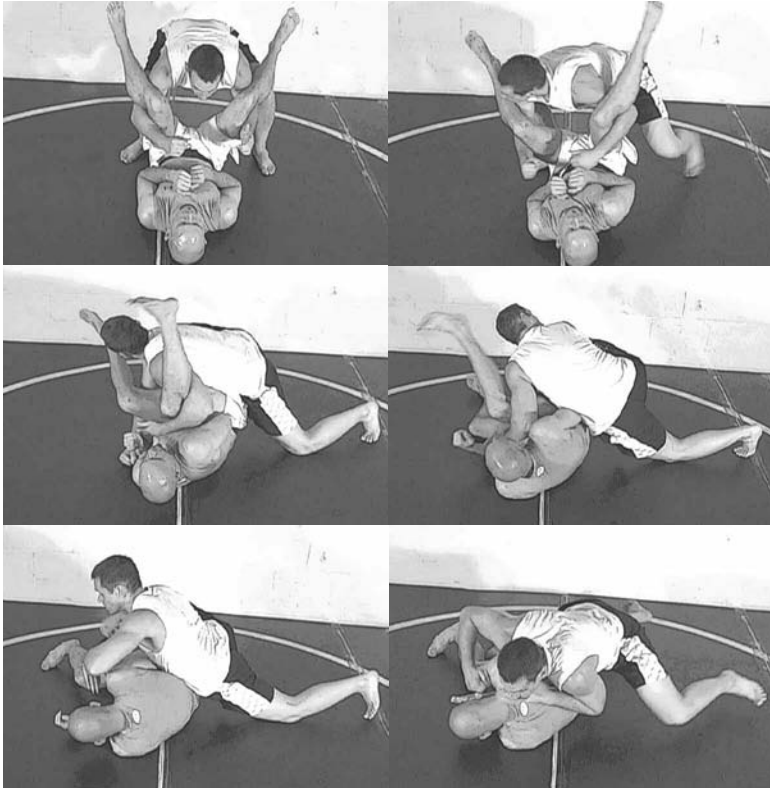


## Ankle toss



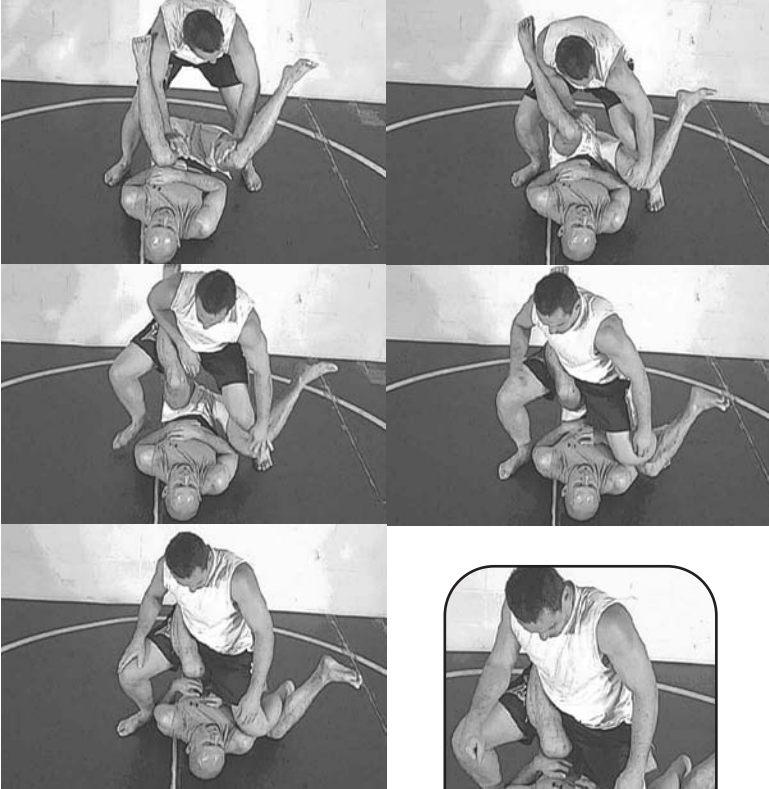
- Hit your step-up or pop-up and control his ankles with your hands.
- Toss them to the side and blanket or clock him with the overhand on the way in.

## ***Double underhook toss***



- Tosses can be performed both kneeling and standing. I recommend working both versions of all variations.
- Once the legs open, underhook both knees (or you can control him at the hips) with the crooks of your arms.
- Drag his body onto your knees.
- Stack and toss to one side by turning your whole body.
- Follow with overhands and hooks.

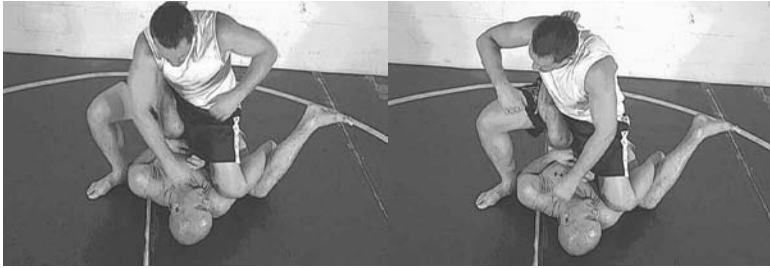
**Throne pass**



- Once the legs open ...
- Stand and split them with your elbows.
- Then use your palms to split them further.
- Drive into him with your hips to stack him.
- Ride on his hamstrings with the hamstring of one leg and the shin of the other.

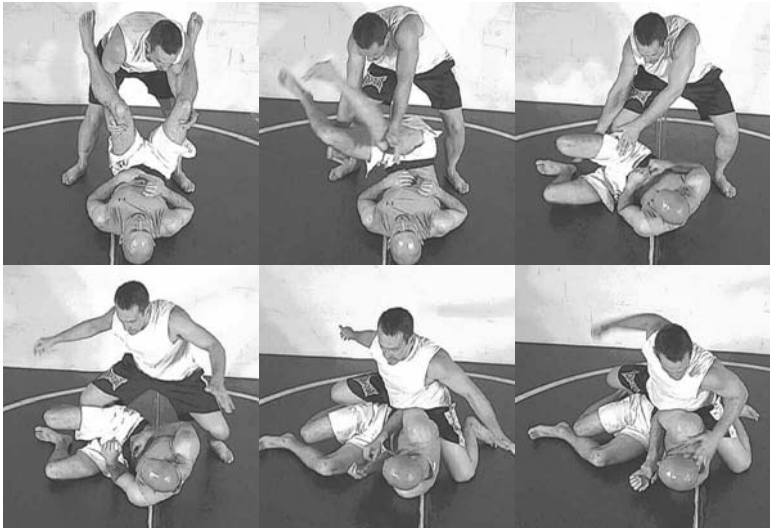


### ***Throne pass to ground and pound down the middle***



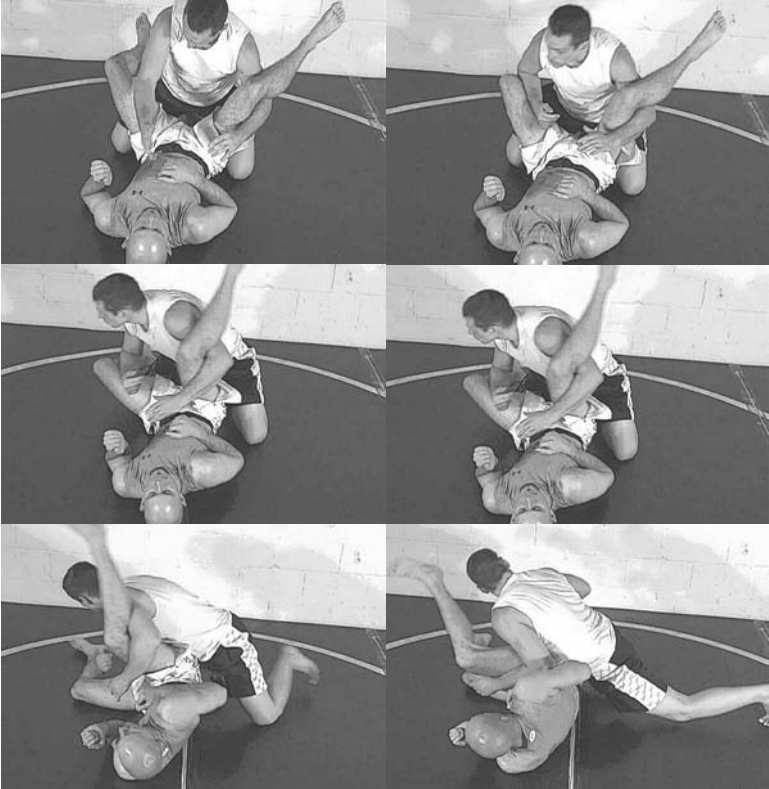
- Hit your throne pass.
- Keep him stacked and fire punches into his face.

### ***Hip glide to side throne pass***



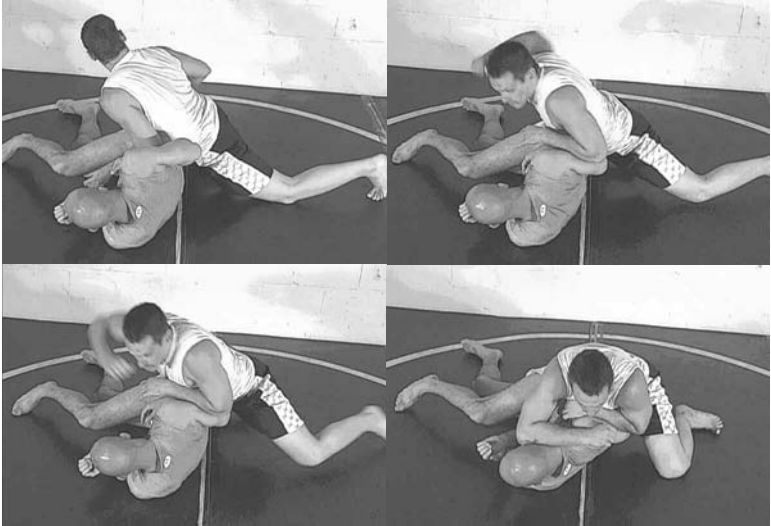
- A variant of the throne.
- Once the legs split ...
- Look up to stand up. Stand and look to the sky while popping your hips forward.
- Toss his legs to one side.
- Ride his hips down to a throne off to his side.
- Fire away.

**Single underhook toss**



Single underhook tosses can leave you vulnerable to the triangle and other offenses — so execute with caution.

