



Shivworks

**Understanding TAKEDOWNS
for the real-world**

Understanding Takedowns: for the real-world

Takedowns seem to be a trending topic at the moment in the social media sphere. We received a lot of DMs asking about our thoughts, so I put together this quick hip-pocket discussion.



What is a takedown?

A takedown is an application of force that puts a standing person into the horizontal plane.

There are many styles of takedowns, but to keep it simple, I will put them all into three categories based on the risk of injury and the likelihood of success. The conditions under which you apply the takedown determine what category you should use, and your ability dictates what specific takedown you can do. **Understanding** that success of the takedown is mainly connected to personal ability and less on the technique.



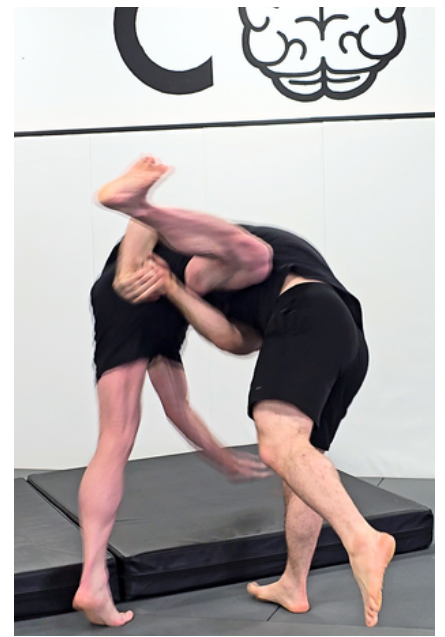
Problem Framing

We have a base definition of the term (takedown). We know there are many types, all with varying risks and requiring different skills and unlimited conditions for use. That is a lot to conceptualize into a concise understanding. So, we are going to problem-frame real-world takedowns. We use this process of problem framing to help organize our understanding of a topic. Starting with declaring the goal or mission statement.



The Goal or Mission Statement:

We need a technique that – regulates the risk of injury to the person doing the takedown and the person being forced down, controls mobility after the point of impact, can be learned by people of varying skill levels, and works under various conditions.



Clarifying our understanding

We can unpack the conversation further from our goal or mission statement by identifying specified/implied tasks and constraints.

- Specified tasks are expressly stated as needed to meet the goal.
- Implied tasks might not be expressly stated but must be accomplished to meet the goal.
- Constraints are any limitations or restrictions.



Specified Task

- You **must** be able to mitigate the risk of injury to the person put on the ground and to the person applying the takedown. Simplified, understand liability (we will get into it more shortly).
- You **must** control mobility after the point of impact, meaning you can increase connection to stay in control or disconnect entirely from the person once on the ground.

Implied Tasks

- You **must** control their hands to limit access to weapons.
 - Everything outside the mat room is a weapons-based environment, and you must account for the possibility of weapons. A chosen takedown should maintain control of the other person's hands. A lot of talented people are advocating for techniques that work well in sports but would fail in a weapons-based environment because there is no control of the hands.

Constraints

- You have a limited amount of time that can be dedicated to training. How much of that time do you dedicate to a specific takedown? The details of a double leg, for example, will not be fully grasped in a single 20-minute training session. There is a learning curve and it can be steep.
- There is a wide range of athletic abilities, and you or the person you are teaching might not have the same physical potential as a Division One wrestler.



Liability

Any time you apply force, you inherit liability; that force must be justified—reasonable (necessary in some jurisdictions like CA). Just because someone slaps you doesn't mean you can shoulder toss them onto their head.



If you apply an uncontrolled high-risk move like a blast double takedown and their skull cracks on concrete, your reason for the takedown better rise to the threshold for lethal force (threat to life or great bodily harm)—or you're in for a legal fight.

