

SUMO

FOR **Mixed Martial Arts**

Winning Clinches, Takedowns, and Tactics

ANDREW ZERLING

Catch your opponent off guard with
unorthodox sumo techniques

"I recommend
this book."

—Lyoto
"The Dragon"
Machida



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Preface

After witnessing a live professional grand sumo tournament in Japan, I became even more enthralled by this well-known but misunderstood martial art. The barrel-like physique of the sumo wrestler contrasts strikingly with the lean, muscular physique of the average combat sports athlete. Because of this, many see sumo as spectacle devoid of real athleticism. But make no mistake: professional sumo wrestlers are easily on par with Olympic-level athletes.

When I explored sumo more carefully, I found that it is just as deeply technical a martial art as judo or Western wrestling. In applying its techniques to my own diverse grappling martial arts training, I have gained an even greater respect for this underestimated martial art. I wanted to share my insights with the martial arts community, so I wrote a seventeen-page academic article titled “Sumo Wrestling: Practical Techniques for the Martial Artist” that was published in the final issue of the *Journal of Asian Martial Arts*. The encouraging feedback spawned my idea of significantly expanding my sumo article and making it a book.

Clinches and takedowns are the most overlooked aspect of many martial artists’ game. My book, *Sumo for Mixed Martial Arts: Winning Clinches, Takedowns, and Tactics*, solves this problem. Sumo wrestling’s little-known but ancient proven clinches, takedowns, and tactics offer a fresh, new perspective. Martial artists who stand to benefit from this book include mixed martial arts (MMA) fighters, practitioners of all arts that involve grappling, self-defense practitioners, nongrappling martial artists, and serious sumo fans in general.

In this book, I first offer an overview of sumo wrestling. Second, we will examine sumo “case studies” to show in detail how a sumo wrestler can technically win a match. Third, we will take a close look at sumo from an MMA perspective. And finally, I will illustrate many sumo techniques relevant to MMA with photos—not line drawings—of actual martial artists performing them. This book is organized so the reader can progressively build on the information as it is presented in a logical order. To gain the most benefit, then, this book should be read from the beginning to the end.

The link between sumo and other martial arts has never before been deeply explored in a book. Brazilian jiu-jitsu and MMA are two of the fastest-growing sports in the world, and sumo has much to contribute to both. Many think they know what sumo is, but what they know is only the surface. This book goes far beyond the surface to uncover theory and techniques that can be of tremendous benefit to many martial artists. I sincerely hope this book brings sumo into the spotlight as a traditional and practical martial art to be studied by all types of martial artists.

—Andrew Zerling

CHAPTER 1

Sumo Wrestling Overview

Introduction

Suddenly after an intense staring contest, two huge men powerfully collide in an earthen ring. They are thickly muscled, flexible, highly trained martial artists; they are sumo wrestlers (*rikishi*). The initial collision of two rikishi can generate an incredible one ton of force or even more. All other things equal, the bigger rikishi usually wins. But rarely are all other things equal. Throughout sumo's history there have been smaller rikishi who, with the proper technique, have toppled mountain-like men. A sumo historian once said the earthen ring where sumo takes place (*dohyo*) is circular to help a smaller rikishi angle away from a larger rikishi. This allows for more interesting matches, and it also shows that in some ways, sumo roots for the underdog.

Japan's ancient and popular martial art is greatly overlooked in the West. This book focuses on sumo's winning moves, with special emphasis on how smaller players can win against larger players. Because sumo techniques allow a small rikishi to take down larger rikishi, there are clearly benefits in sumo for other martial arts, particularly in mixed martial arts (MMA) and other grappling arts. Modern MMA grew mostly out of jujitsu, and sumo can be seen as the root of jujitsu. Sumo, then, is ultimately one of the major roots of modern MMA. Sumo and modern MMA may look vastly different, but if it were not for the great technical fighting advancements of ancient sumo, there probably would be no MMA as we know it today.

Sumo wrestling predates jujitsu by many centuries.¹ Sumo goes back about fifteen hundred years, while the first recorded jujitsu school was not formed in Japan until about five hundred years ago. Considering that sumo was an integral part of the Japanese culture for many centuries before the numerous refined empty-hand techniques of jujitsu were introduced, it would be logical to think sumo had a strong influence in the development of jujitsu.

