



## Grappling Concepts Lesson 8 Earthquake

In today's lesson I'll cover a cool concept that I don't think is used often enough.

Do you know the old adage: "if you don't at first succeed, try, try again?" Well it's not quite so simple as simply doing the same thing over and over again, because in grappling that allows my opponent to counter and recover between each of my attempts.

Sometimes it's better to go so fast and so often that he gets completely overwhelmed.

The best example of trying something persistently is shaking or vibrating part of your body. That might sound hokey and esoteric, but bear with me and you'll see that it's an effective approach to many grappling situations.

### ARMBAR

Helping me out today is my friend and MMA fighter, Garrett Davis.

We're going to start with the basic armbar. I have my leg over his face and I'm hooking his arm with my top arm.

He's defending by holding his hands together. I have a number of options from here to break the grip...





## BREAKING HIS GRIP BY EARTHQUAKING THE BOTTOM LEG

One thing I can do to break his grip, is to put my bottom (right) foot up on to his bicep. If I'm really strong, I can just push with my legs and pull with my arms to break his grip.

But simply pushing his arm so that his grip opens up can be tough if he's strong and determined, especially if my legs aren't that strong.

So, something I can do to increase the power of this technique is to use several short, sharp pushes with my legs. This will usually be enough to break his grip and let you finish the armbar.

Note that if I'm moving my right leg and taking it off of his body, I have to be careful not to give him an opportunity to escape.

So when I'm doing this particular technique, I like to hook his right leg with my right arm. This way I can maintain control of him while I move my right leg around.



**Hooking the leg with the arm, foot on the bicep,  
and then earthquaking his hands apart**



## BREAKING HIS GRIP BY EARTHQUAKING THE TOP LEG

The next technique for finishing the armbar is called the earthquake and it's less pleasant for Garrett.

I'm going to shake my left leg - the one that's across his face - and kick repeatedly into his face with the back of my leg. It's like I'm dribbling his head on the mat. Its very hard for Garrett to maintain his grips when I'm shaking his leg, so this is a very effective way for me to finish the submission.



### **Dribbling my opponent's head by earthquaking the top leg**

Since the earthquake is not a pleasant thing to do, use it at your discretion. There are a few places you should use it:

- in competition, where the intensity will be higher
- on people in your club who you really don't like (hopefully, there aren't too many of those)
- on friends, who will forgive you.
- when you or your partner are getting ready for competition

DO NOT do this on the brand-new guy who'll never come back to class, or on someone who'll really take offense and turn into an enemy. It's more important to have good training partners who will help you than it is to finish an armbar in practice by being too rough on someone.

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## DEFENDING THE GUARD PASS

The earthquake also comes into play when I'm defending the guard pass.

Two common guard passes involve underhooking one leg and driving my knee to my nose, or underhooking both legs.

First let's very quickly show both guard passes:



**The smashing/stacking guard pass from a single underhook**

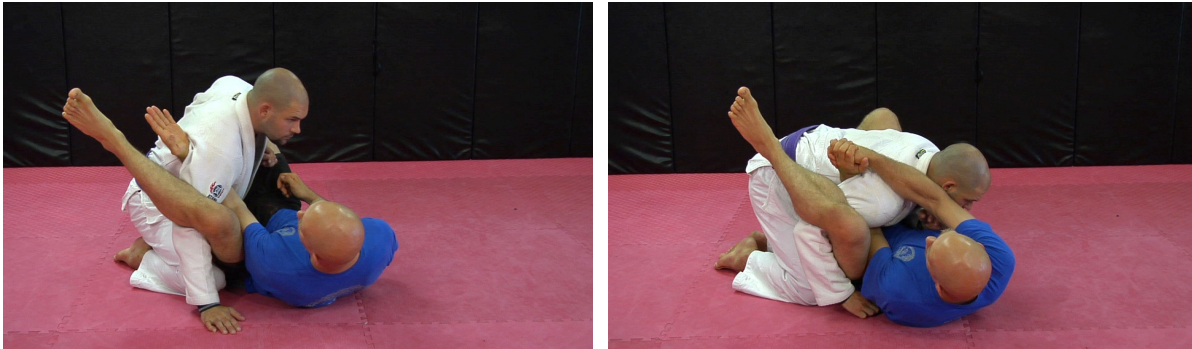


**The smashing/stacking guard pass from double underhooks**



To counter these guard passes I can use something that in Portuguese is called "cadeado."

This technique involves reaching past my left inner thigh with my left arm and getting it under the armpit of his underhooking (right) arm.



**Inserting the left hand under the right armpit,  
then linking hands to lock things up.**

Once I have my hand through I link my hands over his shoulder and now it's really difficult for him to stack me.

If he's already stacked me, it's a bit late. I have to get my left arm through his armpit while he's fishing for the underhook because then there will be space for me to stuck my hand under.