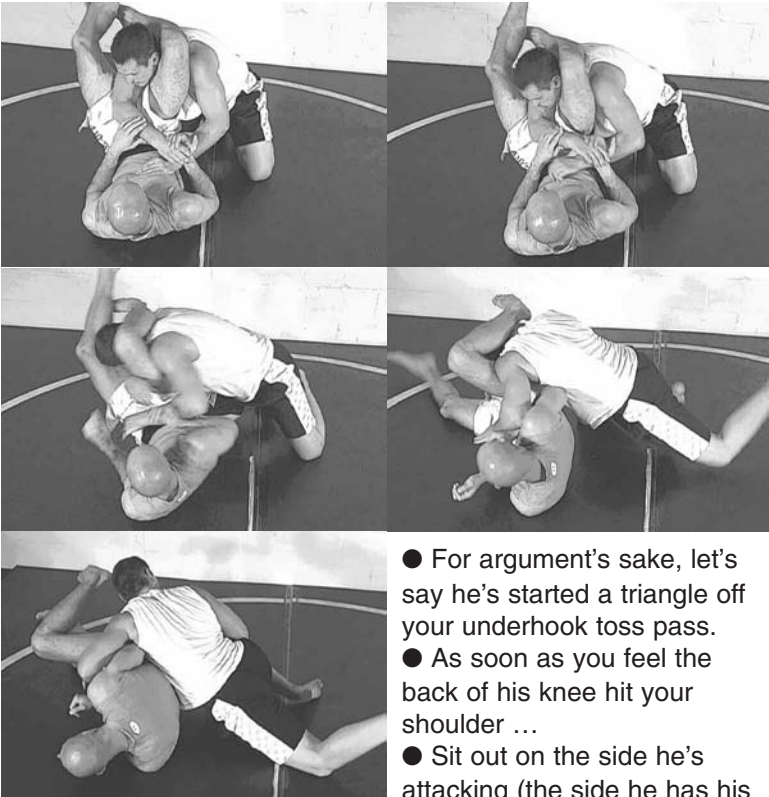
- If the legs open due to punches ...
- Posture up to prevent the triangle.
- Underhook a leg with the crook of your arm.
- Stack him and use your body, not just your arm, to toss his leg.



***Single underhook toss to overhand***

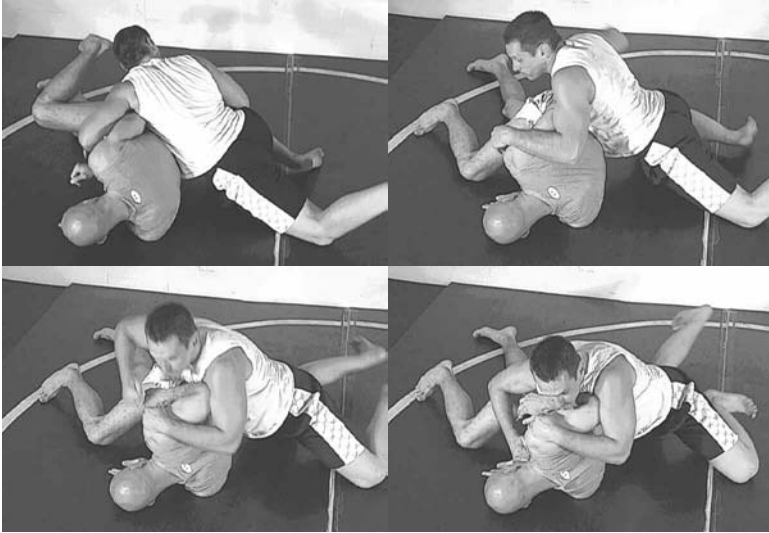
- The same, but as you ride up his body, use the non-toss hand to fire the overhand.

**Sit-out toss versus 1/2 triangle**



- For argument's sake, let's say he's started a triangle off your underhook toss pass.
- As soon as you feel the back of his knee hit your shoulder ...
- Sit out on the side he's attacking (the side he has his leg shelved on) and face his feet.

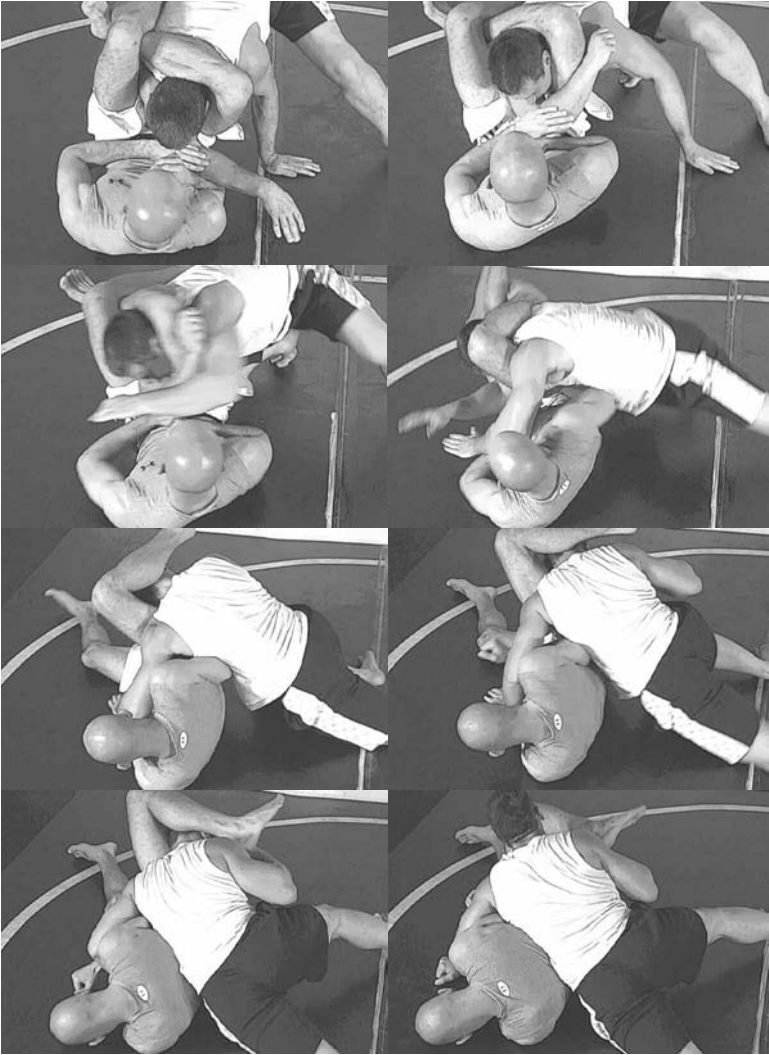
**Sit-out toss versus 1/2 triangle to hook**



- The same but ...
- Once the leg is passed, immediately turn back into him and bang a hook with the non-underhook hand.

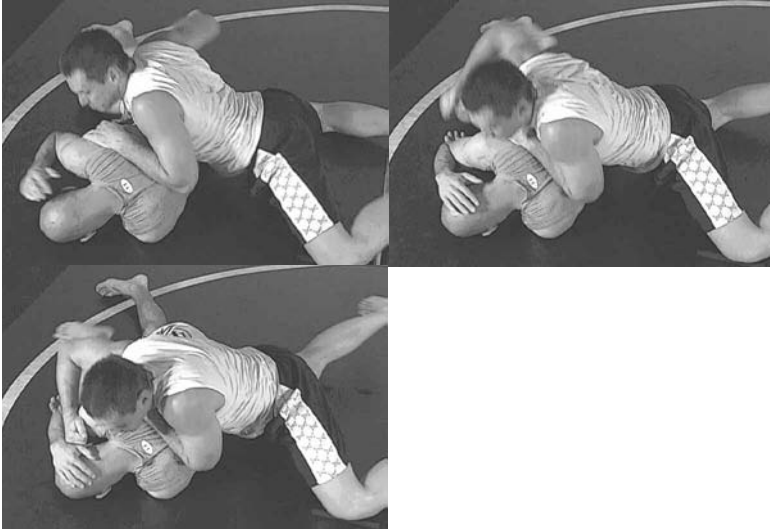


**Sit-out toss versus full triangle**



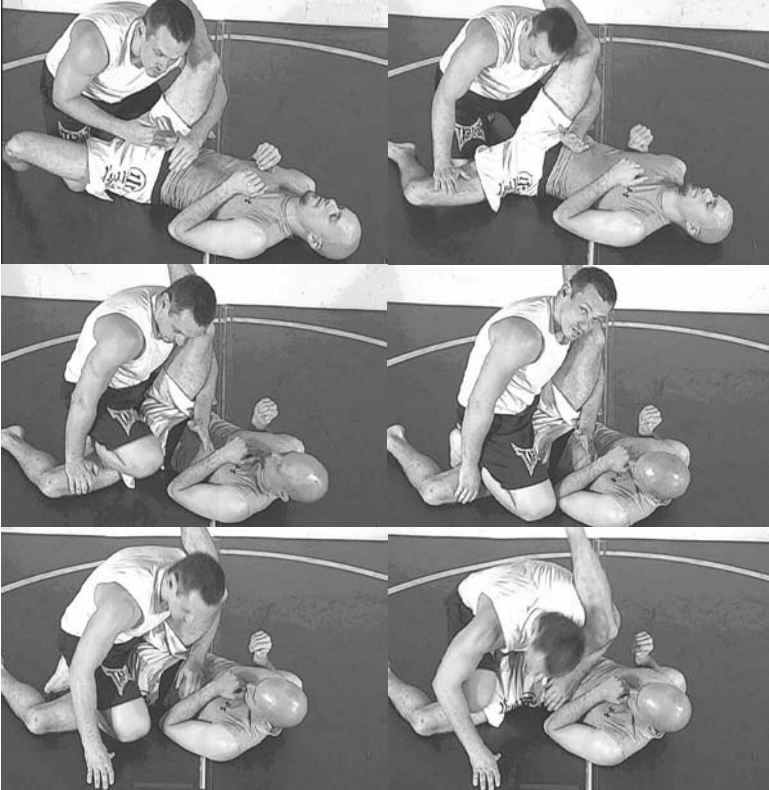
● The previous move will work on the full triangle. Work it several rounds to build your confidence.

***Sit-out toss versus full triangle to hook***

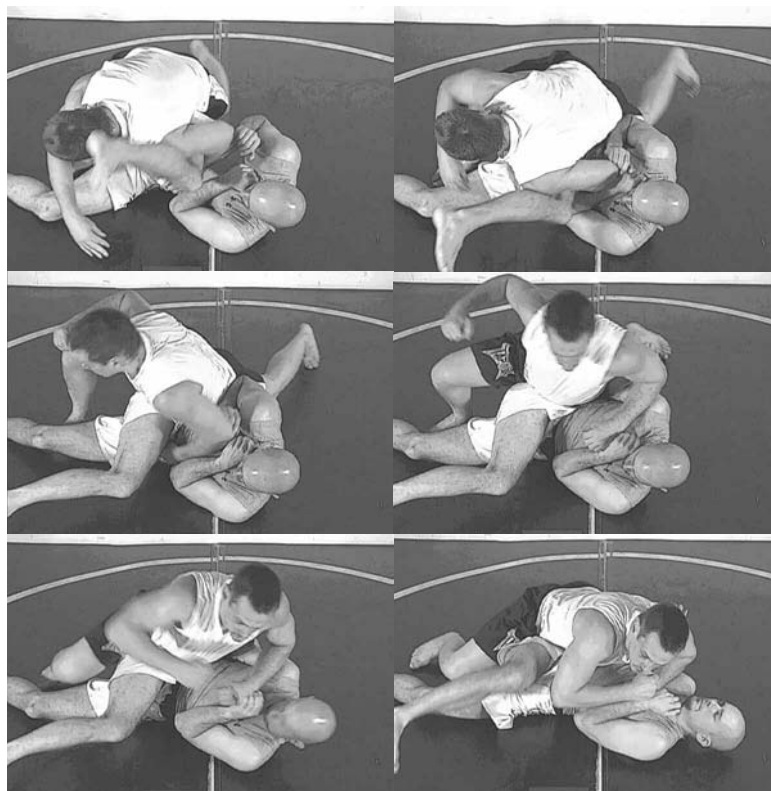


- Like before, once the leg is passed, immediately turn back into him and bang a hook with the non-underhook hand.

