CHAPTER 3 BASIC GROUND-FIGHTING TECHNIQUES

Basic ground-fighting techniques build a fundamental understanding of dominant body position, which should be the focus of most combatives training before moving on to the more difficult standing techniques. Ground fighting is also where technique can most easily be used to overcome size and strength.

Section I. DOMINANT BODY POSITION

Before any killing or disabling technique can be applied, the soldier must first gain and maintain dominant body position. The leverage gained from dominant body position allows the fighter to defeat a stronger opponent. An appreciation for dominant position is fundamental to becoming a proficient fighter because it ties together what would otherwise be a long confusing list of unrelated techniques. If a finishing technique is attempted from dominant position and fails, the fighter can simply try again. If, on the other hand, a finishing technique is attempted from other than dominant position and fails, it will usually mean defeat. The dominant body positions will be introduced in order of precedence.

3-1. BACK MOUNT

The back mount gives the fighter the best control of the fight (Figure 3-1, page 3-2). From this position it is very difficult for the enemy to either defend himself or counterattack. Both legs should be wrapped around the enemy with the heels "hooked" inside his legs. One arm is under an armpit and the other is around the neck and the hands are clasped. Even though a fighter may find himself with his own back on the ground this is still the back mount.

CAUTION

While in the back mount, the fighter's feet should never be crossed because this would provide the enemy an opportunity for an ankle break.

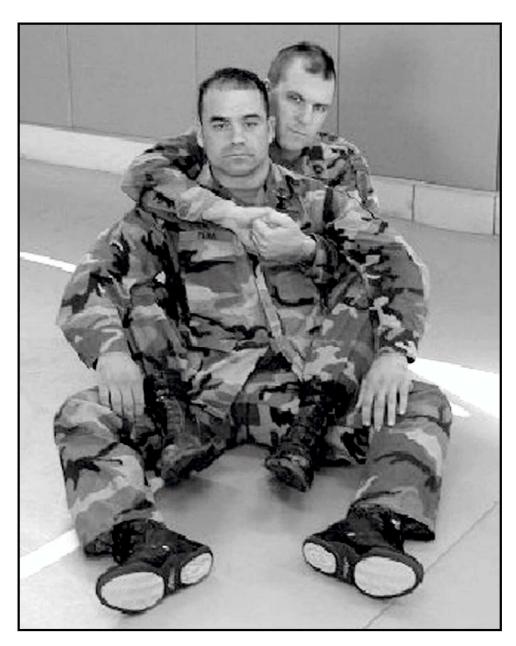


Figure 3-1. Back mount.

3-2. FRONT MOUNT

The front mount (Figure 3-2) is dominant because it allows the fighter to strike the enemy with punches without the danger of effective return punches, and also provides the leverage to attack the enemy's upper body with joint attacks. Knees are as high as possible toward the enemy's armpits. This position should be held loosely to allow the enemy to turn over if he should try.



Figure 3-2. Front mount.

3-3. GUARD

If the fighter must be on the bottom, the guard position (Figure 3-3) allows the best defense and the only chance of offense. It is important initially for the fighter to lock his feet together behind the enemy's back to prevent him from simply pushing the fighter's knees down and stepping over them.



Figure 3-3. Guard.

3-4. SIDE CONTROL

Although side control (Figure 3-4) is not a dominant position, many times a fighter will find himself in this position, and he must be able to counter the enemy's defensive techniques. The fighter should place his elbow on the ground in the notch created by the enemy's head and shoulder. His other hand should be palm down on the ground on the near side of the enemy. The leg closest to the enemy's head should be straight and the other one bent so that the knee is near the enemy's hip. He should keep his head down to avoid knee strikes.



Figure 3-4. Side control.

Section II. BASIC TECHNIQUES

These basic techniques not only teach a fighter to understand dominant body position, but also provide an introduction to a systematic way of fighting on the ground. Almost all types of finishing moves are represented by the simplest and, at the same time, most effective example of the type. Before any time is spent on the more complex and harder to learn techniques presented later in this manual, the fighter must master these basics.

3-5. BODY POSITIONING MOVES

The key to developing good ground fighters is ingraining a feel for the dominant body positions and how they relate to each other.

- a. **Stand up in Base.** This is the most basic technique. It allows the fighter to stand up in the presence of an enemy or potential enemy without compromising his base and thus making himself vulnerable to attack. The principles of body movement inherent in this technique make it so important that leaders should reinforce it every time a fighter stands up
- (1) **Step 1** (Figure 3-5). The fighter assumes a seated posture resting on his strong side hand with his weak side arm resting comfortably on his bent knee. His feet should not be crossed.

