

When we talk about takedowns for self-defense, if you ask the average jiu-jitsu practitioner, what is the value of takedowns in self-defense, they're going to give you the same responses. Most people are going to say, well, if I take him down, I can enforce positional dominance and control on the ground. And as a result, I can control the situation and go through the hierarchy of positions and possibly strangle or submit my opponent. That's a great answer. It's a good answer. In one-on-one confrontations without weapons, that's a damn good system. Other people will tell you, to be honest, I associate the value of takedowns with slamming people hard into the ground. You'll hear the old cliché, when you get hit with a takedown, you get hit with a planet earth. That's more dangerous than any fist or foot. Sure, there's a lot of truth to that. If you get slammed hard on concrete, dude, it fucking hurts. And sometimes it'll knock you out cold. So there's certainly some merit to that suggestion. And that's where most people stop. They say the value of takedowns is either to put him in a situation where you can pin him and control him and perhaps strangle him. And the second is to hurt him with the takedown, pick him up and slam him. Let me tell you something. There is a third interpretation of takedowns, which I believe is, in many self-defense situations, not all, but many, superior to both of those. And this is the SVG scenario. That stands for standing versus grounded. Let's understand a grounded opponent as someone who is on their knees, someone who's on their back or someone who's in turtle position or someone who's in a referee's wrestling position, like so. All of these have something in common. Their body is in contact with the ground with more than just their feet. They have something else in contact with the ground, hands, knees, hips, back, all fours. In all cases, they're grounded. The only time you're not grounded is when you're on two feet and no part of your body other than the soles of your feet is in contact with the ground. Now you're no longer grounded. In my opinion, one of the absolute most dominant fighting positions in all of unarmed combat is the SVG position, where you're standing and the other guy is grounded. Don't get me wrong. I love positional control and hierarchy like anyone else. If it's a one-on-one fight with no danger of bystanders intervening and there's no weapons involved, absolutely. If the ground conditions permit it, you're not fighting on some kind of crazy surface where grappling is impossible. Taking people down, getting on top of it, it's a wonderful thing. Works really well. I use it all the time. Especially if you want to lower the intensity of the conflict through control. But as the intensity of conflicts increases, and as the wildness of conflict increases where other people are involved, you don't know if people carry weapons. They could be, but you don't know. I get less and less enthusiastic about going down to the ground with the guy I've taken him down. And instead, I start to substitute the idea of standing versus grounded opponent. The greatest value of take-downs is that it creates situations where you ground him and you remain standing. This is going to open up for you situations where, as he comes back up to his feet and knocks someone down on the hips, as they come back up, they are in situations where you can enact some of the most catastrophic blows upon a human being that an unarmed person is capable of doing. These are soccer kicks, stomp kicks, knees from a clinch on a grounded opponent. These do more damage than any punches thrown from mounted position, any submission hold I've ever seen in my life. I can still remember clear as day the first time I saw a person killed by a soccer kick. I was working on Amsterdam Avenue in the 1990s. I had a man in a stranglehold. There was a wild melee going on. I was strangling a man as he was passing out. I looked. A man had been knocked down in the street and he had staggered down and was coming up like so. A person ran in from around five meters away and just hit with what looked like a field goal attempt on the man's head. I still remember clear as day, looking at that, and as it happened, even as I was strangling my man unconscious, I looked at him, that man will not survive. He's dead. Sure enough, he was taken to hospital after the melee died down. His brain swelled and he died the next day. I saw three people killed with soccer kicks over the course of my bouncing career. I saw one person killed by stomp kicks. I've never seen anyone killed from the mounted position. Never have. I've seen people get

