

# TAKEDOWNS: The Bewildering Techniques

by Stanley Hess

**Even with all the physical advantages of strength, speed and flexibility, a fighter's gotta have something extra in his bag of tricks to give him that special advantage. Thus, the takedown.**

The day is a long one, with many good fighters from across the nation. The tournament fighters remaining have made it through the eliminations, showing little of the inevitable fatigue. A few faces are red and swollen; like badges, they tell of techniques lacking control. The survivors are busy warming up, some stretching, others involved in mock matches, each sharpening skills for the matches ahead. The P.A. system booms with the growl of the tournament promoter, his voice telling the strain of the day. Excitement flows through the audience; they too await the next round of competition. Two fighters are called into the ring. The referee makes one last check, time-keeper, scorekeeper, judges, all ready. The fighters are primed. The command is given; the movement begins. The fighters touch gloves and the fight is under way. Like a dance of warriors they circle, each seeking out the other's weakness, prodding, testing, neither wanting to commit to the first assault.

Both fighters are experienced, one a nationally ranked competitor, considered one of the best kickers on the circuit. The other is unknown, except to those in Region 1. The ranked fighter seeks his opening, and with the perception of a wizard, his foot snakes out toward its target. But this time it strikes only air as his opponent, with cat-like movements, has dropped and in a whirling motion sweeps the supporting leg. As the fighter crumbles to the floor, his opponent is immediately there. The flags fly; the audience roars. Point, to the fighter from Region 1, Mike Shintaku.

Given all the physical advantages of speed, flexibility and strength in equal proportions, a fighter must have something special in his bag to give him that special advantage. Mike Shintaku, at

## Takedown Against a Roundhouse Kick

The first order of business is to block (1) your opponent's roundhouse kick. Next, grab the kicking leg (2) and the opponent's opposite shoulder. Now pivot, sit into a horse stance, and take him down (3) using your leg as leverage. Finish (4) by following up.



## Takedown Against a Step-in Attack

When your opponent does a step-in reverse punch (1), side step the attack (2), grab either the collar or both shoulders, pull (3) him over backwards, and follow with a punch (4) or suitable counter.



## Scissor Takedown with Punch

When your opponent charges in (1) with a reverse punch, block, grab his lead shoulder, apply (2) a scissor across his hips with both legs while supporting yourself with one hand, then take (3) him down. Follow up (4) with a punch.



## Front Leg Takedown

If you can catch your opponent coming forward, hook his lead foot (1) while simultaneously grabbing his gi at shoulder level for control. Sweep the leg (2) toward his front while pulling his shoulder backwards. Follow him (3) as he goes over so you end in a position (4) where you can effectively follow up.



the tender age of 14, began his tang soo do training under the tutelage of Mariano Estioko, the second American to ever receive a black belt in tang soo do, an honor Estioko received while stationed in Korea with the U.S. Air Force.

The first experience Mike had with sweeps was, "When I was flat on my back counting the holes in the ceiling." Needless to say, Mike learned the hard way. He explains, "During that time, the common way of teaching was the 'watch and do as I do' method. I finally learned to do sweeps by imitating the techniques that the higher belts would

use on me."

These days, Mike is involved in sweeps and takedowns on a whole other level. Having acquired the high levels of personal skill with them as a competitor, Mike has become involved in a sweeps and takedown film which will soon be seen in all video formats. The video is being produced by Future Vision (P.O. Box 16548, Seattle, Washington 98116), a video promotional company he has helped develop. The videotape will be titled *Takedowns, the Bewildering Techniques*.

Mike has been a regionally ranked competitor in the Northwest and has

specialized in foot sweeps and takedowns. His concept calls for the disruption of the long formed fighting patterns of a successful fighter and is achieved through creating mental confusion with respect to time, place and even to the initial purpose or intent. Through the displacement of his balance, one can direct any opponent into a world of momentary confusion and disorder. Remember, any effective technique is launched from a foundation of body position and balance. If these two elements are absent, the technique will be weak. The result: failure.