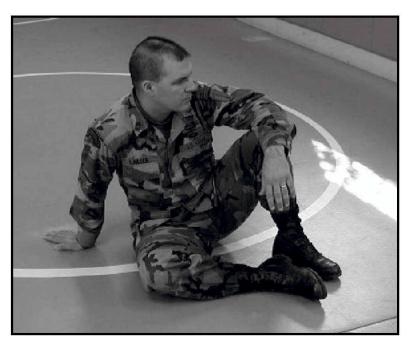


Figure 3-5 Stand up in base, step 1.

(2) **Step 2** (Figure 3-6). Placing his weight on his strong side hand and weak side foot, the fighter picks up the rest of his body and swings his leg between his two posts, placing his foot behind his strong side hand. It is important that the knee should be behind the same side arm as shown.



Figure 3-6. Stand up in base, step 2.

(3) Step 3 (Figure 3-7). After placing his weight on both feet, the fighter lifts his hand from the ground and assumes a fighter's stance. He holds his hands high to protect his head and face. His fists are clenched, but relaxed. His elbows are close to his body, and his weight is evenly distributed on both feet, creating a stable base. He is light on his feet with his knees slightly flexed to allow quick movement in any direction.

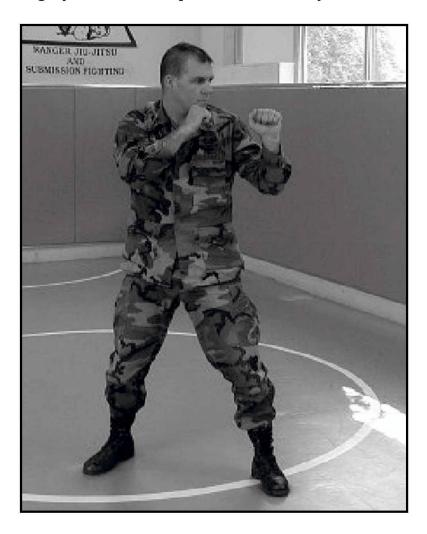


Figure 3-7. The fighter's stance.

- b. **Escape the Mount, Trap, and Roll**. This move starts with the fighter on his back and the enemy mounted on his chest.
- (1) **Step 1** (Figure 3-8). Using both hands the fighter secures one of the enemy's arms and places his foot over the same side foot of the enemy, keeping his elbows tucked in as much as possible.



Figure 3-8. Escape the mount, trap, and roll, step 1.

(2) **Step 2** (Figure 3-9). The fighter now lifts the enemy straight up with his hips and, because the enemy has neither a hand nor a foot to stop him, he will topple over.



Figure 3-9. Escape the mount, trap, and roll, step 2.

(3) **Step 3** (Figure 3-10). As the enemy begins to fall, the fighter turns over, ending within the enemy's guard.



Figure 3-10. Escape the mount, trap, and roll, step 3.

- c. Escape the Mount, Shrimp to the Guard. This move also starts with the fighter on his back and the enemy mounted on his chest. While the fighter is attempting to escape the mount, trap, and roll, he may be unable to capture the enemy's leg. This occurs when the enemy moves his leg away. This movement, however, creates an opening under the same leg. The term shrimp refers to the action of moving the hips away, which is crucial to the success of this technique.
- (1) **Step 1** (Figure 3-11). The fighter turns on his side and faces toward the opening created by the enemy, ensuring that his leg is flat on the ground.



Figure 3-11. Escape the mount, shrimp to the guard, step 1.

(2) **Step 2** (Figure 3-12). The fighter now uses either his elbow or hand to hold the enemy's leg in place and brings his knee through the opening.

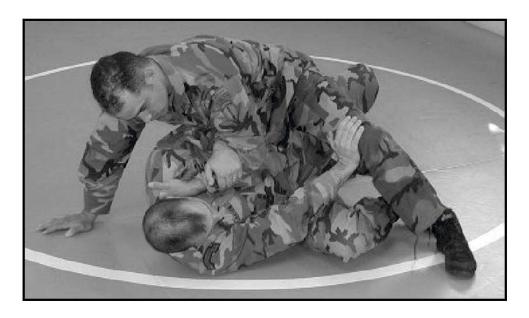


Figure 3-12. Escape the mount, shrimp to the guard, step 2.