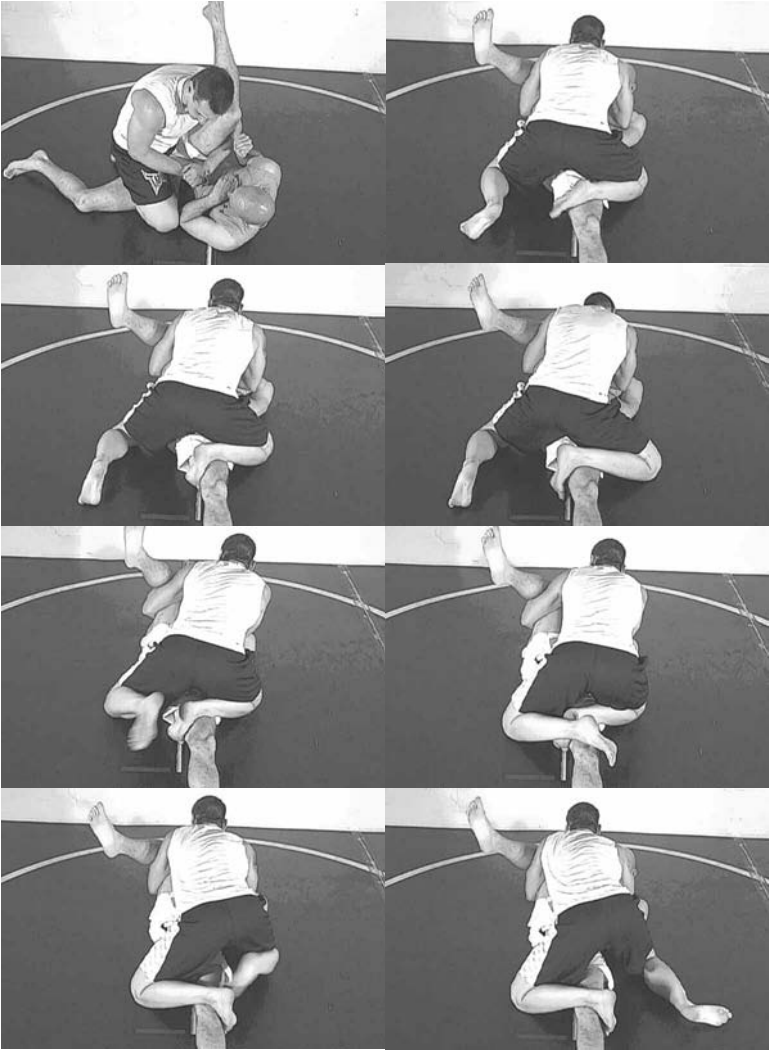
**Single underhook toss with shin pin**



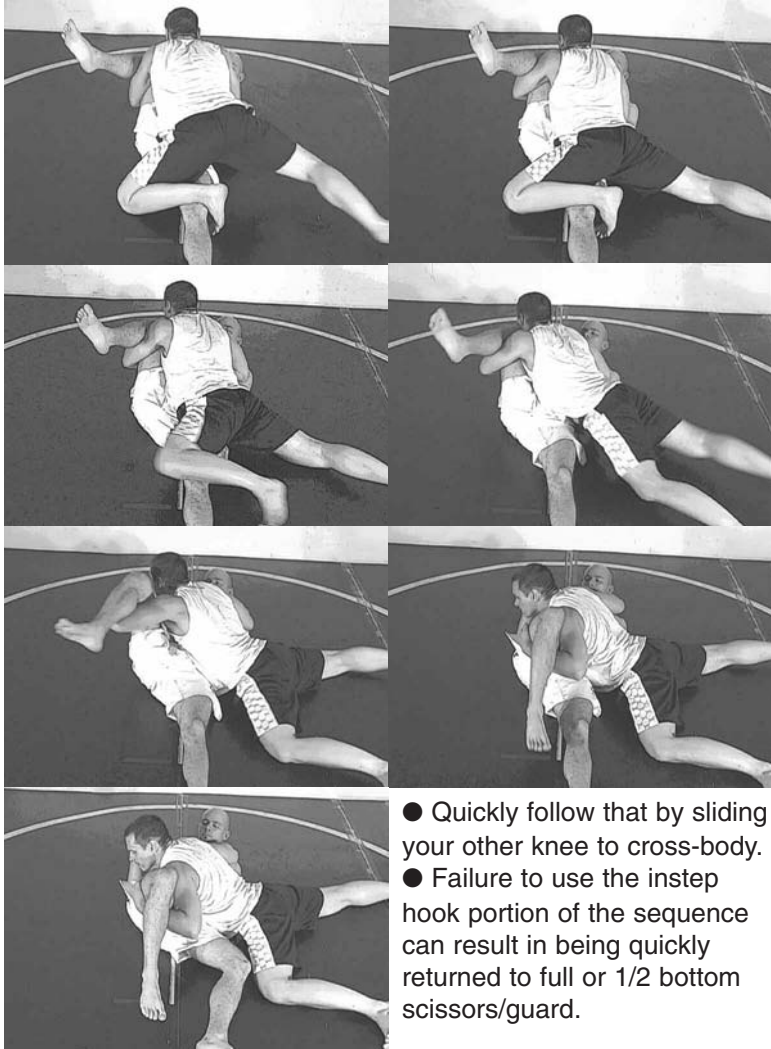
- Here's a safer way to hit the single underhook toss.
- Once his legs are split ...
- Use an elbow to split one of his legs to the mat.
- Place the shin opposite your leg control side on top of his currently "free" leg — the one you are elbow-riding.
- Hit your toss pass.



**Single underhook toss pass to shin pin side**

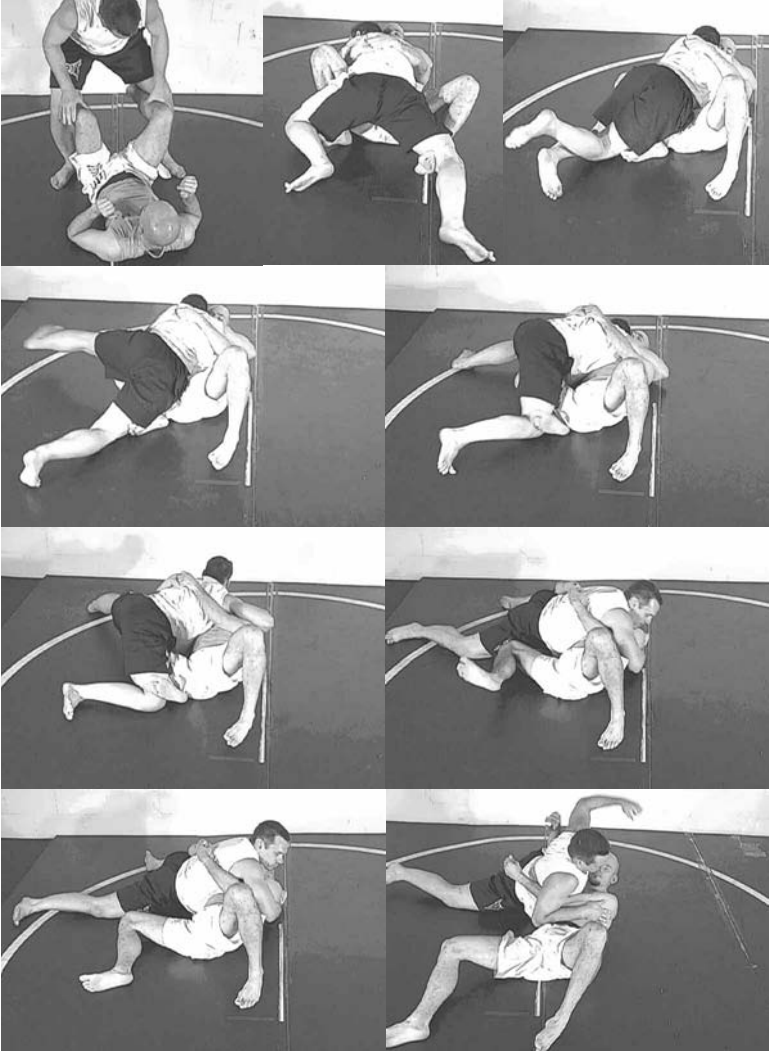


- A good bottom player can thwart your pass, but if you've established your underhook and shin pin, you can pass to the shin pin side using the following steps.
- Overhook his pinned leg with your "free" instep before ...
- Sliding your shin pin leg to cross-body.



● **Note** — You can also cross-knee pass off a shin pin, but it results in reversals 50 percent of the time. I suggest sticking with this version.

