



THE DOJO CONNECTION

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS OF BLACK HILLS BUJIN KI RYU JUJITSU DOJO



Setting Goals: One step at a time

By Mutch Usera Hanshi, 10th Dan

Congratulations! You've started out on an incredible journey in Jujitsu training, that with commitment, passion and knowledge, you'll be on for the rest of your life. Beginning this journey may at times seem overwhelming—mentally and physically. However, by creating goals that are short and at times challenging, you will find that becoming a Black Belt in Jujitsu is attainable.

When you started training at the Dojo, you may have realized that this journey is far different than any other program or sport you may have imagined. You may feel, look and at times act somewhat clueless to what's happening and why I'm wearing a white belt. The language used may be in English, along with some Japanese terminology. Finally, you recognized a formal and discipline structure throughout the class session that is not common in any other sport or program.



Jujitsu, like any other martial art brings a history of training and culture that is hundreds to thousands of years old which makes martial arts a highly respected and an admired lifestyle bringing people across the globe together with the same common goal...*"To master an art that only a few will ever accomplish."*

As soon as you begin training in Jujitsu, you will immediately identify that you may have to set goals that are specific in training and knowledge. From a simple goal of learning to tie your white belt without any help from others, learning basic techniques, to knowing the history of the martial art style you are learning.

So how do you know what goals to set? The answer becomes clearer as you continue to train. There are several goals that can be grouped into several categories:

1. Martial art culture: History, dojo etiquette, attendance, safety rules, instructor titles, proper wearing of Gi, etc.
2. Physical conditioning: Stretching, strength building, weight loss, coordination, etc.
3. Mastering techniques: Stances, strikes, kicks, blocks, throws, takedowns, breakfalls, etc.
4. Competition: Point sparring, grappling, sport jujitsu, katas, etc.
5. Belt rank: Achieving your first stripe, a specific belt rank, becoming a Black Belt, etc.

(Continue on page 2)

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

**DON'T DO A TECHNIQUE
5 TIMES
AND WAIT FOR THE
INSTRUCTOR TO TELL
YOU WHAT'S NEXT-
DO THE TECHNIQUE
500 TIMES
AND WAIT FOR
THE INSTRUCTOR
TO TELL YOU TO
STOP.**

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Setting Goals, One Step at a Time

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Setting goals that are achievable is important. If you've never trained in martial arts before, you're not going to earn your Black belt in a short time period. However, setting a Black Belt goal is a good idea as long as you understand it will be a long-term goal. It is best to focus on short term goals to help you get started and build success as you train. Short term goals will add up and build confidence in your Jujitsu training. Don't compare your goals and successes with other students in class. Always remember that martial arts is an individual program and lifestyle.

Once you decide what your goals are, you now must figure out how you will achieve them. This is an important element of goal setting that often gets overlooked. If you don't have action plans to achieving each goal, success is practically impossible. When identifying a goal think about your commitment including a timeframe and/or measurement to achieve results.

Take time to visit with your family about your proposed goals and how you plan to commit to training at the dojo and reaching your goals. Reach out to classmates that may help you achieve your goals. Finally present your goals to your Sensei (instructor). He or she may be able to assist you in preparing realistic and achievable goals based on the Sensei experience, knowledge and expectations for you, the student. Your instructor may help you identify your strengths and weaknesses prior to producing your goals.

As you progress toward each of your goals. Take routine measurements of your achievements. For example, if you're trying to lose weight, step on the scale once a week to see if your approach is working. If it's not working, consider your options. Don't quit, some goals may be more challenging than anticipated and may require a different approach. That's okay as long as you achieve some results.

Once you achieve the goal, celebrate and recognize that you are moving towards something that most have never achieved. Thank those who may have supported you along the way as they may help you achieve your next goal. Move on to the next goal. You can also reach several goals at once in a multitasking function.

Goal setting is not easy, however, if done with focus and determination, it will present positive results in achieving any challenge you may have in life.

See you at the Dojo!