(3) **Step 3** (Figure 3-13). When his knee gets past the enemy's leg, the fighter places his weight on the same leg and turn towards the other side. This action will bring his knee up and create enough space to pull the leg out and place it over the enemy's leg.



Figure 3-13. Escape the mount, shrimp to the guard, step 3.

(4) Step 4 (Figure 3-14). The fighter now uses his hands to hold the enemy's other leg in place to repeat the actions from the first side.

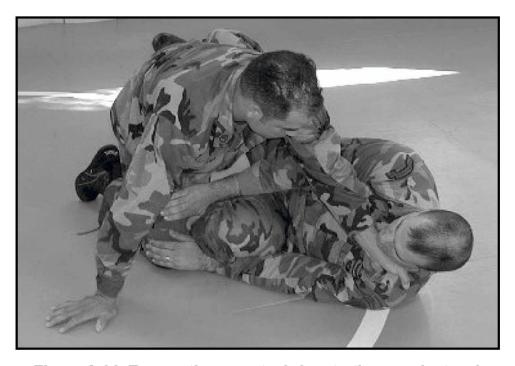


Figure 3-14. Escape the mount, shrimp to the guard, step 4.

(5) **Step 5** (Figure 3-15). It is important that the fighter lock his feet together around the enemy, placing him in the open guard.



Figure 3-15. Escape the mount, shrimp to the guard, step 5.

- d. Pass the Guard and Achieve the Mount. The fighter is in base within the enemy's guard. From this position, the fighter must escape from within the enemy's legs. This action is called passing the guard.
- (1) **Step 1** (Figure 3-16). The first thing the fighter must do is defend against the front choke by using one hand to pin one of the enemy's arms to the ground at the biceps. He also keeps an upright posture.



Figure 3-16. Pass the guard and achieve the mount, step 1.

(2) Step 2 (Figure 3-17). The fighter then raises his opposite side foot and places it on the ground just out of reach of the enemy's hand. He turns his hips, creating an opening, and pushes his hand through, fingertips first.



Figure 3-17. Pass the guard and achieve the mount, step 2.

(3) *Step 3* (Figure 3-18). The fighter then slides down and back until the enemy's leg is on his shoulder.



Figure 3-18. Pass the guard and achieve the mount, step 3.

(4) *Step 4* (Figure 3-19). With the same hand, the fighter grasps the enemy's collar with his thumb on the inside and drives the enemy's knee straight past his head. Pressure on the enemy's spine forces him to release his legs.



Figure 3-19. Pass the guard and achieve the mount, step 4.



Figure 3-19. Pass the guard and achieve the mount, step 4 (continued).

(5) Step 5 (Figure 3-20). The fighter rides the enemy down into side control.



Figure 3-20. Pass the guard and achieve the mount, step 5.



Figure 3-20. Pass the guard and achieve the mount, step 5 (continued).

(6) **Step 6** (Figure 3-21). The fighter faces toward the enemy's legs and changes his hips, ensuring that his knee is controlling the enemy's hip, and that his legs are spread out to avoid a reversal.



Figure 3-21. Pass the guard and achieve the mount, step 6.

(7) **Step** 7 (Figure 3-22). The fighter uses his free hand to control the enemy's legs, and swings his leg over into the mount.



Figure 3-22. Pass the guard and achieve the mount, step 7.

- e. **Escape the Half Guard.** Frequently the enemy will wrap his legs around one of fighter's from the bottom. This is called the half guard.
- (1) **Step 1** (Figure 3-23). The fighter must prevent the enemy from either regaining the guard, or rolling him over. To do this, the fighter must assume a strong position. He should ensure that his elbow is against the side of the enemy's neck, and he is blocking the enemy from placing his leg under him with his bottom knee.



Figure 3-23. Escape the half guard, step 1.

(2) Step 2 (Figure 3-24). By moving first the toe and then the heel of the captured foot, the fighter "walks" it closer to the enemy's buttocks.



Figure 3-24. Escape the half guard, step 2.

(3) **Step 3** (Figure 3-25). The fighter uses his free hand to push the enemy's knee until the fighter's knee is exposed, and then drives it over the enemy until it is on the ground.



Figure 3-25. Escape the half guard, step 3.

(4) *Step 4* (Figure 3-26). If the enemy attempts to push against the fighter's knee with his hand, the fighter places his hand under the enemy's arm at the bend in his elbow and pushes it upward towards his head.



Figure 3-26. Escape the half guard, step 4.