Sumo can be considered the earliest codified form of jujitsu. Many of the *kimarite*, sumo's winning moves, are similar to modern-day jujitsu and judo techniques. They also

have similar names. Sumo's one-arm shoulder throw, *ipponzeoi*, has a counterpart in jujitsu's full shoulder throw called *ippon seoi nage*. Sumo's *koshinage*, a hip throw, is similar to jujitsu's *o-goshi* or full hip throw, and the same goes for *sotogake*, sumo's outside leg trip, and jujitsu's *kosoto-gake*, or small outer hook.

Sumo can be seen as one of the oldest and most primal and powerful of the Japanese martial arts. So it is not hard to understand why we may view sumo as the root of jujitsu. Some other martial arts, such as judo, aikido, and Brazilian jiu-jitsu (BJJ), are all modern-day forms of jujitsu,² each having different objectives and associated techniques that have changed over time to coincide with those objectives.

Some well-known martial artists have studied sumo. The founder of judo, Jigoro Kano, studied not only jujitsu but also a great variety of martial arts, including sumo, to help formulate his modern-day judo.³ When Kano wanted to beat a competitor, he would study everything available, along with sumo techniques and even training books from abroad. Early on, Kano used his knowledge of a sumo shoulder-throw technique to help him create the shoulder-wheel throw (*kata-guruma*), which is similar to Western wrestling's fireman's carry. He used this new throw to defeat a tough opponent. Kano collected nearly one hundred transmission scrolls (texts containing the secrets of the system) from many different schools of martial arts, including sumo.⁴

In Okinawa, karate master and pioneer Gichin Funakoshi in his youth engaged in sumo-like wrestling called *tegumi*, which he recounts in his book *Karate-Do, My Way of Life*. Funakoshi mentioned in his book that he cannot be sure how much tegumi helped his karate mastery, but it definitely had a positive impact. His tegumi training helped him gain muscular strength, which is very beneficial in karate. Also, Funakoshi is certain that tegumi assisted in fortifying his will, an attribute every martial artist needs.⁵ Tegumi branched off in two directions: the self-defense version, karate, and the sport version, Okinawan sumo. Hence, many Okinawan karate masters also practiced tegumi.

The founder of aikido, Morihei Ueshiba, started his first real training in the martial arts with sumo. In *Abundant Peace*, Stevens describes the grueling conditioning Ueshiba endured during his sumo training. Even while in the Imperial Army as a young man, Ueshiba was still remarkable at sumo. Ueshiba's early training in sumo, which focused "on keeping one's center of gravity low," probably had an influence on the development of aikido in his later years.⁶ All three profoundly influential martial arts masters, Kano (1860–1938), Funakoshi (1868–1957), and Ueshiba (1883–1969) saw the great importance of adding sumo to their martial arts training routine.⁷