This works to counter both the single and double underhooks, so long as I get my arm through the hole before he tightens things up too much.

Once we're in this position, it becomes a stalemate. He's not passing my guard right now, but he will as soon as I let go. And breaking the stalemate is where the earthquake comes in.



If we're in the stalemate position where he has the single underhook on my left leg and I have cadeiada on his right arm, I'm going to earthquake my left leg and pull up with my arms to clear out his underhook and get him back into my guard.

It's even better when he has double underhooks...

Let's say that I have cadeiada applied on his left side with my right arm.



If I earthquake my right leg we end up with one arm in, one arm out, which is the trigger position for the triangle.



So you can go from defending a guard pass to applying a submission with a few simple moves!







## STANDING KIMURA

This is bit of a showboat move, but I'll show it to you because I've used it on the mat and haven't been too badly stung by it.

It starts with me applying a Kimura from side control, and he defends by grabbing his lapel. I pinch his head between my legs and try something more dramatic to finish.



I put my weight on his ribs, which allows me to jump to my feet. Then I dead-lift him, earthquaking his arm to break his grip on his lapel. Once his hands come apart I can even tap him out from the standing position.



This is a surprise move. If he knows it's coming, it won't work. But because it's such an unfamiliar technique, it will work on most people the first time, even if they're fairly heavy.

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## INSERTING HOOKS VS 'WRESTLER'S POSTURE'

Wrestler's often use something I call 'wrestler's posture.' Let's pretend that Garrett weighs 50 pounds more and that he's a wrestler. If Garrett has me in this then he hooks my head with his left arm and drives forward, trying to choke me with his shoulder.

He really crowds my legs and hips with his own hips, making it difficult for me to get my hooks into place to use my open guard game. He may have his hips turned or he might be keeping his hips flat and driving with both legs.



### 'Wrestler's posture'

How will the earthquake help me here?

Let's say that I want to get my left butterfly hook in under his thigh. This is easy to do if he's relaxed. But if he's driving in, then unless I'm really flexible, it can be tough.

So first I'll make room by earthquaking my left leg, kicking repeatedly and driving the back of my left hamstring against his hip.



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This vibration pushes his leg and hip back, creating the space I need to circle my butterfly hook into place.



I use my legs and arms to push him AWAY, which will make him drive in harder, and when he does I pull him TOWARDS ME and use my butterfly hook to flip him over.



I end up in the mount position, which is a vast improvement compared to him trying to pop my head off with his shoulder!



This is a relatively simple but effective sweep, and it relied on using the earthquake to get my butterfly hook into place.



## EARTHQUAKING THE UNDERHOOK SWEEP

Here we apply the same concept to enhance an already powerful sweep. Garrett stands up in my closed guard and I manage to underhook his right leg with my left arm. This is a very powerful sweeping position. Usually I put my right hand on the ground and drive this thigh sideways to my left to tip him over.



### **Setting up the underhook sweep**

But if he's got really good base (or if he's heavier than me) finishing this sweep can be hard. But if I do the earthquake by giving his leg a series of short, sharp pulls with my left arm he often collapses. It's a lot harder for him to keep his balance against something that's vibrating or shaking than it is against one sustained pull.



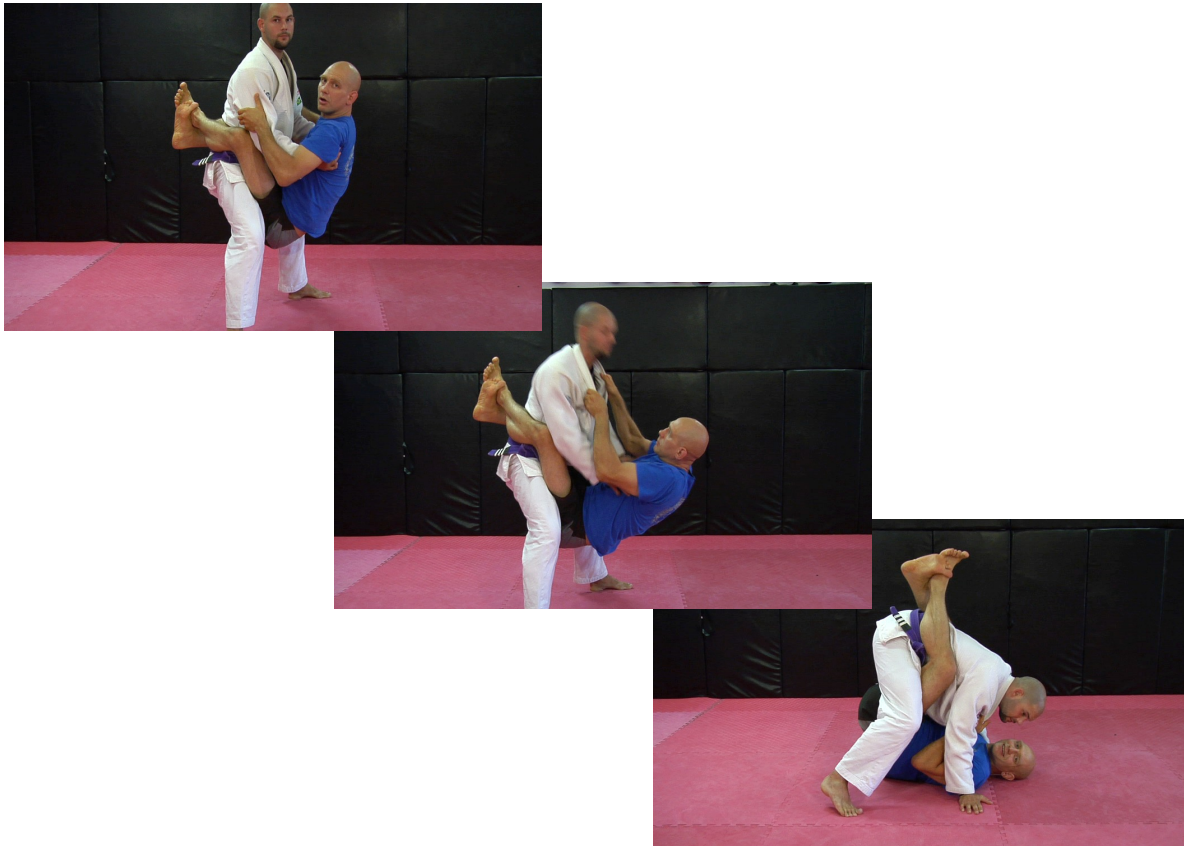
**By jerking his foot with my left arm and extending my hips I cause him to topple!**