- f. Arm Push and Roll to the Rear Mount. The fighter starts this technique in the front mount.
- (1) **Step 1** (Figure 3-27). When the enemy attempts to protect his face from punches by crossing his arms over it, the fighter uses both hands to push one arm farther across and captures it in place by using his body weight.



Figure 3-27. Arm push and roll to the rear mount, step 1.



Figure 3-27. Arm push and roll to the rear mount, step 1 (continued).



Figure 3-27. Arm push and roll to the rear mount, step 1 (continued).

(2) *Step 2* (Figure 3-28). While keeping control with one hand, the fighter uses the other hand to reach around the enemy's head and grasp the wrist of the captured hand.



Figure 3-28. Arm push and roll to the rear mount, step 2.

(3) Step 3 (Figure 3-29). The fighter now places the first hand on the enemy's elbow and, by pushing with his chest, turns the enemy onto his stomach. The hand on the elbow is used to hold the enemy in place while the fighter repositions his chest for further pushing.



Figure 3-29. Arm push and roll to the rear mount, step 3.

(4) **Step 4** (Figure 3-30). The enemy will sometimes use his elbow as a post to avoid being turned to his stomach. When this happens, the fighter brings his weight slightly off of the enemy and uses his hand to pull the elbow under the enemy, pushing him forward onto his stomach.



Figure 3-30. Arm push and roll to the rear mount, step 4.

(5) Step 5 (Figure 3-31). From this position the enemy normally tries to rise up and get his knees under him. When he attempts this, the fighter sits up and brings both legs around, "hooking" them inside of the enemy's legs, and grasps his hands together around the enemy's chest. One arm should be over the enemy's shoulder and the other should be under his arm.



Figure 3-31. Arm push and roll to the rear mount, step 5.

- g. **Escape the Rear Mount.** This technique begins with the fighter face down and the enemy on the fighter's back in the rear mount.
- (1) **Step 1** (Figure 3-32). The fighter must first roll over one shoulder so the enemy ends up underneath him, both facing skyward.



Figure 3-32. Escape the rear mount., step 1.

(2) *Step 2* (Figure 3-33). He now places one arm beside his own ear as shown and the other across his body in his armpit. This will prevent the enemy from securing a choke.



Figure 3-33. Escape the rear mount. step 2.

(3) **Step 3** (Figure 3-34). Falling toward the side of his own raised arm, the fighter pushes himself toward his own shoulders using the ground to "scrape" the enemy off his back.



Figure 3-34. Escape the rear mount, step 3.

(4) *Step 4* (Figure 3-35). Once his back is on the ground, the fighter uses his arms and legs to step over and gain the mount.



Figure 3-35. Escape the rear mount, step 4.

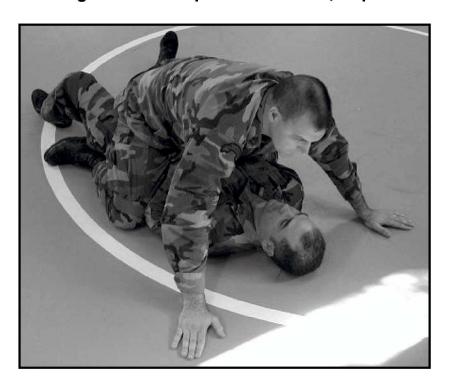


Figure 3-35. Escape the rear mount, step 4 (continued).

3-6. FINISHING MOVES

When dominant body position has been achieved the fighter can attempt to finish the fight secure in the knowledge that if an attempt fails, as long as he maintains dominant position, he may simply try again.

- a. **Rear Naked Choke.** Chokes are the most effective method of disabling an enemy. This technique should only be executed from the back mount after both leg hooks are in place.
- (1) **Step 1** (Figure 3-36). Leaving the weak hand in place, the fighter reaches around the enemy's neck and under his chin with the strong hand.

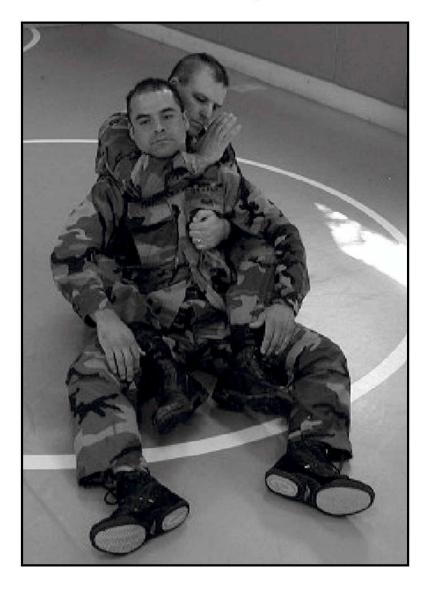


Figure 3-36. Rear naked choke, step 1.