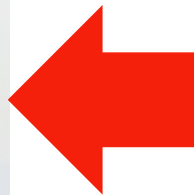
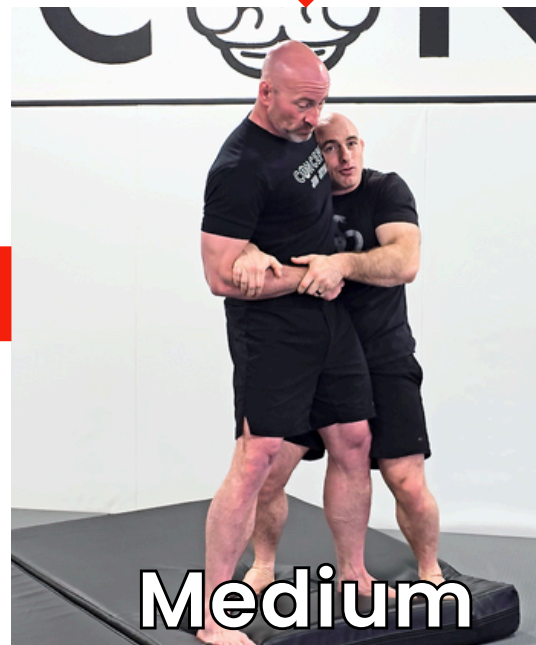
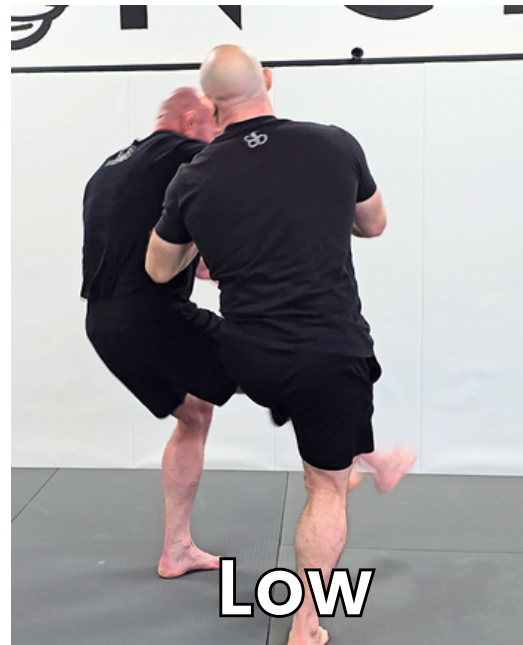
The **goal of force**, whether as a cop or in self-defense, should be the most effective, least injurious technique based on context and ability. That's my view on "de-escalation"—For example, if a guy runs at you with a knife, five to seven rounds to the face might be the least injurious, most effective option.



Categories

There are many styles of takedowns. To keep it simple, I categorize them into three types based on risk of injury, mobility after impact, and likelihood of success-(this is extremely subjective): low risk, medium risk, and high risk.

The conditions under which you apply the takedown determine the category you should use, while your ability dictates the specific technique you can execute. Success hinges more on personal ability than the particular move.



Low Risk

These rely on off-balancing or breaking stability— foot sweeps, leg trips, or some ankle picks. More in the realm of judo. They use minimal ballistic force, keeping injury risk low. They also tend to require less attachment, reducing the chance of falling or being dragged down by the person. These tend to have a steep learning curve for proper timing and balance.

Medium Risk

These force the person down while controlling the midline— think body locks, inside or outside trips. A lot of traditional Greco-Roman wrestling-style takedowns. They can be ballistic and dangerous, but you can control the descent to reduce risk. You're more attached to the person when using these types of takedowns than any from the low or high-risk category, limiting mobility after impact.

High Risk

These are the ballistic, highlight-reel slams—like blast doubles, some single-leg variations, suplexes, and hip or shoulder throws. Injury potential is high since descent is very difficult to control. Connection is usually more than the low-risk category but less than the medium risk.



The Users

Takedowns have two primary real-world users: law enforcement (LE) and normal people like you and me - self-defense. (Sports? That's nerd stuff—set it aside for now.)

Takedowns for Law Enforcement

An officer must be able to control the movement of another person. Control comes from maximizing friction between the participants and the environment. The fastest way for someone to understand and apply friction to limit mobility is on the ground in the horizontal plane – pinning them down. Pinning a person to a wall, a fence, or a car works. But when standing, stability is hard for most people to manage. Stability is not as much of a problem on the ground. This is why modern defensive tactics emphasize ground grappling. Officers need takedowns, it is a requirement of the job. I believe takedowns for law enforcement are in the **MUST HAVE** section of the training budget, and I strongly encourage officers to learn them.

Takedowns for Self Defense

Regular people interested in self-defense don't have the same need or requirement as officers to acquire takedown skills—you're not handcuffing anyone. As a normal person, you have the option to leave the situation, though circumstances don't always allow you to leave safely. Hitting someone with the earth can end a fight. So investing time in takedown skill can be a high ROI. I would place takedowns for self-defense in the **SHOULD HAVE** section of your training budget.



Recommendation

Time and personal ability are constraints shared by LE and civilians. So, how do you pick a takedown category and specific takedown?

Medium-risk techniques will best serve most people in most situations. Specifically, I recommend a body lock style of takedown.