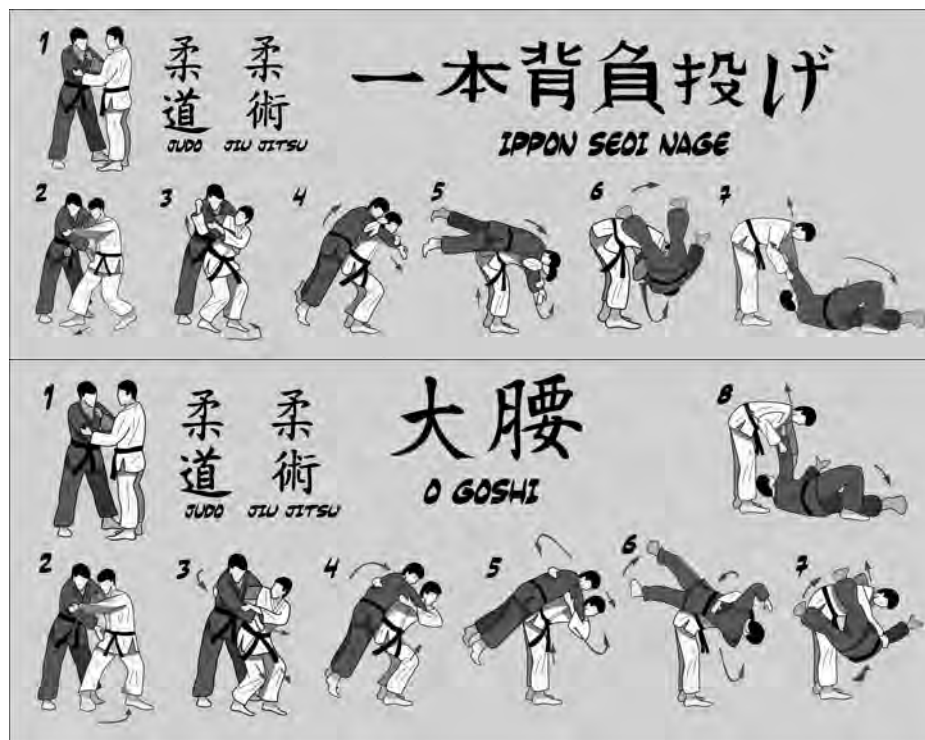
More recently, former UFC Light Heavyweight Champion Lyoto Machida, besides being an expert in Shotokan karate and BJJ, has a strong background in sumo. Machida describes in his book *Machida Karate-Do Mixed Martial Arts Techniques* that his sumo training strengthened his fighting stance and base, as well as his mind.⁸ With his open-minded approach to martial arts training, Machida has become one of the most

formidable MMA fighters of his time. Later in this book we will examine his fighting style in depth, especially his outstanding use of sumo techniques and tactics in MMA competition. Even in the modern arena of MMA, Machida saw the value of integrating some sumo into his MMA fighting game.



All three profoundly influential martial arts masters, Kano (1860–1938), Funakoshi (1868–1957), and Ueshiba (1883–1969), saw the great importance of adding sumo to their martial arts training routine.

(Left: Kano, courtesy of Uchina, Wikimedia Commons. Middle: Funakoshi, courtesy of Gichin Funakoshi, Wikimedia Commons. Right: Ueshiba, courtesy of Sakurambo, Wikimedia Commons.)



The judo/jujitsu throws full shoulder throw (ippon seoi nage) and full hip throw (o-goshi) have practically the same technique and name as its sumo kimarite counterparts one-arm shoulder throw (ipponzeoi) and hip throw (koshinage). This shows that there is a very close historical link between sumo and judo/jujitsu. There are numerous other instances of this connection—so much so that sumo could be considered the earliest codified form of judo/jujitsu.

(Upper: Ippon Seoi Nage, courtesy of bimserd, Can Stock Photo. Lower: O-Goshi, courtesy of bimserd, Can Stock Photo.)

Sumo History and Practice

Myth surrounds much of sumo's early history. It was a violent sumo match between the gods, it is said, that created the Japanese islands themselves. Sumo's Japanese beginnings go back about one thousand five hundred years, making sumo one of the oldest organized sports on earth. There is evidence that the precursors of the combat sport probably came from China or Korea. The earliest known record of sumo in Japan is its ancient predecessor known as *sumai*, which was practiced in a no-holds-barred wrestling style. Warlike *sumai* evolved to a more sportive sumo style of wrestling. Sumo essentially took its present style in the Edo period (AD 1603–1867).

CHAPTER 2

Sumo Wrestling Case Studies

Introduction

In this chapter, we will study a specially selected group of professional rikishi for their wrestling style. As you will see, some wrestlers' body types and fighting styles can vary dramatically, and their bouts can be quite interesting when they get together in the ring. When it comes to fighting styles in sumo, there are basically two types: traditional belt-grabbing sumo wrestling and pushing sumo wrestling. Undoubtedly, there are many rikishi who are proficient in both styles of sumo wrestling, but usually a rikishi focuses on either a pushing style or a belt-grabbing style. Techniques and tactics are presented in detail so readers might add some of these sumo moves to their own martial arts repertoire.

