

Hello there!

I want to personally welcome you to the North Star Mixed Martial Arts Academy.

My name is Jackson Galka -- I am a lifelong martial artist and the owner of NSMMA. I began training in both Brazilian Jiu-jitsu and Muay Thai Kickboxing in 2004 after a highschool and college wrestling career. After retiring from professional MMA competition, I created North Star Mixed Martial Arts and have committed myself to the development of athletes, young and old, here at our state-of-the-art facility in Philadelphia.

Our academy is built upon the foundation of motivated, positive individuals like you and I am excited to be of service to you in your martial arts and fitness journey!

Unlike a traditional workout, training in the martial arts does require a good deal of patience, perseverance, and positivity. But for those men and women who apply the habits, mindset, and discipline forged on the mats to their personal and professional goals outside the academy, the sky is the limit!

I look forward to building a long relationship with you, and am always at your service when it comes to your health, fitness, and martial arts needs. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly at [Jackson@northstarmma.com](mailto:Jackson@northstarmma.com).

Now, let's get down to brass tacks :)

Please save this e-mail as it has a TON of important information that will be helpful throughout your journey here at the academy.

- It is of the utmost importance that all students Check In to every class they attend. We use attendance numbers as part of our rank advancement program, as well as monitoring the consistency of our members. Students will not be permitted to attend a class they have not checked into.
- You can check in via the ZenPlanner App on our mobile phone (available for iOS or Android), as well as at any kiosk at the academy.
- Note: You can view additional student resources online (including a copy of this e-mail) in the members section of our website.
- Visit [northstarmma.com/members](http://northstarmma.com/members) and use the password "feb2017" (case-sensitive)

We primarily run two programs here for adults: Striking, and Submission Grappling/Brazilian Jiu-jitsu. I will describe both what to expect, and how to advance, in both styles below.

## **STRIKING**

Our Striking curriculum is built upon a foundation of Muay Thai, Dutch Kickboxing, and Western Boxing. What this means is that you will learn the best skills from each style -- powerful kicks, knees, and elbows from Muay Thai, rapid-fire combinations from the Dutch Kickboxing, and crisp boxing, elusive footwork and head movement from Western Boxing. We often refer to our curriculum as "Muay Thai" or "Thaiboxen" due to the large cultural influence of Muay Thai in our curriculum and academy.

**Striking 101:** New Students will begin their journey in our **Striking 101** classes. This class focuses on the *what* and *how* of striking.

- **Required Equipment:** Students are required to have their own pair of boxing gloves (12oz or greater) and hand wraps. *Fundamentals students are not permitted to wear Thai Style shorts until they pass the Fundamentals Exam.*
- **What do we do?** Our system will teach you crisp punching, sharp elbows, devastating knees, and incredibly powerful kicks. You'll develop these skills from concept to execution, learning the underlying mechanics and science behind maximizing your body's offensive potential. A huge part of this process will be a physical and mental transformation that will improve your durability and willpower. The striking arts place a high emphasis on conditioning so you will be working at your own pace in a fast-moving, high energy environment while refining the tools of the trade.
- **How do we do it?** The Striking 101 classes place a great emphasis on *safety*. In order to train and perform at a high intensity, all students must be familiar with the proper vocabulary, drills, and safety procedures of a professional striking academy. Learning the *how* behind the art will allow us to confidently, and safely, push ourselves to our limits (and beyond). Students who do not internalize and demonstrate a strong respect for safety, and who habitually violate our safety principles, will be swiftly removed from the academy.
- **Advancing beyond Striking 101:** When a student has completed a minimum of five weeks and 12 hours of study, that student will be eligible to take our Fundamentals Exam. Upon passing the Fundamentals Exam, the student will receive a pair of Thai Shorts and have access to the Intermediate Level Study.

**Intermediate Muay Thai:** Once a student has successfully demonstrated the proper training skills required to operate in our Intermediate program, they will earn the right to wear Thai Style boxing trunks. Any style or color of trunks are permitted, and they do not have to be purchased from the academy.

- **Required Equipment:** In addition to 12oz+ boxing gloves and handwraps, Intermediate students are required to own a mouth guard and a pair of approved shin guards. This equipment must be brought to every class. Intermediate level students will adhere to our uniform policy of Thai Style shorts or MMA style shorts. No loose fitting shorts (below

the knee) or pants are acceptable, although tights may be worn underneath the shorts. Students may not be permitted to train without the proper attire.