Black Hills Bujin Ki Ryu Jujitsu Affiliated Dojos

When you travel for business or vacation, the below Dojos are part of our martial arts organization and training is complimentary as a member of Black Hills Bujin Ki Ryu Jujitsu:

Budokan Martial Arts Honbu Dojo, Palm Coast, FL

George Alexander, Hanshi,
10th Dan, and president of
ISKKF, OHKA, and ISJF
Phone: 518-567-7382
www.worldbudokan.com

Minnetonka Martial Arts, Minnetonka, MN

Allen Horner, Shihan, 8th Dan
Phone: 952-938-6765
eclecticmatialarts@comcast.net

Dynamic Martial Arts of Sioux Falls, Sioux Falls, SD

Joe Herreman, Kyoshi, 6th Dan
Phone: 605-370-0085
www.dmaofsiouxfalls.org

Northern Hills Bujin Ki Ryu Jujitsu Dojo, Belle Fourche, SD

Eileen Miller, Renshi, 4th Dan
Phone: 605-210-2909
nhbkrjujitsu@outlook.com

Park City Martial Arts, Park City, UT

Jim Kwan, Renshi, 4th Dan
Phone: 952-818-9919
www.parkcitymartialarts.com

Finger and Thumb Joint Manipulation Techniques

Finger and thumb joint manipulation techniques—also known as digit locks—used in self-defense, martial arts, law enforcement, and combat systems. These techniques are powerful not because of brute force, but because they target small, weak joints that are easy to control and very painful when stressed. Let's break down the mechanics and power dynamics of these techniques:

General Principle

Small joint manipulation (fingers, thumbs) is extremely effective for:

- Pain compliance
- Breaking grips or holds
- Controlling or disabling an opponent

These locks are highly effective even against stronger attackers, since fingers and thumbs cannot resist twisting or backward bending force.

Explanation of Each Technique in the Image:

Top-Left: *Finger Twist and Bend*

What: Twisting the finger sideways and backward.

Power: High pain, risk of dislocation or tendon damage.

Use: Quickly disable grip or create an opening.

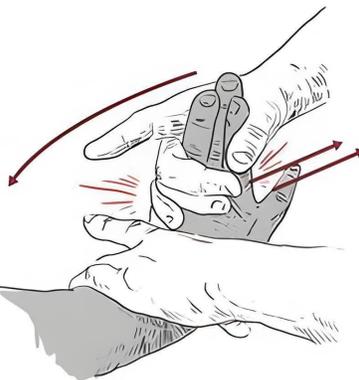


Top-Center: *Vertical Finger Hyperextension*

What: Bending a finger directly backward or forward.

Power: Causes instant pain, can dislocate or break finger.

Use: Escape holds or control opponent with minimal effort.

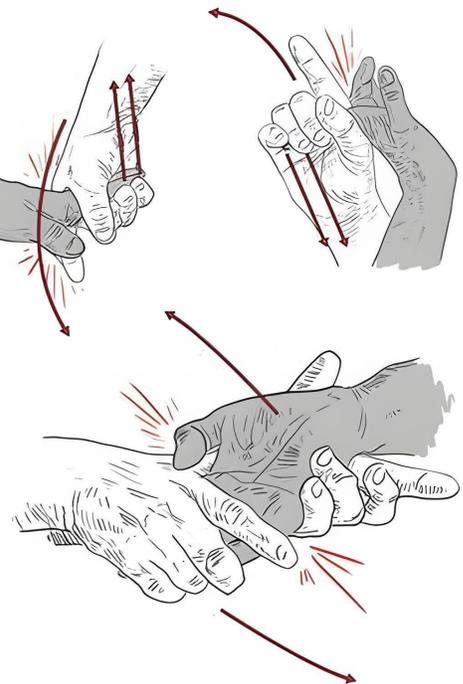


Top-Right: *Thumb Backward Pull*

What: Pulling and rotating the thumb backward.

Power: Thumb is structurally weak; causes immediate release.

Use: Effective against grabs or during weapon disarmament.