their noses broken, teeth knocked out, badly fucked up, cuts, all that kind of thing. Sure, you see that all the time. But the most catastrophic injuries I've ever seen in my life, including fatalities, involve soccer kicks and stomp kicks. I saw people put into comas on a regular basis with soccer kicks and stompings. In my entire 12-year bouncing career, I only saw two people in my life knocked out by a head kick in a standing position. You might say, well, it's America. It's a boxing culture. Americans don't kick much. Well, I've worked with a lot of people who are kickboxers. Even they, when push came to shove, they threw mostly punches. I saw very few people knocked out by head kicks in a standing position, too, in 12 years. But every weekend, I saw numerous people knocked unconscious by soccer kicks by people who had no formal training and couldn't do a head kick if their life depended on it. But on the floor, they were fully capable of knocking people out. I saw injuries where people's noses went across their face, broken orbital bones, five, six teeth knocked out at a time, broken jaws, people getting fucked up. And you're looking at them after the fight going, damn, that literally looks like he's been in a fucking car accident. It doesn't look like a fight. It looks like a car accident. These weapons are extraordinarily powerful. And the great advantage of takedowns, one great advantage, I should say, of takedowns in a situation where the shit has really hit the fan, and it's no longer a fight, it's a melee. You must distinguish, guys, between a fight, two people fighting with no bystander intervention versus a melee, where the situation is uncontrolled and many people are fighting, and there's the prospect of intervention from third parties as you're fighting someone else. Distinguish between a melee and a fight, okay? In a melee, I don't follow people down to the ground, never. I go SVG, okay? So that I remain standing and I can use the worst weapons, sorry, the most devastating weapons in unarmed combat at my discretion, okay? So if we're, for example, in on a leg like so, if I put my opponent down in a position like this, normally a groin kick is actually quite hard to hit on a knowledgeable human being if you're standing in front of a genkawa. When two dudes face off with each other, of course they're thinking about groin kicks, okay? And to snap kick into a groin, no, it's going to take some setup, some skill, okay? You can do it, but guys will always instinctively cover up, et cetera, et cetera. But when you have a leg and you rotate your opponent over, there's no defense from here, okay? In a situation like this, it's straight up the middle, they don't even see it coming, okay? I've had people literally puking their guts out on the sidewalk after being hit like this. But I've never been able to achieve that when I was in front of someone, okay? If we have a leg up, if I walk my training partner down, so when he goes to recover back up to his feet, he's in a situation where you can just go in and self-kick, okay? Now you're talking about situations where you're putting people into a fucking coma. This is not, you're not hurting people, you're putting them out, okay? When someone goes to get up in front of you, it's just, it's over. Even as he goes to get up, you capture their head. You're in situations where the knees from here are just devastated. Standing up, ready? Even knees from standing, just stand up straight. Even knees from here can be difficult on somebody, put your elbows in front, okay? It's not easy to bring the knees in on someone here, not kneel, okay? But knees in here are just so easy, because it's like fighting a midget for Christ's sakes. It's like I'm six foot five and he's five foot nothing. He has no mobility. You have all your mobility, okay? He's got nothing. So there's no reason why any mildly athletic person with any talent whatsoever can just absolutely wreck someone under these conditions. So as we go to a grappling situation and bring the high leg up, as we put our man down, you go in with soccer kicks from either side. If he turns away from you, they panic and run, and they go up to turtle position, you just follow in, okay? And this creates a level of response which is, it's unusual, okay? If I follow Giancarlo down, pass it over, lie down, buddy. Let's say I've taken Giancarlo down, okay, and I climb into the mountain position. I'm dominant relative to him, okay? Yes, from here I can hit very hard. So this is a dominant position for me, but what have I done? I'm grounded. I'm on two knees. This is his friend. My dominant position is only dominant relative to him, but it's inferior relative to him. So in a melee, as I'm hitting here, boom. Now it's me

going to the hospital. I'm the guy with the broken orbital bone, five missing teeth, okay? In a melee, I would never follow people down. Pass it over, just give me a leg, buddy. If I put someone down in a situation like so, and we come in and put him down, as Placido goes to get up, boom. That's the kind of blow you work with, okay? And you can do this multiple, multiple times, okay? There's no other way to say this, guys. It's a devastating weapon. Of course, guys, you must only use this in response to the scenario you're in. As I said earlier, if you're at your brother's wedding and the guy gets out of hand, you're not going to go SVG on him, of course. You've got to put him down to the ground, you've got to get mounted on him and hold him down and calm things down. But I'm talking now about melees, where people are getting fucked up, okay? There's the possibility of weapons, there's people with broken glass around, there's people jumping at each other in swarms. This is no time to go down to the floor. This is the time for SVG, lie down, facing this way. Now, facing that way. Now, in a situation like this, your main weapons are going to be the soccer kick and the stomp kick. Let's understand something about how they work together. You can't have one, you've got to have both. You use stomp kicks whenever his legs are between you and his upper body. I cannot soccer kick my opponent in the head in this position. Put your feet up. I can't reach because his legs get in the way, his elbows get in the way. I can't reach with a soccer kick, okay? But you can always reach with a stomp kick. You've got two choices. If the feet are low, when the feet are low, we always do an angle step, okay? And an angle step, I step at 45 degrees to my opponent. And as a result, we're in a position to go straight through. So when the feet are low, we go 45 degrees across. Step and through. When the feet are high, feet are high, you go right up the middle. You play the feet, you play the feet, and you go right up the middle, okay? Feet are low, you go 45 degree angle. High leg and down. Feet are low, you go right up the middle. You come straight in, right like so, okay? So whenever the legs are between you and the head, you go stomping. Another time you go stomping, turn your body. Stomp kick is when he covers his head with his elbows. Now, the soccer kick is protected, he's protected, okay? The stomp kick is a low velocity kick. When you go to stomp, the velocity of your foot is actually pretty low. The highest velocity kicks are soccer kicks, where you can wind up for them. So you can kick a ball 70 meters with a soccer kick, but you can only kick a ball 10 meters with a stomp, okay? So velocity is not the key to a stomp. The key to a stomp is not my kick, it's the surface behind his head. That's what does him in. Put your elbows up. So I come in, soccer kick's not working, he's blocking. So what I do is I make the back of his head contact with the floor with a stomp. It's the surface behind the head that damages him, not the kick, okay? If there's no elbows in the way, this is the time to soccer kicks. You come straight in, and you have two choices. You got two choices. You got the leg that's closest to the head and shoulders, this is the most devastating one. And you have the outside leg, which you use when you just want to hit the temple and you have more angle. You come through and hit the temple. So when you go for the jaw, you go top leg. When you go for the temple, that's another good knockout spot, you go across the body and hit the temple, okay? So you play these off against each other. He's a grounded opponent. You're standing, he's grounded. I see the feet are low, so we come up and in. Now I'm in the perfect position to cover. If he's covering up, you come in.