



Krav Maga



Krav Maga pronounced (kräv) (megä´) n. [Hebrew.] for “contact combat”, is the official self-defence and hand-to-hand combat system of Israel. Krav Maga is a very modern and practical style of self-defence that is the only style worldwide known as an art of self-defence and not as a martial art.

Krav Maga isn't about being a tough guy, it's not about learning how to fight in a ring, it's about going home alive no matter what the situation. Krav Maga is a survival system dealing with personal safety issues in the context of defending against both armed and unarmed attackers. Krav Maga integrates instinct based self-defence tactics, with a strong curriculum that trains aggressiveness, fighting spirit, situational awareness, and verbal de-escalation of conflict. Its anti-terrorist roots make it aggressive by design, with only one objective, to eliminate the threat in the fastest way possible.

It is considered a highly refined, street fighting system, designed to be utilised against street attacks, muggings, and sexual assaults. Krav Maga was developed for use in the street. When an individual is attacked in the street there is no way to know how many opponents or weapons you might encounter, therefore Krav Maga training is based on a system without rules.

This Israeli system emerged in an environment where extreme violence was common has been continually refined and developed in light of actual modern combat and self-defence experiences. Krav Maga has received international recognition for its unique approach in bringing self defence to civilian, military, and law enforcement alike. The Krav Maga symbol consists of the Hebrew letters K and M surrounded by an open circle because the system is open to improvement by adding techniques, exercises, and training methods.

The Israeli System of Defensive Tactics

Krav Maga is not just another reformatted martial art; in fact, it has been around for some fifty years longer than most eastern martial arts have been around in the west. Krav Maga has its origins in military combat where it was forged on the anvil of some of the most severe combat settings of this century—amidst Nazi terrorism, the combat of World War II and the very violent military confrontations of the Middle East.

Krav Maga was created and developed by Grandmaster Imi Lichtenfeld (1910-1998), who started it in the late 1940's when serving as Chief Instructor for hand to hand combat and combat fitness training for the Israeli Defence Forces. Imi, as a young man growing up in Bratislava, Slovakia, was a champion heavy weight boxer, a top-level wrestler, and an expert in judo/jujitsu.

Imi's father, who was the police officer in charge of the detectives in Bratislava, taught his detectives (and Imi) police defensive tactics. Imi grew up in an environment where combative sports, law enforcement, and ferocious street fights played equal rolls. Imi took part in numerous street fights defending the Jewish quarter against local fascists and Nazis before and during the first phase of World War II. After 2 years of travel, Imi immigrated to Palestine (1942), which became Israel in 1948.

Due to the political situation, Israel was immediately at war with its neighbours and did not have the luxury of six-month boot camp for its young soldiers, who were literally conscripted and sent to fight. Because of this situation, the Israeli military needed an effective hand to hand combat system that could be learned very quickly, easy to retain, and very effective. This was the birth of Krav Maga in Israel. Beginning with Israeli Special Forces units like the Haganah, Palmack, and Palyam, Krav Maga became the official combatives training for all military personnel, Israeli police and security forces.

Since then it has been studied, tested, improved and developed extensively so that now Krav Maga techniques are applied in areas such as law enforcement, elite military units, VIP protection and civilian self defence programs for men, women and children.

Who Uses Krav Maga Today?

In 1964, Grandmaster Imi Lichtenfeld finished his military service and adapted Krav Maga to a civilian framework. In Israel, the style has become an important part of the educational system and is taught to elementary and high school students on the national curriculum along with being taught at the Wingate Institute, one of the world's leading physical fitness centres. It is taught to men, women, and children under the auspices of the Israeli Ministry of Sport and Education.

Krav Maga is the official system of hand-to-hand combat and self-defence employed by the Israeli Defence and Security Forces, the Israeli National and Military Police and its Special Operations and Anti-Terrorist Units. The Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) including their Special Forces Units, Israeli Police, and Internal Security Branches currently uses this style on a day-to-day basis.

Krav Maga is taught all ages and abilities, at community centres, schools, and clubs throughout the world. Krav Maga is taught to Sky Marshals, commercial airline crews, and has expanded outside the borders of Israel and is very successful in the United States, Canada, Brazil, United Kingdom, France, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Russia, Italy, Poland, Japan, Thailand, Australia, and New Zealand.

