

Capital MMA and Elite Fitness Blue Belt Test – Burke, VA

Blue Belt Requirements: Minimum 12 months of training (18-24 months on average and approximately 150 classes), and at least 16 years old.

White Belt 1 Stripe: 15 Classes
White Belt 2 Stripe: 50 Classes (~35 classes after 1st Stripe)
White Belt 3 Stripe: 85 Classes (~35 classes after 2nd Stripe)
White Belt 4 Stripe: 110 Classes (~35 classes after 3rd Stripe)
Ready to Test: ~145 Classes (~35 classes after 4th Stripe), depending on coaches' discretion and by invitation.

Obviously, tracking attendance is very important. With seven Capital MMA locations and many students training at multiple locations, Zen Planner is used to track attendance across all locations. Some schools have an iPad on site to record your class attendance, but all classes are on the Zen Planner app (download on the Apple or Google app store) and you can log your attendance from the Zen Planner app. Accurately logging your attendance will help with the logistics of tracking your total number of classes.

It is important to note that promotion eligibility has requirements beyond just class attendance. Your coach(s) will decide when you're ready to test for your next belt level. Professor Jeremy Lafreniere talks about the Three T's and the Big C when it comes to judging when a student is ready to be promoted to the next belt level. The Three T's are Time on the Mat, Technique, and Toughness. The Big C is Character.

There is no substitute for Time on the Mat. There is a certain level of jiu jitsu maturity that a student must achieve before being promoted to a higher belt level, and the only way to develop that maturity is by time.

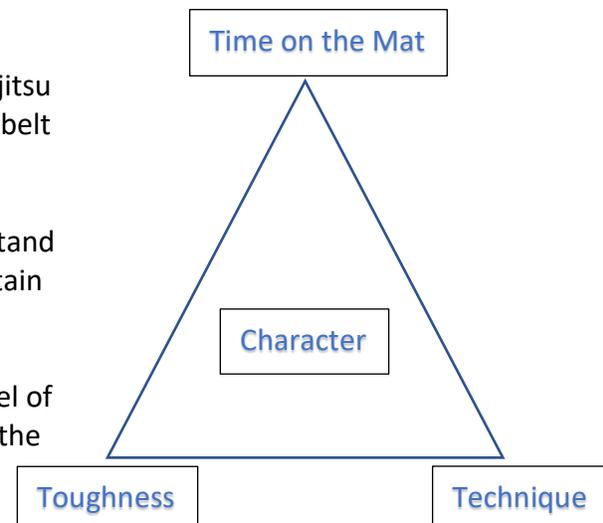
Capital MMA has a culture of being a fun and safe place to train. Understand that what we are training is a combat martial art, and that requires a certain amount of Toughness.

Technique is where the proverbial rubber meets the road. Without a level of technical expertise, a student is not ready to be promoted, regardless of the number of classes attended.

The Big C – Character. Are you volunteering to help clean the mats? Are you helping with the brand-new student who is attending their very first class? Are you paying attention in class? Are you a good training partner or are you a bully on the mats? While there are too many factors to list, understand that without good character, you are not ready to be promoted to the next level.

Blue belt is an important achievement in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu as it marks a major milestone in a student's journey from beginner to practitioner. This does not mean you have to be a world champion, or have an unbeatable guard, or have a limitless depth of jiu jitsu knowledge. It does however mean that you have started to develop a "game," you've started to be able to escape from positions, you've started to learn submissions and you've started to become familiar with self-defense principals. A Blue Belt has learned how to walk, but isn't ready to run a marathon.

It's important to not fall into the trap of becoming a YouTube Warrior. While there is a wealth of information available to study, a Blue Belt student needs to concentrate on and begin to master the fundamental principals of jiu jitsu. It is of little benefit to learn a berimbolo back take if you aren't able to escape from side control or break and



pass someone's guard. In addition, the "Blue Belt Curse" is real. It's important not to become one of the "Blue and Through" statistics. Once you have achieved the rank of Blue Belt you are entrusted to step up to the challenge, embrace the responsibility and commit to continuing to improve. You are expected to remain focused and willing to learn. Less than 25% of students that start BJJ achieve Blue Belt. Less than 10% of those achieve Purple Belt. While a Blue Belt has taken a big step down the jiu jitsu path, the fun is just beginning.

There's a level of trust and responsibility that comes with a Blue Belt. The first rule, at any level, is don't be an asshole. Be respectful of your coaches, fellow students, and school. Other rules that are expected to be followed include:

Cleanliness – students are expected to shower to keep their body clean, clip their fingernails and toenails, wash their Gi after every training session, not forgetting to also wash their belt. This should all have become second nature by the time you're being considered for promotion to Blue Belt.