Bottom-Left: *Finger Lock with Wrist Leverage*

What: Combines finger bend with wrist control.

Power: Multiplies leverage and pain, can lead to full takedown.

Use: Control and immobilization.

Bottom-Right: *Thumb and Palm Rotation*

What: Twisting thumb while stabilizing the hand.

Power: Extremely painful, can damage ligaments.

Use: Restraint, disarming, or creating distance.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Ally Myers
Hayleigh Myers
Nickolas Schiazzano
Charles Seward

BELT PROMOTION

Yellow Belt:

Aubery Mangubat, Youth Class
Joyce Thompson, Youth Class
Kodi Ladd, Adult Class
Iyohila Big Eagle, Adult Class
Dancing Big Eagle, Adult Class

Brown Belt:

Anika Weiler, Teen/Adult Class
Max Altman, Teen/Adult Class

STRIPE PROMOTIONS

White Belt:

A.J. Garcia, 1st Stripe
Noah Erickson, 2nd Stripe
Grace Erickson, 2nd Stripe
Averie Wheeler, 2nd Stripe
Shayne Payne, 2nd Stripe

Yellow Belt:

Tayla Bender, 3rd Stripe



Master the Art of Control: 12 Essential Grips for Ju-Jitsu and Grappling



C Grip – A versatile open-hand grip where the fingers curl to form a "C" shape. Commonly used in clinching or wrist control to trap or manipulate your opponent's arm or clothing without fully closing your hand.



S Grip – Formed by interlocking fingers like an "S". Used frequently in no-gi Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (BJJ) for body locks and controlling an opponent's torso while maintaining flexibility in grip transitions.



Butterfly Grip – Both hands interlace with fingers curling around each other, providing a secure and symmetrical hold. Ideal for clinching, controlling arms, or setting up throws.



Pretzel Grip – A gi-specific grip where you twist the opponent's sleeve or lapel in a pretzel-like fashion. Perfect for limiting their movement or breaking posture in a grappling scenario.



Pistol Grip – You grab the opponent's sleeve like you're holding a pistol. Very strong grip control in gi BJJ, allowing you to pull and manipulate your opponent's limbs effectively.



Pocket Grip – A variation of the pistol grip, where you fold the edge of the gi and grip it tightly like reaching into a pocket. Provides excellent tension and control for sweeps and submissions.



Collar Grip – A direct grip on the opponent's collar. Useful for choking techniques, posture control, and initiating attacks in both gi jiu-jitsu and traditional judo.



Gable Grip – A palm-to-palm grip with fingers closed over each other without interlocking. Used in wrestling and grappling to apply pressure, secure holds, and control the body during transitions.

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HANSHI MUTCH USERA 2025 MASTER SERIES MARTIAL ARTS CAMP



WHEN
OCTOBER 10, 11 & 12, 2025

WHERE
BLACK HILLS
BUJIN KI RYU JUJITSU HONBU DOJO
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\$85 PER PERSON - FOR ALL THREE DAYS

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UPTOWN RAPID MALL
2200 N. MAPLE AVE, RAPID CITY, SD

REGISTER AT THE DOJO DURING CAMP
OR MAIL TO:
MUTCH USERA, HANSHI
5624 VILLAGGIO LN, RAPID CITY, SD 57702
EMAIL: JMU8DAN@GMAIL.COM
CALL: 605-863-2378



TRAINING INCLUDE:

- BUJIN KI RYU JUJITSU
- SHORINJI RYU JUJITSU
- TAIHO JUTSU
- OKINAWA SHORIN RYU KARATE
- KAMAGATA RYU KENJUTSU
- OKINAWA HAKUTSURU KENPO
- CHINESE KENPO
- JEET KUN DO
- KOBUDO



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Hanshi Mutch Usera presents 2025 Master Series Martial Arts Camp

1. When is the Master Series Martial Arts Camp?

Friday, Oct 10:

Camp enrollment and check-in: 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm
Sessions begin at 5:00 pm to 7:30 pm