(2) **Step 2** (Figure 3-37). The fighter now places the biceps of the weak hand under the strong hand, moves the weak hand to the back of the enemy's head, and completes the choke by expanding his chest.

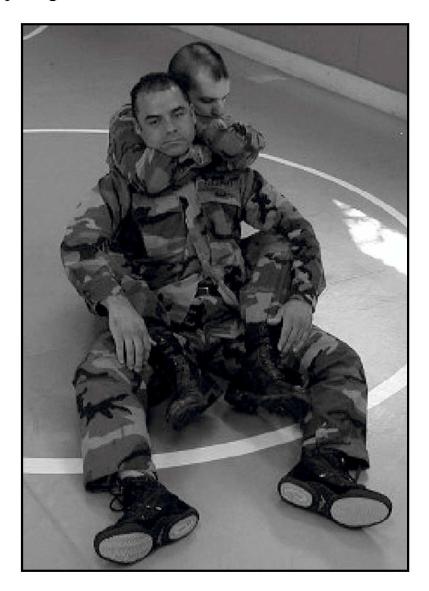


Figure 3-37. Rear naked choke, step 2.

- b. Cross Collar Choke from the Mount and Guard. This technique can only be executed from the guard or the mount.
- (1) **Step 1** (Figure 3-38). With the weak hand, the fighter grasps the enemy's collar and pulls it open.

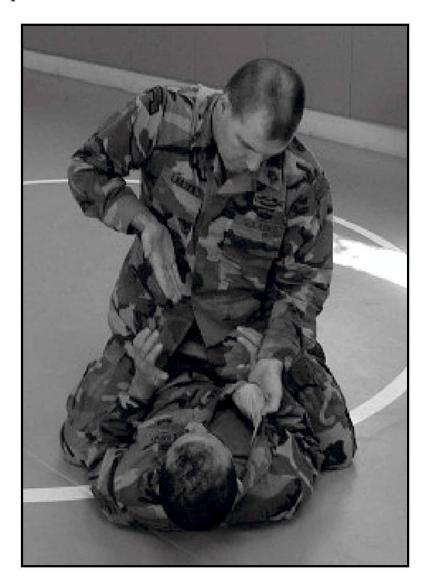


Figure 3-38. Cross collar choke from the mount, step 1.

(2) **Step 2** (Figure 3-39). While keeping a hold with the weak hand, the fighter now inserts his strong hand, fingers first, onto the collar. The hand should be relaxed and reach around to the back of the neck grasping the collar.

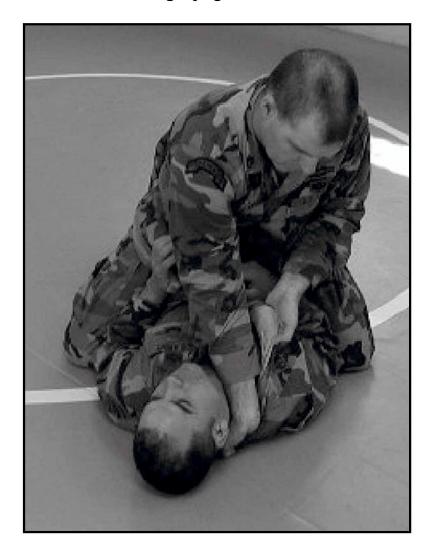


Figure 3-39. Cross collar choke from the mount, step 2.

(3) **Step 3** (Figure 3-40). After grasping the back of the enemy's collar, the fighter inserts the weak hand under the strong hand and into the collar, fingers first, touching or very close to the first hand.



Figure 3-40. Cross collar choke from the mount, step 3.

(4) **Step 4** (Figure 3-41). The fighter turns his wrists so that the palms face toward him, and brings his elbows to his side. He will complete the choke by expanding his chest and pulling with the muscles of his back.



Figure 3-41. Cross collar choke from the mount, step 4.

Note: If the fighter is applying this choke from the mount, he should put his head on the ground on the side of the top hand and relax into the choke.

