



SHOW ME YOU MEAN IT
GRACIE BARRA BONDI

PILLAR 03 OF 06 • FOCUSED TRAINING, HIGH VOLUME

FOCUSED TRAINING

Train a lot, and lock in every single time. The focus part is free.

SHOW ME VERSION

PRO VERSION

9 MIN READ

01

WHY IT MATTERS

If you only take two things from this whole guide, take these: lock in, and train way more. For me those are the absolute most important.

Skill comes from focused tries, and lots of them, over a long time. Whoever has the most focused tries at a skill will usually be better at that skill. Focus costs nothing, and volume is mostly a decision about your week.

02

THE STANDARD

NON-NEGOTIABLE

- **Focus every session.** Good questions, great effort, tough partners, no chatting.
- **At least four sessions a week.** Teens: adults classes or open mat at least twice a week, not just juniors.
- **Worlds level means training every day:** 10 to 12 sessions a week, including strength work.
- **A few focuses, held as long as your plan says,** with a technical focus you can name before every session.
- **Technique first, then intensity.** Never the other way around.

I won't chase you on any of this. These are your goals, and I won't fight you if you don't take them seriously. I'll just coach you at the level you're showing me, and I'll be ready when you are.

03

HOW TO DO IT

STEP 01

LOCK IN: THE FOCUS IS FREE

As your coach, I should walk into every session and think: "That athlete is so focused. They're asking such good questions about today's technique. They give me a great effort every single day. I want to coach that kid." Here's what I should see, as a minimum:

- Laser focus on today's technique and today's game.
- Good questions about what we're learning.
- Great effort every day, not just when you feel like it.
- Tough training partners, picked on purpose.
- Time spent in the positions you're bad at.
- No chatting with friends during the session. This is a huge one.
- Staying on the focus. Drifting into other moves costs you practice time on the skill you're building.

When you try the new thing and it fails, good. Trying something new isn't failing to try your best. Trying is learning. The athlete who never tries anything new never learns anything new.

STEP 02

TRAIN AT LEAST FOUR TIMES A WEEK

Most people who come to me train about three times a week. That's fine for a Student. A true professional trains at least four times a week, and that's the floor.

GOAL	SESSIONS A WEEK	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE
Training for fun and fitness	2 to 3	A great way to do Jiu-Jitsu. Not this plan.
Serious competitor	4 minimum	Teens: juniors plus adults classes. Adults or open mat at least twice a week.
Win nationals	5 or more	More sessions and harder sessions. Advanced classes, open mats, the toughest partners in the room.
Worlds	Every day	As many sessions as you can. 10 to 12 a week, including strength work.

Teens: juniors classes alone won't get you there. You can do juniors and adults, but four juniors classes a week won't give you the volume you need. Get into the adults classes (advanced, or fundamentals if there's no advanced) and the open mats, at least twice a week. This plan is built for teenagers and adults. If you're eight or nine, this isn't you yet, and that's fine.

The hard part for most families is lining all those sessions up with sleep and diet. That's the balance we strike together, starting with your [schedule](#). And be honest with yourself: if you could train five times a week and you choose two, the goal and the volume don't match. Change one of them.



FROM THE COACH

Ten sessions a week, including strength and conditioning, was my minimum, with a full-time job. I was physically weak at the start, so I couldn't handle more. Realistically I should have been doing about twelve. Twelve seems to be the magic number: pro-level volume without breaking your body.

RICKY

STEP 03

COUNT VOLUME OVER TIME, NOT JUST PER WEEK

Volume is sessions per week, times how long each one is, times how many weeks you keep it up. Someone training twice a week for three years will generally be better off than someone who trained six times a week for two months. Your body and brain need lots of experience with Jiu-Jitsu, and lots of time to process it.

5/WK

DAYS OF JIU-JITSU A
WEEK, KEPT UP OVER
THE LONG TERM

45_{MIN}

LIVE TRAINING A DAY,
NOT COUNTING
WARM-UPS AND
DRILLS

195

HOURS OF LIVE
PRACTICE IN A YEAR
AT THAT RATE

11,700

FOCUSED ATTEMPTS,
AT ONE TRY PER
MINUTE

We're in an economy of tries. Count yours.

STEP 04

FOLLOW YOUR PLAN'S FOCUS AND STICK TO IT

You don't pick your focuses. Your coach sets them in your plan (on the Worlds squad, that's your Worlds block). Your job is to follow them, name your technical focus before you bow in, and keep coming back to it, day in, day out.

How long you hold a focus is set by your plan and your coach: one athlete might spend a few weeks on guard passing, another a few months. Either way, give it long enough to actually change before you move on. In my own camps I held about three focuses for months at a time (single legs, guard retention and upper body

guards in one; leg entanglements, single legs and back takes in another). That was my plan, not a rule for yours.

STEP 05

STEER EVERY ROUND TOWARD YOUR FOCUS

Don't wait for a round to hand you your position. Take the round to your position. Even in a flow round or an open round, work your way into the exchange you're building, and stay there until your partner starts giving you the responses you need to develop the skill. Working single legs? Your rounds start standing. Working guard retention? Get to guard and stay there. If the round drifts away, steer it back.