***Double elevator pass (butterfly guard) with body lock***



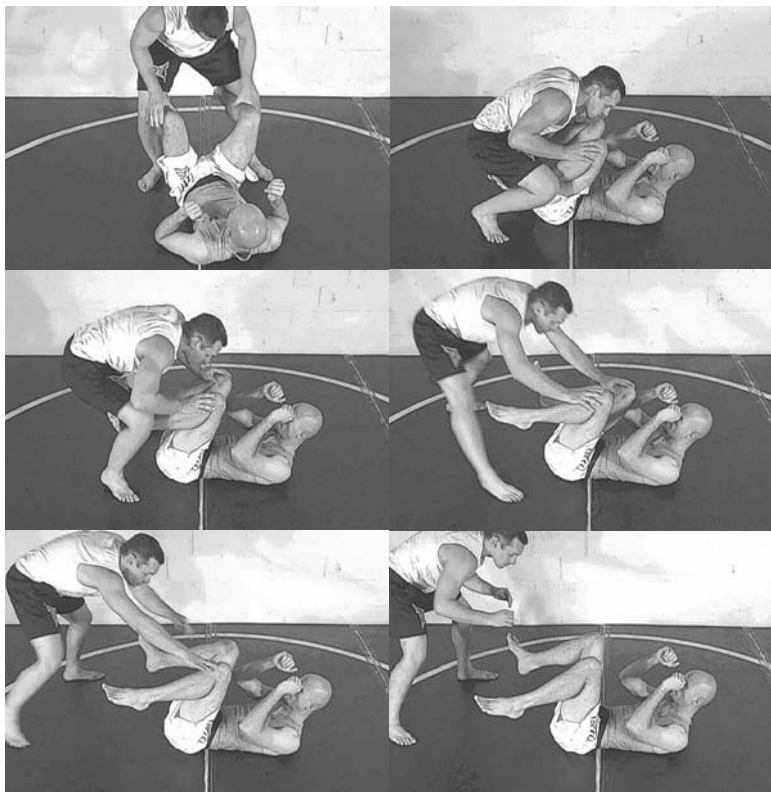




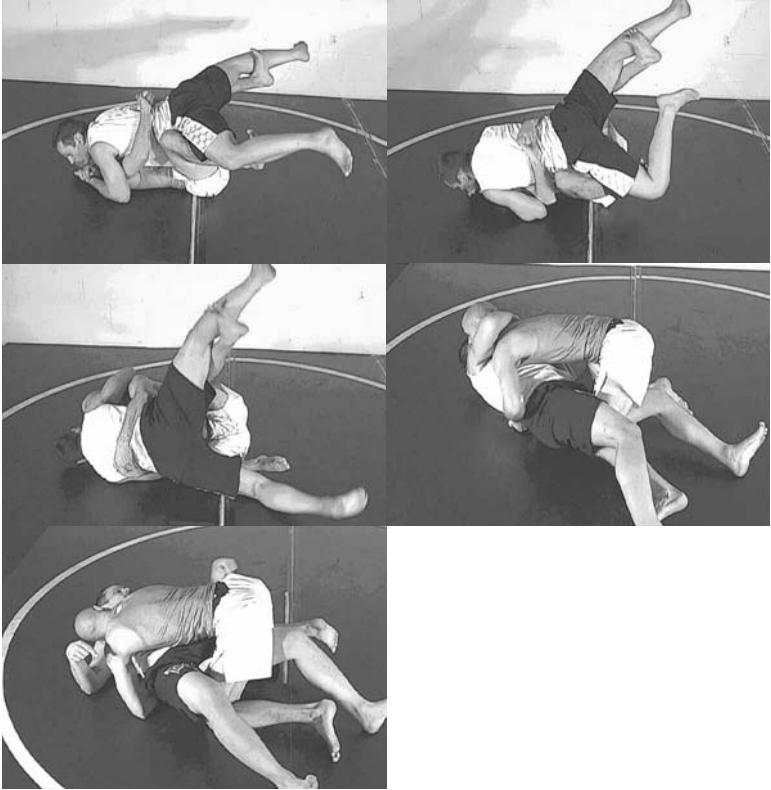
- This version of leg control is only effective in MMA if your opponent can body lock you. If he doesn't, no need to pass, simply step out (see next page) or fire away.
- Assuming he has locked you properly ...
- Sprawl to keep base.
- Bang the body and head to soften him.
- Sprawl one leg all the way back (here the right leg).
- Push his legs to the sprawl side.
- Immediately bring the sprawled leg back, posting the returning knee behind his knees to block him while stepping the other foot up.
- Control his hips with yours and let fly.



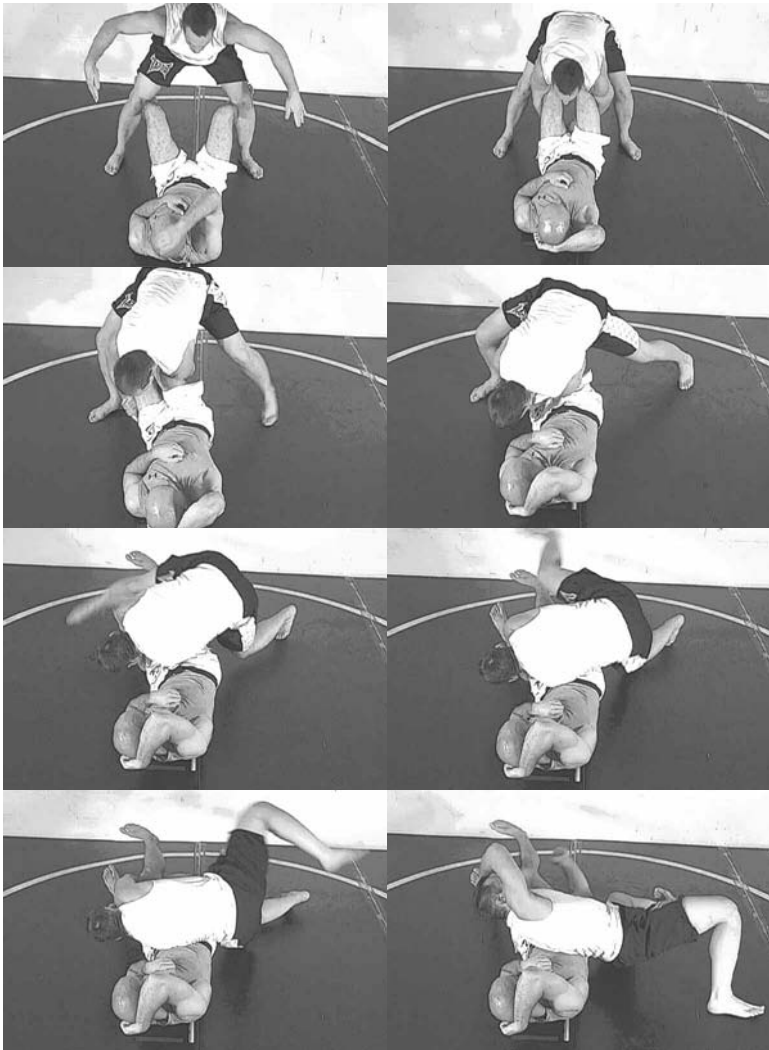
***Stepping away from double elevator***



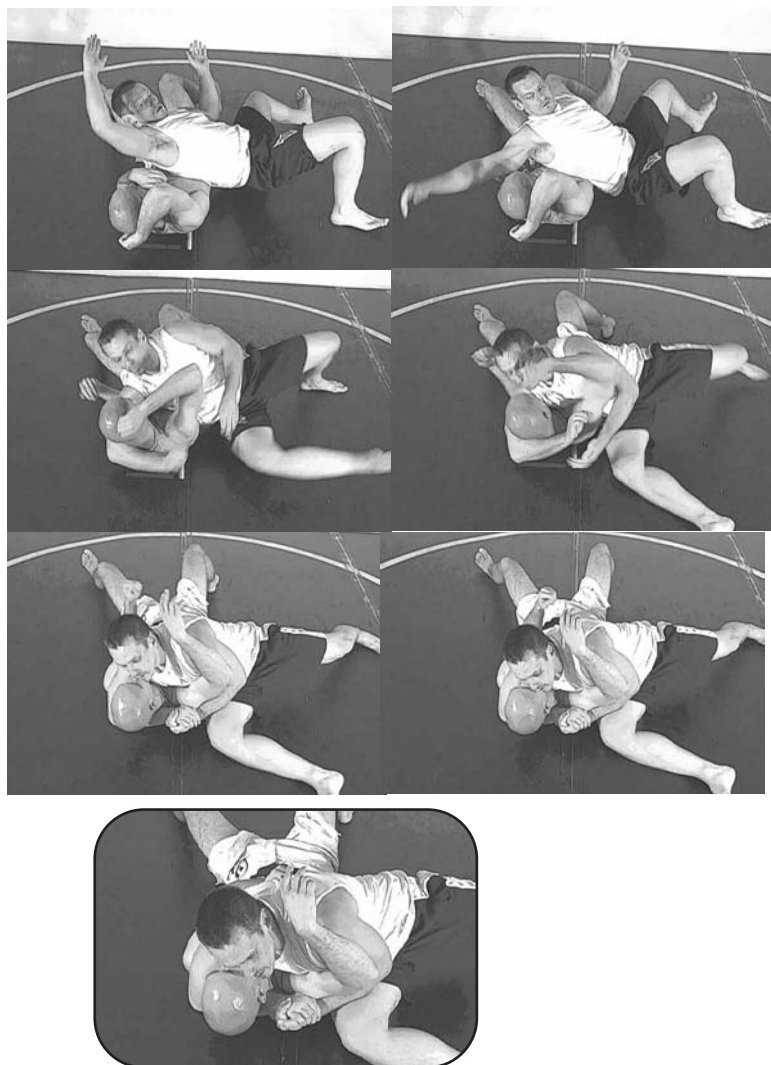
***Double elevator danger ...***



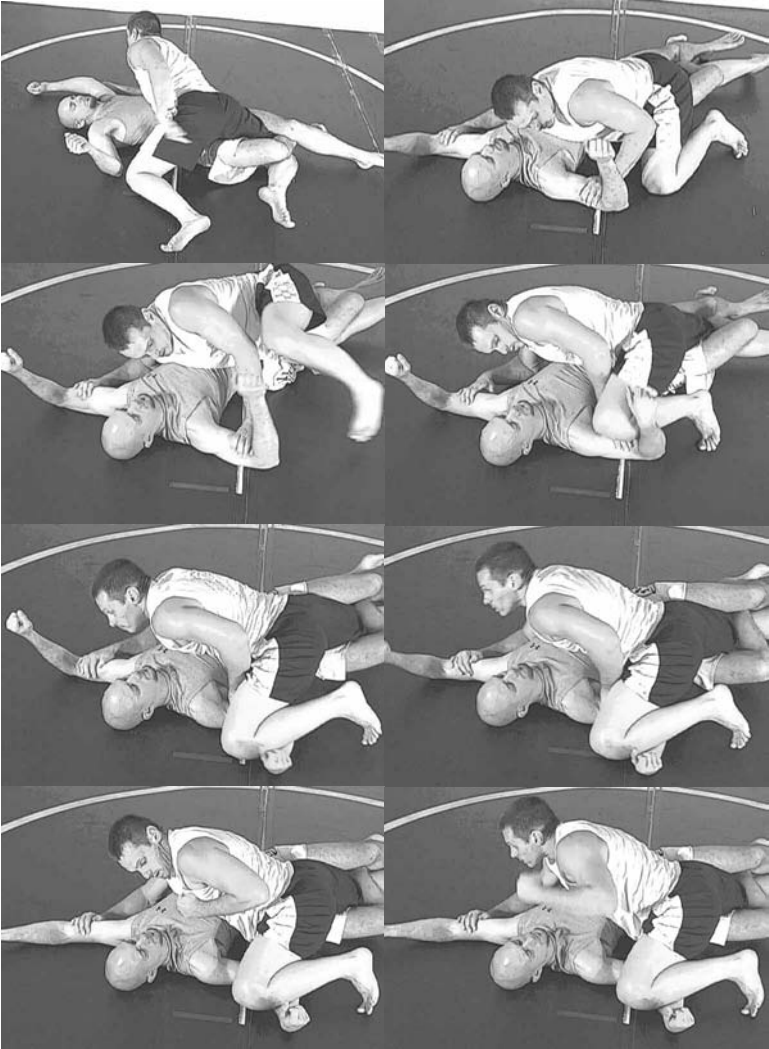
**Log role versus double elevator no body lock**



- If you want to keep the game on the ground and/or you have reason to respect their grounded guard work (De La Riva, Goes guards among other approaches), you can ...
- Hug his thighs together with both of your arms and then 360 roll up his body to a cross-body ride.

