

WORKING OUT IN WACO

JIU-JITSU ACADEMY OF MARTIAL ARTS



STASYA HOPP

An Instructor at the Jiu-Jitsu Academy of Martial Arts working with his students.

By STASYA HOPP

For another unique fitness experience, Jiu-Jitsu is a form of Japanese martial arts that trains in close combat without the use of any weapons. Rather than focus on the fighting aspect of the sport, Jiu-Jitsu is more self-defense oriented. It is a physical workout that teaches you how to defend yourself against an attacker of any gender or size.

Just down the street from the Waco Boxing Club is another unique form of fitness combined with self-defense. Select Jiu-Jitsu Academy of Martial Arts trains men, women and children from all walks of life how to properly defend themselves while providing a full body and mind workout.

“With Jiu-Jitsu you don’t have to be an extreme athlete,” said Lance Yager, owner of Waco’s Select Jiu-Jitsu Academy of Martial Arts. “Most people that are resistant to starting a new fitness routine say they are too out of shape to get started and with Jiu-Jitsu, the physical fitness that comes from it is really just going through the motions and practice of the sport at your best ability.”

Jiu-Jitsu is more self-defense oriented than being about fighting. It is a physical workout that teaches you how to defend yourself against an attacker of any gender or size, Yager said. And it’s not just a physical workout, but a mental one as well, he said.

Unlike boxing and similar sports, it does not focus on any particular muscle group during a workout. You are working every part of your

body to defend yourself against an attacker who will most likely not match you in size, and escape the position you are being held in. Most of your workout, according to Yager, will be your mind and how you use it to defend yourself.

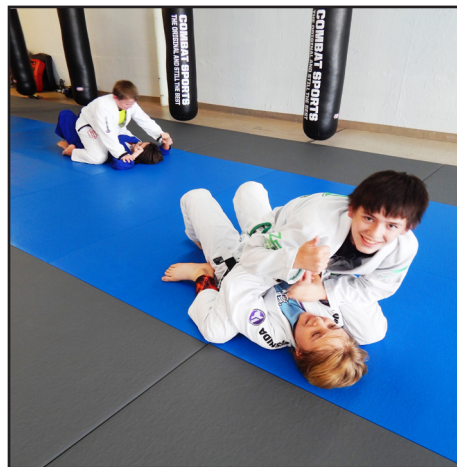
Like traditional karate, classes are taken in full uniform called a “Gi.” Techniques such as

grappling, striking, pinning, throwing and joint locking are more common through Jiu-Jitsu practice than in karate. According to Yager, the choke is the primary weapon in defense and gives someone who is smaller an advantage against a larger opponent.

“The whole system of Jiu-Jitsu is based upon leverage,” Yager said. “We don’t get to choose the size of our attacker, so the only way we know our practice is effective is by how well we can pin an opponent bigger than us.”

At Select Jiu-Jitsu, Yager has clients from ages 5 to 75. Classes offered include Youth Jiu-Jitsu for 5 to 8 year olds, Junior Jiu-Jitsu for ages 9 to 15 and Adult Jiu-Jitsu is the most popular class offered for people 16 and older. The gym also works with the Baylor University Jiu-Jitsu club and offers private training.

Yager has trained all over the world including Tokyo, Utah, Colorado and Texas. He started practicing martial arts at age 9 but, at 19, when he was stationed in Tokyo for the Air Force, Yager learned how to kick box and grapple, eventually leading to his passion for Jiu-Jitsu. Yager and his wife, Mindy, now reside in Waco where they train over 130 students.



STASYA HOPP

Two pairs of students demonstrating at Jiu-Jitsu Academy of Martial Arts.



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Two students practicing Jiu-Jitsu.

In today’s fitness world, mental health is just as important as physical health. Through self-defense and the practice of Jiu-Jitsu people are learning far more than how to just tone and shape their bodies. Both boxing and Jiu-Jitsu teach you how to protect yourselves through different focuses while maintaining a healthy body and mind.