



Honour Respect Quality Cooperation Integrity

Rooted in Motion: The Stability Principle in Canadian Jiu Jitsu

Before a technique can land, before a throw can lift, before a step can even be trusted, the body must be stable.

In the art of Canadian Jiu Jitsu, stability is more than a physical stance. It is a principle, a presence, a readiness. As described by Shihan R.W. Forrester in the *Canadian Jiu Jitsu Technical Manual*, stability is the first and most essential of the six biomechanical pillars upon which the entire art is built.

And rightly so. Because without understanding stability, little else can follow.

Six Principles, One Foundation

Canadian Jiu Jitsu is a dynamic system—one that draws its roots from Karate, Judo, Aikido, Kung Fu, Boxing, and more—but it's united by a common thread: biomechanical intelligence. It is not enough to simply do a technique. One must do it well, in harmony with the body's design and natural physical laws. That means understanding biomechanics and using the principles to your benefit.

Shihan's six principles form the structural bones of his approach:



- Stability
- Summation of Joint Forces
- Continuity of Joint Forces
- Thrust (Impulse)
- Direction
- Grip and Control

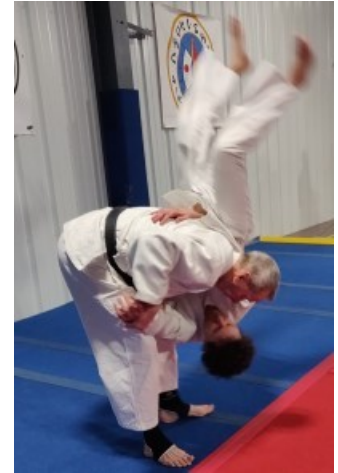
Each one could be studied for a lifetime, but it all begins with the first.

Stability Is Not Stillness

When beginners hear the word “stability,” they often imagine rigidity or being locked in place, unmoving. But in Jiu Jitsu, stability is anything but static. True stability is adaptive. It's the ability to absorb force, to re-root on the fly, to transition without tipping, to remain balanced while your environment shifts violently around you.

It all begins with a core understanding of human anatomy. For simplicity, your centre of gravity is located just below the navel, and where that centre moves, so must your balance follow. In any stance—whether rooted or mobile—the goal is to keep your centre within your base of support. Step outside of it, and you’ve lost the ground beneath you.

This principle comes to life in the most subtle of ways. Watch a skilled practitioner execute a hip throw. They don’t simply yank their partner across the waist—they drop their fulcrum beneath the opponent’s centre of gravity and tilt the world out from under them. That is skillful use of stability (maintaining your own and capturing your opponents)



Training Stability at Every Level

In the dojo, we don’t just talk about stability, we cultivate it.

For the novice, this begins with awareness. We guide students through slow stance transitions, helping them feel how the body anchors itself. They practice balancing on one foot while moving their arms, or resist gentle partner pushes without stepping—learning the language of micro-adjustments. Stability, for them, is felt more often than understood.

As students gain experience, we introduce stress. The intermediate practitioner must now move under pressure. They change direction during footwork drills without rising up. They absorb bumps and sweeps from partners during light sparring or randori, finding their base again and again. They begin to understand that stability isn’t just about planting—it’s often more about dynamic motion or recovery.

The advanced student goes one level deeper. For them, stability is not just self-preservation—it’s a weapon. They maintain perfect balance while destabilizing others. During throws, their stance never wavers. They aren’t just withstanding the storm—they’re surfing it.

Why Stability Matters

You can’t deliver much power from a teetering base. You can’t effectively defend yourself if you’re falling down. You can’t move freely if your footing isn’t reliable or if your balance is pulling left when you want to go right.

And so, everything in Jiu Jitsu flows from this principle. A student who masters stability won’t just throw harder or fall softer, they’ll become more confident, more relaxed, and more present. They’ll waste less energy. They’ll see the attack before it happens.

They’ll be, in every sense of the word, grounded.

Looking Ahead

Stability is the root, but not the full story. In the next part of this series, we'll explore other topics and perspectives on martial arts principles. We will expand on the six principlesand more.

- Summation of Joint Forces
- Continuity of Joint Forces
- Thrust (Impulse)
- Direction
- Grip and Control

But until then, stand firm in your regular practice. Feel the ground beneath you.

Canadian Jiu Jitsu Council Directors



Shihan R. W. Forrester (d. 2013)