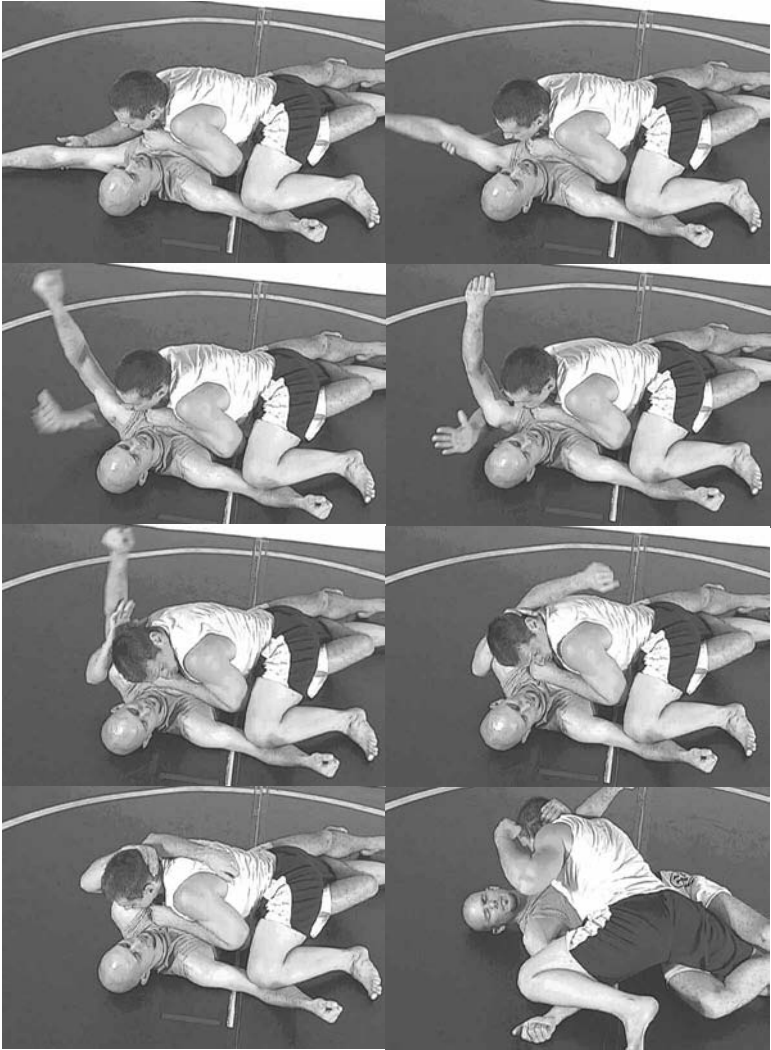


**1/2 mount — 1/2 guard top ground and pound**



***Biceps ride to shin pin***

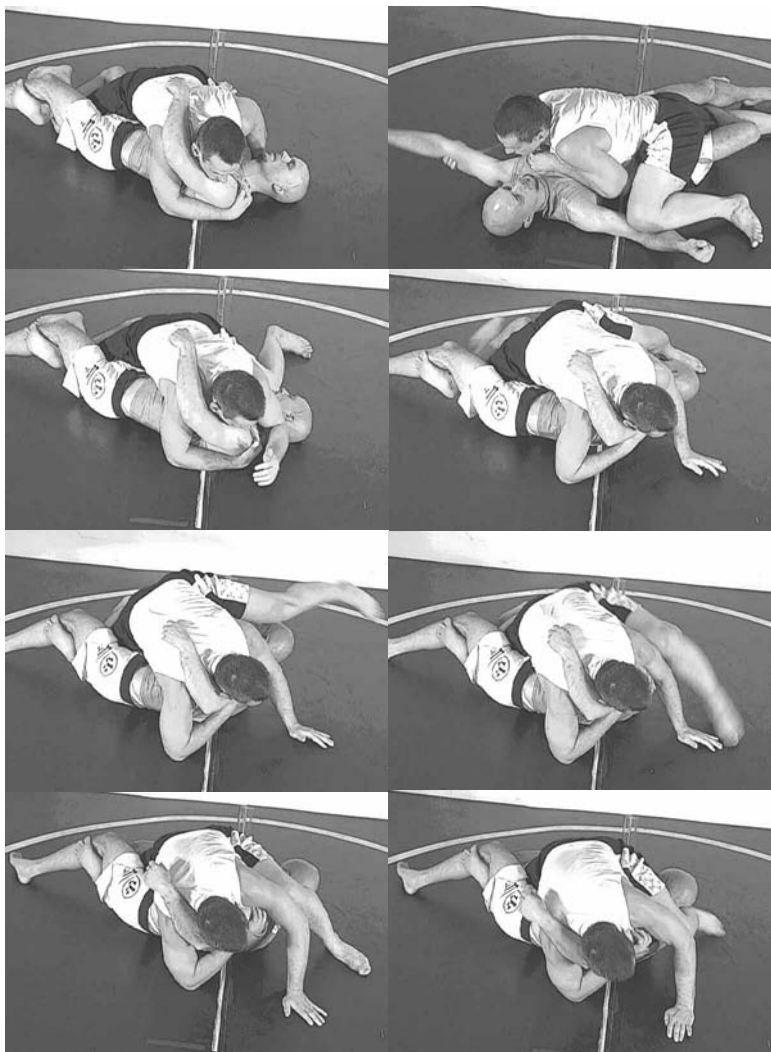
- Fight for a biceps ride on both arms then ...
- Place the head-side shin on top of his near arm.
- Bang the head with the near side hand.



***Underhook and shin pin***

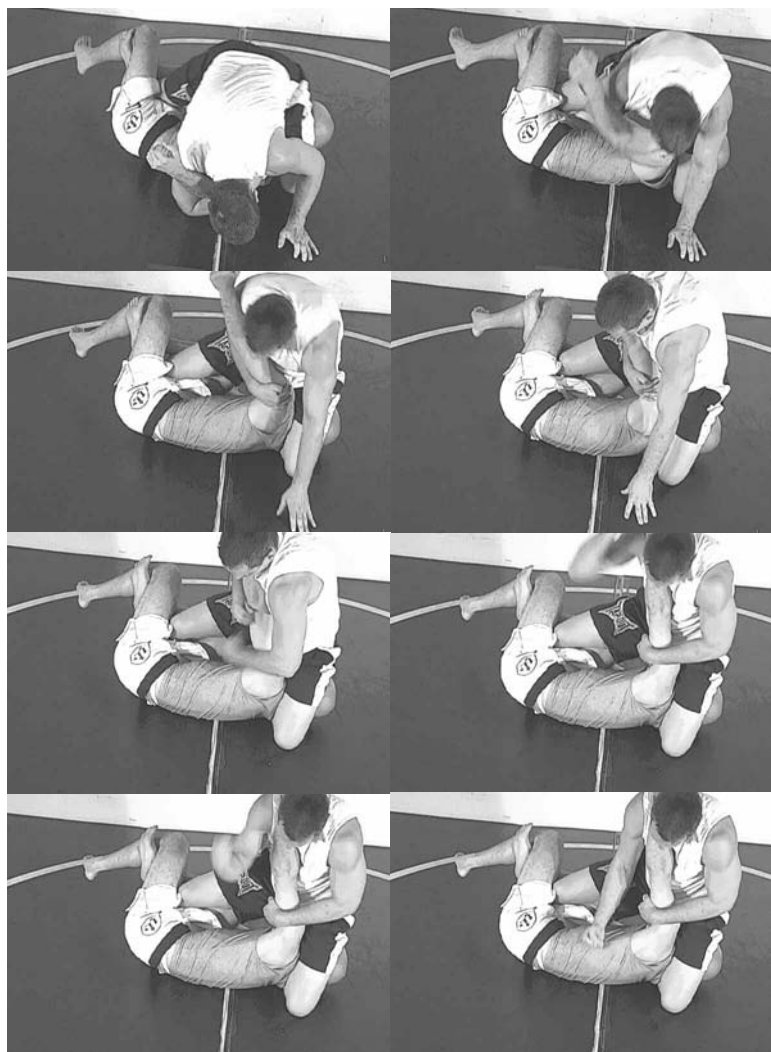
- Underhook his far arm.
- Fight for the shin pin again and execute as in the previous move.





***Stepover and hammer ribs***

● Hit the head stepover (cary stretch) and pound his ribs with hip-side hammer fists.







***Inside bottom scissors against cage ground and pound***



***Drive to the cage***

- Driving your opponent's head/neck against the cage can make him mighty uncomfy.



***1/2 pressure squat versus slipping against cage***

- If/when he attempts to escape a hip, block the hip by dropping that same side knee to the mat and ...
- Squeeze in with your raised knee.



***1/2 pressure squat to ground and pound***

- Fire punches from this position.



***Look up to stand up  
pass against cage***

- To pass against the cage, simply stand up ...



- Look skyward ...
- Thrust your hips forward ...
- Toss his legs to the side ...

*More images next page.*

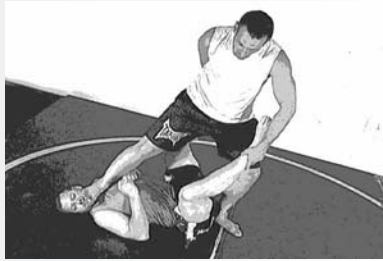
## MMA Mastery: Ground and Pound



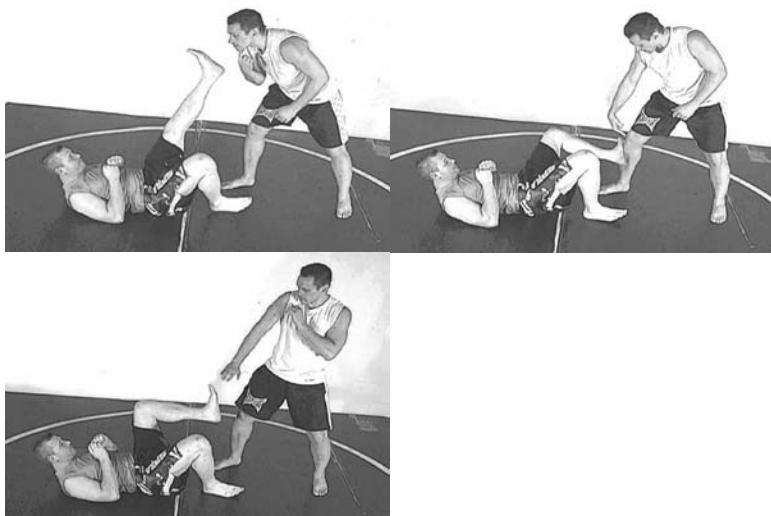
- Come back in with a salvo.

## ***7 Grounded work*** ***— top position***

When one opponent is standing and one is on the mat we call that the grounded position. Here we place you in the position of being the fighter who has the good fortune to be on his feet. You can still be nailed from this position, so you can opt for backing up and letting the ref stand the fight up. But if you choose to bang from here (and it is fun), here is your top-grounded tool kit.