- c. Front Guillotine Choke. Many times this technique may be used as a counter to the double leg takedown.
- (1) Step 1 (Figure 3-42). As the enemy shoots in toward the fighter's legs, the fighter should ensure that the enemy's head goes underneath one of his arms. The fighter wraps his arm around the enemy's head and under his neck. The fighter's palm should be facing his own chest.

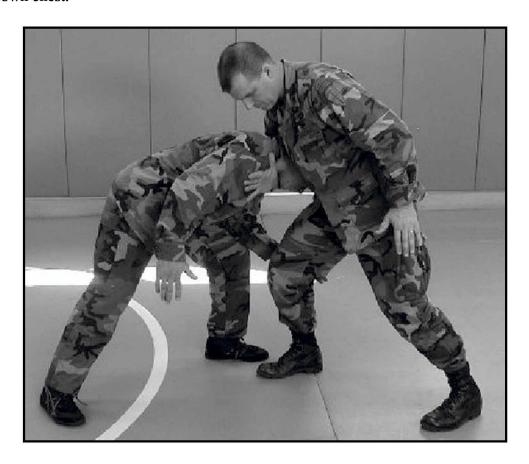


Figure 3-42. Front guillotine choke, step 1.

(2) Step 2 (Figure 3-43). With the other hand, the fighter grasps the first hand, ensuring that he has not reached around the enemy's arm, and pulls upward with both hands.



Figure 3-43. Front guillotine choke, step 2.

(3) **Step 3** (Figure 3-44). He now sits down and places the enemy within his guard, and finishes the choke by pulling with his arms and pushing with his legs.



Figure 3-44. Front guillotine choke, step 3.

d. Bent Arm Bar from the Mount and Cross Mount.

(1) **Step 1** (Figure 3-45). When the fighter has mounted the enemy, the enemy may try to cover his face by putting both arms up. Using the heel of his hand, the fighter drives the enemy's wrist to the ground ensuring that his elbow goes to the elbow notch (elbow between collarbone and the head with pressure against the neck).



Figure 3-45. Bent arm bar from the mount and cross mount, step 1.

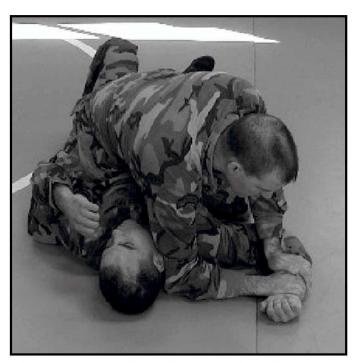


Figure 3-45. Bent arm bar from the mount and cross mount, step 1 (continued).

(2) *Step 2* (Figure 3-46). With the other hand, the fighter reaches under the enemy's bent arm and grasps his own wrist.



Figure 3-46. Bent arm bar from the mount and cross mount, step 2.

(3) **Step 3** (Figure 3-47). The fighter raises the enemy's elbow and at the same time drags the back of his hand along the ground like a paint brush, breaking the enemy's arm at the shoulder.



Figure 3-47. Bent arm bar from the mount and cross mount, step 3.

- e. Straight Arm Bar from the Mount.
- (1) **Step 1** (Figure 3-48). From the mount, the enemy may attempt to push the fighter off with his arms. The fighter places both of his arms on the enemy's chest ensuring that his arm goes over the targeted arm.



Figure 3-48. Straight arm bar from the mount, step 1.

(2) Step 2 (Figure 3-49). Placing all of his weight on the enemy's chest, the fighter pops up and places his feet under him, ensuring that he keeps his butt low.



Figure 3-49. Straight arm bar from the mount, step 2.

(3) *Step 3* (Figure 3-50). Keeping his weight on the enemy's chest, he now swings his leg around and over the enemy's head and slides down the arm.



Figure 3-50. Straight arm bar from the mount, step 3.

(4) **Step 4** (Figure 3-51). The fighter now pinches the enemy's arm between his legs, grasps the arm at the wrist, and falls back extending the arm. The breaking action is hip pressure against the elbow joint.



Figure 3-51. Straight arm bar from the mount, step 4.

f. Straight Arm Bar from the Guard.

(1) **Step 1** (Figure 3-52). When the fighter is on his back with the enemy in his guard, the enemy will sometimes present a straight arm such as when trying to choke. The fighter should secure the target arm above the shoulder.



Figure 3-52. Straight arm bar from the guard, step 1.

(2) *Step 2* (Figure 3-53). The fighter inserts his other hand under the enemy's leg on the side opposite the targeted arm. The hand should be palm up.



