



AJA NEWSLETTER

Volume XLI, Issue I

Spring 2018

Inside this issue:

- Event Notice 2
- Recent Promotions 3
- From the Archive... 5
- Concussion Awareness 7
- About the AJA 10

Slow-Motion Jujitsu

By David Boesel

Having practiced Tai Chi for several years, I decided to try a slow-motion form of jujitsu training at Kaiwan Budokai Dojo in Severna Park, MD. It seems to work well as a training method, even though jujitsu, unlike Tai Chi, usually requires a partner and involves elements, such as falls, where speed cannot be controlled. Slow-motion jujitsu enables beginners to get the specifics of their techniques right the first time and enables more experienced jujitsuka to correct errors that they've incorporated without thinking about it.

The method is especially helpful to new students, because it's less confusing than teaching techniques at regular speed. Once they become familiar with the motions, speed can gradually be increased. Experienced mid-level students may still be executing techniques in ways that are substantially correct but need improvement in detail. As their practice slows down, errors

(continued on page 2)

Jujitsu: A Case Study in Evolutionary Biology

by Dave Stuart

The idea of evolution, particularly human evolution, is still a contested subject in some circles. Regardless of your personal stance, the following is a jujitsu perspective on vulnerabilities in the human anatomy (i.e., nerve techniques) through the discipline of evolutionary biology. The goal is not to convince anyone of the validity of human evolution, but rather offer another lens for practitioners and teachers alike to understand jujitsu concepts and adapt them into their own practice and instruction.

Many are familiar with the basic tenets of evolution, even if just through the colloquial phrase "survival of the fittest." Note that "fittest" is not necessarily the biggest, fastest, or strongest of the species, but rather those individual species that have adapted to survive and propagate in their given environment. The classic examples are Darwin's finches, which did not adapt to be bigger or

(continued on page 6)

Upcoming Events

**The Northern Region's annual Shiai will be on
July 22 at the Towson YMCA**
If you would like your event featured in the AJA
newsletter, please send it to
Newsletter@AJA-email.org

Slow-Motion Jujitsu

(continued from page 1)

become more evident to instructors and to students themselves. A student might realize, for example, that her feet are not in quite the right position, that her balance is a little off, or that she is relying too much on arm strength, rather than using body mass to provide power. In addition, this training method helps improve the flow of motion, both within a given technique and across two or more techniques in sequence.

Slow motion jujitsu is also valuable in enabling new students to respond to unscripted attacks in self-defense exercises. Most senseis have had instances where a new student who's being attacked stands immobilized trying to figure out which technique to use in response. In the past, I've said "Just do SOMETHING, don't stand there!" Now, with slow-motion attacks, the student can see what's coming and has a better chance of processing the information and responding appropriately.

The biggest problem in starting to use slow-motion jujitsu is getting students to slow down. Understandably, they feel comfortable moving at a quicker pace, and being reminded to slow down introduces one more factor to process as they're trying to learn the basics. The reminders work, though, and over the course of several lessons, students get the idea. It also helps to practice basic techniques in unison, because it's easier for the sensei to regulate speed in a group and for the student to assimilate cues from the other students around him.

We don't practice slow-motion jujitsu all the time. It doesn't work well in randori, where it tends to result in stalemate, because the contenders can see what attacks are coming and defeat them pretty easily. And the more advanced students need to be able to practice responding quickly and precisely to fast attacks. But it's great for learning the basics and developing the muscle memory on which jujitsu, other martial arts, and all sports depend.

Recent Yudansha Promotions

Name	Rank	Date	Dojo
John Frank	Yodan	December	Baltimore School of Self Defense
Jason Hirata	Sandan	December	Vancouver Institute of Self Defense
William Griffin	Sandan	December	Vancouver Institute of Self Defense
Jason Claus	Sandan	December	Vancouver Institute of Self Defense
Cody Claus	Shodan	December	Vancouver Institute of Self Defense
Kale Claus	Shodan	December	Vancouver Institute of Self Defense
Kelly Garcia	Nidan	January	Vancouver Institute of Self Defense
Damon Cronin	Nidan	February	Vancouver Institute of Self Defense

Recent Mudansha Promotions

Name	Rank	Date	Dojo
Thomas Dineen	Ikkyu	December	Baltimore School of Self Defense
David Garcia	Nikyu	December	Baltimore School of Self Defense
Marco Kirikos	Shichikyu	January	Towson Daitobukan Dojo
Sol Fitzgerald	Gokyu	January	Towson Daitobukan Dojo
Robert Ridgely III	Sankyu	January	Ho'on Dojo
Elise Fonseca	Yonkyu	February	Kaiwan Budokai
Erika Deckard	Yonkyu	February	Kaiwan Budokai
Sharon Clark	Rokyu	March	Kaiwan Budokai

Sensei

To have your students' unregistered promotions featured in the newsletter, please send them to
Newsletter@AJA-email.org

FROM THE ARCHIVE...