Case Study 1: Mainoumi—"Department Store of Techniques"

In sumo, size certainly matters, but technique matters as well. A case study in size versus technique naturally leads to the popular Japanese rikishi Mainoumi. He was five feet seven and a half inches in height and only 220 pounds, a very small person by sumo standards. Mainoumi used up to thirty-three kinds of kimarite in his wrestling days. Because of his broad use of kimarite, he was nicknamed "Department Store of Techniques" (Waza no Depaato). Mainoumi has said, "The eighty-two kimarite enhance the value of sumo."¹² Mainoumi rose to the *komusubi* rank, the fourth level from the top, an incredible achievement for a small rikishi in a field of giants.

Mainoumi was one of the most popular rikishi in the 1990s as his great fighting spirit and broad use of kimarite made him stand apart from the other much larger rikishi he was wrestling. For a smaller rikishi, Mainoumi's strong judo background combined with his remarkable physical strength and agility made him a very formidable opponent. It was not uncommon for Mainoumi to win against rikishi who outweighed him by two to

almost three times. A solid push from a larger rikishi would launch him in the air. He would also lose if a larger rikishi achieved a dominating hold on him. Because of this, Mainoumi would at the start of the bout feint a forward charge and then quickly jump off the line of attack. Frequently, the larger rikishi's forward momentum was committed enough that he would fall to the ground. If that didn't work, Mainoumi was prepared to get beside or behind his opponent and push him out of the ring or down to the ground.

Opponents started to catch on to Mainoumi's tactics and wouldn't commit themselves to a full-on charge at the start of the bout. The match would be downgraded to a noncommitted pushing contest. This was a contest Mainoumi couldn't win, so he would slip or jump to his opponent's side or back. He had plenty of strength and leg techniques to throw opponents once he was in a dominant position. Mainoumi was most vulnerable when squared up in front of his opponent. This occurred often when facing other smaller, fast rikishi like him.

Mainoumi, at the initial charge, would commonly employ quick and cunning moves, shocking both the opponent and the audience. For instance, he would use an unconventional sumo wrestling technique called "deceiving the cat" (*nekodamashi*). At the start of the bout, a rikishi abruptly claps his hands together just in front of his opponent's face without touching it. The objective of this technique is to cause the opponent to close his eyes for a moment and distract him briefly, giving an advantage to the hand-clapping rikishi. This technique can be risky as, if it fails, it exposes the rikishi to his opponent's onslaught. The hand clapping is not that difficult. The hard part is how the opponent's brief distraction is instantly leveraged to gain the advantage. However, this trick will probably work only once on a particular opponent, as he will be expecting it the next time.

The *mawashi* is the belt worn by the rikishi. "The law of the ring" is that the one who dominates his opponent's *mawashi* with a controlling grip will almost certainly win the match. Mainoumi considered his opponent's *mawashi* his "lifeline": if he did not grip it, he would lose. Mainoumi has said that where you grab the *mawashi* determines how you can turn or throw your opponent. The *mawashi* grip gives the rikishi the greatest leverage.

According to Mainoumi, "The worst scenario for a small rikishi is having to face a strong head-on charge. If this happens he will be overpowered and pushed out instantly. This is the most dangerous thing. To absorb the bigger rikishi thrusting, he can pull back his shoulder quickly and weaken the power of the attack. You have to be innovative. Respond flexibly in order to cope with a bigger foe."¹³ To be innovative and flexible, the martial artist must dig deep into his technical repertoire to unearth appropriate solutions to the problems presented.

A prime example of Mainoumi's advice can be seen in the November 1991 match he had with Akebono (Chad George Haheo Rowan). At more than five hundred pounds,

CHAPTER 3

Sumo and MMA

Introduction

We turn now to mixed martial arts (MMA), which offers more tools for achieving victory than sumo and is a very different combat sport. Of course, size and strength matter a lot in MMA contests, but with the rules allowing more highly effective strikes, positions, and submissions, the bout contains many more fight equalizers than the David and Goliath sumo match. Some rikishi have competed in MMA with limited success. Rikishi have difficulty adapting to MMA, as their lack of speed compared to a skilled smaller foe and their large frames make them especially vulnerable to strikes and submissions.