Figure 3-53. Straight arm bar from the guard, step 2.

(3) Step 3 (Figure 3-54). By releasing his legs from around the enemy's waist and raising them above him, the fighter changes his center of gravity.



Figure 3-54. Straight arm bar from the guard, step 3.

(4) **Step 4** (Figure 3-55). He now curls his back to give himself a point on which to spin, and by pulling with the arm on the side opposite the targeted arm, he spins around and places his leg over the enemy's head, capturing the target arm between his legs.



Figure 3-55. Straight arm bar from the guard, step 4.

(5) Step 5 (Figure 3-56). The fighter now brings his hand from under the enemy's leg and secures the wrist of the targeted arm, completing the move by breaking the targeted arm with pressure from his hips.

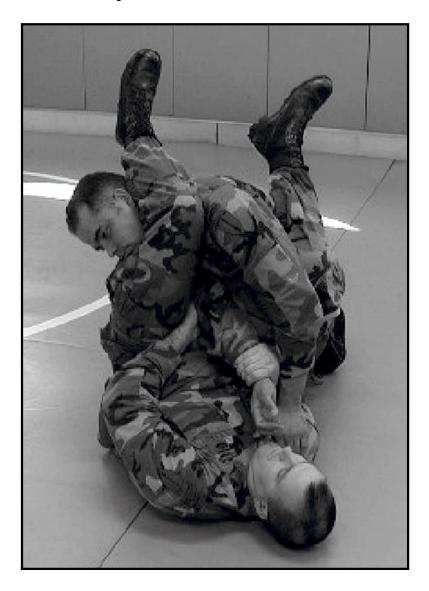


Figure 3-56. Straight arm bar from the guard, step 5.

g. Sweep from the Attempted Straight Arm Bar.

(1) **Step 1** (Figure 3-57). If the enemy tucks his head in to avoid the arm bar, The fighter maintains his grip on the enemy's leg and swings his own leg down to gain momentum. The fighter ensures that he curls his leg under after swinging it down.



Figure 3-57. Sweep from the attempted straight arm bar, step 1.

(2) **Step 2** (Figure 3-58, continued on page 3-40). The fighter pushes the enemy straight over with his other leg and finishes mounted.

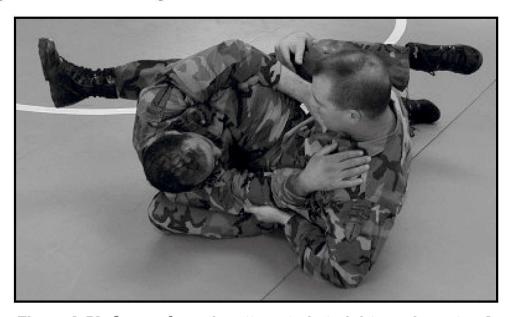


Figure 3-58. Sweep from the attempted straight arm bar, step 2.

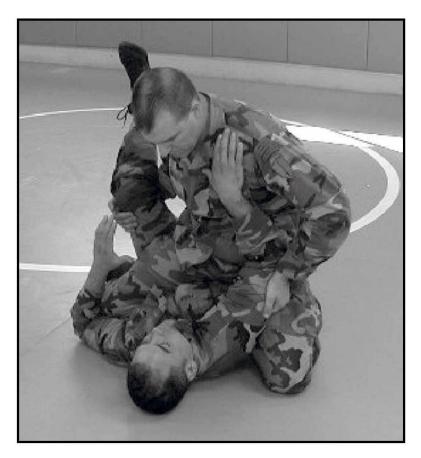


Figure 3-58. Sweep from the attempted straight arm bar, step 2 (continued).

3-7. DRILLS

Drills are used as a portion of the warm-up, which allows the maximum use of training time, stresses the importance of position, and also keeps training focused on perfecting the basic moves. Different details can be taught or emphasized during each training session. This will result in a deeper understanding of the techniques, as well as building muscle memory, teaching the soldiers to move in the most efficient ways naturally. More advanced techniques can be substituted within the framework of the drill after sufficient skill level is shown in the basics.

- a. Drill 1 (Basic Drill). This drill begins with one soldier mounted.
- (1) Step 1. The soldier on the bottom escapes the mount using the trap and roll technique.
 - (2) Step 2. The same soldier passes the guard and achieves the mount.
- (3) **Step 3.** The roles now reverse and the second soldier goes through steps one and two.
 - b. **Drill 2.** This drill also begins with one soldier mounted.
- (1) Step 1. Using the arm trap and roll technique, the soldier on top gains the back mount.
- (2) Step 2. As soon as the first soldier sets the hooks in, the second soldier rolls over one shoulder and escapes the back mount.