The AJA has an extensive online archive of back issues of the newsletter. This evergreen letter to the editor is from January 1992.

Dear Fellow Martial Artist,

I have been very fortunate during the last five years, as a seminar attender, to have been able to participate in 39 seminars. These seminars have featured 26 very prominent instructors. Although some of the seminars featured the same instructor teaching the same technique as the last of their seminars I attended, there was always some big part or some small part of the technique that I had missed. I was glad to work the technique again under the instructor's guidance to further my understanding of the technique.

During these seminars I have also had the opportunity to meet and train with many nice people. During this time I have also found there are two types of seminar goers.

The first of these is group A. Group A are martial artists from many different cities, they are of many different nationalities and many different styles. These martial artists may attend one seminar or many. The only real common bond group A has is the desire to learn. During the seminar, if you are able to work with a person from group A, you will feel good about your seminar experience. Group A listens to the instructor, watches the instructor, then begins to train the techniques as the instructor has shown. The people in group A know who they are, and I thank you.

This brings us to group B. These martial artists, although similar to group A in appearance, background, style and training, are different in one aspect. The difference being the desire to learn. If you have to work with a person in group B, your seminar experience will not be as pleasant. Group B listens to the instructor, watches the instructor, then begins to do techniques from his/her system or some technique he thinks would work better. Group B is also responsible for these statements. "In our school, we don't do that. I would just do this. (Or) Oh, I've done that before." Group B will also confess to knowing all the techniques he/she will ever need to know. When the instructor shows a technique group B already "knows," group B will disregard all the details and principles the instructor is trying to get across.

I have yet been able to understand why someone of group B's superior knowledge of the martial arts would spend the time and money to attend a seminar for which everything taught they already know. Maybe what group B does not fully understand is that the instructor has probably been teaching

his/her art longer than group B has been alive, and would not be able to display their 30, 40, or 50+ years of experience in one afternoon, one week, or even many years. It is a shame group B does not grab as much knowledge as they can from these masters when given the opportunity. This would not be a problem if only group B worked with group B. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Group A sometimes has to suffer by not being able to take in as much information as possible, which is what they came for.

Now for the suggestions. Group A, hang in there, attend as many seminars as time, money and your spouse will permit. Group B, save your money, stay home and tell yourself everything you know. Because at the seminar, if you tell everyone else what you know, you will still be the only one listening.

Allen Hopkins

Budoshin Jujitsu Dojo

Protection, KS

You can find the January 1992 newsletter, along with fifty other issues, at americanjujitsuassociation.org/about/newsletters. The archive is incomplete; if you happen to have an issue which is not currently listed, please contact Webmaster@AJA-email.org

Content

If you would like to contribute content to the AJA newsletter, please send it to **Newsletter@AJA-email.org**

- We're always looking for
- Articles about jujitsu, your students, or your dojo
 - Upcoming events
 - Personal interest events

Jujitsu: A Case Study in Evolutionary Biology

(continued from page 1)

faster than one another, but had slightly different shaped beaks in order to efficiently eat the flora in their given environment while those with insufficient beak shapes died off in the process we call natural selection. I will break down this argument for evolutionary biology as it applies to jujitsu into two separate but intertwined sections: why our anatomy evolved to what it is today and the instinctual drivers we can exploit in this anatomical structure as jujitsu practitioners.