- **Tactics:** We get to the good stuff here in the intermediate program! Once you are up to speed on the basics of training, and have a firm grasp of *what* and *how* we do it, it's time to dig into the combinations and skills involved in becoming an elite fighter. Whether your goals are for fitness, self-defense, or competition--these skills are critical to understanding and appreciating the theory and culture of Muay Thai, and provide access to a deeper level of training (and will teach you a lot about yourself and your limits--and how you can break through them).
- **Boxing Classes:** Intermediate level students will also be invited to participate in our boxing classes. We have organized these in our intermediate level program due to the complexity of the combinations, and the foundation of basic striking skills required. Shinguards are not necessary in this class.
- **Contact:** Our Intermediate level classes involved a fair amount of contact. However, all contact is performed at a pace and intensity appropriate to the student. We emphasize a culture of safety here, so if you are ever uncomfortable with certain drills we can modify them.
- **Advancing into Sparring Classes:** After a minimum of 2 months and 35 classes (these can be a combination of Striking 101, Boxing, and Intermediate level classes), the student will be eligible for sparring (Advanced level classes and Sparring classes). There is no test or fee associated with advancement, and advancement is not required. Many students enjoy the benefits of Muay Thai without ever sparring!

**Advanced Muay Thai (Sparring):** Reserved for our more advanced students, these classes focus primarily on strategies and tactics in real-time against resisting opponents. Safety is prioritized, and intensity is variable depending on experience. Students new to sparring will be guided through sparring drills at a moderate pace and work up to full speed over the course of many training sessions.

- **Required Equipment:** All sparring sessions require 16+oz approved sparring gloves, shinguards, handwraps, knee pads, and a mouthguard. Students without the proper protection will not be permitted to spar.
- **Competition Team Invitation:** Students who demonstrate consistency, composure, and the desire to explore competitive opportunities will be invited to train with the competition team. It is expected that all competitors will maintain an average of 4 days/week (minimum) training, in addition to attending all scheduled competition team training sessions unless otherwise obligated.
- **Risk and Injury:** Any students demonstrating malicious or aggressive behavior during sparring will be benched.
- **Shorts Testing:** Advanced students will be eligible to test for their Team Shorts after a minimum of 10 months and 200 classes. Those who have passed the Shorts Test will receive an exclusive pair of Team Shorts that they can wear with extreme pride.

## GRAPPLING

Our Grappling curriculum is built primarily on the foundation of Brazilian Jiu-jitsu (BJJ), but also pulls techniques from Judo, Sambo, and Olympic Wrestling. Grappling classes are separated into both Traditional BJJ (with the Gi), or Submission Grappling (without the gi). Students will receive credit for advancement in both arts, but students who neglect to train in the traditional uniform will find their belt advancement slower as much of the BJJ curriculum involves grip fighting and tactics specific to the gi.

**Traditional Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu:** BJJ has emerged in the past 30 years as the premiere martial art for self-defense. In one-on-one situations, BJJ has an unparalleled track record of success and is universally trained by Military, Police, and professional Mixed Martial Artists alike. Traditional BJJ relies heavily on the *Gi* (also known as a *kimono*), the traditional uniform, and teaches many techniques specific to situations in which both combatants are wearing grippable attire.

**Submission Grappling:** The main difference between the "submission grappling" style and the Traditional style is the use of the gi. In submission grappling sessions, students are not allowed to manipulate the apparel of their partner or opponent. Competitively, some of the rules change as well. However, fundamentally the skills and techniques do not change by a significant margin.

- **Required Equipment (BJJ):** Students are required to wear an appropriately fitted and clean gi to every session. The gi must be fresh, and not unwashed from a previous training session. In addition, it is expected that students will conform to the highest level of personal hygiene. Students with hygienic issues (long fingernails, sores, open wounds, body odour, visible dirt, makeup, etc) will not be permitted to train.
- **Required Equipment (Submission Grappling):** Students are required to wear grappling shorts (no metal pieces--zippers, grommets, etc) and a moisture wicking top with sleeves (no tank tops, no cotton t-shirts). Expectations of proper hygiene are maintained as above.
- **Advancement (white belts):** Newer students (those wearing a white belt) will have the ability to earn progress stripes on their journey towards their first colored belt, the Blue Belt. Progress stripes will require a *minimum* of 40 logged hours (classes) attended. Because students progress at varying speeds, there is no standard as to how long it takes to advance through the ranks, or what specific techniques learned earn the next rank. Students are encouraged, and expected, to maintain a dialogue with the coaches about their progress so they can receive more personalized direction in order to advance as efficiently as possible.
- **Advancement (colored belts):** Colored belts will require a minimum of 500 logged hours in order to advance. Jiu-jitsu has one of the highest standards for advancement in the martial arts. Progress to the level of Blue Belt is comparable to Black Belt in many

other martial arts, and only a tiny percentage (somewhere around 1 in 10,000, or .0001%) ever achieve that rank. Will you be part of that .0001%?

As a student here at North Star Mixed Martial Arts, you have access to both striking and grappling training. Many students opt to spend most of their time in one art--and some students invest time into studying both. The choice is yours!

I'm sure the information above can seem extremely overwhelming--as I said, please save it for future use and refer to it frequently!

You can, again, always reach me directly at [Jackson@northstarmma.com](mailto:Jackson@northstarmma.com) with any questions.

I am grateful and honored by your enrollment here in the academy and look forward to working with you in all of your health, fitness, and martial arts goals!

Respectfully,

Jackson Baer Galka  
Head Coach, Owner  
The North Star Academy