



# ETIQUETTE ON THE MATS

If you are new to Jiu-Jitsu, we are excited to have you training with us here at White 2 Black!

This article covers a few tips about BJJ etiquette for new students to practice on the mats.

At White 2 Black we believe that values such as RESPECT, SPORTSMANSHIP, CONSISTENCY, RESILIENCE, PERSISTENCE, SELF-AWARENESS and DETERMINATION can build your spirit and guide your lifestyle.

The mat, for most of us, is a fortress of Zen. Bills, worries, arguments, and anxieties, it all floats away

Gym rules vary from one Jiu-Jitsu school to another, but they are there for a reason – to create the training environment that the instructors are after. While not every BJJ School is an ideal fit for everyone when you've made your choice to train at a gym, follow their gym rules and basic BJJ etiquette.


## **1. ADDRESSING YOUR INSTRUCTORS**

Anyone with a black belt should be addressed as “Professor.” If your instructor is wearing a brown, purple, or blue belt, they should be addressed as “coach”.

## **2. REMOVE YOUR FOOTWEAR**

Your shoes collect bacteria. You want your feet clean when you step onto the clean mat, and to make your life easier we have a disposable wet wipes for that effect. If you have time, clean your foot with the wipes before step in to the mat. We're all sitting and lying on the mats, rolling on them, and sometimes putting our faces on them, after all.





- When you leave the mat, don't walk barefoot, bring some sandals to make it easier to grab your water or to go to the restroom, or simply put your shoes back on.

### **3. BOWING ON AND OFF THE MATS**

Every time, you walk into the mat you should ask the person who is giving class permission to get in and bow in his/her direction to show respect to the dojo (place/mats) and to the professor. This lets your classmates and instructor know that you're there to train respectfully.

When leaving the mat, turn around to face the mat or the professor and bow again before stepping off. When you are leaving (even just to drink water) do the same: bow towards the professor before leave the mat.

### **4. CONVERSATIONS**

Restrict conversations to BJJ and class-relative topics. This is an unwritten rule that pretty much every gym agrees with. The mats are a place for training, and, while banter and general chats are normal, trying to broach subjects like politics, religion, or other sensitive issues is not a good idea. Respect the fact that people are on the mats to train and learn BJJ

Conversation to steer clear of:

Religion

Gossip

Race issues


Inappropriate topics

Politics

### **5. BE PUNCTUAL**

Give a solid attempt at being on time. If you need extra time to suit up, show up early

Don't intentionally skip the warm-ups. They are part of the class and for a purpose. Plus is not fair for the rest of your teammates.





## **6. PRACTICE GOOD HYGIENE**

Be respectful to your training partners and bring your Gi and uniform clean everyday. Hygiene is very important in grappling sports and is key to preventing the spread of skin infections.

You must wash your Gi after EVERY training session. If you plan to train frequently, you may need to purchase more than one Gi.

Show up in proper Jiu-Jitsu uniform. Use a rash guard under the Gi and spats under your shorts or Gi. This not only prevents mat rash but will help minimize sweat transfer.

At White 2 Black it's mandatory use rash guard or t-shirt under the Gi. For No Gi classes is mandatory use the Academy uniform (rash guard and spats/shorts) and for Gi classes is mandatory the use of the WHITE Gi.

Keeping nails AND toenails trimmed, jewellery removed, and long hair tied back for training are also important courtesies to your training partners.


Wash your belt as well after every class just like the rest of your gi.


## **7. RESPECT**

Treat everyone with respect, regardless of what belt rank you currently hold. Even more importantly, if you have a higher rank, remember that lower belts are looking up to you, so do your best to be a positive example. You do not have to be friends with everyone, but you do need to respect everyone on the mats.

Signal the start of a grapple by giving each other daps. Don't sneak attack your partner.

If necessary, establish boundaries before you roll. Make light of any injuries that either of you might have and don't use any banned techniques.





- Always be aware of your surroundings. If you're rolling close to the edge of the mat, a wall, or another group of classmates: change your location. You can either start over or maintain the positions you had when you decided to move. If you see a higher belt give them the hierarquic respect as they deserve.

And if your belt comes undone (which it inevitably will), retie it while facing away from the class and instructor

Always line up by rank: highest to lowest along the wall during instruction or whenever the coach asks you to.