Humans are obviously very different from the aforementioned finches, where adaptation is very obvious, but we can still see the evidence of thousands of years of adaptation just from our general anatomy. If we look at the environment our evolutionary ancestors lived in, we can begin to see how our anatomical arrangement helped suit them for survival. For example, the femoral artery is one



Figure 1: Brachial and femoral arteries marked with arrows

of the largest in the body, and severing it can result in bleeding out in less than a few minutes if left untended (Figure 1). The risk is similar but slightly smaller for the brachial artery as well, but what do both of these have in common in placement on the body? Let us consider living in the time of our evolutionary ancestors, where moving through thick forests and rocks were a daily occurrence. Anyone who has ever hiked an unkempt trail will tell you it is likely you would come out the other end with cuts and scratches on your arms and legs from the thick sharp brush and rock formations.

But what does this have to do with our femoral and brachial arteries? Imagine if these major lines of our complex circulatory system were on the outside of our legs and arms instead of safely tucked between our legs and between our bodies and arms. The chances of our ancestors cutting one of these major arteries and bleeding out would rise exponentially, thus their chance for survival (and further procreation) dramatically decreases. This simple example may seem to imply there were two human-like ancestors at a period of history where some had major arteries on the inside of their limbs and some on the outside. This is

absolutely not the case, as evolution is not a binary process of one over the other, but rather very small incremental changes over hundreds if not thousands of years resulting in the best suited anatomical structure for the environment.

While this is just one basic example that suits the scope of this article, extensive research is available to further explain why our anatomy evolved into what it is. I encourage you to do more research on your own for more examples.

Evolution has given all animals (including humans) two driving forces behind their behavior: survival and procreation. We see this in every animal species, and we could argue that the simplest brain functions are programmed to ask “how do I keep living?” and “how do I make more of me?” Without these two driving factors, a species would cease to exist as they would either not live long enough to procreate or have no desire to procreate and eventually die off. Due to these two broad “life goals,” anything that hinders either of these functions is seen as a threat to a species’ very existence. This is arguably why the sensation of pain exists. Anything that may threaten an animal’s ability to survive or procreate will cause pain. We as jujitsu practitioners can exploit this concept as means of controlling or dispatching an aggressor.

Like many of you, I learned nerve techniques on a case by case basis, meaning for a particular technique I was shown a nerve to exploit. Another popular method is just running down the body and showing all of the sensitive areas for a student to memorize/demonstrate. Instead of us exploring nerve concepts in the aforementioned ways, let us instead look at them through the evolutionary

(continued on page 8)

Concussion Awareness Students and Parents

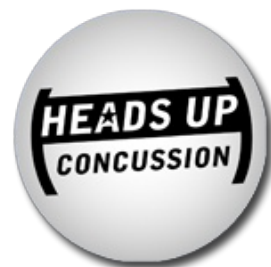
Injuries or concussions are very rare in AJA dojos. However, they do occasionally occur. Here is some useful information from the CDC on concussion awareness for [students](#) and [parents](#). For general information, go to

www.cdc.gov/headsup/basics/index.html

Training & Certification

If you’re an instructor and not yet Concussion Awareness Training certified go to www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/training to take the free 30 minute course, pass the free exam, and secure your free Concussion Awareness Training Certificate. This is an insurance coverage requirement.

Also, make sure you’re making the information presented in Students & Parents: Concussion Awareness available to your students and their parents on a regular basis, either by printing up the documents and handing them out in class or providing students and parents with the links so they can download the information themselves.



concepts described above.

The easiest example is threatening an aggressor's ability to procreate, which obviously involves an attack to the genitals. Such an attack would be extremely painful. It is also easy to understand that genitals are necessary to perform one of the two evolutionary life functions (procreation), thus the line from evolutionary significance to jujitsu adaptation is clear.

We can also draw a clear correlation between the femoral/brachial arteries and pain due to the fact that damaging them could lead to severe blood loss and/or death. But what about some sensitive areas we frequently exploit where damaging them may not lead to a mortal injury?



Figure 2: Clavicle hollow

The hollow of the clavicle (Figure 2) is devastatingly effective nerve area to exploit. In our dojo we call it the "down button," as proper execution leads to the individual dropping quickly to the mat in pain (Figure 3). Before reading further, can you explain why this region is so sensitive based on the anatomical evolution argument made previously? Potentially it could be that any sufficient amount of pressure applied to any place on the body will cause pain, but what does this particular spot exploit that makes the pain so much worse than pushing on someone's deltoid with the same amount of pressure? The answer is what that hollow leads to: the body cavity where your heart and lungs reside. Anything that would puncture through the



Figure 3: Using the "down button"

hollow in the clavicle has the potential to damage the heart and lungs, which are clearly an important part of survival.