STEP 06

GET THE MOST OUT OF EVERY PARTNER

You can get a lot out of any training partner if you're smart about it: bigger, smaller, lighter or less experienced. Put your ego aside. Not every session needs to be as hard as possible. Ask yourself, "What can I focus on and develop technically with this partner today?" Then teach each other, work set positions, and build something.



FROM THE COACH

For one camp my main partners were two of our teenagers, 15 and 16, both 30 to 40 kilos lighter than me. I took my strength out of it and we worked set positions: their berimbolo attacks, my berimbolo defence. Later a world champion tried to berimbolo me and couldn't. Those two made me better. Every partner in the room has something to give you if you set the round up well.

RICKY

Elite training is what you bring to the session, not the room you're standing in. When it feels like the room is the problem, look at your own focus first (see [Mindset](#)). Moving School, or even country, won't make your training elite on its own: your diet, your effort and your focus come with you wherever you train. Being in an elite room isn't the same as bringing elite training to it.

STEP 07

TECHNIQUE FIRST, THEN INTENSITY

Your strength and conditioning belongs in the gym (see [Strength & Conditioning](#)). On the mat, the goal is to get as good as possible. Hard rounds have a place, but not often, and the idea is never to blow your knees out going flat out every round.

Building skill out of intensity almost never happens. Build the skill, then build the intensity on top of it. Putting strength and skill together is a coordination problem, and coordination gets built in the right order. This is technical empowerment, not "harder" empowerment. If most of your improvement is coming from trying harder, treat that as a warning sign: intensity without skill is how people get hurt, even on a move they've drilled for weeks.

STEP 08

SEE WHAT A PRO WEEK LOOKS LIKE

Mornings I'd go to a pro session and get smashed by world-champion-level athletes. At night I'd come to Gracie Barra Bondi tired and sore, teach good classes, then train and drill with my Students. Rep, rep, rep.

DAY	MORNING	NIGHT
Mon	Gym (strength)	Gracie Barra Bondi
Tue	Jiu-Jitsu pro session	Gracie Barra Bondi
Wed	Gym (conditioning)	Gracie Barra Bondi
Thu	Jiu-Jitsu pro session	Gracie Barra Bondi
Fri	Gym (strength)	Gracie Barra Bondi
Sat	Complete rest	
Sun	Competition, or a second rest day	

Plus a full-time job. Some days were triples: gym, Jiu-Jitsu, work, Jiu-Jitsu. I competed every two or three weeks.

04

SHOW ME AND PRO

SHOW ME YOU MEAN IT

LOCK IN AND TURN UP

FREE

- **Focus every session.** The full list in step 1.
- **At least four sessions a week**, with adults classes or open mat at least twice.
- **Follow the plan you've been given.** The focuses come from your plan. Hold them as long as it says.
- **One good question** every class.
- **Pick a tough partner** in every set of rounds.
- **Log every session** in your tracker: what was my focus, did I get my tries in.

PRO

EVERY DAY, AS MANY SESSIONS AS YOU CAN

10 TO 12 SESSIONS A WEEK, INCLUDING S&C

- Training every day, doubles where you can.
- Three strength and conditioning sessions a week (see [Strength & Conditioning](#)).
- Focuses planned with your coach as part of your long-term plan (see [The Long Game](#)).
- Every round steered toward your focus.
- Recording and reviewing your rounds (see [Technical Empowerment](#)).

COMMON MISTAKES

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- ✗ **Chatting with friends through the session.** Save it for after. Every minute talking is a minute not trying.
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- ✗ **Juniors classes only.** Teens need adults classes or open mat at least twice a week.
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- ✗ **Changing focus after every loss.** Lose on a takedown, chase takedowns, then something else. Hold the plan for the block.
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- ✗ **Waiting for the round to give you your position.** Steer it there.
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- ✗ **Only rolling with comfortable partners.** Pick tough ones, and get something technical out of the lighter ones too.
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- ✗ **Going as hard as possible every round.** Hard rounds have a place, not often.
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- ✗ **"I just need to try harder."** Trying harder isn't the same as training better. Go back to technique.
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- ✗ **Deciding the room is the problem.** Elite training is what you bring to the session. Check your own focus first.
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CHECKLIST

DO THIS

EVERY WEEK

- ☐ Four or more Jiu-Jitsu sessions.
- ☐ Adults class or open mat at least twice.
- ☐ Named my focus before every session.
- ☐ Steered my rounds toward my focus.
- ☐ Picked at least one tough partner every session.
- ☐ Asked at least one good question every class.
- ☐ No chatting with friends during the session.
- ☐ Logged every session in the tracker.

NOT PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

This is coaching guidance, not medical advice. The volume targets assume you're healthy and build up to them gradually. If you're injured, sick or carrying a niggle, tell your coach before the session so we can modify it. When to see a physio or GP, and who I use, is in [Recovery](#).