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# Health & Fitness

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&Fitness

## Do you jiu-jitsu?

### Brazilian fighting technique makes for fierce workout

By Mary Leslie  
Tallahassee Staff Writer

Five pairs of men, sweaty and exhausted, stood in line for the water cooler at Wednesday night's jiu-jitsu class in a small studio on North Monroe Street.

They'd just finished a seven-minute round of one-on-one sparring in the Brazilian fighting style, all under the watchful eye of instructor Felipe "Zicro" Neto, leader of the Alliance Tallahassee Team and a native of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Some faced their fingers behind their heads and stretched, while others walked around to catch their breath before the next round began.

For the relatively small amount of space the combat occupies, it's difficult to believe just how much physical exertion is required in jiu-jitsu until one sees it up close. Winning a match requires using almost all of one's muscles to make an opponent submit.

Kevin Dumen, an intermediate-level student at Alliance, has been taking classes with Neto since November, but he's been doing jiu-jitsu for about two years.

Dumen's a baseball and soccer coach in Marianna and said that jiu-jitsu helps him in those areas, too, by increasing his cardiovascular endurance, strength and speed.

"(I like) the physical conditioning, the camaraderie and the self confidence that it gives you," he said.

Brazilian jiu-jitsu saw a significant surge in popularity in the mid-'90s after mixed martial arts competitions demonstrated how effective jiu-jitsu was against other fighting styles.

Jiu-jitsu (which means "the gentle art") focuses on ground-fighting techniques and submission holds and is one of the non-striking martial arts known as grappling.

Neto has been training in jiu-jitsu since he was 17, competing often in Brazil and the United States. He was promoted to black-belt level 10 years ago while training at the Master Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Academy in Atlanta.



GLENN BEIL/Democrat  
Felipe "Zicro" Neto runs a Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu school for all skill levels on North Monroe Street. Neto demonstrates a move on Joey Ligeirinho.



"Every day we have a different warm-up," says Felipe "Zicro" Neto.

GLENN BEIL/Democrat

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See a photo gallery from the Brazilian jiu-jitsu class.

#### IF YOU GO:

**What:** Brazilian jiu-jitsu classes for all ages and levels  
**Where:** Team Alliance, 2418 N. Monroe St., Suite 150.  
**Cost:** Varies.  
**Contact:** 422-7730 or zicro2002@hotmail.  
**Online:** www.alliancetallahassee.com.

He is a two-time Rio de Janeiro state champion, as well as a Florida State Champion. Neto has also won the Rickson Gracie Spring Open and was a co-champion at the 1997 Pan American Competition.

He became the North American Grappling



GLENN BEIL/Democrat  
Felipe "Zicro" Neto, demonstrating a move on Joey Ligeirinho, has been training since he was 17.

Please see JIU-JITSU, 2D

## JIU-JITSU

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champ last year.

To the untrained eye, jiu-jitsu may look something like wrestling or judo.

FSU student David Huie, who's been with Neto since last fall, was a wrestler all throughout high school. He said the biggest challenge in making the transition from wrestling to jiu-jitsu was changing his mind set.

"The objective is a little bit different," Huie said. "In jiu-jitsu you want to go straight to your back, because if you go to your stomach, you'll get choked out."

In actuality, the fighter who's submitting taps out, indicating his defeat.

Huie is majoring in exercise science and said that he's seen an improvement in his cardiovascular stamina, core muscle strength and flexibility.

"It's probably one of the best exercises you can do," he said. "It's a workout for your entire body."

Neto has a degree in physical education, so he makes sure to keep his students healthy and fit.

"Sometimes I work their cardio conditioning



GLENN BEIL/Democrat  
Felipe "Zicro" Neto watches students during a recent class of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. "It's a workout for your entire body," says student David Huie.

... make their heart rates go a little higher," said Neto. "Other days I work more toward flexibility. Everyday we have a different warm-up."

Joey Ligeirinho, also an intermediate-level student, just graduated from FSU with a degree in criminology. He likes to compete in no-gi matches, or bouts in which the fighters don't wear the traditional white pants and coat.

With Neto's assistance, Ligeirinho prepares for

the matches with regular training and good nutrition and is watching what he eats.

"How you treat your body off the mat is what's going to help you in here," he said.

Ligeirinho has been training at Alliance for about six months and just graduated from FSU with a degree in criminology. He said he hopes to open his own jiu-jitsu studio some day.

"Jiu-jitsu pretty much changed my life," he said.

## TEETH

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ated with poor oral care," says Colon. In the first case, the babies don't grow as rapidly when the body is fighting infection.

see a dentist once a year. Americans' huge intake of sugary food doesn't help either.

Its no wonder that