(3) *Step 3.* When the second soldier is mounted, the roles will reverse, and they will go back through steps one and two.

3-8. DEFENSE AGAINST HEADLOCKS

The headlock is a very poor technique for anything more than immobilizing an enemy. It is, however, a very common technique in actual fighting; therefore, knowing how to escape is very important for a soldier. The techniques are progressive, and should be attempted in the order taught.

a. Form the Frame.

(1) **Step 1** (Figure 3-59). The fighter's first step in escaping from a headlock is to ensure that his arm is not captured. With a short jerky motion, the fighter pulls his elbow in and turns on his side.



Figure 3-59. Form the frame, step 1.

(2) **Step 2** (Figure 3-60). If able, the fighter forms a frame under the enemy's chin. The fighter's top arm should be under the enemy's jawbone, and his top hand should rest comfortably in the grasp of the other hand. At this point, the fighter's bone structure should be supporting the enemy's weight.



Figure 3-60. Form the frame, step 2.

(3) *Step 3* (Figure 3-61). By pushing with the top leg, the fighter moves his hips back away from the enemy.



Figure 3-61. Form the frame, step 3.

(4) **Step 4** (Figure 3-62). The fighter reaches with both legs to grasp the enemy's head. If the enemy lets go of his headlock, the fighter squeezes the enemy's neck with his legs.



Figure 3-62. Form the frame, step 4.

(5) Step 5 (Figure 3-63). If the enemy does not release the headlock, the fighter rotates around until he is on both of his knees behind the enemy's back.



Figure 3-63. Form the frame, step 5.

(6) **Step 6** (Figure 3-64). The fighter uses his top hand to clear the enemy's legs out of the way and steps over, bringing his foot in tight against the enemy's hip. The fighter establishes his base by putting both hands on the ground.



Figure 3-64. Form the frame, step 6.



Figure 3-64. Form the frame, step 6 (continued).

(7) **Step** 7 (Figure 3-65). The fighter forces the enemy to release his grip on the fighter's neck by forming the frame and leaning toward the enemy's head, driving the bone of his upper arm under the enemy's jawbone.



Figure 3-65. Form the frame, step 7.

- b. Follow the Leg. Although the fighter should always try to form the frame, sometimes the enemy will tuck his head in making it impossible.
- (1) **Step 1** (Figure 3-66). After ensuring that his arm is not captured as in the first technique, the fighter moves as close to the enemy as possible and places his leg over him. The fighter's heel should find the crease at the enemy's hip formed by his leg.



Figure 3-66. Follow the leg, step 1.

(2) **Step 2** (Figure 3-67). The fighter pulls his bottom arm free and places his weight on it. Holding the enemy tightly at the other shoulder, the fighter crawls over him using his own leg as a guide.



Figure 3-67. Follow the leg, step 2.

(3) Step 3 (Figure 3-68). At this point the enemy has the option to either roll with the fighter or not. If he does not, the fighter uses all of his body to apply pressure to the enemy's shoulder. This will break the enemy's grip and leave the fighter behind the enemy. If the enemy rolls with the fighter, the fighter brings his foot into the enemy's hip as before and break his grip by forming the frame and applying pressure toward his head.



Figure 3-68. Follow the leg, step 3.

c. Roll Toward the Head (Figure 3-69). If the enemy should succeed in capturing the fighter's arm, the fighter can use the enemy's reaction to his attempts to free it to his advantage. With short jerky motions, the fighter attempts to pull his arm free. The enemy will have to adjust his position by leaning toward the fighter. Immediately after the fighter attempts to pull his arm free and feels the enemy pushing, the fighter arches toward his head and then over his opposite shoulder, taking the enemy over.



Figure 3-69. Roll toward the head.

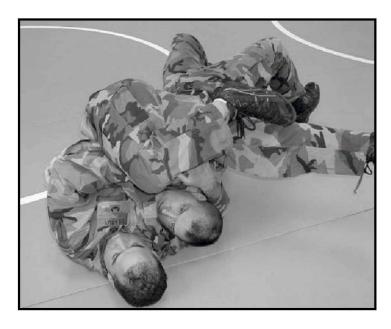


Figure 3-69. Roll toward the head (continued).

Note: The roll must be timed correctly and must be toward the fighter's head and not straight over his body.