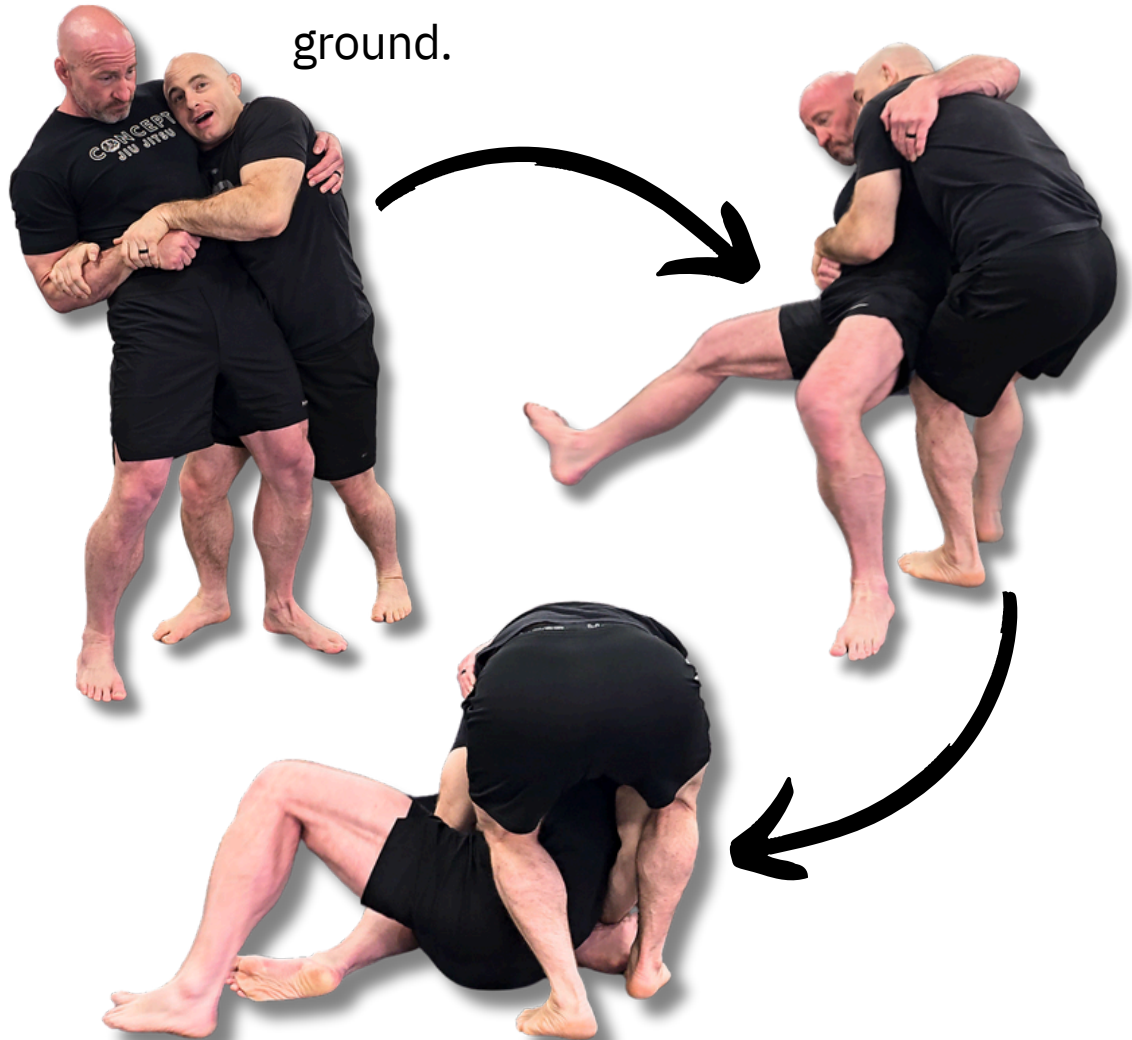
Versatility: keep it standing if you want. A body lock does not mean you must immediately drop the person. When you apply the takedown, you can exert a high degree of control over the person's descent for safety or slam them hard for a highlight reel finish—understanding how most body lock takedowns work does not take hours and hours of training.



The Split Seat belt

Getting more specific on the medium-risk category, I would advocate the average person start by developing the split seat position and how to use the split seat belt to force a person to the ground.

The split seat belt—popularized by Khabib during his UFC reign (sometimes called the Dagestani handcuff)—meets all the requirements for using takedowns in the real world.



The split seat belt allows you to regulate the amount of force during the descent. You can control the amount of connection after impact using footwork to achieve the desired level of mobility. The position controls the hands of the person being forced to the ground. It does not take long to see a high success rate, and you don't need to be a D1 wrestler.