Saturday, Oct 11:

Camp enrollment and check-in at 8:00 am to 9:00 am
Sessions begin at 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
Belt testing and Awards and Recognition at 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Sunday, Oct 12:

Check-in period at 8:00 am
Camp sessions begin at 9:00 am to 11:30 am

2. Where is the Camp being held?

Black Hills Bujin Ki Ryu Jujitsu Honbu Dojo at the Uptown Rapid Mall,
2200 N. Maple Avenue, Rapid City, SD 57701

3. How to Register for Camp?

Cost: \$85 per Person

Camp fee is non-refundable.

Complete the Camp Enrollment form

Cash or make check payable to: **Black Hills Bujin Ki Ryu Jujitsu Dojo**

Option 1 - Enroll during day of Camp on Friday or Saturday

Option 2 - Mail registration form to Hanshi Mutch Usera at
5624 Villaggio Lane, Rapid City, SD 57702

Option 3 - Website enrollment forms may be available at your Dojo.

4. Who can attend Camp?

The Camp is for all students of all ages and belt levels to learn martial arts skills in various styles and systems. Attendees and instructors are from our Dojos located across South Dakota including Minnesota and Utah.

5. What should I bring for training at the Camp?

Bring your GI, safety and sparring gear. If you don't own sparring gear, we will supply you with borrowed gear. If you own a Bo (long staff), please bring it to Camp. Also, bring light snacks and drinking water or beverage for break periods. A lunch break will be scheduled for Saturday at 11:30 am.

6. Do I have to train all three days?

Your enrollment fee covers all three days of the Camp. You may train in as many sessions you like. There will be 10-15 minute breaks between training sessions.

7. Can my family and friends watch the training sessions?

Yes. We encourage family and friends to attend in support of your training or just observe the various sessions that will be instructed during Camp. Videoing camp training sessions are not allowed!

8. Will there be recognition awards and promotions held at Camp?

Yes. On Sat, Oct 11 at 4:00 pm, we will hold belt testing, followed by awards and recognition of all students attending Camp. Also, group and attendee photos will be taken during that time.

9. Will you sell equipment for training at Camp?

We will offer sales for limited equipment and supplies such as GIs, sparring gear, training manuals, Dojo patches and safety gear.

For more information contact:
Mutch Usera, Hanshi, 10th Dan
605-863-2378 jmu8dan@gmail.com

www.bujinkiryujujitsu.com



2025 MASTER SERIES MARTIAL ARTS TRAINING SCHEDULE

Friday	YOUTH SESSION	TEEN/ADULT SESSION
4:00 pm	Registration/Networking	Registration/Networking
5:00 pm	Welcome & Introductions	Mutch Usera Hanshi
5:15 pm	All - Warmups	Joe Herreman Kyoshi
5:30 pm	Competition Point Grappling Techniques / Joe Herreman Kyoshi	Taiho Jutsu – Tactical Defense / Mutch Usera Hanshi
6:25 pm	BREAK	BREAK
6:35 pm	Basic Nage Waza – Basic Jujitsu Throws / Eileen Miller Renshi	Chinese Kenpo Kata / Allen Horner Shihan
7:30 pm	Adjourn	Adjourn
Saturday	YOUTH SESSION	TEEN/ADULT SESSION
8:00 am	Registration/Networking	Registration/Networking
9:00 am	ALL - Welcome - Warmups	Mutch Usera Hanshi / Allen Horner Shihan
9:30 am	Wrist Lock Techniques / Vern Haas Kyoshi	Jeet Kun Do Applications / James Kwan Renshi
10:25 am	BREAK	BREAK
10:35 am	Soft Blade Competition / Joe Herreman Kyoshi	Jujitsu Nage Waza / Mutch Usera Hanshi
11:30 am	Lunch Break	Lunch Break
12:30 pm	Rensoku Waza – Purple Belt / Eileen Miller Renshi	Chinese Kenpo Applications / Allen Horner Shihan
1:25 pm	BREAK	BREAK
1:35 pm	Kobudo – Allen Horner Shihan	Kamagata Ryu KenJutsu (Sword) / Joe Herreman Kyoshi
2:30 pm	BREAK	BREAK
2:40 pm	Rensoku Waza – Green Belt / Vern Haas Kyoshi	Shorinji Ryu Jujitsu - Rensoku Waza / Mutch Usera Hanshi
3:30 pm	Break and Test Preparation	Break and Test Preparation
4:00 pm	All - Belt Testing - Recognition, Awards, Photos	Usera Hanshi and Dojo Instructors
6:00 pm	Adjourn	Adjourn
Sunday	YOUTH SESSION	TEEN/ADULT SESSION
9:00 am	All - Warmups & Jujitsu Falls	Ben Benson Renshi
9:30 am	Shorin Ryu Karate / Mutch Usera Hanshi	Competition Point Grappling Techniques / Joe Herreman Kyoshi
10:20 am	BREAK	BREAK
10:30 am	All – Sparring for Competition	Allen Horner Shihan
11:30 am	Closing Remarks, Announcement & Ad- journ	Hanshi Mutch Usera