Leadership – Students who are being considered for promotion to Blue Belt should be leading by example. Attending class regularly, arriving on time, paying attention during instructions, helping with cleaning of the mats. Also, exemplifying the ideology of the school, respecting the coaches and fellow students, and mentoring the new White Belts.

Integrity – By definition means "the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles; moral uprightness." Student's join jiu jitsu gyms for a variety of reasons. Some for exercise, some for health, some for a life change, some for self-defense, etc. Beginning training in jiu jitsu is a humbling experience. White Belts are forced to face their own ego and "submit" to the knowledge that perfection is unattainable, there's always someone just a little bit better, and that the journey is never complete. In the beginning a White Belt will get beat...A lot! Over time the White Belt will learn to get comfortable in uncomfortable positions, then there's really not a bad position. Then the White Belt will learn how to escape an uncomfortable position. Then the White Belt will learn how to improve that position and then dominate that position. Then the flash, then the submission! Stay focused and willing to learn. BJJ is a sport that is very community oriented, and every student is integral in upholding and preserving the ideology of the school and the safety and respect of the students.

Rickson Gracie discussed what makes jiu jitsu so hard. He estimated that for every Blue Belt today, there are about 100 students who gave up before achieving Blue Belt. Rickson suggests the reason is because every time you step onto the mat, you're confronting yourself. Jiu jitsu will reveal your character and you will be forced to face it, all of it. Are you tough enough, resilient enough, competitive enough, humble enough? You will test yourself every time you step on the mat...every time. You will have to become comfortable with getting your ass kicked today but coming back tomorrow to improve on who you were. The jiu jitsu road is bumpy, there are a lot of ups and downs, but you have put yourself in a position to learn. Learn about the art of jiu jitsu, but also to learn about yourself. Sometimes you learn you are lacking in certain elements, but if you continue, you'll also learn how to apply the lessons of jiu jitsu to your life outside of the academy also. Miyamoto Mushashi wrote, "when you know the path broadly, you will see it in all things."

The history of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu is a well-known story, and students who are being considered for Blue Belt promotion should have some understanding of origins and journey Brazilian Jiu Jitsu has experienced.

The process of being promoted to Blue Belt is also a time for internal reflection.

What is your reason for studying Brazilian Jiu Jitsu? What is your strongest area in BJJ? What is your weakest area in BJJ?

There are some essential Jiu Jitsu concepts that a student who is being considered for Blue Belt should have started to understand; Survival, Distance Management, Grappling and Striking, Base, Timing, Weight Distribution, and Connection.

Regarding Survival, Helio Gracie understood that Defense was paramount. Your ability to survive a fight is even more important than your ability to “win” a fight. In fact, surviving a fight is actually winning. This is why self-defense is a key component of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu.

Whoever manages the distance, manages the fight. Distance Management is the ability to control space. In Brazilian Jiu Jitsu a fighter knows there are only two “safe” distances; outside of striking and kicking range, and in very close range, invading someone’s personal space. Jiu Jitsu teaches us to be comfortable in both distances, but most comfortable in the most uncomfortable position for most people, but where most fights seem to end up, on the ground, grappling.

Grappling and striking. Striking techniques are fundamentally designed around the ability to generate massive speed and power to deliver damage. This creates problems for those who are unable to generate either. Furthermore, if you are unable to connect a well-timed strike with precision and power, the ability to finish a fight with one blow without a broken hand or foot becomes less likely. What is more likely is the fight going to the ground, by choice or not. BJJ allows the odds to be in your favor against any person of any size with a martial art that allows you to adapt to the individual and the various situations you may find yourself in. Not everyone can become an effective striker, but anyone can become an effective grappler.

In Jiu Jitsu, the definition of Base is your ability to keep and maintain balance against force and resistance. If you are balanced with good base, you are able to remain standing, keep from being swept, and hold a top position. If you have good base you have created a structure to resist the push and pull forces applied against you. Your base must move, it must be fluid. It’s no accident the Gracie family has chosen the triangle as the symbol for Gracie Jiu Jitsu. If you picture a triangle shape it is perfectly balanced.



The right move at the wrong time is the wrong move. Timing is about being in the right place at the right time, and not as much about speed. Developing technical perfection will allow you to find control in different positions and then perfect timing in those situations.

Proper Weight Distribution is important in all BJJ techniques. How to use your weight and where to place it is key to success in BJJ. This applies to both top and bottom positions.

Connection can be understood on many levels. Those include posture and alignment in connecting to your opponent. Connecting to the ground helps you move your hips, bridge and create angles. And also connecting to the positive and negative forces of movement. When you want to move a person in a particular direction, using our body’s natural intention to oppose forces can be used against them. If you want to pull, start with a push. If you want to go right, start left.