The free-movement phase, when both combatants are standing and there is no gripping between them, is addressed somewhat in sumo with open-handed thrusts, slaps, and pushes. These open-handed techniques are not designed for a knockout but to move the rikishi out of the sumo ring. In MMA these open-handed moves would be less effective, because knocking an opponent out of a cage or even a boxing ring is much more difficult and is not the objective in that sport. Plus, the dynamics of takedowns and strikes are much different against an MMA cage wall than an open sumo ring.

Ground fighting is not dealt with in sumo at all, because in a sumo match, once a rikishi touches anything on the ground beyond the soles of his feet, the match is over. Submissions, a requirement for success in MMA competitions, are not really taught in sumo. The only submission-type kimarite are armlock-like throws against the elbow. Some examples are the popular armlock throw (*kotenage*), the rarely used armbar throw (*tottari*), and the very rarely used armbar-throw counter (*sakatottari*). Plus, several major sumo moves require the use of a belt to grip the opponent. In MMA competitions there is usually no belt to grip, but in gi-wearing contests, a belt is available for use as well as in many self-defense situations. It is therefore apparent that the means of achieving victory in an MMA competition and in a sumo match are vastly different.



Mixed martial arts fighting arena.
(Photo courtesy of Neil Lockhart, Shutterstock.)

The Clinch Phase

But there are significant similarities between these two combat sports. Mostly, sumo techniques deal with the standing clinch phase of hand-to-hand fighting. The clinch, *yori*, is when there is some sort of gripping between the combatants while they are standing. There are numerous types of clinches. The standing clinch is one of the three major phases of hand-to-hand fighting and MMA. Combatants usually clinch when one of them is defending a takedown or as they strike each other. It may not be as well known as the free-movement phase (standing strikes with no grips) and the ground phase, but it is just as critical.

In an unarmed single fight, the most powerful clinches provide you with the most control of your opponent's movements. Solid grips on your opponent's head or torso offer this valuable control. A powerful clinch ties up your opponent and takes much of his striking ability away. On the other hand, a simple wrist grab does not control your opponent's movements much and as such is a poor clinch.

A good standing clinch can stop much of your opponent's striking ability, and it gives you many options: striking from the clinch, standing submissions, takedowns to ground fighting, or disengaging to the free-movement phase to strike. Depending on the dominance of your standing clinch, your opponent has those options as well. The clinch is like a hinge that connects the other two phases of combat. Being proficient in the clinch gives you the ability to dictate where the fight will lead—to the free-movement phase or to the ground phase. As shown in professional boxing and MMA competitions around the globe, avoiding the clinch is very difficult, even when facing a lesser adversary. That is why clinching skills are so important.



Clinches and takedowns are a vital part of the fight game, but they are often overlooked.
(Photo courtesy of only4denn, Can Stock Photo.)

The Over-Under Clinch

Interestingly enough, the over-under clinch that is very popular in sumo is the most used type of clinch in MMA contests. If you look at the illustrations that describe the eighty-two sumo *kimarite* listed by the Japan Sumo Association, you will notice that the over-under clinch is extremely prevalent. Renzo Gracie and John Danaher state that “the over-under clinch is undoubtedly the most common form of clinch in MMA competition.”³⁰ This use of the over-under clinch is a common thread between sumo and MMA. For both combat sports, one major goal of this clinch is to take your opponent to the ground.

As its name implies, the over-under clinch (see photo on next page) is where both combatants have one overhook and one underhook. The overhook or overarm, *uwate*, is performed by placing an arm over the opponent’s arm and securing it. The underhook or underarm, *shitate*, secures the opponent’s upper body with your arm placed under the opponent’s arm. The underhook is the offensive position, while the overhook is the defensive and weaker hold. When in the over-under clinch, your head is usually on the side of your overhooked arm, as this puts weight on your opponent’s underhooked arm, which nullifies some of his powerful control with the underhook. With this clinch a combatant should have his shoulder (underhook side) buried into the opponent’s chest, pushing in. For better balance, you are usually in a staggered stance with your lead leg on the side you are underhooking your opponent.

