

It's very important that right from the start of our analysis of takedowns in a self-defense context, we ask ourselves, what are the functions of takedowns in a self-defense context? There are plenty of people who will tell you that takedowns are a very bad idea in self-defense, that you should do everything possible not to go to the ground. I think a large part of this comes from the fact that people tend to think there is only one possible reason for taking someone down in self-defense or street fighting as an application. Let's understand right from the start that there are, in fact, at least three. There are others, but there are at least three major reasons why you might want to employ takedowns, not just one. The first is the obvious one that every jiu-jitsu student learns on their first day in an application. When people say, why would you take someone down in a self-defense application, your standard jiu-jitsu answer is so you can exhibit control over your opponent, get past their legs, get into dominant pins, and then ultimately to submit them. That's the jiu-jitsu 101 method. If we're engaged in any kind of situation where we're not getting along with each other and I come in, I pick up my Chinese partner's leg, and then from here, we put our opponent down to the floor. Once we put this man down on the floor, our next thing is to get past those dangerous legs. As a result, we're in situations now where we can work our way for a hierarchy of pins culminating in mount and rear mount. Once we're in a situation like this, we can use the threat of strikes from a position like this to get someone to turn, for example. Once they go into a turn, we're going to get opportunities to go into finishing holds such as strangles, et cetera, et cetera. This is what you learn on your first day in class. This method of the application of takedowns is a tried and true method, and it's extraordinarily successful in any situation where you're fighting one-on-one without weapons. In my opinion, it is the best way, in most circumstances, of dealing with aggression where you believe you're only fighting one person, where there's no weapons involved. Your main ... The main virtue of this method is that it gives you a tremendous variation in intensity level of response. You can use this method to simply control someone, okay, without even applying strikes or a stranglehold. You can simply put them down on the floor, get mounted, and just hold them down until police arrive or until they simply become pacified. It gives you a tremendous variation in the depth of your response. You can go all the way from the most gentle methods of control to the most potentially violent methods of ending the fight. You could use a stranglehold which potentially could kill someone. You could literally end their life. It takes you from the most gentle responses to the potentially most lethal responses, and every variation in between those. The great virtue of this method, anytime you're in a one-on-one situation without weapons, is the amount of control it gives over you and the huge variation in the depth and level of your response. That's why so many people have favored it for so long. It's just a really, really effective way of operating. Now, people will always criticize this method and say, well, wait a minute. The fights I see, there's multiple people involved, and I would never go to the ground. Yeah, absolutely. Melee situations with this strategy would be quite inappropriate. We'll look at that, but let's not beat around the bush here and say there's more than one reason why you would employ takedowns. It's not just so you can get on top of people and get into dominant positions. A second reason why we might use takedowns is intimidation or damage. You can employ takedowns where you're putting so much kinetic energy into your opponent that when they hit the ground, they're badly shook up by it, and in some cases, even incapacitated. For example, if we have a person that we're engaged in some kind of altercation with and we pick up high single leg, as we come in on a training partner, from here, I can impart momentum into my training partner's fore, which is intimidating for him. If I take my training partner's leg up and put him hard down on the floor, as he goes to get back up, he's in a situation where you can just run someone down and it's tough for them. They get smashed down to the ground in an intimidating fashion. This second approach to takedown can be used as a way of doing damage to them. You throw someone hard on concrete who's not used to being thrown, it's a hard fall. I've often told people this is one of the very best ways to disengage from fights, when you want to just

walk away from a fight. One thing I've always found amusing about advice on self-defense is you often hear people preaching that you should just walk away from a confrontation. You'll see people pre-risk grab. You pull your hands and you run away from the confrontation. I don't know where you live, but every violent situation I was involved in in a bouncer, if you, for example, poke someone in the eye and they let go and you run away, they're not just going to stand there and look at you running away, they're going to chase you down and beat the shit out of you. You can't just say, hey, I'm disengaging from the fight and assume that he's going to disengage from the fight. On the contrary, many of the people who engage in street fights have a kind of predatory mindset where they tend to select people that they believe they can defeat in a fight. There's very, very few people who go into a fight against someone they believe they're going to lose to. That takes some courage. Most people who engage and initiate street fight situations are typically kind of predatory and they tend to choose people that they believe they have an advantage over, size, strength, ferocity, surprise, which they believe will enable them to win quite easily. They don't want to get into a war. They don't want to get into a fight where they could be hurt. They want to get a quick win and move on. So when you go to run away from them, they're going to look at you the same way that a hyena looks at an antelope, which is running away from it. They're not going to let it go. They're going to chase it down and try and kill it. So you can't just say, I will disengage from the fight. Okay, you've got to disengage in a way where the guy doesn't want to follow you. Many of the people that I would have to tangle with in bar fights were very athletic, young, in shape people. There's no way I could just run away from them if I wanted to. One of the best ways to disengage is not to disengage as prey. If I disengage from someone, I look like prey because I'm running scared from someone. He's going to chase me down and he'll beat me up over there instead of here. But if I disengage in a way where this guy got hurt before I disengage, okay, if I take someone up in the air and from a situation like this, when he goes to get up, you're pushing him down, tearing him down. When I disengage now, I'm disengaging as a predator, not as prey. When I walk away now, he's thinking like, holy shit, I don't want to fight this guy. And so when I walk away, you walk away under your terms. You're not running away as prey, you're walking away as predator. And that's the manner in which you want to disengage. So one of the best ways for us to employ takedowns where you don't want to go down to the ground, you don't want to get into a long, protracted fight, is to use them as a source of intimidation so that when you disengage, you disengage on your terms as a predator instead of on his terms as prey. There is a third use of takedowns, which I don't know how to break this to you. It's a rather nasty form of use of takedowns. It's to employ or make use of what I often refer to as the SVG position. This is the stand-in versus grounded opponent, okay? You're probably all aware of the fact that in the sport of mixed martial arts, there are very clear rules on grounded opponents, and you're not allowed to hit them in certain kinds of ways. That's because the kinds of hits that you can employ from there are particularly violent in their nature and extraordinarily effective. They can end a fight with catastrophic injuries in the blink of an eye. Anytime you take someone down, you create situations where you are standing over an opponent, and they can be in a range of positions. Sometimes they will be on their back. This would be standing versus supine, okay? They can be on their all fours. This would be standing versus prone, and they can be on their knees, where it's standing versus kneeling, okay? Anytime I find myself standing versus kneeling, prone, or supine, you have a dramatic ability to impart severe damage upon your opponent through the use of soccer kicks, stomp kicks, and clinch knees. You can enact a massive amount of damage to an opponent using these three methods and others, but those are the three main methods, in a very short period of time without putting yourself in a vulnerable grounded position relative to other people in a melee type fight. My advice, which I will be putting to you throughout this video, is that you must distinguish between one-on-one encounters without weapons, where the traditional four-step method of jiu-jitsu is extremely effective, in fact, arguably the most effective of all, versus melee encounters, where