Let us also explore the nerves underneath the mandible (Figure 4) which can be exploited by hooking fingers underneath to cause pain (Figure 5). Puncturing this area would obviously not affect any vital organs in the body cavity, nor the brain. But instead, damaging the mandible impedes our ability to eat which of course is vital to survival.



Figure 4: Nerve beneath mandible



Figure 5: "The Crusher" attacking mandible

Using this thought process, we can begin to understand why attacks to the eyes and trachea are also extremely painful.

As you have read this article, I do not expect you to have learned anything particularly new about jujitsu itself. In fact, anyone who has been training for a year or more should be able to properly execute at least a few nerve techniques. Instead, this article should be used as an example of different ways of thinking about and teaching jujitsu. As a student, I would challenge you to think about this evolution example and apply it to the third of your five steps of learning (patience, repetition, understanding, experimentation, evaluation). Once you understand nerve techniques under the general principal of evolutionary significance, you can start to experiment by saying to yourself, "if I need X to survive, and Y in some way protects or facilitates X, then applying pressure to Y will cause significant pain." Then evaluate (the fifth step in learning) your hypothesis. Did it work? If not, why?

For my fellow instructors, use this as an example of how we can use other disciplines (in this case evolutionary biology) to explain jujitsu concepts and techniques. We as instructors should not only be showing how to perform a technique, but also explaining why it works, thus further facilitating our students' steps of learning beyond practice and repetition. I personally use frequent analogies to biology, physics, and geometry to further student understanding.

As our culture adapts to new information and ways of thinking, we must also adapt our teaching to effectively reach our audience and further the dissemination of our art. Just like an animal species, jujitsu will find a way to adapt to its environment for survival. The only question then is: will you as a teacher/practitioner adapt to this environment, or will your methods suffer the attrition of natural selection?

About the American Ju-Jitsu Association

The American Ju-Jitsu Association was founded in 1972 by George Kirby and William Fromm at the request of their sensei, Jack Seki, for the purpose of bringing different ryu of the art together in an atmosphere of mutual cooperation and respect. Since that time it has grown from two dojo to approximately twenty-four, plus international affiliates. The AJA has established itself as a reputable organization within the martial arts community and works closely with other major Ju-Jitsu organizations in the United States and internationally in areas of mutual concern.

The AJA is a non-profit amateur athletic association registered with both the state of California and the United States government [IRS code 501(c)(3)]. It is a non-profit corporation with a charitable foundation status. Although originally recognized by the IRS as a "social club" because there was no other way to recognize the AJA as an amateur athletic association, formal recognition of the AJA as a true amateur athletic association, according to the criteria of the United States government, was secured in 1976 under the Sports Act of that year. To our knowledge, the AJA is the only martial arts organization in the U.S. that is classified by the IRS as an amateur athletic association.

Board of Directors

Position	Name	Email
President & Chairman	David Boesel	President@AJA-email.org
Vice President	Jeff Wynn	VP@AJA-email.org
Secretary	Kristine Wiscarson	Secretary@AJA-email.org
Treasurer	Marc Tucker	Treasurer@AJA-email.org
Western Region Director	Tony Damigo	WRDirector@AJA-email.org
Southern Region Director & International Competition Coordinator	Thomas Salander	SRDirector@AJA-email.org
Northern Region Director	Paul Klara	NRDirector@AJA-email.org
Director	Gene Roos	Director@AJA-email.org
Director	Scott Finley	Webmaster@AJA-email.org

Administrative Staff

Position	Name	Email
Certificates Coordinator	Barry Stebbins	Certificates@AJA-email.org
Communication Director	John M. Landry, Ph.D.	Communications@AJA-email.org
Historian	Mike Balog	Historian@AJA-email.org
Materials Coordinator	Jeff Rice	Materials@AJA-email.org
Membership	Kristine Wiscarson	Membership@AJA-email.org
National Awards	Vacant	Awards@AJA-email.org
National Standards & Certification Board	Harold Zeidman	NSCB@AJA-email.org
Newsletter Editor	Samantha Finley	Newsletter@AJA-email.org
Recruitment	Brian McClernan	Recruitment@AJA-email.org
Webmaster	Scott Finley	Webmaster@AJA-email.org