The positions of the combatants when they are in the over-under clinch mirror one another, thus creating a neutral position. This neutral position is created as each combatant has an equal opportunity to attack and defend. Even though the over-under clinch is a neutral position, it still greatly controls your opponent’s torso and is therefore a powerful clinch. In this clinch, technical skill and physical attributes, such as size and strength, play important roles in determining the advantage.

Why is the over-under clinch the most commonly used clinch in sumo and MMA? One reason is that it is a powerful neutral clinch, so it is easier to attain than a powerful dominant clinch such as the double-underhooks clinch. Most importantly, the over-under clinch, for a neutral clinch, controls the opponent's striking arms the best. The collar-and-elbow clinch is also a powerful neutral clinch, but it does not control the opponent's striking arms that well. In some other grappling sports, like folkstyle and Greco-Roman wrestling, strikes are forbidden; therefore, the collar-and-elbow clinch is much more commonly used. In sumo and MMA, head and body strikes are always a threat in the clinch. Both of these combat sports have evolved a preference for the over-under clinch because of the crucial need to protect from the devastating strikes of the opponent's arms. Also, part of the reason rikishi use the over-under clinch so often is because it gives them a grip closest to their opponent's belt. This gives the rikishi maximum gripping control over his opponent. Because the over-under clinch is an easy-to-attain neutral clinch that gives the best striking protection for a neutral clinch, this clinch provides an important link between sumo and MMA. As you can gather from the illustrations in this book, sumo has many answers to the riddle of the over-under clinch—answers that send the opponent crashing to the ground.



The over-under clinch. For this book, it is critical to understand the over-under clinch, as most of the technical photos start from this position. The over-under clinch is the most commonly used clinch in both sumo and MMA. (Photo by Kristopher Schoenleber.)



The collar-and-elbow clinch. The collar-and-elbow clinch is also a powerful neutral clinch like the over-under clinch, but it does not control the opponent's striking arms as well as the over-under clinch. This makes the over-under clinch a much better choice for sumo and MMA, where strikes are allowed. In some other grappling sports, like folkstyle and Greco-Roman wrestling, strikes are forbidden; therefore, the collar-and-elbow clinch is much more commonly used. (Photo by Kristopher Schoenleber.)



The double-underhooks clinch. This dominant clinch is usually attained after locking up in the over-under clinch.

(Photo by Kristopher Schoenleber.)



Japanese sumo wrestlers in the over-under clinch. Illustration done in Japanese wood block print style.

(Photo courtesy of patrimonio, Can Stock Photo.)

Why the Takedown?

After the opponent hits the ground from a takedown, the ground phase begins. In the ground phase the combatants can employ strikes or submissions from a variety of ground positions, which gives them the best control over their opponent's movements. Therefore, for many MMA fighters this is their preferred phase of combat, as discussed in more detail below. Performing a successful takedown on your opponent gives you a much greater opportunity to achieve a dominant top position on the ground. This takedown to a dominant top position when first entering the ground phase is much more effective than pulling your opponent into your guard and ground fighting from a bottom position. The guard is where you are on your back or buttocks with your legs in front of your opponent. If used properly, the bottom guard can be a powerful position for performing many offensive and defensive techniques, but a dominant top position on the ground is always preferred by submission grapplers.

From your dominant top position, your opponent not only has to carry your weight, but your movements, submissions, and strikes are also much better as gravity is on your side and you have a lot more variations of techniques available to you. Renzo Gracie and John Danaher said it nicely: "In a ground fight, it is always desirable to be on top, in the most controlling position possible. If, however, you find yourself in the bottom position, the guard is the best place to be."³¹ Because practically all fights start standing, it makes sense that strong takedowns are one of the best ways to enter the ground phase and immediately achieve a controlling top position.

Why is the ground phase preferred by many MMA fighters? Why should an MMA fighter be skillful in taking the fight to the ground with takedowns? The ground phase is preferred by many MMA fighters for a number of reasons. Real dominance in an unarmed single fight is generally achieved by superior body contact (controlling the opponent's body), which can be used to negate your opponent's striking and submission ability. The free-movement phase gives the fighter no grips and therefore no body contact. The standing clinch gives the fighter some body contact. Finally, the ground phase gives the fighter the most possibilities for superior body contact to dominate his opponent with strikes and submissions.