Many United States local law enforcement, federal agencies, state police, SWAT and other special operations teams have been taught Krav Maga to include, but not limited to the following:

Federal Bureau of Investigations

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms

*Drug Enforcement Administration Arrest &
Control Unit*

U.S. Treasury Department

U.S. Immigration Service

U.S. State Department

Connecticut State Police

Pennsylvania State Police

Texas Department of Public Safety

Ohio State Highway Patrol

Florida State Highway Patrol

California Highway Patrol

California Department of Justice



U.S. Central Intelligence Agency
U.S. Coast Guard - Port Security Unit
U.S. Coast Guard - Tactical Law
Enforcement
U.S. Coast Guard - Drug Interdiction
New York City Police Department
Illinois State Police
Chicago Metro Police Department



Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department
Los Angeles Police Department Academy
Santa Monica Police Department
El Segundo Police Department
Beverly Hills Police Department
Burbank Police Department
Pasadena Police Department
Alabama State Police

Krav Maga is Different from Traditional Martial Arts

A common criticism of some traditional martial arts is the lack of real-life applicability – will all those fancy moves hold up against thugs on the street? A lot of people when asked why they study their particular Martial Art will answer “So I can look after myself”, or something similar. After training awhile most people seem to realize that most Martial Arts in their traditional form are not realistic self defence systems - and were never meant to be - but a sport, whereby a modern Karate practitioner (for example) can compete against another karate practitioner. There are rules to prevent illegal moves and foul play; and that is how it should be. This of course is a very basic view as most martial arts offer the serious student a lot more such as self-awareness and character building, fitness, friendship and so on.

Unlike most martial arts that are formal, ritual-oriented, and difficult to learn, Krav Maga is all about fighting dirty and learning no-holds-barred moves in a realistic environment. Indeed there are some similarities between Krav Maga and traditional eastern martial arts. The style consists of street survival tactics that includes a hybrid of mixed martial arts techniques also utilized in boxing, karate, judo, ju-jitsu, muay thai, as well as a number of less well-known styles. However, it is one of the few fighting styles in the world which adapts to the student rather than expecting the student to adapt to it, teaching students to build on their natural reflexes.

In an assault situation an individual has the right to use whatever techniques necessary to defend them self. For this reason, there are no competitive tournaments, katas, rituals, or choreographed routines in Krav Maga. Instead, Krav Maga relies on retzef or “continuous motion” to complete the defence. Krav Maga was developed in an environment where the Israeli military could not devote many hours to prolonged hand-to-hand combat training for their personnel. Therefore, the Krav Maga system was created with great importance placed on bringing students to a high level of skill in a relatively short period.

Krav Maga uses a simple approach to learning through constant practice and repetition. The most effective defences against each kind of assault become almost second nature and automatic, so that in actual “street” confrontations they will be immediately utilized. In its military capacity and highest levels of learning, Krav Maga teaches not just defences against armed and unarmed attack, but how to initiate an attack.

Krav Maga training stresses the ability to react when surprised. Techniques and training methods emphasize the ability to function from a poor state of readiness, and to move from a passive to aggressive state immediately in order to fight back and survive. By emphasizing and practicing a few key defence techniques for each assault the style is able to consider a wide range of defence options hardly ever found in other styles, making Krav Maga a complete fighting system.

Instructors incorporate realistic re-enactments, teaching students how to operate under the stress of an actual attack. Students learn to defend against common chokes, grabs, and bear hugs, as well as weapons such as guns, knives, and sticks. Just as important, students learn to function during the stress and shock of a sudden, violent encounter. Krav Maga is easy to learn and suitable to everyone who needs an effective way of self-defence.

In addition to self-defence, Krav Maga teaches hand-to-hand combat. This is a more advanced and sophisticated phase, and shows how to neutralize an opponent quickly and effectively. It embodies elements related to the actual performance of the fight including tactics, feints, powerful combinations of different attacks, the psychological dimensions of the fight, and learning how to use the environment to your advantage.

Principles of Krav Maga

- Avoid injury.
- Devise drills that take advantage of natural reflexes.
- Defend and attack in the minimum time required.
- Use of the human body's vulnerable spots.
- Use of the body's natural weapons as well as ordinary objects that may be nearby.
- No Rules, use everything you have

Characteristics of Krav Maga

According to law enforcement trainers, the most striking characteristics of the system are:

- Students are instructed in state-of-the-art defensive principles that apply to a variety of threatening attacks that occur during commonly documented street crimes.
- Students train from a position of disadvantage in real time and real speed.
- Defensive manoeuvres are combined with simultaneous counterattacks until all potential danger is eliminated.
- Unique training methods are employed to simulate violent street encounters. This is necessary to place students under extreme stress while performing Krav Maga techniques. Students learn to go from a passive to an aggressive state quickly.
- Krav Maga also teaches students to function with their attention divided; while fatigued; and when they are faced with a multitude of spontaneous attack scenarios.