### Psychology of Takedowns

Sweeps and takedowns are used in virtually every style of karate, but very few competitors utilize or even realize their value. Therefore, most don't know how to cope with the effects of a good takedown. Most fighters can take punches and kicks without faltering mentally. But, when finding themselves off balance, disoriented or even flat on their backs, most competitors hit the panic button. Only when their balance is reestablished, or they realize where they're at, do they get some semblance of confidence back. Psychologically, the knowledge that for a split second



### Drop Kick Scissor Takedown

When the opponent steps in with a punch, turn and drop (1) to one knee. Immediately launch a back kick (2) to the opponent's head. This leads perfectly to a scissor (3) across your attacker's lead leg. Then take him down, roll (4), and follow up (5) with a roundhouse kick to his face.



### Distraction Sweep

Facing an opponent (1) who counters well, slide (2) your back foot forward. Then shoot out your forward foot (3) and use the sweep to just tap his lead leg; this will direct his focus there. Now cock (4) the leg and fire a roundhouse kick (5) to the head or chest.



### Spinning Sweep

When facing an opponent (1) who relies on front leg kicks, feint until your opponent executes (2) a front leg kick. Then drop (3) and spin, taking out (4) his supporting leg. This sweep is similar to a spinning hook kick. Once he's down (5), follow up (6) with a reverse punch.



### Defensive Hip Throw

Your opponent prepares (1) to attack and does so (2) with a lunging reverse punch as you step in and block and deliver (3) an elbow strike to the chin. Then clasp his wrist with your left hand, secure your right hand to his shoulder or lapel (4) and pivot. Execute (5) the throw and follow up (6) with a punch.

they were no longer in control of themselves in a combat situation or were completely disoriented has taken its toll. Subconsciously they realize that their opponent has a technique that they might not be able to defend themselves against if applied again; consequently it affects their overall future performance against that opponent.

Broken concentration, hesitation and a defensive attitude become such a fighter's pattern. Thus many fighters are beaten through the use of simple sweeps.

### Centerline Concept of Sweeping

To make sound use of takedowns, two elements must be taken into con-

sideration: one, the opponent's centerline, and two, the opponent's stance. The centerline concept is most effective against a stance in which the weight is nearly equally distributed on both legs—as in forward and horse stances. When attempting the takedown sweep, first evaluate the opponent's stance. How is his weight dis-



tributed? Secondly, determine the direction of the opponent's centerline. The centerline is an imaginary line that extends from the top of his head down to the floor, with the nose and the belly button as points on that line. This line also runs perpendicular to the plane of the hips. Once these two factors are understood, it becomes simple to say

that the centerline takedown is executed by attacking the forward foot at ankle level and pulling it in the direction of the opponent's centerline. If executed properly, the opponent will go down with relative ease.

**Balance Point Concept of Takedowns**  
When applying sweeps or take-

downs to an opponent using a stance that is not equally balanced, consideration as well as your own balance point becomes critical. On attacking, body placement and positioning prior to the execution of the technique also become an important factor. To be able to

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# TAKEDOWNS

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## Takedown from a Headlock

If an attacker places you (1) in a headlock, sit into a horse stance (2) and deliver an elbow to his solar plexus, following up with a downward strike (3) to the groin. Grab his shoulder (4) and the inside of his leg. Execute (5) a hip throw and follow up (6).

control an opponent effectively, you must displace their balance point with your balance point. From there, the takedown becomes effortless.

## Offsetting Balance

Balance offsetting techniques are most effective against runners. They are also good for creating an opening while preventing an opponent from counterattacking. With running opponents, redirecting the forward foot into or across their rear leg causes him to literally trip over his own feet.

Opponents who are both attacking as well as defending can be unbalanced to your advantage. When attacked with a stepping-in type of attack, sweep the foot in mid-flight, redirecting its forward placement. The same applies to kicking attacks. Redirect the kicking foot by catching and throwing the foot down and away from its intended placement. When facing a defensive

opponent, sweep the forward foot in the centerline direction and forward, displacing the placement of the original stance. These three off-balance techniques, if executed properly, should both displace and extend the stance of the opponent and prevent any of his techniques from being effective. Now all you've got to do is score on him.

These concepts, diligent practice and these sweeps and takedowns can and will be an asset to your arsenal of techniques.

These days, Mike is involved in a sweep and takedown film which will soon be seen in all video formats. The video is being developed by Future Vision (P.O. Box 16548, Seattle, Washington 98116), a video promotional company that Mike has helped develop during the last year. The video tape will be titled, *Takedowns: The Bewildering Technique*.

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