Size and strength are not as threatening to a skilled ground fighting specialist as they might be to other fighters because the ground phase is a learned skill that nullifies many of your opponent's physical attributes. Additionally, some MMA fighters are not well versed in the ground phase, so it would be beneficial for the ground specialist to take the opponent out of his element. In both MMA fights and street fights, moreover, there is a high likelihood that the fight will end up on the ground anyway, either as the result of a fall during the struggle or by design from a determined takedown. So being well versed in the ground phase is a way of being very prepared for the inevitable. Effective takedowns help you get to the ground phase more safely and quickly so you do not receive as much punishment from strikes in the free-movement phase and the clinch phase.

Detailed ground fighting is beyond the scope of this book, especially because sumo wrestling is not a ground-fighting martial art. Nevertheless, the benefits of taking the fight to the ground had to be discussed as most of sumo's techniques are takedowns, and it would be reasonable to know why you would want to go to the ground in a fight. There are countless quality ground-fighting instructional books and videos on the market today that can help educate you in the ground phase of combat.



MMA fighter taking down his opponent in the cage.

(Photo courtesy of nickp37, Can Stock Photo.)

CHAPTER 4

Technical Photos

Introduction

In this final chapter, we illustrate many selected sumo techniques from an MMA perspective that can be easily integrated into your martial arts game. First, for your safety while training, breakfalls will be shown. Second, the proper fighting stance will be examined for MMA compared to sumo. Third, supplementary techniques will be demonstrated to help you with sumo's winning moves, *kimarite*. Finally, we will examine in depth selected *kimarite* that are highly applicable to fighting and MMA. This final chapter ties together everything presented in this book so you will have an excellent understanding of how sumo can be used in MMA and other grappling situations.

Here are some important tips to follow when performing the takedowns in this chapter. It is best to attack with combinations. Just as a boxer strings punches together looking for the knockout, so the takedown specialist combines takedown attempts to enter the ground phase. The first takedown should be a committed attack so you get the right reaction for the second takedown attack. One committed technique flows from the next until victory is achieved. Also, proper transition from clinch-phase takedowns to the ground phase involves staying close to your opponent as you follow up immediately with ground techniques. If there is too much distance between you and your opponent after your successful takedown, you will almost certainly lose the advantage of your takedown.

Breakfalls (Ukemi)

Ukemi literally means “receiving body.” It is the art of knowing how to respond properly to an attack so the receiver is not injured. Often these skills resemble tumbling and are practiced in many Japanese martial arts, not just in sumo. The primary objective in breakfalls is to protect your head and spine, which house your delicate nervous system. When done properly, breakfalls soften blows to the bones and joints. Breakfalls significantly lessen the amount of damage sustained in a fall. The force of the fall is distributed

over noncritical areas of the body. Knowing how to breakfall is not only important when being thrown by your opponent but also in daily life. Many accidents involve falling down, whether it is from a trip or slip. In the martial arts, being able to inflict punishment is important, but being able to receive it can be even more critical.

For training safety, practice your takedowns and breakfalls on a good padded surface to help prevent unwanted injuries. When first practicing breakfalls, start slow and start low. It is always advisable to begin from a lying-down position to get the correct body position. Then progressively move to a sitting position, to a crouching position, and finally to a standing position. In the beginning all rolls should be started from a kneeling position. When performing rear and sideways breakfalls, you will be slapping out with both arms or just one arm. Therefore, your arms should be spread at a forty-five-degree angle from your body. This spread keeps you from landing directly on your arm with your body. It also keeps the shoulder joint from absorbing too much pressure if the spread is too wide. Finally, make sure you tuck your chin into your chest when instructed, so you protect the back of your head from hitting the floor.

Forward Breakfall (Mae Ukemi)

Forward Breakfall (Mae Ukemi) kneeling



Andrew starts on his knees.



He falls forward and protects himself by slapping out and supporting himself with his arms. He makes contact on the ground from his fingertips to his elbows all at once to spread the impact of the fall across a wide surface area. Before he makes contact with his arms on the ground, he twists his face to the side just in case his arms cannot stop the full impact and his head hits the ground. Twisting his face to the side protects his nose, mouth, and eyes if his head makes contact with the ground. After the fall, Andrew makes contact with the ground only with his toes and forearms to protect the trunk of his body.