A prerequisite to being considered for promotion to Blue Belt is the ability to escape from every major position, such as mount, guard, side control, and back mount. Students must have a good understanding of how to position their bodies in the various positions and how to correctly apply body pressure to retain that position and begin to improve their position. As an example, students must have started to develop a decent sweep game because they must be able to advance their position from guard. While “position before submission” is the age-old adage in BJJ, by the time a student is being promoted to Blue Belt there should be at least one “go to” submission in that student’s arsenal. All fights start from the feet, so a student being considered for promotion to Blue Belt should also

have an understanding of basic grips, footwork, base, and posture from standing. Being able to regain guard and retain guard is another key component of being promoted to Blue Belt. Passing the guard begins with breaking the guard. Both of which are important in being promoted. Self-Defense is a foundational element in BJJ. Students must have an understanding of basic self-defense techniques. Realistic and appropriate goal setting is an important lesson to learn. Try to make your goal something within your power to achieve. Not a goal dependent on the decisions of others. Meaning, make your goal I will attend class three days per week. I will drill a certain position/move 50 times in the next 2 weeks. I will prepare before class and study the moves and positions I've been taught. I work hard to do the best jiu jitsu I possibly can. Rather than my goal is to be a Blue Belt in 6 months, or something that is beyond your direct control.

Skills Test

	Pass	Needs Work
<u>How to Tie Your Belt</u>	△	△

Solo Functional Movements – Be Able to Accurately demonstrate these solo functional movements

	Pass	Needs Work
Shrimp	△	△
Bridge	△	△
Forward Roll	△	△
Backward Roll	△	△
Forward Break Fall	△	△
Backward Break Fall	△	△
Stand in Base	△	△
Penetration Step	△	△
Snake Walk	△	△

Grips – Be able to demonstrate the various grips

	Pass	Needs Work
Gable Grip	△	△
S Grip	△	△
Seatbelt	△	△
Rope and Knot Grip	△	△
Pistol Grip	△	△
Sleeve Cuff Grip	△	△
Monkey Grip	△	△
Describe Various Gripping Don'ts	△	△

Positions – Be able to accurately demonstrate the following positions and discuss method(s) for retention

	Pass	Needs Work
Closed Guard	△	△
Open Guard	△	△
Half Guard	△	△
Side Control	△	△
Front Scarf	△	△
North South	△	△
Reverse Scarf	△	△
Knee on Belly	△	△

Mount	△	△
Back Mount	△	△
Turtle	△	△
Combat Base	△	△
Knee on Belly	△	△

Positional Escapes – Be able to demonstrate the following

	Pass	Needs Work
Two escapes from Side Control	△	△
Two escapes from Mount	△	△
Two Escapes from Back	△	△
One Escape from Knee on Belly	△	△
One Escape from North South	△	△
Three Ways to Break the Guard	△	△
Four ways to Pass the Guard	△	△
Pass from Half Guard (top) to Side Control	△	△

From Standing – Be able to demonstrate the following from standing

	Pass	Needs Work
Obtain Grips	△	△
Break Fall	△	△
Single Leg Takedown	△	△
Double Leg Takedown	△	△
Hip Throw / Toss	△	△

Sweeps – Be able to demonstrate the following sweeps

	Pass	Needs Work
Hip Bump Sweep (Kimura Sweep)	△	△
Pendulum Sweep / Flower Sweep / Waiter Sweep	△	△
Scissor Sweep	△	△
Half Guard Sweep (from bottom)	△	△

Self-Defense – Be able to demonstrate the following

	Pass	Needs Work
Sucker Punch Defense	△	△
Distance Management	△	△
Bear Hug Defense – Front and Back	△	△
Grip Break – Wrist Grab	△	△
Grip Defense – Shoulder	△	△
Grip Defense – Lapel (Single hand or double hands)	△	△
Headlock Defense	△	△
Chest Push Defense – Single hand or double hand	△	△
Guillotine Defense	△	△
Punch Block Defense – Stage 1-4	△	△

Live Roll / Positional Sparring

	Pass	Needs Work
	△	△

Test Criteria / Grading

Grade each skill as Pass or Needs Work

Divide the number of Pass by the total number of skills tested. (# Passed / # Skills tested)

With a final score of 90 or higher, recommend for promotion.

Number of Skills Tested: 20

Skills Tests:

Self Defense:

	Pass	Needs Work
_____	Δ	Δ

Jiu Jitsu Technique

	Pass	Needs Work
_____	Δ	Δ

Grade: $\frac{\text{Number of Pass}}{20} = \text{_____}\%$

Recommendation: _____ Approved to Promotion
_____ Needs Work