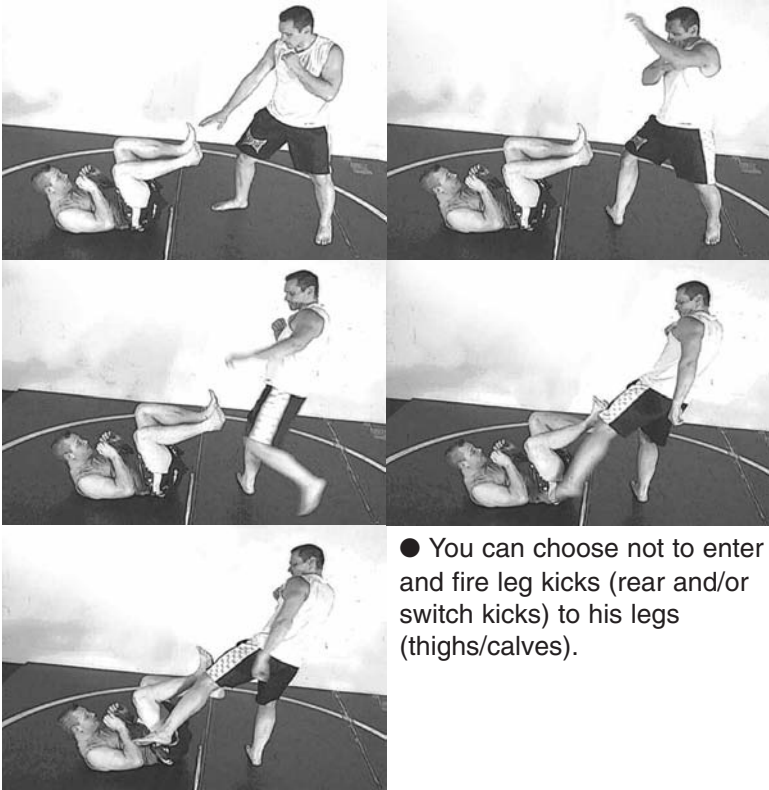


## ***Grounded up stance***



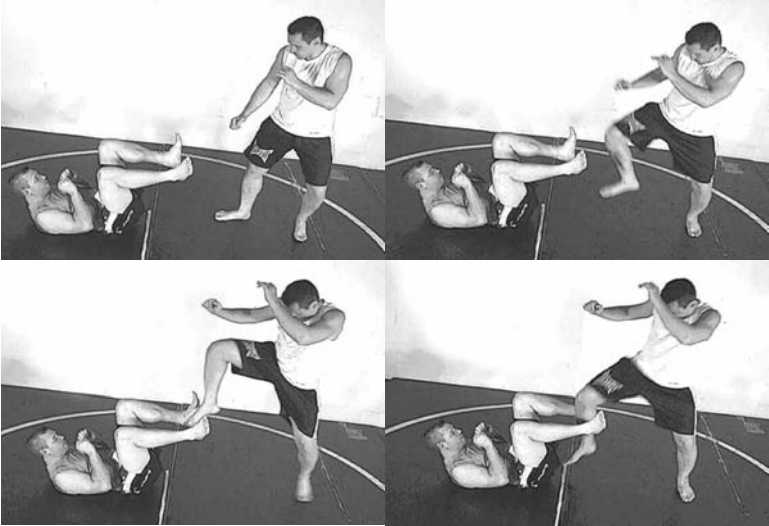
- Your weight distribution should be 70/30 with most of the weight on the rear foot. You want the lead leg unweighed since you will likely receive a kick or two.
- Lean back and watch the up-kick.
- Rear hand is up to protect your face.
- Lead hand is down ready to snag an ankle.

**Leg kick**



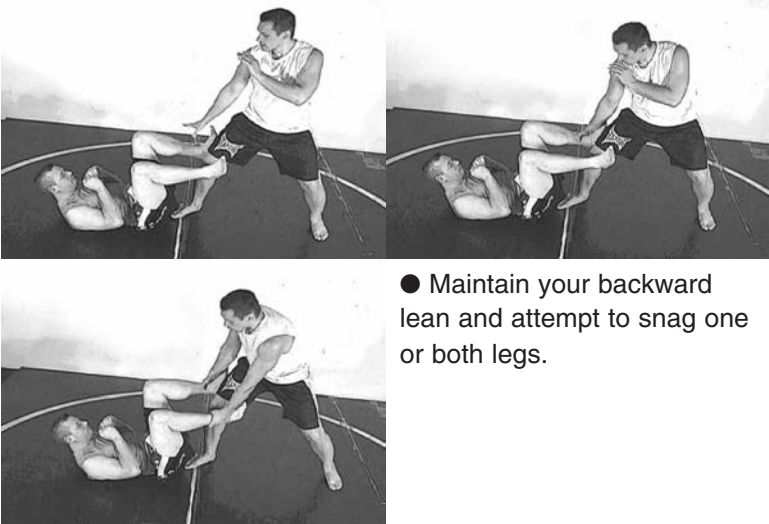


**Entering on the grounded opponent**



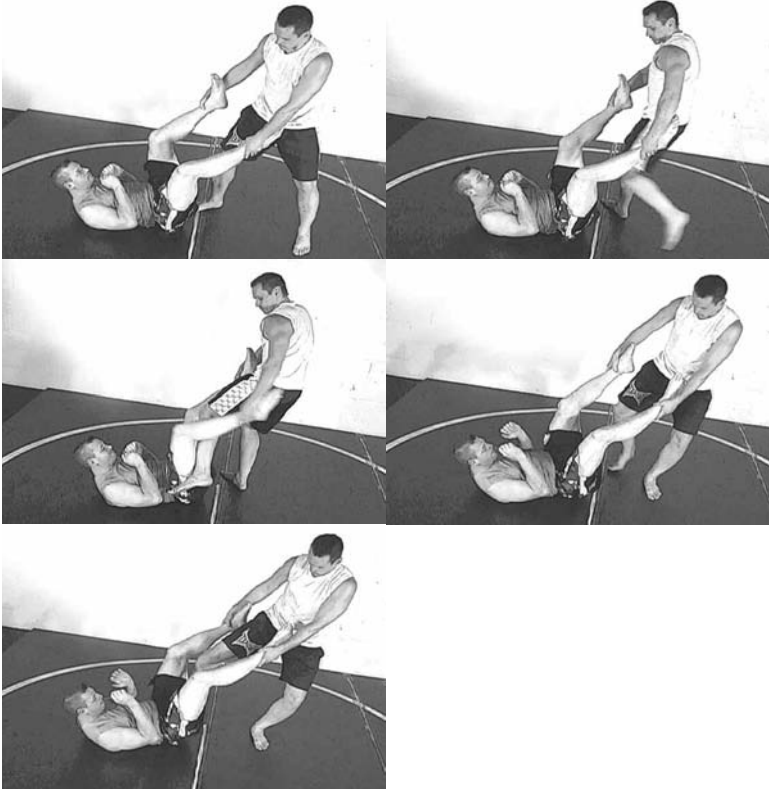
- Raise the lead leg and step in fast being sure to maintain your backward lean.
- Aim to step between his legs with your lead leg.

**Attempting leg control**



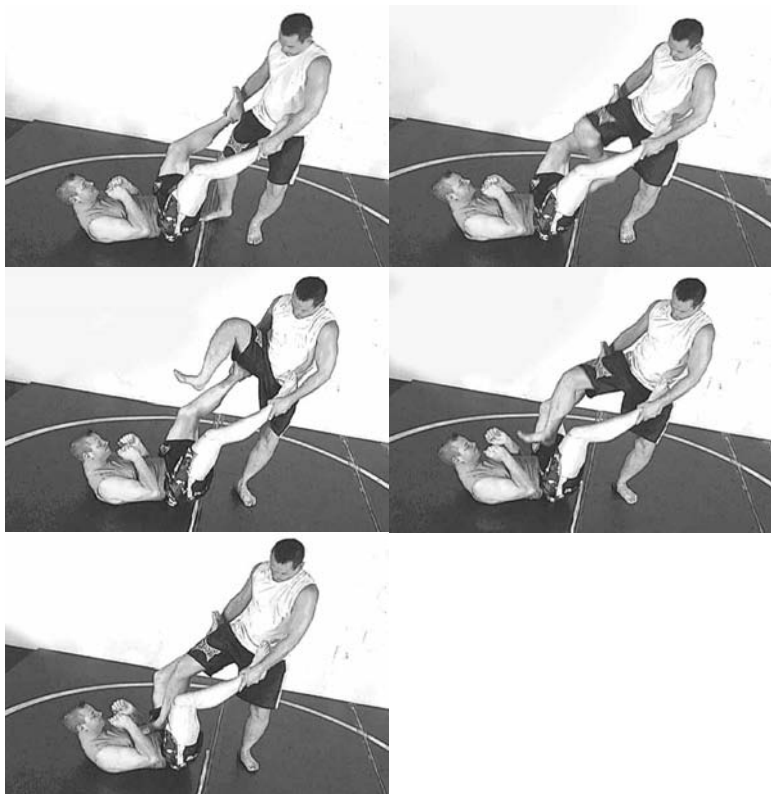
- Maintain your backward lean and attempt to snag one or both legs.

## **Leg control to thigh kick**



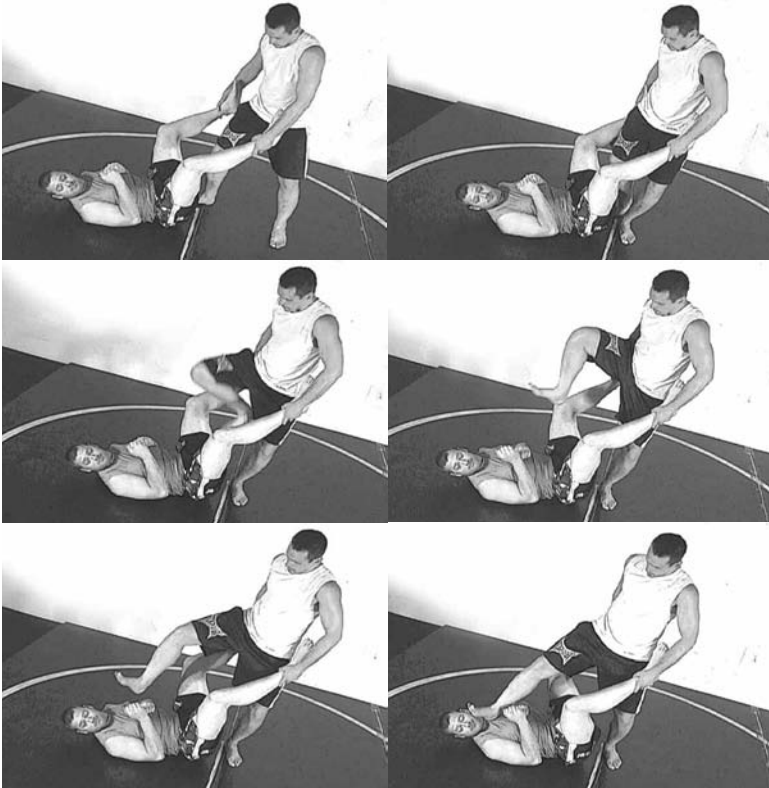
- This kick works fine with single or double ankle control.
- Kick the controlled leg with the control side leg.
- Example: If you are controlling his left leg with your right hand, kick his left thigh with your right leg.

***Double leg control to body stomp***



- If you can keep control over both legs ...
- Lift the rear knee high and stomp the body.
- Return to base quickly.

