

Delivering Knockout Blows

Because most assailants are looking for a victim and not a fighting partner, an assault rarely progresses to the point at which you have to knock the attacker unconscious. In fact, students of realistic self-defense classes report in large numbers that using their skills outside of class is much easier than in class. I've lost track of the number of times I've heard feedback like this, "I only did an Eye Strike, and I did it wrong, but he left me alone" or "I was all ready to do the Knee to Groin strike, but he was already lying on the ground" or—my favorite—"I put my hands up in protective stance and opened my mouth to yell and they apologized and ran away." Sometimes students even sound *disappointed* that they didn't get a chance to use all of their skills!

Although, hopefully, you'll never need to deliver a knockout blow, it's important to study knockout blows for several reasons. There may be a situation in which a knockout blow is your best choice, perhaps if you are attacked when camping and have a long hike in front of you before you can get to safety, or perhaps if an assailant breaks into your home late at night and you need time to alert your children and get to safety. It's also an important element of psychological self-defense. Knowing that you can knock someone out *if you have to* will be evident in your self-confidence and your willingness to defend your boundaries verbally, emotionally, and physically.

Myth, part I It's easy to knock somebody out. I've seen it in the movies a thousand times. Just punch someone in the head, and he's out cold.

Myth, part II It's almost impossible to knock somebody out. Only boxers, marines, or professional bodyguards are strong enough. Unless you know all of the right pressure points and have fists of steel, you could never do it.

Fact The truth is somewhere in between. It's definitely harder than it looks in the movies; for example, it might take ten blows instead of one. But it's also easier than the average person might imagine. You can do it with some of the techniques you've already mastered!

There are two basic types of knockouts. One happens when the body is feeling so much pain that it shuts down as a protective mechanism and the attacker passes out. The other type of knockout occurs when someone is hit in the head with sufficient force that the brain knocks against the skull once or twice and she or he loses consciousness. In step 10, Delivering

Knockout Blows, you'll study some refinements to the techniques you've already learned (Side Thrust Kick, Knee to Groin) and learn two new techniques that target the attacker's head. You'll also learn the skills you need to end a fight by assessing the perpetrator's consciousness and getting to safety.

KNEE TO HEAD

Whether you know it or not, you've already practiced the Knee to Head many times in *Self-Defense: Steps to Survival*. It is almost exactly the same move as the Knee to Groin (step 4, Kicking With Feet and Legs). Once again, hit with the top of your upper thigh, not actually your knee (figure 10.1). This gives you a weapon with more surface area, which simplifies targeting and provides increased force to

your strike, incorporating the muscles of your back and butt, not just your leg. This is a good move to use when an attacker is kneeling or bent over and you are standing. You might have a chance to deliver a Knee to Head after a successful Knee to Groin or High Elbow Strike. Begin by reviewing the physical stance for the Knee to Groin in step 4, Kicking With Feet and Legs (page 51).

Figure 10.1 **Knee to Head**

APPROACH

1. Protective stance
2. Assess distance to target



(continued)