## COLLAPSING STANDING POSTURE (WITH THE GI)

Here's an application of the earthquake that I learned from Marcelo Grosso, a jiu-jitsu blackbelt under Ricardo de la Riva.

We were sparring and I've always liked standing guard passes, so I stood up in Marcelo's guard. To collapse my posture he grabbed both my lapels and instead of just pulling down, he used the earthquake to shake me back down into his guard.



My head was jerking back and forth and it was completely impossible for me to keep my balance. The first time he got me with that, I had to stop and laugh. Having my head whip around like that was a very unexpected sensation and I was completely disoriented by it.

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## APPLYING AND COUNTERING THE TWISTER

For our last example today I'm going to show a technique that is a type of earthquake, but even more it's an exemplification of the maxim that *"if at first you don't succeed, try, try again."*

The technique is a counter to the "twister." one of my favorite submissions. It's been popularized by Eddie Bravo, but it's actually an old wrestling submission. First I'm going to show you one way to get into the twister, and then we'll look at a counter for the same technique.

To start, I'm on Garrett's back with an over/under grip. The underhook is really important here, so I have to make sure that he doesn't escape his right arm.



To transition to the twister, I first switch my right hook from the outside to the inside



I then use my right hook to chuck him to the left, and use the newly created space to slide deeper down on his hips. He can't roll away because I'm still hooking under his right arm with my right arm.





Now I double triangle my legs around his left leg. My left ankle is behind my own right knee and my right ankle is behind his left ankle. Note that I maintain the right underhook.



I then shoot my left arm through his armpit and around the back of his head. Now his right arm is trapped behind my back.



To finish the submission I bring my right arm across the front of his face, link my hands at the top of his head, and gently pull his head towards me.



**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Be very gentle with this submission because this isn't a choke, it's a powerful neck crank and can really screw somebody's neck up.





## EARTHQUAKE TWISTER DEFENSE

There are tons of entries for the twister, and it's very powerful. But recently I've had trouble nailing anybody at my club with it because they all know the following counter.

Prevention is the best medicine and the best counter, but you can escape even during the last few steps of the twister

In the first photo, I'm getting ready to trap his head. But Garrett uses his right foot to kick my right ankle off of his left foot, while escaping his hips out to his left (photo 2)

If he does that only once, then I'll just refasten my triangle (photo 3).

But if he's determined and kicks off my legs again and again, then he'll likely get his hips out far enough so that I'll have to abandon the twister (photo 4).

Even if I come to the top, to side control, it's still better for him than being caught in the twister

And that's just one more example of how you can use the earthquake. Now get out on the mats and keep the earthquake in mind when you're defending against submissions, defending positions, and applying submissions.







**Lesson 9 Preview:**

Next week I'm going to take one of the most fundamental concepts in all of Brazilian jiu-jitsu and submission grappling – moving your hips – and really expand on it for you.

You'll find out the *real* reason you have to move your hips, as well as learning four advanced drills leg and hip movement drills. These are the same drills that I use when I want to work on my movement. And I think they'll definitely bump your game up a notch too!

Until next week

Stephan Kesting  
[www.grapplearts.tv](http://www.grapplearts.tv)