Benefits of Krav Maga

Awareness

Students of Krav Maga use basic moves in various combinations to fend off violent attacks. This means that students adjust to new situations through improvisation, an important and

unique feature of this style. Of course, this requires using the “head” as well as the body, and thus Krav Maga addresses the thought process as well as the physical action.

Confidence

Improvisation also allows for limitations in physical abilities. Not everyone can bring his or her leg up to a 180-degree angle, and thus the system is geared towards the average person. Students are taught a variety of possible defensive reactions for each possible attack situation, building upon an actual framework of useable techniques. They are then encouraged to utilize the responses that are appropriate to their capabilities. This allows the student to develop a sense of confidence in their abilities.

Self-control

The mind and body self-control are developed through practice. The student will learn how to control his six senses (he develops the 5 basic senses and the sixth, the ability to foresee the movements before they are made, and is also the ability to sense the environment around him). Many types of exercises make the student able to control any muscle or part of his body. If we think on movement as a sequence of moves passing quickly from one to another like a movie, in Krav Maga we develop the perception of the move in its first frame. The instinctive movement is worked to exhaustion, because is essential in dangerous situations. The instinctive movement is very fast, and it is apart from the emotional state, which the brain controls the movements just by reflex.

Physical Fitness

Being physically and mentally prepared to handle confrontation is why so many people, as well as hundreds of law enforcement agencies, train in Krav Maga; it keeps them from becoming victims. Because physical fitness is closely interwoven into the system, the workout includes a number of cardiovascular and strength building exercises, as well as stretching to increase flexibility. Emphasis is put on speed, endurance, strength, accuracy, and coordination, especially for intensive Krav Maga training.

Movements

All Krav Maga moves were created based on natural body movements and are all very simple. This is what makes their use easier on danger and surprise situations. The moves are short, and by consequence, fast. There are no rules, the techniques was created for real-life situation application. The strikes are intended to body sensible targets, what makes the Krav Maga practitioner and his adversary even, independently from their physical strength, and makes the defence more objective. In short: Krav Maga is a simple personal defence system, fast, and objective, accessible to anyone.

Technique of Krav Maga

The technique is based on mind and intellectual force no matter what the physical strength you have, and had as a goal the transference of weight as explosive force. As physics tells us, strength is equalled to mass multiplied by acceleration. The strike brings to the target the striker’s bodyweight. The strike’s movement works as a spring released: the speed does not have continuous acceleration; it is released at maximum speed. The techniques practiced in the style must be in terms of actual defence situations. In fact students of Krav Maga are taught the vulnerable points (i.e. back of neck, temples, eyes, throat, knees,

groin, etc...) on the human body and are encouraged to use this knowledge to fend off an attack.

Components of Krav Maga

Techniques of Self-Defence

- Defence against punches and kicks
- Releases from bear hugs and chokes
- Defence against knives and clubs, etc.
- Defence against guns
- Defence against multiple attackers

Face-to-Face Combat

- Various types of kicks/arm blows
- Sparring under pressure
- Controlled fighting

Groundwork

A Krav Maga student is as comfortable in a ground confrontation as standing confrontation. (Note: a student does not necessarily want to be situated on the ground during a confrontation for several reasons including the threat of multiple attackers. Nevertheless, the reality is that many fights do end up on the ground.) Krav Maga incorporates extensive groundwork tailored to the Krav Maga philosophy of quickly disabling or neutralizing an opponent. In other words, a Krav Maga practitioner does not necessarily intend for a “submission” or “tap out” from an opponent as common in sport fighting. A Krav Maga student will execute a joint dislocation or worse to end to the confrontation. (On this and related points, use of force and legal issues are important considerations. A defender must not exceed “reasonable” force or use excessive measures once the threat ceases to be a danger. Use of force issues vary considerably and it is incumbent for a defender to know what is legally acceptable.)

Krav Maga Level Classes

Although the curriculum set forth by Krav Maga is logically organized by way of a progressive testing (level) system, the promulgation and distribution of grades is certainly not the goal of the system. Instead, the most important goal of Krav Maga is to help you develop the ability to quickly and efficiently defend against any conceivable threat to you, a friend, or a family member.