12 Essential Grips for Ju-Jitsu and Grappling

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Gokor Grip – Named after grappling legend Gokor Chivichyan, this grip involves clasping your wrist or forearm with the other hand for maximum torque and control in throws or submissions.



Scoop Grip – Used to scoop under an opponent's limb or body part, great for underhooks or reversing positions in grappling exchanges.



Seatbelt Grip – One arm goes over the shoulder and one under the armpit, locking hands together across the chest. Essential for back control and setting up chokes in MMA and BJJ.



Butterfly Grip – Repeated for emphasis, this grip is a key foundation in grappling for control, leverage, and positional dominance.

How to Use These Grips Effectively:

- Learn to switch between grips fluidly depending on gi/no-gi situations.
- Combine grips with body positioning—grip alone doesn't control, body mechanics do.
- Practice grip endurance; your ability to maintain a strong grip under stress is vital.
- Use grips to off-balance, manipulate, and neutralize attackers or opponents.
- Pair these grips with takedowns, chokes, and joint locks for maximum effect.
- Break your opponent's grip as much as you control them—grip fighting is the first layer of self-defense in grappling.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

September:

- 9/6 Aubrey Mangubat
- 9/16 Dreagan Smith
- 9/21 Adreanna Patton
- 9/23 Jonathan Usera
- 9/24 Jozlyn Watson

October:

- 10/17 Matt Sedlacek
- 10/21 Tayla Bender
- 10/30 Vern Haas

November:

- 11/11 Joyce Thompson

December:

- 12/13 Anika Weiler
- 12/14 Dancing Big Eagle
- 12/24 Robert Usera

Guidelines when purchasing martial arts gear for Black Hills Bujin Ki Ryu Jujitsu Dojo:

- You may purchase the following type of Uniform (Gi):
 - All white uniform – Karate, Judo or Jujitsu style Gi
 - All blue uniform - Judo or Jujitsu style Gi
 - White Gi top with Black Gi Pants is accepted (optional) for all students
- Only Brown and Black Belt members are allowed to wear a Black Gi (Karate, Judo or Jujitsu style) - top and pants.
- Safety mouth guard is required for training at the Dojo.
- Groin protector gear is required for all male students when training in the Dojo.
- Sparring Gear (hand, foot and head) is a must once you are orange belt and above. We do have spare gear for loan purposes for those who do not own sparring gear.
- Dojo Patch may be purchased for \$10 by me at the Dojo.
- American Flag patch is also available for \$5 at the Dojo.