there are multiple people running around, you don't know who is who, and anything could happen. In those situations, when you put yourself on the ground, you can be dominant to the person you're on top of, but you can be positioned inferior, massively inferior position, relative to standing people around you, and you can be soccer kicked, you can be stomped, and you can be clinch-kneed. The idea is we can use takedowns in a situation where I get my training partner up from here. Once you put him down on the floor, now we're in a situation where we can start to employ stomp kicks, okay? We can go up through, we'll be looking at this in detail. We can use soccer kicks as he goes up to his knees, and from here, you can impart tremendous damage. As he comes up to knees, you're going to find yourself in situations where you can employ knees, stomp kicks, and soccer kicks in a way where you can do terrible damage to people in very short amounts of time. Let's understand that the classical four-step method of jiu-jitsu is designed to impart control over opponent for extended periods of time, and for that purpose, I believe it's the best all-around method. The idea of SVG is that you massively cut down on the amount of time required to do catastrophic damage. If you take someone down, work your way through a hierarchy of pins, and then finally submit them, it takes a lot of time. It might take you 20 seconds. 20 seconds in a street fight is an eternity, okay? If I have someone on all fours, and they're going to get up, a soccer kick might take you quarter of a second, and you can do roughly the same amount of damage with a soccer kick, take your opponent to unconsciousness, as you can with a stranglehold. As a result, because you never go into a vulnerable grounded position against standing people on the periphery of the fight, and the fact you can get damage done in a fraction of the time that you could using the classic four-step system, I believe that in extreme self-defense situations where you are no longer concerned with legal problems, you are no longer concerned with the normal social mores that would prevent you from doing terrible things to a fellow human being. Rather, you're in a fight for survival, and this is all about you getting away without going to hospital, and you're prepared to put other people in hospital under those extreme circumstances. You must start to think about using takedowns not to control people on the ground, but to enter into SVG scenarios, where you can use a combination of stomp kicks, soccer kicks, and clinch knees to do terrible damage to people in a very short period of time. So there are three major functions of takedowns for the jiu-jitsu person in a self-defense situation, not one. The first is the one most people equate with jiu-jitsu, control. Take him down to the ground, work through the classic four-step system. This is the ideal method in situations of low-intensity conflict, okay? Remember, guys, not every self-defense situation has maximal intensity, okay? In fact, the vast majority of negative interactions with our fellow man are actually pretty low intensity. They're usually arguments over small things, and people just want to let off steam. No one wants to go to hospital over these things. So you can't just have self-defense techniques that only work in maximal extreme situations. You can't go straight to eye gouges, fish hooking, and then headbutts, okay? If you do, you're going to spend a lot of time incarcerated. So we need to have graded responses. The beauty of the traditional four-step system is it enables you to do that. You can go from very gentle responses to extreme responses, even killing people if you had to with a stranglehold, okay? Then we get to our second function for takedowns, intimidation, where you can cause someone some serious discomfort and even harm by slamming them hard into the ground, okay? This is an excellent way to intimidate people and end a fight through intimidation where you walk away from the confrontation in a predatory role rather than a prey role. When you're prey, running from a predatory person, you will be chased down and beaten, okay? But when you exit on your own terms and your opponent doesn't look at you as a prey but looks at you as a predator, then you can safely disengage from a fight, okay? The only people who should be running away from a fight are people who can run very, very quickly. If you're not that kind of person, you can get run down, bad news for you. Just because you choose to disengage doesn't mean the other guy does. The third and perhaps the most controversial aspect or use of takedowns is going to be to

create the SVG scenarios where you are standing over an opponent you have grounded with a takedown. This will enable you to use some of the most violent weapons in all of street fighting, the use of stomps, the use of soccer kicks, and the use of clenched knees. These can do terrible damage in a very, very short amount of time. Now, obviously, the SVG scenario is reserved only for those situations where you have no concerns over legal problems after the fight. This is presumably a situation where the shit has truly hit the fan and you're fighting for survival. You don't want to go to hospital and you're prepared to put other people in hospital to do that. So this would not be a first response, obviously. But there are situations where you're going to have to use this and it would be preferable in melee fighting over the traditional four-step method. Once you understand that there are these three major reasons for using takedowns and that we have to be able to go between these three, depending upon the circumstances in which you find yourself, you will see that there are many more reasons and ways to use takedowns than the traditional, let's take him down so we can get mounted on him.