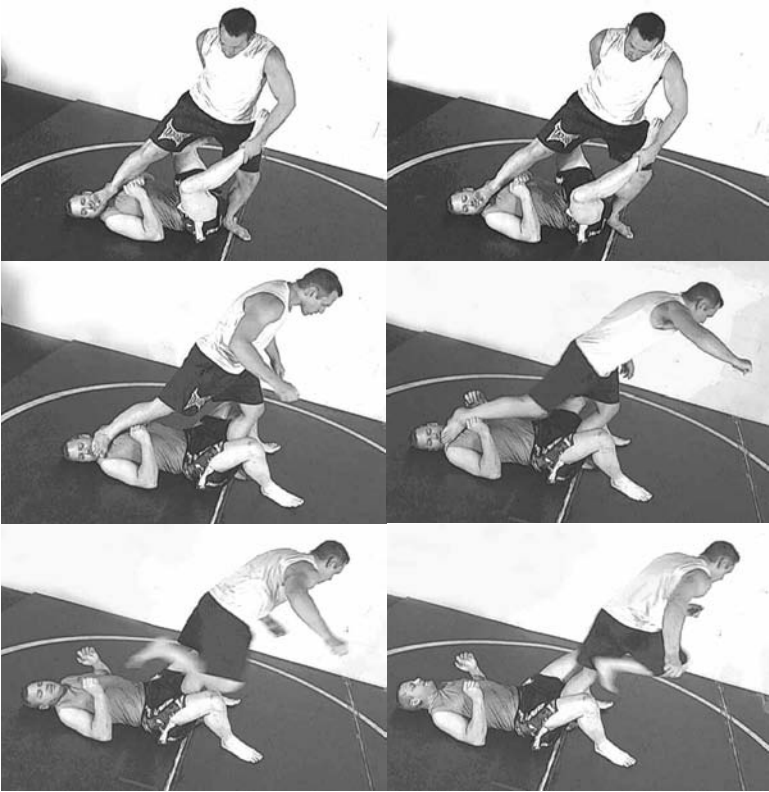
***Double leg control to face stomp and step out***



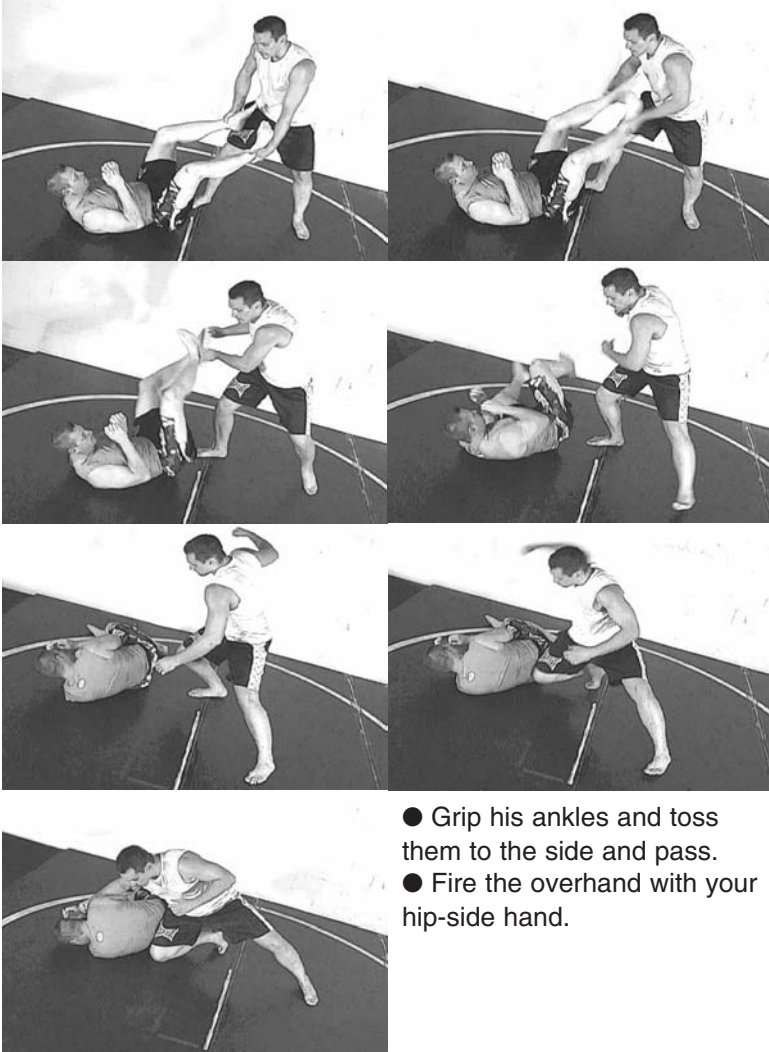
- BJ Penn uses this technique beautifully to escape leg locking opportunities that present themselves when extending the kicking leg so far up the body.
- Stomp as you would in the body version, but once the stomp lands ...
- Post the foot on his face ...
- Release his legs and pivot to face your lead leg and step out.
- Posting on his face prevents his snagging a leg easily.

*More images next page.*

*More stomping and stepping out*

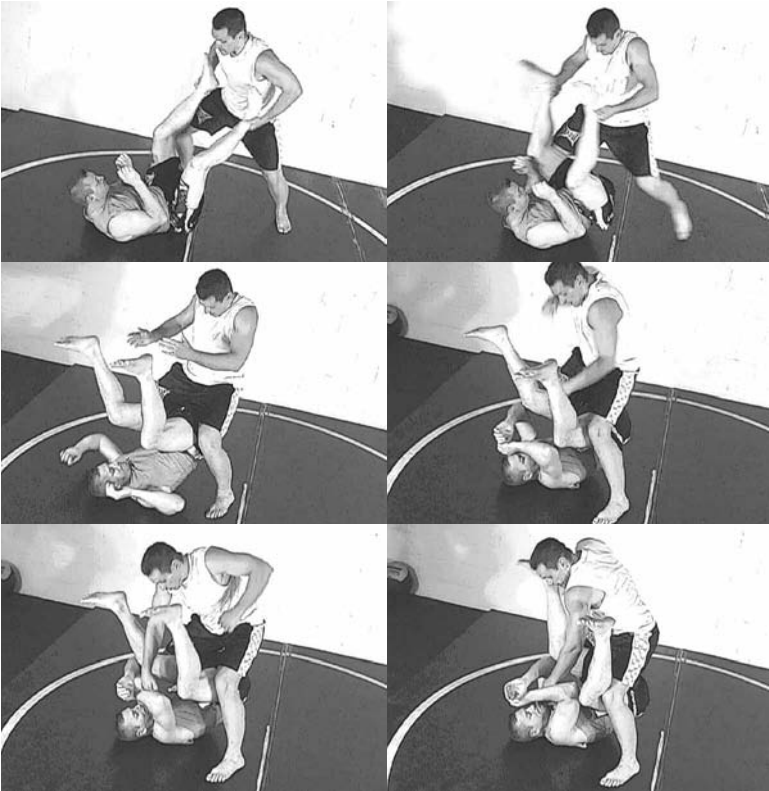


**Leg toss to pass to overhand**



- Grip his ankles and toss them to the side and pass.
- Fire the overhand with your hip-side hand.

**Stack toss to pass**



- Throw his legs over his head to stack him.
- Drop a knee behind his hips to keep him stacked and then ...
- Toss his hips to one side or the other to blanket.

**Stack toss to punch down the middle**

- Once you have the knee down to brace his hips, fire a punch down the middle a la Sakuraba.
- Toss his hips to the side to pass.





**Peel and overhand versus leg weave**

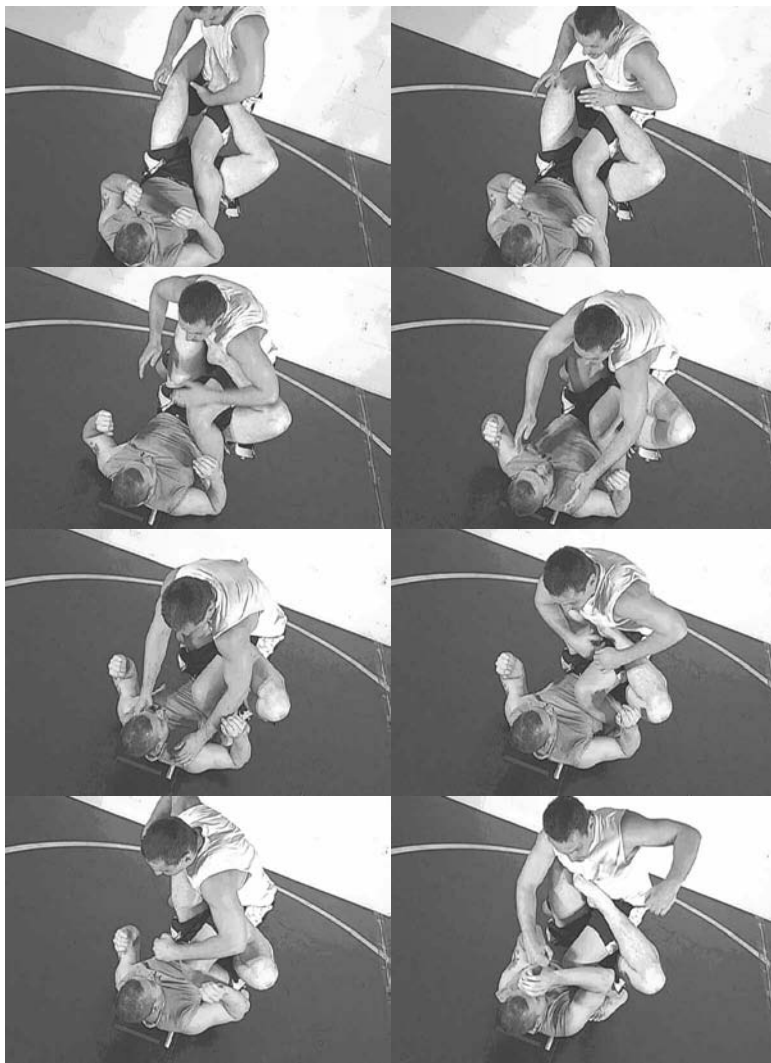


- If your opponent underhooks your lead leg with his lead leg to set leg locks ...
- Grip his wrapped heel with your lead hand.
- Peel it off and drop an overhand.