Forward Breakfall (Mae Ukemi) standing



Andrew starts with a standing position.



He falls forward and protects himself by slapping out and supporting himself with his arms. He makes contact on the ground from his fingertips to his elbows all at once to spread the impact of the fall across a wide surface area. Before he makes contact with his arms on the ground, he twists his face to the side just in case his arms cannot stop the full impact and his head hits the ground. Twisting his face to the side protects his nose, mouth, and eyes if his head makes contact with the ground. After the fall, Andrew makes contact with the ground only with his toes and forearms to protect the trunk of his body.

Rear Breakfall (Ushiro Ukemi)

Rear Breakfall (Ushiro Ukemi) squatting



Andrew starts with a squatting position.



He falls backward while tucking his chin to his chest to protect his head from the backward impact on the ground. Just before his back hits the ground, Andrew slaps out with both arms making contact on the ground from fingertips to elbows all at the same time to spread the impact of the fall across a wide surface area. Andrew's arms should be spread at a forty-five-degree angle from his body. This spread keeps him from landing directly on his arms with his body. It also keeps his shoulder joint from absorbing too much pressure if the spread is too wide.

Rear Breakfall (Ushiro Ukemi) standing



Andrew starts with a standing position.



He falls backward while tucking his chin to his chest to protect his head from the backward impact on the ground. Just before his back hits the ground, Andrew slaps out with both arms making contact on the ground from fingertips to elbows all at the same time to spread the impact of the fall across a wide surface area. Andrew's arms should be spread at a forty-five-degree angle from his body. This spread keeps him from landing directly on his arms with his body. It also keeps his shoulder joint from absorbing too much pressure if the spread is too wide.

“A valuable addition to the library of . . . sumo or MMA.”

—Mark A. Buckton,
sumo writer, *Japan Times*

“Andrew Zerling has done us all a service.”

—Mark Hatmaker, best-selling author of *No Holds Barred Fighting* series

“Explore the methods of sumo. Mr. Zerling’s book is the perfect entrée.”

—Burton Richardson, author, Black Belt Hall of Fame

“Guaranteed to take your up-close-and-personal fighting skill to the next level.”

—Loren W. Christensen, author and veteran martial artist

“Well-written and thoroughly researched.”

—Neal Molyneux, managing editor, *MMA Uncaged Magazine*

“Worth its weight in gold.”

—Chris Gould, author, *Sumo Through The Wrestlers’ Eyes*

“A unique blend . . . simply cannot be found elsewhere.”

—Dr. Arthur T. Bradley, author, *The Survivalist* series

Sumo enhances speed, timing, leverage, and strategy

This innovative book demonstrates how the study of sumo can benefit practitioners of modern mixed martial arts (MMA), as well as other grappling arts. Sumo has its own particular variations of MMA-style body locks, throws, and trips, among other techniques.

MMA competitors know their sport grew with the evolution of jujitsu, but many do not realize sumo can be seen as the root of jujitsu. Sumo uses distraction, angles, and leverage to steal an opponent’s balance and take him down.

This book features

- In-depth demonstrations of 48 sumo kimarite (winning moves) with step-by-step instructions
- Over 300 photos
- Case studies of famous rikishi (sumo wrestlers)
- Discussion of sumo’s development, rules, and training, as well as recent changes in sumo techniques

The author provides analysis of the three basic types of fighters in MMA and how sumo techniques and tactics can enhance their skills. He examines the fighting style of former UFC light heavyweight champion Lyoto Machida, who made highly effective use of sumo wrestling in MMA competition. Throughout, the author places special emphasis on how smaller players can defeat larger adversaries.



Andrew Zerling is a black-belt martial artist with over two decades of experience in a variety of styles. His work has appeared in the *Journal of Asian Martial Arts* and *Black Belt Magazine* with Brazilian jiu-jitsu master Renzo Gracie. This is Andrew’s first book. Andrew Zerling resides in Rumson, New Jersey.

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