Be aware that in the majority of schools, you should let upper-belts request to roll with you and not the other way around. In our academy we promote the equality and we don't praise this mentality, but we should keep that in mind and wait for the higher belts to choose.

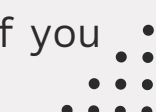
## **8. MAINTAIN AN ATTENTIVE POSTURE WHEN WATCHING TECHNIQUE**


While it is not really a big deal in most gyms, your posture during the technical demonstration can be seen as a sign of respect. While there's no need for everyone to sit in the same position, lying on the mats as if you were on a beach is not appropriate for class.

Instructors usually leave space for questions and answers at the end of a demonstration or the end of class. This is a great time to ask something, but keep your questions specific to the subject of class and try to remember that other people might have questions too.

## **9. BE HUMBLE**

When drilling, don't try to teach your partner a similar or "better" technique. Practice the technique thoroughly and repetitively until the instructor tells you otherwise. Your instructor is there to teach and know exactly what is the best for you to learn. Repetition and reviews will be your best practices during your BJJ journey. Is never too much review a position even if you think you know it already. Trust your professor.





Be gracious in victory and defeat. If you lose, congratulate your partner. If you win, congratulate your partner on what they did well.

## **10. HONOR DIFFERENCES (THIS INCLUDES SIZE, AGE, AND GENDER)**

Experience matters in Jiu-Jitsu, but it is equally important to remember that size, age, and gender are real factors too. A 220 lbs white belt is more than capable of injuring a 110 lbs purple belt. Don't think that just because someone is a higher rank than you that you are entitled to go as hard as you want. This also applies when rolling with someone much older than you. At 25 your cardio and recovery rate is much greater than at 55.

Women can be every bit as ferocious as men, but for a given weight class tend to have less muscle. Guys: Don't be condescending, but also don't use your full power. Try to match your training partner's intensity in order for both of you to get the most out of a roll.


## **11. RESPECT THE TAP**

Taps can come in a variety of forms depending on your partner's mobility in their current state. Rapid taps to the body or mat, flailing feet, finger poking, audible distress, or a combination of.

On the flip side, tap early and often. You're not impressing anyone by holding out until the last second to tap. That's how injuries happen. Simply tap out, reset, and keep rolling. Rolling is a tool for learning, not competition. As far as BJJ etiquette goes, this is one of the most important things to remember.

## **12. SILENCE YOUR CELL PHONE**

Put your cell phone on silent during class. A cell phone ringing is the equivalent of someone talking or coming into class late – it distracts everyone. Better yet, just leave your phone in your car – there is an amazing peace that comes from disconnecting from the world when you're training!





### **13. GET PERMISSION BEFORE FILMING**

Always ask first before filming the class. If the professor allows you to film, consider sharing at the Whatsapp group for your classmates to have access to them as well.

### **14. BE HUMBLE IN VICTORY**

Celebrating after tapping someone is bad form. If you get the tap, smile, adjust your Gi, and slap and bump again. There is no need to act as if you've won a UFC title belt every time you tap a training partner. In fact, you won't be left with many training partners willing to roll if you do.

### **15. WHATSAPP GROUP**


At White 2 Black we like to be connected with all students. That is why we create a Whatsapp group, to share ideas, pictures, and infos. Please make sure you download this app if you would like to be on top of what is happening at the Academy.

### **16. LEAVE BAGS IN THE CABINETS**

After changing clothes, leave the bags in the lockers to leave the benches free for those who want to see the class.

### **17. DON'T ASK TO BE GRADUATED**

There are several factors that make you change tracks or earn a track, and one of them is attendance. That's why we have a grading system that you can check at the Academy or ask the teachers that recognizes the student who comes to class. However, this system is only a support for teachers who know their progress and difficulties better than anyone else. In Jiu-Jitsu, and in all martial arts, students are not supposed to ask or remind the teacher about belts or belts. Of course, you can discuss it if you have any questions, but avoid asking rudely or getting frustrated if you don't arrive on the exact day you're supposed to earn it. If not that day, then the next. Trust your teacher.





## SUMMARY

BJJ etiquette extends past just saying “OSS” and bowing. In fact, those two are not very high on the list of important things to consider when you step on the mats. How you conduct yourself in every part of training, in competitions and when visiting gyms all come together to form an overall impression of you as a grappler.

We hope you enjoy training at White 2 Black, and please feel free to ask if you have any questions about BJJ etiquette.