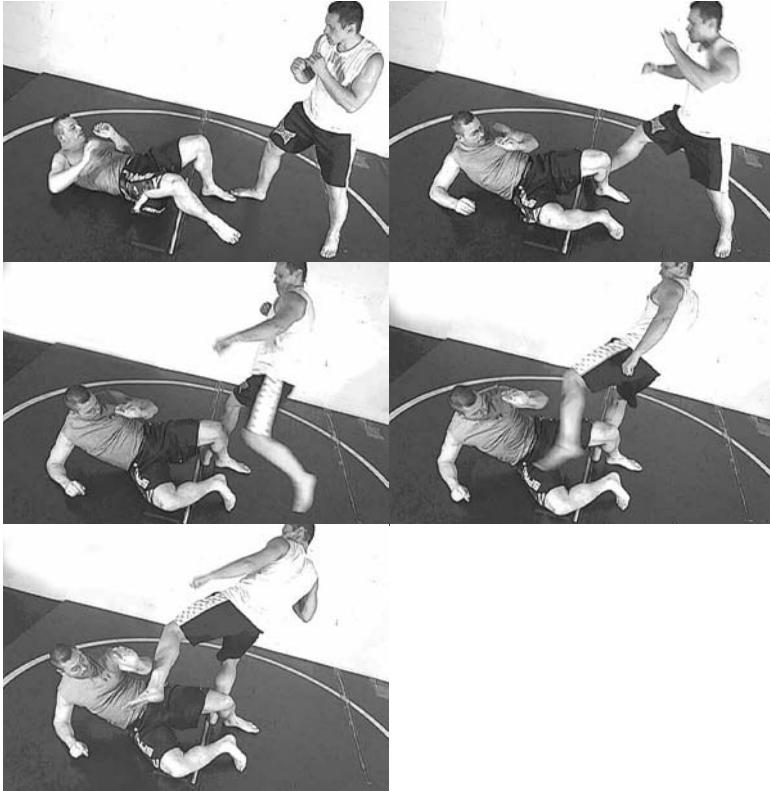


***Shove and overhand versus leg weave***



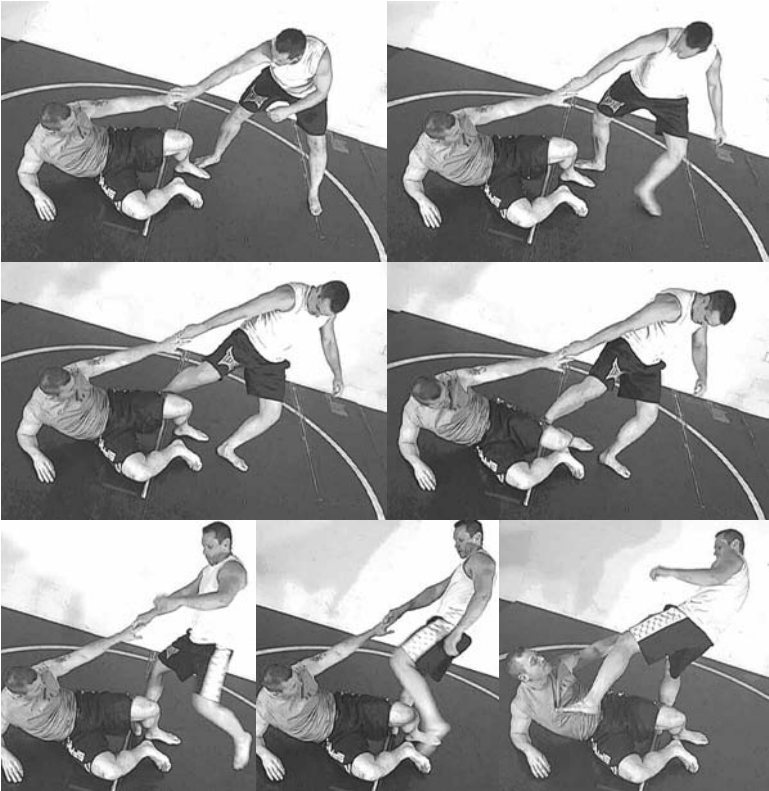
● If you can't peel, shove his foot toward his face as you collapse your hips onto his leg. Then fire an overhand.

## ***Round kick versus get-up***



- If your opponent rises to a seated base giving the indication he wants to get up ...
- Fire a rear kick to the head.

**Handshake round versus get-up**



- Often the rising opponent will have his lead hand extended to block kick attempts.
- If you can grab his hand/wrist with your lead hand before firing the kick, you have the opportunity to remove his primary block and ...
- To jerk him into the kick.



## **8 Merging pound with ground**

If you've followed the suggested template, by this point you've worked all that preceded in isolation. Now, it's time to put it all together with a few ground and pound drill sets.

### ***Rock of Gibraltar***

There is a mighty enlightening drill set we use to educate defensive stability, offensive movement and fluidity in the turtle position. The drill set is, admittedly, an artificial construct (as most drills are) in that you will be asked to maintain positions for extended times that only may occur for seconds or fractions of seconds in real-time fight conditions. Despite this artificiality, I heartily urge you to spend some time with this drill set. Please take the time to make stops at one of the three high utility destinations: the pry, the one-on-one and the overleg ride.

### ***Rock of Gibraltar — base drill***

- The down partner will assume a hands and knees position on the mat.
- The top partner will place his chest on the down partner's back — at this point the top partner makes zero contact with any other part of his body (no hands, feet or knees).
- At the "Go" signal, the top man is to attempt to turn or break the bottom man down flat. That is, the top man wins if the bottom man is turned to his back or dropped onto either side for more than two seconds (the bottom man may roll through back and/or shoulder positions to get back to base). The top man may also simply break the bottom man down to "belly flat" position for more than two seconds.
- The bottom man is to maintain his hands and knee base for as long as possible. Again, as stated, he may collapse or roll through "pin/jeopardy" positions to thwart an attack as long as he is not halted for the two second mark. He is not to escape.

That is, no stand-up switches, sit-outs, pulling guard or 1/2 guard. The bottom man's job is to be the immovable rock.

- The top man is to use only breakdown tools — no submissions, no submission set-ups and/or striking.
- Once the top man has broken the bottom man down (or the clock runs out), immediately switch positions.

### ***Rock of Gibraltar — base plus escapes***

- In this version, once the “Go” is sounded, the top man goes to work as in the preceding drill, and the bottom man is allowed to escape. That is, stand up, switch, sit-out, roll through or pull guard or 1/2 guard.
- The only proviso is if the bottom man pulls 1/2 guard, he has to maintain it for 10 seconds or improve it to full guard to win the round.

### ***Rock of Gibraltar — ground and pound***

- Both fighters gear up.
- The bottom man has zero escapes, whereas the top man uses only the breakdown vocabulary and striking (with control) to break his man down.

### ***Rock of Gibraltar — ground and pound plus escapes***

- You know what to do.

I think you'll find as you move through the drills that the intensity rises as does the pace. But executed with due diligence, your offensive riding and your "get the hell outta Dodge" defense will improve immeasurably.

You can run this same 1-4 drill hierarchy for half clock and full clock drills. Run the respective drill sets as follows.

***Half clock ground and pound drill sets***

- Base drill
- Base plus escapes
- Ground and pound
- Ground plus escapes

***Full clock ground and pound drill sets***

- Base drill
- Base plus escapes
- Ground and pound
- Ground plus escapes

***Inside bottom scissors/guard and 1/2 guard ground and pound drill sets***

These drills differ only slightly from those that precede them. Run this same template for 1/2 guard and the grounded position.

***Base drill***

- The man inside the legs strives to maintain position while the bottom man is allowed to sweep or submit.
- The top man may not strike or pass (he may go as far as 1/2 guard, but that's it).

***Base plus escapes***

- The bottom man may sweep and submit as the top man strives to keep base or pass fully.

***Ground and pound***

- Bottom man has all of his submission and sweeping tools, while the top man must maintain position and strike, but not escape/pass.

***Ground plus escapes***

- Gear up because it's crazy on!

## ***Conclusion***

There we have it — a comprehensive explanation of ground and pound principles as well as statistical back up for their position of importance in the Hierarchy of Utility in Mixed Martial Arts. We also have a pragmatic arsenal for riding, transitioning, breaking down and pounding. Admittedly we did not cover striking from the bottom (bottom scissors/guard). Striking opportunities here are rare, and house odds say you are safer escaping (sweeping), tying up or submitting rather than attempting to go strike for strike versus an opponent who has room to swing and gravity on his side while you are on your back with the planet blocking your ability to run. We also did not cover striking as specific submission set ups. By that I mean “Use strike A to assist submission B.” That approach is a bit too specific even for my tastes. I think you’ll find the mere act of tenderizing with a fluid ground and pound game is setup enough for most submissions.

With that said, I do ask you to return your attention from time to time to the data. Striking in both the vertical and horizontal environments wins more fights than submissions. Again, this text is not an inducement to give up submissions, but rather a suggestion to reduce their primacy and to up the ante on the house odds of striking. We must all have a good to great ground game, and the quickest way to move from good to great is to short circuit the complex skill set of the submission game with the more skeletonized, bone-jarring strategy of ground and pound.

If you have any questions or want occasional new drill sets and/or updates to the text, please visit us at [www.extremeself-protection.com](http://www.extremeself-protection.com)

Thanks for your time. Train hard, train safe!

Mark Hatmaker



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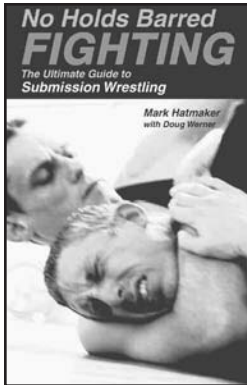
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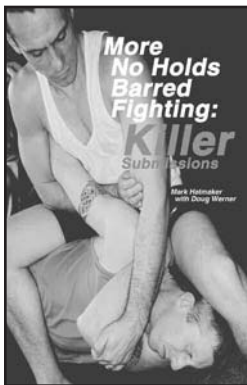


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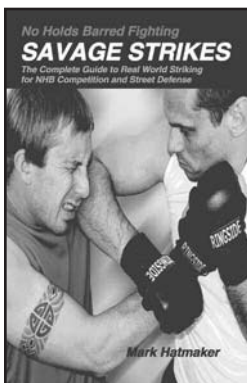


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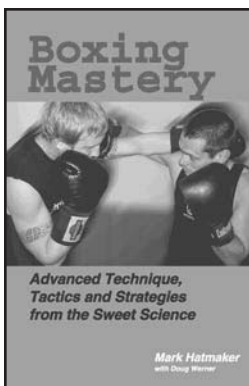
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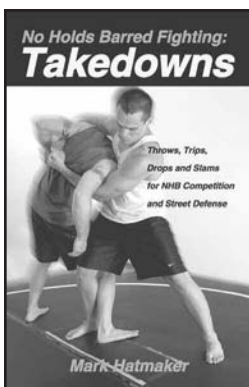
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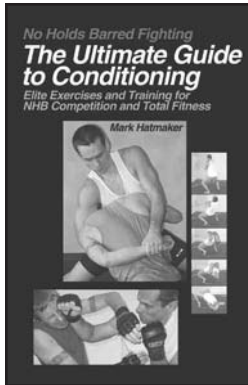


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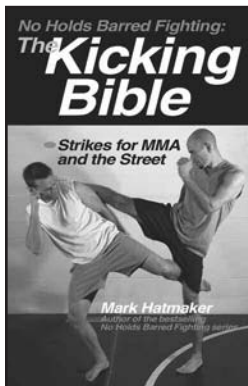
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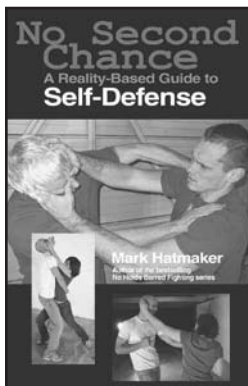
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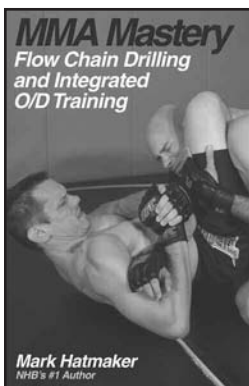


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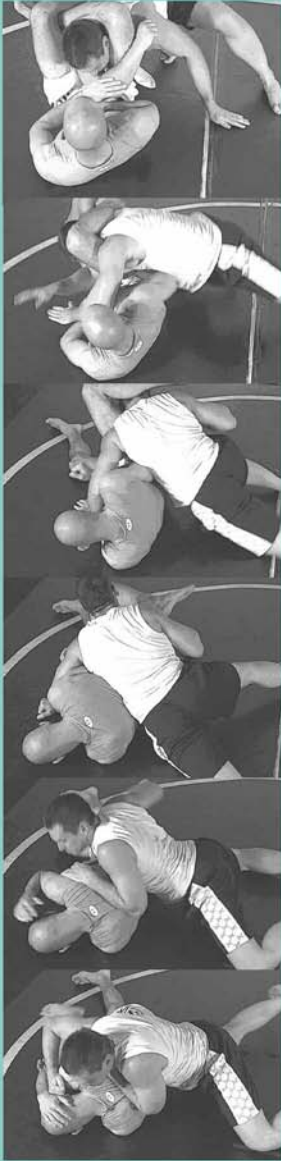
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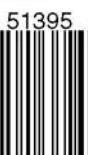
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