Century has made a change on their Century Direct website. Everything is working now so if you are looking for martial arts gear, Northern Hills Bujin Ki Ryu Jujitsu has an online store with Century Martial Arts. Merchandise will be delivered to you directly. This is the link:

<https://cp.mystudio.io/r/?=dvhWFr/10664///175355105>



Here are codes all Bujin Ki Ryu Jujitsu students can use. Choose one to get products discounted:

LUKE15 saves 15% on most uniforms and gear

PSALM23 saves 10% on many items

JOHN316 saves 5% on many items

Any questions about ordering gear, please email me at jmu8dan@gmail.com or Eileen Miller at nhbkrjujitsu@outlook.com

Welcome Int'l Shorinji Ryu Jujitsu Federation Members

Pictured right: Cory Price, Robert Usera, Jonathan Usera, Brandon Wong and Jackson Weiler



Pictured left: Jarrett Breuninger, Vern Haas, Noah Usera, Nick D'Alessandro, Mason Price, Michael Hill, and Tanner White

Applying a Wristlock Technique

Source: G. Breeland, 6th Dan, Aikido

When applying any wristlock techniques avoid excessively 'grabbing' uke's wrist and arm. We may grab hard at first, but eventually relax that grip.

Grabbing gives uke something to automatically resist and react to. Tension in the hands and shoulders telegraph intent eliciting a reflexive reaction. Uke automatically tenses up to move away.

This reaction may, in turn, cause nage to counter back, unconsciously pulling in to force technique. Notice if this happens (btw - we have all done this). We are reconditioning our body to respond counterintuitively.

A more relaxed open hand can still redirect. A hand that 'cuffs' uke's wrist offers less for uke to react to. And since we are studying movement from our center, harnessing uke's energy actually begins here - not in our hands, flaring elbows, or constricted shoulders. The center connects while the hands facilitate.

The whole body movement blend harnesses ukes energy, while the center channels the course to redirects the intent. We release our "hard" grip and the entire tensed hand to a rooted, stable connection through the body's center.

Nage can also align his internal state with that of the harnessed energy.



Lucas Wheeler and Nick D'Alessandro received Black Belt Club membership certificates.

Black Belt Club Session held Sept. 1st

Members of the Black Belt Club received advanced training by Hanshi Usera as they trained in Nikyu-Brown Belt requirements and Nidan-Black Belt requirements. Black Belt Club members include blue belt students and above from Northern Hills Bujin Ki Ryu Jujitsu and Black Hills Bujin Ki Ryu Jujitsu Dojo. The training is designed to develop students in becoming Black Belt members, leaders and instructors.



International Shorinji Ryu Jujitsu Federation

The *International Shorinji Ryu Jujitsu Federation* (ISJF) is recognized as a worldwide martial arts organization and is a member of the World Martial Arts Federation. The ISJF is a world leader in organizing and presenting the art of Jujitsu to the public.

Lead by Hanshi George Alexander, 10th Dan, Chair of the Board, the International Shorinji Ryu Jujitsu Federation (ISJF) is dedicated to teaching its members and educating the public about the art of Japanese Jujitsu.

All students are encouraged to become a member of the International Shorinji Ryu Jujitsu Federation. Hanshi Usera is a life-time member and Director for the ISJF. Annual membership fee is \$45. To enroll as a member of the ISJF, simply pickup a ISJF membership form at the dojo or contact Hanshi Usera.

BITS & PIECES...

LEAVE OF ABSENCE: *Members participating in other activities during the year*

If you or your child plan to participate in other sports and may need to take time off from Jujitsu Class, please be sure to notify us at least **one month** in advance so we are able to process postponing your membership payment from the month they depart until when they plan to return. Payment postponement through **Leave of Absence** are good for up to three months. You can pick up a **Leave of Absence** form at the Dojo and email to jmu8dan@gmail.com or deliver to Hanshi Usera or contact Char Usera at 605-381-8470.

Update your membership information

As we move into a new month, please be sure to check your membership information for updates that need to be sent to Char Usera. This includes payment information, home address, phone number and email address. You can contact Char at 605-381-8470 or email her at charleneusera@gmail.com.

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A true karate kid is strong in body, sharp in mind, and gentle in heart.

Black Hills

Bujin Ki Ryu Jujitsu Honbu Dojo

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